The Pennsylvania State University
Dickinson School of Law
Latino/a Law Students Association

CONSTITUTION

Article I: Name and Purpose

Section 1: Name of the Organization
The Organization, comprised of Latino/a students and/or those interested in Latino/a issues attending The Pennsylvania State University - Dickinson School of Law, shall be known as the Latino/a Law Student Association.

Section 2: Mission of the Organization
The Latino/a Law Student Association (LLSA) is committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive community for Latino students at Penn State University-Dickinson School of Law and sending highly qualified, dedicated, and responsible lawyers into every legal arena. These goals may be achieved by a membership that consists of both Latinos and individuals interested in Latino culture and issues. This vibrant membership may be composed of both Spanish-speakers and non-Spanish speakers and represent the various countries of Latin America.

LLSA seeks to remedy the under-representation of Latinos in all segments of the legal community. LLSA strives to increase the number of Latino students enrolled in the Penn State University - Dickinson School of Law. In working toward this objective, LLSA will work closely with the Admissions Office on recruitment matters. Furthermore, LLSA strives to provide Latino students enrolled at the law school with academic and social support, as well as keeping abreast of Latino issues in the law.

Through the power of community, LLSA seeks to foster activism in all forms that seeks to improve conditions for the entire Latino population, which is now the nation's largest minority group. Because of this demographic shift, LLSA must lead out in building coalitions with other communities. Thus, it is in that spirit of community that LLSA vows to work closely with the Minority Law Student Association (MLSA) and all other student and community organizations with similar goals to that of LLSA to empower and improve conditions for all under-represented groups.

Article II: Membership

Section 1: Requirements for Membership
Membership shall be open to all Pennsylvania State University – Dickinson School of Law students.
Article III: Dues

Section 1: Schedule of Dues
   a. Members are required to pay dues on a semester basis.
   
b. Dues are payable by the date set by the Executive Board, in such dollar amount as determined by the Executive Board at the recommendation of the treasurer.

Article IV: Officers and Duties

Section 1: Officer Positions
   a. President
   b. Vice President.
   c. Secretary
   d. Treasurer
   e. 1st Year Representative

Section 2: Qualifications for Officers
   a. All officers must be members of LLSA and students currently attending the Pennsylvania State University – Dickinson School of Law.
   
b. No LLSA member may hold more than one office within the Organization at one time.
   
c. All prospective officers should have attended at least one half of the general body meetings in the prior year.

Article V: Nominations and Elections of Officers

Section 1: Management of Elections
   a. Elections shall be managed by an ad-hoc committee (the “Elections Ad-Hoc Committee”) which shall be composed of one representative from each class. These representatives shall not be candidates for any office and shall be appointed by consensus of all members present at the beginning of the Election Meeting.
   
b. This Committee should be assisted by the faculty advisor or other appointed staff member.
   
c. The Elections Ad-Hoc Committee will decide all procedural aspects of elections.
Section 2: Nomination Procedure
Candidates shall be determined in the following manner:
   a. All members nominated and seconded by another member shall be accepted as candidates. Self-nomination is permitted.
   b. Nominations and seconds shall be accepted during the nominations period. The nominations period for each office shall begin five (5) school days before the date of elections and shall end before candidate statements for that particular office are given at the election meeting.

Section 3: Time of Elections
   a. Elections for all officers, except First Year Representatives, shall be held during the last two week period in the month of March. The Executive Board must decide the specific date and notify the membership of this date prior to Spring Break.
   b. Elections for First Year Representative shall be held no later than four weeks after the beginning of first year classes.

Section 4: Balloting Procedures
Dignity, fairness and efficiency shall be the governing criteria in the conduct of elections. Voting shall be by secret ballot. Ballots shall be collected and tabulated by the members of the Elections Ad-Hoc Committee. This Committee shall announce the results of the tabulation as soon as the ballots have been counted. However, the specific numerical results shall be kept secret.

Section 5: Voting and Run-off Elections
Eligibility: All who are members of LLSA and are current on the semester dues shall be entitled to vote. This includes Third Years. This clause will not apply to the election of the First Year Representative.

   a. Election and run-offs: A simple majority of the votes cast is required to elect. If no candidate achieves a majority, a run off election shall be held between the two candidates having the highest number of votes. Run-off elections for any office shall take place immediately after the initial balloting for the office and in the same manner as prescribed in Section 5 of this Article.

   b. Proxy voting shall be allowed. Members wishing to vote by proxy must register his/her ballot with the Chairperson of the Election Ad-Hoc Committee or the Vice Chairperson in writing, in a signed, sealed envelope specifying the office and the person who is to receive the vote for that particular office. Such votes shall only count if the person named is a candidate for that office, i.e., general votes for an individual are not valid.
Section 6: Election Disputes and Appeals

a. All disputed elections, nominations, balloting and all matters pertaining to nominations and elections not covered by this Constitution shall be decided by the Elections Ad-Hoc Committee, when constituted, and by the out-going Executive Board. All such disputes must be presented within three (3) days of the election. If these deciding bodies cannot make a ruling, subsection (c) applies.

b. The complaining party shall have the right to meet with the deciding bodies prior to their making a ruling on the complaint.

c. Appeal: Appeals from the determination of the deciding bodies shall be heard by the membership. The membership must be notified at least four (4) days prior to the meeting at which the appeal will be heard and the general meeting will be heard within five (5) days. At this meeting, the complaining party shall be given five minutes to explain the basis of the complaint. A question/answer period shall follow. A successful appeal requires a 2/3 vote of members present.

Article VI: Committees

Section 1: Classification of Committee
LLSA shall have both standing and special committees. Decisions made by such committees shall be subject to review by the Executive Board.

Section 2: Standing Committee
The Standing Committees of LLSA shall be the following:
  a. Academic Committee
  b. Admissions Committee
  c. Social Committee

Section 3: Special Committees
a. Special Committees may be created by the President with the advice and consent of the Executive Board. The powers and duties of the Special Committees shall be to investigate and study assigned matter and, where appropriate, implement activities relating to specific purposes, businesses and objectives of LLSA. Special Committees shall terminate at the conclusion of the school year or by action of the Executive Board.

b. Special committee members shall be selected by consensus of the LLSA members. The President of LLSA shall select which member of the special committee shall act as Chair of that committee.
Section 4: Appointments
Chairpersons and members of the committees must be members of LLSA. The President, with the advice and consent of the Executive Board, shall appoint all Chairpersons of Standing and Special Committees from among the members of these committees.

Article VII: Finances

Section 1: Fiscal Year
The fiscal year of LLSA shall coincide with the Law School academic year.

Section 2: Preparation of Annual Budgets
The proposed budget of LLSA, including estimates of income and requests for appropriations from the general fund of LLSA, shall be prepared by the Executive Board in compliance with Student Bar Association requirements.

Section 3: Disposition of Assets
All income and appropriations current and accumulated, and all other property of LLSA shall be held for its benefit by the Treasurer. Disbursements from LLSA funds shall be made after the presentation of a voucher or receipt to the Treasurer of LLSA. This voucher or receipt shall be signed by the Treasurer and countersigned by the President certifying that the expenditure has been authorized by the Executive Board. All such vouchers or receipts shall be kept.

Article VIII: Procedure for Removal of Officers

Section 1: Initial Letter of Inquiry
Upon request in writing to the Executive Board by any member outlining the reasons thereof, the Executive Board may address a general letter of inquiry to any LLSA officer to determine the reason or reasons such officer has failed to properly perform the duties of his/her office. Such letter of inquiry must be sent upon the request of any two or more of the above officers.

Section 2: Second Letter of Inquiry
Where there is no response to the initial letter of inquiry, a second letter of inquiry shall be addressed to the officer giving notice of the specific charges of nonfeasance or malfeasance and giving an opportunity to answer these charges.

Section 3: Manner of Delivery
Each letter of inquiry shall be delivered in person or by mail.

Section 4: Removal from Office
Upon the affirmative vote of a majority of officers then in office, the Chairperson shall address a letter to such officers advising them of their failure of performance of assumed and assigned duties, and notifying them of their removal from office. Any communications regarding a removal of any officer will be the responsibility of the Chairperson, unless Section 5 of this Article is called into effect.
Section 5: Removal from Office of Chairperson
In the event the President is the officer who has failed to properly perform the duties of his/her office, the Vice-President shall be responsible for following the procedures outlined in Sections 1 and 4 of this Article.

Section 6: Appeal to membership
Anyone removed under the provisions of this Article has the right to appeal to the general membership for reinstatement. Such appeals shall be conducted according to the following procedure:

a. Notice of desire to appeal must be given in writing to a member of the Executive Board no later than a week after removal.

b. When: Appeal shall take place at a special meeting within a week after notice of appeal.

c. Procedure: the appellant shall be granted ten minutes to explain the reasons for his/her removal. The Executive Board shall then appoint someone to explain the reasons for removal. This shall be followed by a period of questions and answers.

d. Reinstatement: Appellant shall be reinstated by a 2/3 vote. Such vote shall be a secret ballot counted by an ad-hoc committee that shall be composed of one representative from each class selected by consensus of those present. Such representatives cannot be members of the Executive Board. Only members of LLSA who have paid their dues as of the date of mailing of the second letter of inquiry shall be eligible to vote for the reinstatement.

Article IX: Adoption and Amendments of Constitution And Adoption of Resolutions

Section 1: Adoption and Effective Date of this Constitution
The Constitution shall be adopted by a 2/3 vote of members present at the Constitutional Convention and shall become effective immediately subject to exceptions taken by the Senate.

Section 2: Amendment of the Constitution
a. Proposed amendments must be submitted to the Executive board in writing at least seven (7) school days prior to consideration by membership. The Executive Board then has the responsibility to distribute copies of the proposed amendments to the members at least four (4) school days before consideration. Notice of the date of consideration shall also be provided.

b. The sponsor(s) of the proposed amendment shall be given at least five minutes to address the members at the meeting, and opportunity shall be provided for questions and answers.
c. Voting: Proposed amendments are ratified by a 2/3 majority vote in favor by the dues-paying membership present at the meeting where the amendments are considered.

Section 3: Adoption of Resolutions
Resolutions as to the opinion or position of the Organization as to any issue of concern to its membership shall be adopted by a majority vote of those present at a general meeting.

Article X: Meetings

Section 1: Notice
The Executive Board shall schedule all meetings and shall strive to provide all members reasonable notice of time and place.

Section 2: Operation
Dignity, fairness and efficiency shall be the governing principles at all LLSA meetings. The President shall preside over all meetings or appoint someone to preside. If necessary, the meetings may be governed by a Robert’s Rules of Order.