



Cornell Law Students Association

CONSTITUTION

LAST REVISED February 26, 2025

Article I – Name of Organization

Section 1. The official name of this organization is the **Cornell Law Students Association**. Campus Activities and University Relations have approved it. The name follows the Cornell University Policy 4.10 on Student Organization Branding.

Section 2. This organization is also called **CLSA**, which will be the official acronym.

Article II –Mission, Purpose, Aims of Organization

Section 1. The purpose of the **Cornell Law Students Association** shall be to promote the general welfare of Cornell Law School students as the student government and student bar association of Cornell Law School.

Section 2. The goals of this organization are to promote fellowship among students, accountability between students and administration, and connections with alumni.

Article III – Membership Requirements and Limitations

Section 1. Membership eligibility.

- a. The organization shall consist of all students enrolled in Cornell Law School.
- b. Any student may voluntarily remove themselves from the organization by emailing an executive board officer or leaving the organization's Campus Groups.
- c. Members of registered student organizations must be registered, matriculated full-time students at their respective Cornell University campuses (i.e., Ithaca, Geneva, NYC Tech). Part-time students, non-matriculated students, students on a leave of absence, or students who are abroad may not serve as officers, e-board, and/or voting members of student organizations. It is the responsibility of the Advisor to collaborate with the President to ensure that all officers are full-time students on their campus. If one of your officers has a change in status that will require them to step down from their position, please contact the Campus Activities Office. General members may be students, faculty, staff, or community members.
- d. **The Cornell Law Students Association** complies with Cornell University Policy 6.4 of Prohibited Bias, Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual and Related Misconduct. This policy is also outlined in the Big Red Guidebook.

Section 2. The Officers reserve the right to remove any member (based on the unanimous decision of the Officers) through the following grounds:

- a. Violation of rules and regulations outlined in the Cornell Student Policies and/or Student Code of Conduct.
- b. Failure to uphold the provisions of the constitution and bylaws.
- c. Does not act in the best interests of the organization and/or is engaged in activity jeopardizing the organization's existence.

Article IV – Student Code of Conduct

Section 1. All members must follow local, state, and federal laws, Cornell University rules, and the organization's constitution at all functions.

Section 2. All members will abide by Cornell University Policies, specifically policy 6.4: Prohibited Bias, Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual and Related Misconduct.

Section 3. In case of a violation and/or an active University investigation, the following are options:

- a. Members involved in an active University investigation may receive a temporary suspension or limited membership as determined by a unanimous decision of the Officers and Advisor.
- b. Members found violating university policy may be permanently removed as members as determined by a unanimous decision of Officers and Advisors.

Section 4. Consistency. This constitution shall be interpreted to be consistent with the Law School Honor Code and the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity.

Section 5. Academic Integrity Hearing Board. This board, described in the Law School's Honor Code, shall have three CLSA members: the President, the Executive Vice President, and the student member of the Academic Standards Committee. If any of the student representatives are unable to participate on the board, they shall designate an appropriate replacement from the CLSA Executive Committee.

Section 6. Duty to Report Serious Violations. Law students have a duty to report serious violations of the above honor codes if the violation is of such a nature that the violating student knowingly allows themselves or others to gain an unethical advantage over their fellow students.

Article V – Executive Board of Officers

Section 1. Elected Executive Committee.

- a. The CLSA's governing body shall be the Executive Committee, which shall consist of:

i. **The Officers**

1. President
2. Executive Vice President
3. Vice President
4. Chief Administrator
5. Treasurer
6. Media Director
7. **External Representative**

ii. **The Class Representatives**

1. Two (2) Third-Year Representatives
2. Two (2) Second-Year Representatives
3. Two (2) First-Year Representatives
4. One (1) LL.M. Representative

Section 2. Authority.

- a. **Derivation:** The Executive Committee derives its authority from the electoral process by which the student body expresses its views.
- b. **Acts:** Act in the name of Cornell Law Students when the Executive Committee considers it advisable to do so.
- c. **Funds.** Receive, manage, and disburse CLSA funds for the benefit of Cornell law students subject to Article VII and the Bylaws.
- d. **Activities:** Plan and execute any activity designed to promote the academic, professional, or social well-being of Cornell law students.
- e. **Construction:** The above sections shall not be construed as limiting the right of any student(s) to initiate recommendations.

Section 3. President. The President shall:

- a. have the authority and responsibility for the execution of this Constitution and for the supervision of all activities undertaken by the CLSA
- b. ensure that the Cornell Law Students Association's activities and members follow all Cornell University policies.
- c. call and preside over Executive Committee meetings;
- d. set the agenda for Executive Committee meetings and distribute copies to Executive Committee members before each meeting, provided, however, that any Executive Committee member may bring up an issue not on the agenda;
- e. serve as CLSA liaison officer between the CLSA and the Law School administration and the university community;
- f. appoint student members to faculty committees, CLSA committees and positions with the Executive Committee's consent;

- g. appoint two (2) additional GPSA Representatives to represent the law school;
- h. have the power to remove presidential appointees for cause with the Executive Committee's consent;
- i. help the Executive Vice President and Treasurer form a calendar of activities and budget;
- j. serve on the Academic Integrity Hearing Board;
- k. serve as Student Bar Association President to the ABA;
- l. furnish the Chief Administrator with a copy of all correspondence made on behalf of the Executive Committee or the CLSA;
- m. take any other action necessary and proper to perform the foregoing; and
- n. commit to serve for one (1) year on campus, barring any unforeseen circumstances.

Section 4. Executive Vice President. The Executive Vice President shall:

- a. perform the responsibility of assisting the President;
- b. ensure that all the organization's activities and members follow all Cornell University policies.
- c. perform the President's duties in the President's absence and with the President's consent;
- d. succeed to the office of President for the remaining portion of any unexpired term if that office should become vacant;
- e. help the President and Treasurer form a calendar of activities and budget;
- f. foster student contact with Cornell Law School alumni;
- g. serve on the Academic Integrity Hearing Board;
- h. furnish the Chief Administrator with a copy of all correspondence made on behalf of the Executive Committee or the CLSA;
- i. perform any other duties that the President may delegate; and
- j. take any other action necessary and proper to perform the foregoing.

Section 5. Vice President. The Vice President shall:

- a. represent the CLSA's best interests to the American Bar Association by serving as Cornell Law School's ABA Representative;
- b. submit a written report following attendance at American Bar Association Functions;
- c. actively foster student involvement with the ABA and other professional associations;
- d. furnish the Chief Administrator with a copy of all correspondence made on behalf of the Executive Committee or the CLSA;
- e. perform any other duties that the President may delegate; and

- f. take any other action necessary and proper to perform the foregoing.

Section 6. Chief Administrator. The Chief Administrator shall:

- a. notify each Executive Committee member of forthcoming Executive Committee meetings pursuant to Article VIII §8;
- b. notify the students of each forthcoming Executive Committee meeting by posting a notice on the student event listserv;
- c. record the minutes and maintain a record of attendance of all Executive Committee meetings;
- d. distribute minutes to the Executive Committee after each meeting;
- e. make minutes and records of the Chief Administrator available to any CLSA member upon request or to any others upon the President's request;
- f. prepare the general correspondence of the CLSA and the Executive Committee;
- g. maintain a current record of telephone numbers of all Executive Committee members;
- h. maintain files of all records of the CLSA and its committees;
- i. maintain a roster of the presidents and treasurers of all organizations receiving funds from the Executive Committee;
- j. maintain a record of all votes;
- k. maintain current copies of the CLSA Constitution and Bylaws;
- l. obtain timely reports from all CLSA committees and Appointees;
- m. create, manage and update an event e-calendar for all upcoming CLSA events;
- n. make the event calendar available to the Executive Committee and all CLSA members;
- o. upkeep, restock, and organize the joint student organization space;
- p. upkeep, restock, and organize the CLSA office; and
- q. conduct an accounting of the supplies kept in the CLSA office and keep an updated record; and
- r. perform any other duties that the President may delegate.

Section 7. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall:

- a. serve as CLSA comptroller;
- b. help the President and Executive Vice President form a calendar of activities and budget;
- c. supervise and advise the Executive Committee on funding for all CLSA events prior to the Executive Committee funding vote;
- d. collect all monies due the CLSA;
- e. provide for a safekeeping of all CLSA money;
- f. disburse CLSA funds when authorized to do so;
- g. handle all reimbursements, payment requests, and receipts;

- h. keep complete written records of all revenues and expenditures according to standard accounting principles and current administrative guidance;
- i. organize and maintain archival files for all matters related to finances, including allocation summaries and reports of CLSA expenditures for recent years;
- j. submit a financial status report in writing to the Executive Committee at the start of each semester and at any other time the Executive Committee shall deem it necessary;
- k. inform and advise all recognized law student organizations regarding their budgets and other sources of funding that may be available to them;
- l. facilitate and oversee decision making for any funding applications made by recognized law student organizations to the CLSA;
- m. maintain a log of all funding applications made to the CLSA and the CLSA's funding decision;
- n. furnish the Chief Administrator with a copy of all correspondence made on behalf of the Executive Committee or the CLSA;
- o. perform any other duties that the President may delegate; and
- p. take any other action necessary and proper to perform the foregoing.

Section 8. Media Director. The Media Director shall:

- a. ensure that the CLSA Constitution and Bylaws are available on the CLSA website;
- b. regularly maintain the CLSA website and social media channels;
- c. ensure that all CLSA elections are publicized on the CLSA website and/or social media channels;
- d. perform any other duties that the President may delegate; and
- e. take any other action necessary and proper to perform the foregoing.

Section 9. External Representative. The External Representative shall:

- a. represent the law school at regular meetings of the GPSA;
- b. serve as a liaison between the law school and the graduate student community as a whole;
- c. report on a weekly basis to the CLSA Executive Committee as to developments in the GPSA and the graduate student community as whole;
- d. furnish the Chief Administrator with a copy of all correspondence made on behalf of the Executive Committee or the CLSA;
- e. perform such other duties as the President may delegate; and
- f. take any other action necessary and proper to perform the foregoing.

Section 10. Third Year Representatives. The Third Year Representatives shall:

- a. regularly contact various members of the third year class to encourage participation in

- upcoming CLSA events and solicit suggestions related to the function of CLSA;
- b. furnish the Chief Administrator with a copy of all correspondence made on behalf of the Executive Committee or the CLSA;
- c. perform such other duties as the President may delegate; and
- d. take any other action necessary and proper to perform the foregoing.

Section 11. Second Year Representatives. The Second Year Representatives shall:

- a. regularly contact various members of the second year class to encourage participation in upcoming CLSA events and solicit suggestions related to the function of CLSA;
- b. furnish the Chief Administrator with a copy of all correspondence made on behalf of the Executive Committee or the CLSA;
- c. perform such other duties as the President may delegate; and
- d. take any other action necessary and proper to perform the foregoing.

Section 12. First Year Representatives. The First Year Representatives shall:

- a. regularly contact various members of the first year class to encourage participation in upcoming CLSA events and solicit suggestions related to the function of CLSA;
- b. furnish the Chief Administrator with a copy of all correspondence made on behalf of the Executive Committee or the CLSA;
- c. perform such other duties as the President may delegate; and
- d. take any other action necessary and proper to perform the foregoing.

Section 13. LL.M. Representative. The LL.M. Representatives shall:

- a. seek to involve all non-J.D. candidates in the Law School community, encourage participation in upcoming CLSA events, and solicit suggestions related to the function of CLSA;
- b. furnish the Chief Administrator with a copy of all correspondence made on behalf of the Executive Committee or the CLSA;
- c. perform such other duties as the President may delegate; and
- d. take any other action necessary and proper to perform the foregoing.

Section 14. Term of Service.

- a. **Length:** Each Executive Committee member's term shall last until the day of the Law School Convocation which follows the next General Election.
- b. **Transition:** Following the General Election, the incumbent Executive Committee shall be responsible for the preparation and training of the Executive Committee-elect and may grant Committee members-elect duties as prudent to facilitate a smoother transition.
- c. **Consecutive Terms:** An Executive Committee member may serve consecutive terms,

provided that they do not hold a specific position as Officer for more than **five** semesters.

- d. **Concurrent Terms:** No Executive Committee member shall hold concurrent CLSA-elected offices.
- e. **Grounds for Removal:** Grounds for removal of an officer include:
 - i. violation of rules and regulations outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.
 - ii. failure to uphold the provisions of the constitution and bylaws.

Section 15. Responsibilities.

- a. Both elected and appointed officers shall be responsible for their duties as listed in this constitution.
- b. Each officer shall also establish and maintain a working relationship with the General Membership, Executive Committee, and all other officers, advisors, chairs, committees, and staff necessary to perform their duties.

Section 16. Transitions.

- a. Each officer shall maintain a record of their position, including budgets and activities of the office, to provide to incoming officers following elections.
- b. Outgoing officers shall also make every effort to assist in the transition process, including helping to ensure that incoming officers are aware of their responsibilities.

Article VI – Elections

Section 1. Voter Eligibility.

- a. All CLSA members may vote in any CLSA election, except that only members of each class may vote for their respective Class Representatives.

Section 2. Candidate Eligibility. Each candidate for an Executive Committee member position must comply with the following:

- a. Completion of at least one semester at Cornell Law School, except First Year Representative and LL.M. Representative candidates who must be enrolled in their first semester.
- b. Attainment of at least twenty-five (25) signatures on a CLSA nominating petition for that office, except those running for LL.M. Representative as LL.M Association President. Students may sign more than one petition, providing their signature is valid. A signature is valid if the signing student is qualified to vote for the candidate in the election.
- c. Compliance with all election rules in the Bylaws.
- d. If only one candidate qualifies as eligible by the deadline for nominating petitions, that person's name shall nevertheless appear on the ballot.

Section 3. Election Subcommittee:

- a. **Organization.** The Election Subcommittee shall consist of the CLSA Officers as defined in Article V, Section 1(a)(i). Those Officers shall elect an Election Commissioner from among them.
- b. **Duties.** The Election Subcommittee shall conduct all CLSA elections and any other elections in the law school that the Executive Committee authorizes. The Subcommittee shall promulgate election regulations subject to Executive Committee approval, certify candidates, supervise balloting, certify the election results, and hear and resolve any election disputes by majority vote. After a full hearing, the Election Subcommittee may award such sanctions as it seems appropriate, including disqualifying the offender(s) and voiding the election result(s).
- c. **Recusal.** Any Election Subcommittee member who is a candidate for an Executive Committee position shall not serve on the Subcommittee.

Section 4. Notice of Election

- a. **Timing.** The Election Subcommittee shall give notice to the student body of any CLSA election at least ten (10) days before any election.
- b. **Contents.** The notice shall include:
 - i. The date of the election
 - ii. The dates for circulation of the nominating petitions if the election is for an Executive Committee position.
 - iii. The location where students may obtain nominating petitions and copies of the CLSA Constitution and Bylaws if the election is for an Executive Committee position.
- c. **Date of Election.**
 - i. General Election. The election of all Officers, and Second and Third year Representatives shall take place in February as specified by the Election Subcommittee.
 - ii. Secondary Elections. First Year Representatives and the LL.M. Representative Elections shall take place in September.
 - iii. Special Election. An election to fill an Executive Committee mid-term vacancy shall take place when the Executive Committee deems it necessary. If the office of President shall become vacant and if the Executive Vice President chooses not to succeed, the Executive Committee will hold an election to fill the vacant position within ten (10) school days.
- d. **Recall Election.** The Election subcommittee will hold this election within ten (10) school days after one-third of an Executive Committee member's constituency recall the

member by following the procedures in Section 7 of this Article.

Section 5. Ballot Design.

- a. **Order.** All certified candidates shall be listed alphabetically by office.
- b. **Write-ins.** Each position shall have a place for voters who wish to write-in the name of an eligible student.
- c. The portion of the ballot that lists the candidates for Executive Vice President shall include a reminder to the voter that the Executive Vice President shall succeed to the office of President, should the President vacate the office of President.

Section 6. Method of Voting.

- a. **Officer Election.** Each eligible student may cast one vote each for the offices of President, Executive Vice President, Vice President, Chief Administrator, and Treasurer.
- b. **Class Representative Election.** Each eligible student may cast two votes for the positions of Third Year Representative, Second Year Representative and First Year Representative.
- c. **LL.M. Representative Election.** All non-J.D. candidates may cast one vote for the position of LL.M. Representative by way of election of the LL.M. Association President, who shall serve in both roles.
- d. **Secrecy.** All elections shall be by secret ballot.

Section 7. Election Results.

- a. **Elections for President, Executive Vice President, Vice President, Chief Administrator, Treasurer, Media Director, and External Representative:**
 - i. If, on the initial balloting, no candidate receives more than 50% of the votes cast, there shall be a runoff between the top two candidates.
 - ii. In the event of a tie for most votes, there will be a special runoff election.
- b. **Elections for First-Year, Second-Year, and Third-Year Representatives:**
 - i. If the top three (3) candidates obtain 60% or greater of all the votes cast, the two (2) individuals with the most votes will be declared the winners.
 - ii. If the top three (3) candidates receive less than 60% of all the votes cast, there will be a special runoff election between the top three (3) candidates.
 - iii. In the event of a tie between any of these three candidates, there will be a runoff election.
- c. **Recall Election.** The recalled Executive Committee member must vacate their position if three-fourth of those voting support recall.
- d. **Tie.** If a tie exists, the Election Subcommittee will hold a special election between the tied candidates within ten (10) school days.
- e. The results of all elections, including vote tallies for the candidates, shall be available to

any student upon request.

Section 8. *Procedure for Unfilled Elected Positions.*

- a. If no petition is timely filed for an elected position, the newly elected Executive Committee may vote to appoint a qualified student to the vacant position.

Section 9. Removal of Executive Committee Member.

- a. Removal proceedings may be initiated against any Executive Committee member(s) by a petition containing the signatures of at least one-third of that member's constituency. Upon receipt of this petition, the Election Subcommittee (minus any members whom the petition concerns) shall conduct a recall election by following the procedures of Section 4(d) of this Article.

Article VII – Advisor

Section 1. Advisor selection.

- a. Any faculty or staff member at Cornell University capable of corresponding with the university in the official and legal matters of the **Cornell Law Students Association**.
- b. University/Department advisors are assigned by the university/department to oversee an organization.

Section 2. Responsibilities of the advisor:

- a. attend general body and/or executive board meetings when needed;
- b. meet regularly with the organization's President to stay updated and serve as a resource;
- c. assist with the annual registration process; and
- d. assist with the funding process

Section 3. Term of service.

- a. There is no limit to how long the advisor may hold the position subject to the advisor acting in the organization's best interests, does not violate any Cornell University Policies rules and/or Student Code of Conduct, and is not engaged in activity jeopardizing the organization's existence.

Article VIII – Meetings

Section 1. Who May Call. Meetings may be called in one of the following ways:

- a. **Presidential discretion.** The President shall set the date and time of meetings.
- b. **Petition for meeting.** If twenty (20) CLSA members petition the Executive Committee for

a meeting, the President shall call a meeting during the first day the President can obtain a quorum.

Section 2. Setting & Format.

- a. **When.** The President must make a reasonable effort to call meetings at a time when all Executive Committee members can be present.
- b. **Where.** The President shall have discretion to set a reasonable place for the meeting.
- c. **Who may attend.** Any law school community member may attend any meeting.
- d. **Sunshine Provision.** The Executive Committee does not have the right to conduct deliberations or votes in private during weekly, scheduled meetings.

Section 3. Procedure.

- a. The President shall preside over all meetings. In the President's absence or recusal, the Executive Vice President shall preside. If the Executive Vice President is not willing or able to preside, the Executive Committee shall appoint one of its other members to preside.

Section 4. Quorum.

- b. Half of the current members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum.

Section 5. Notice.

- a. **Weekly meetings.** Notice of a meeting shall be given at least 24 hours before that meeting by email to the student event listserv.
- b. **Emergency Meeting.** Oral notice to Executive Committee members shall be sufficient if the President reasonably deems the meeting an emergency meeting.

Section 6. Voting.

- a. **Amendments.** A two-thirds vote of a quorum is required to amend the Bylaws or to propose a Constitutional amendment.
- b. **Other actions.** A majority vote of a quorum is required to approve any other action. If a tie vote occurs, the President's vote will break the tie.
- c. **Public record.** The Chief Administrator shall record the votes of all members on all motions and publish them in the minutes.
- d. **Executive committee action definition.** No members of the Executive Committee shall take any action in the Executive Committee's name unless the Executive Committee duly approved the action. This provision shall not be construed to prohibit any of the Officers, or the Officers collectively, from taking any action in their own name(s) within their constitutional powers.

Article IX – Finances

Section 1. Disbursements. The Executive Committee shall have discretion over disbursements subject to the restrictions in this Constitution and the CLSA Bylaws.

- a. **Who may receive CLSA funding.** The CLSA may fund requests from any law student or group of law students subject to the restrictions of paragraph (d) of this section. This shall not prevent the Executive Committee from requesting funds for outside events deemed worthy of funding.
 - i. **Procedure.** Funding requests are to be presented at the regularly scheduled CLSA meetings. A law student or group of law students may choose to make a presentation, at the conclusion of which, the Executive Committee may ask questions.
 - ii. **Emergency Funding Requests.** A law student or group of law students may submit an emergency funding request to the Treasurer, who will transmit it to the Executive Committee to be voted upon. This mode of request may not be abused.
- b. **Pecuniary Gain Prohibition.** Executive Committee members shall not receive any wages or salary from the CLSA for their work. However, the CLSA can compensate an Executive Committee member for reasonable and necessary expenditures made on the CLSA's behalf.
- c. **Authority.** All CLSA expenditures must be authorized in the following way:
 - i. The Executive Committee may approve an expenditure by a majority vote of those present at a meeting held in advance of the disbursement.
 - ii. **Balanced Budget.** Neither the Executive Committee nor the Officers can authorize an expenditure that would exceed the CLSA's available funds.
- d. **Non-discriminatory Events.** The CLSA shall not fund any event that excludes any law school community members for reasons of race, religion, gender, national origin, sexual preference, or any other demonstrable form of discrimination.

Article IX – Amendments and Ratification

Section 1. This constitution shall become effective once uploaded to CampusGroups during the annual re-registration process or once re-uploaded to CampusGroups after amendment as described in Section 3(c) of this article.

Section 2. Proposal. Constitutional amendments may be proposed in the following ways:

- a. **Executive Committee.** The Executive Committee can propose an amendment by a two-

thirds vote of the Executive Committee, at which time the amendment shall become effective until permanently ratified or rejected by referendum as described in Section 3(a) of this Article or referendum held at the end of semester during which the amendment is implemented.

- b. **Petition.** Members of the student body can propose an amendment by submitting a petition containing the signatures of 25% of the student body.
- c. **Minor Changes.** Changes related to organization, grammar, consistency, and clarity of the Constitution and the Bylaws can be made by the Chief Administrator at any time upon a two-thirds vote from the Executive Committee.

Section 3. Ratification.

- a. Ratification of a proposed amendment requires a two-thirds vote of those cast in a referendum during an election for at least one Officer position.
- b. The constitution on file in CampusGroups is uploaded annually during the re-registration process and is valid until amendments are made.
- c. Any changes to the constitution must be shared with Campus Activities as a revised constitution for review.
- d. **Effect.** None of the Constitutional provisions shall have any retroactive effect.

Section 4. Constitutional Disputes.

- a. The Executive Committee will serve as the final arbiter of any disputes about the interpretation of this Constitution.