

# LAW SCHOOL STUDENT CHAPTER GUIDEBOOK



**Federal Bar  
Association**

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# I. WHAT IS THE FEDERAL BAR ASSOCIATION (“FBA”)?

The mission of the FBA is to strengthen the federal legal system and administration of justice by serving the interests and the needs of law students, federal practitioners, both public and private, the federal judiciary and the public.

The FBA includes more than 18,000 members—including 1,500 federal judges—and serves as the catalyst between the bar and the bench, as well as the private and public sectors, working together to promote the sound administration of justice and the integrity, quality, and independence of the judiciary. The FBA also provides opportunities for scholarships and allows judges, lawyers and law students to interact professionally and socially.

For more information on the FBA, please visit: [www.fedbar.org/About-Us.aspx](http://www.fedbar.org/About-Us.aspx)

FBA National administers the association nationally and provides resources to the local chapters as well as to the members of its 23 sections and 6 divisions. In addition, FBA National sponsors a variety of programs and conferences for its full membership throughout the year, including its Annual Convention, Leadership Summit and the Younger Lawyers Division Thurgood Marshall Moot Court Competition.

The purposes of the Law School Student Chapter shall be to further the objectives of the FBA, to represent the FBA to law students, and to stimulate the interest of law students in the activities of the FBA.

# II. WHY THE FBA?

There are several reasons why individuals join the FBA. It is a national organization with chapters across the country and in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. As such, the organization has a strong national presence and reputation, in addition to the tremendous work done at the local chapter level. Moreover, the FBA has 30 sections and divisions focused on specific areas of federal law, which could be very valuable to law students interested in learning more about a specific area of law. For more information on the FBA’s sections and divisions, see <https://www.fedbar.org/membership/sectionsdivisions/>

Membership in the FBA also provides excellent networking opportunities with private employers, the federal government, and clerkship opportunities with federal judges. There are a variety of events open to law students, such as the Younger Lawyers Division Thurgood Marshall Memorial Moot Court Competition, Leadership Summit, Annual Meeting & Convention, all national conferences and webinars, as well as scholarship opportunities. FBA members and Law School Student Chapters also have access to great speakers for law school events.

The FBA also monitors and often advocates on federal issues that impact the practice of federal lawyers and courts. The FBA keeps its members abreast of current federal issues, and promotes high standards of professional competence and ethical conduct.

### III. ORGANIZING AN FBA LAW SCHOOL STUDENT CHAPTER

The FBA Law School Student Chapter at your school should be organized and led in a manner consistent with other student organizations at your law school. For guidelines on how FBA Law School Student Chapters could be organized, please see **Appendix A** (found on page 8).

One of the keys to a successful entity within the FBA is the establishment of a stable leadership ladder. The purpose of the leadership ladder is to identify both current and future leaders in the organization. Establishing a leadership ladder ensures that the organization will have stability, as the leaders will learn each aspect of the organization as they advance through the leadership ladder.

In establishing a leadership ladder, it is important to select individuals who have a future vision for the organization, and are willing to do the work necessary for the organization to succeed.

### IV. SUPPORT FROM YOUR SCHOOL IS ESSENTIAL

#### **Look for a Mentor, Dean of the School, etc.**

Advisor within the Law School: Law School Student Chapter must have an advisor within the Law School. An advisor is not only helpful in the formation of the Law School Student Chapter but may also be necessary if the Law School Student Chapter is interested in obtaining funding from the Law School or larger University, where appropriate. There are several steps that you might take to identify a potential advisor.

First, you should contact your Dean of Students or the law school administrator responsible for law student organizations to inform that individual of your desire to start a Law School Student Chapter and the need for an advisor. It is likely that an advisor will be assigned to you by the Law School.

You may also consider directly approaching a faculty member to request that he or she advise the new organization. In deciding which faculty member to approach, you might consider focusing on faculty who teach topics related to federal law. The FBA has numerous sections that focus on specific areas of federal law. A list of the sections is available on the FBA website at [www.fedbar.org](http://www.fedbar.org). You may want to review the

list of FBA sections and target faculty members who teach subjects related to sections represented within the FBA. Making this connection between faculty members' teaching interests and FBA sections will likely increase the faculty member's interest in mentoring/advising the Law School Student Chapter, as the faculty member has a pre-existing interest in that subject matter.

If the above steps are unsuccessful, the next step in finding an advisor for your Law School Student Chapter is to contact the FBA National Office. The FBA National Office staff can assist you in identifying someone in your state who may be associated with your Law School, such as an administrator, faculty member or adjunct faculty member.

Please note that once an advisor is identified, the FBA national office should be notified, as the advisor will receive a free FBA associate membership.

## **V. SUPPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY, NATIONAL LAW STUDENT DIVISION BOARD, AND LOCAL CHAPTER LEADERS**

In addition to having an advisor within the Law School, it can also be helpful to have a mentor(s) outside of the Law School to help guide the Law School Student Chapter in its organization and events. It may be helpful to reach out to local FBA Chapter leaders.

One of the main benefits of law students forming a Law School Student Chapter is the opportunity for the students to interact and network with federal judges and practitioners. To that end, it is very important that the Law School Student Chapter Leadership coordinates with its local Professional Chapter President to maximize these opportunities.

To find out whether there is a chapter within your town or region, a list of existing FBA professional chapters is located on the FBA website at <https://www.fedbar.org/membership/chapters/>. Once you identify a professional chapter close to your Law School, you should e-mail [students@fedbar.org](mailto:students@fedbar.org) to request assistance and to inform FBA National Headquarters of your Law School Student Chapters formation. National Headquarters will connect you with your Local Professional Chapter to help supervise your Law School Student Chapter.

The student should ask the local Professional Chapter President whether he or she may attend an upcoming meeting of the local chapter and be put on the agenda for the meeting. (Alternatively, if it is a very large board, the student might suggest attending an Executive Committee meeting of the local FBA Chapter or reach out to the local Younger Lawyers Division chair).

At the general board meeting or Executive Committee meeting, the student can meet some of the board members of the local FBA Chapter and explain the reasons why the student wants to form an FBA Law School Student Chapter. Then the student can receive feedback from local FBA Professional Chapter board members on how the local FBA chapter and Law School Student Chapter might be able to support one another. Additionally, a subcommittee could be formed to plan a kick-off event for the FBA Law School Student Chapter. The subcommittee should contain student members and local FBA Chapter members.

With respect to a kick-off event, there are a few options for what the event may look like. One option is to have the event at the law school and invite local Professional Chapter members to attend. Perhaps one of the local federal judges might be willing to speak at the event to attract both students and FBA members to attend. Alternatively, if the Law School Student Chapter wants to have an event outside of the law school (e.g. in a downtown space that might attract more practitioners or at the federal courthouse to attract more judges), then the students might coordinate with the local Professional Chapter to host a joint event off-campus. Regarding an off-campus event, if the Law School Student Chapter plans to receive funding from the law school, the student should be sure to check in with the advisor and the law school to ensure this does not violate any student group code of conduct, etc.

Following the kick-off event, the members of the Law School Student Chapter should continue to attend local FBA Chapter events. The Law School Student Chapter Leadership should ensure that its members are added to the local Professional Chapter's listserv and newsletter, so they are aware of upcoming events. The FBA Law School Student Chapter Leadership should also consider sending a delegate to the monthly local Professional Chapter meetings who reports back to the Law School Student Chapter on developments in the local federal bar.

In addition to reaching out to local FBA chapters, you should also work closely with the FBA National Law Student Chapter Board Members and FBA National staff in establishing and growing your Law Student Chapter.

## VI. CONTACT THE NATIONAL FBA

FBA National maintains a website at [www.fedbar.org](http://www.fedbar.org) to provide its members and the public with information on the organization and its mission. The website is a great resource and is a good starting point for law students to explore the benefits of FBA membership. Law student members of the FBA are encouraged to reach out to FBA National staff at [students@fedbar.org](mailto:students@fedbar.org) and to participate in programs sponsored both on the national and chapter levels. FBA National realizes that its law student members are tomorrow's lawyers and wants to encourage their active involvement and participation in its programs. Once the FBA Law Student Chapter is established at a law school, its members are encouraged to contact their local chapter and submit an Agreement Form online (<https://www.fedbar.org/law-school-student-chapter-agreement/>) so they may experience the benefits of the FBA.

## VII. FINANCES

Your FBA Law School Student Chapter should handle its finances in a manner that is consistent with the rules for finances for other student organizations at the law school. This may mean that your Chapter will need your own Law School Student Chapter bank account, so that you can make division related deposits and payments. In establishing your bank account, consider having someone with some institutional permanence, such as a faculty member, on the bank account so that the Law School Student Chapter will always have access to the funds even if graduating members fail to properly turn over the account.

## VIII. PLAN ACTIVITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Below is some information on events that have been hosted in conjunction with Law school Student Chapters and Professional Chapters. You may want to try some of these activities within your Law School Student Chapter.

- The New Orleans Chapter sponsored a panel discussion of United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit law clerks for law students at Tulane University Law School. The event followed a special sitting of the Fifth Circuit at Tulane. The Honorable Kurt Engelhardt of the Eastern District of Louisiana, a past New Orleans Chapter President, moderated the panel and provided introductory remarks about the FBA and the value of student membership in the FBA. The event was promoted to the students and the law school community as sponsored by the New Orleans Chapter of the FBA.
- The Oregon Chapter of the Federal Bar Association (OR-FBA) hosted a networking mixer with law students to kick off the launch of the FBA Law Student Chapter at Lewis & Clark Law School. The keynote speaker was Hon. Michael Simon of the U.S. District Court of Oregon. Judge Simon shared his thoughts about his first year on the bench and tips for learning new areas of the law. A representative from the Oregon Chapter of the FBA also spoke to discuss the benefits and networking opportunities of the organization. The event was held at the law school and students, judges, practicing lawyers, court staff and faculty were in attendance.
- The Minnesota Chapter of the FBA hosts an Annual Law School Reception, which recognizes the work and activities of the four law school chapters in Minnesota, the Minnesota Chapter's Law School Outreach Committee, and the Minnesota Chapter at large. Law students are very enthusiastic about the FBA, and many who have attended receptions in the past have gone on to lead their state division or serve in their respective Law School Student Chapter

## IX. MEMBERSHIP

Any person enrolled as a student at any law school who is willing to support the purposes and objectives of the FBA, and who remains in good standing in law school, is qualified for membership. This organization does not discriminate based upon race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, physical impairment, national or ethnic origin, or age.

## APPENDIX A

Below is suggested language to incorporate into documents as you organize and develop your FBA Law Student Chapter and to assist in the establishment of a leadership ladder. It may be helpful to utilize similar language in establishing your Law School Student Chapter and filling these leadership positions. In addition to the positions listed below, it may also be useful for your Law School Student Chapter to have one or two people on your leadership ladder who are responsible for serving as a liaison(s) to the National Law Student Division, National Younger Lawyers Division, or any local FBA chapters in the area.

### ARTICLE I. Officers

**Section 1. Elected Officers.** The officers shall be elected from the membership of this Chapter and shall be as follows and in the order named:

1. President
2. Vice President
3. Secretary
4. Treasurer
5. Membership Chair\*
6. National Liaison\*

Each officer elected shall assume the duties of office immediately following elections and shall hold office until the subsequent election, or until a successor be duly elected. Each officer shall serve a term of no more than three consecutive years. \*The offices of Membership Chair and National Liaison shall be appointed by the President.

**Section 2. Executive Committee.** The Executive Committee shall consist of the elected officers of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, the Membership Chair, and the National Liaison, as well as the advisor to the Law Student Chapter, and the respective National FBA Law Student Division Board Member for their Circuit (ex-officio). The Executive Committee shall meet on the call of the President or any two of its members after providing two (2) days notice. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the Executive Committee members. The Executive Committee may perform such Chapter business, not requiring a vote of the membership, as shall be in the best interests of the Association and the Law School Student Chapter.

### **Section 3. Duties of Officers.**

(a) President. The President shall be the chief executive officer of this Chapter and shall perform such duties as may be required by the Law School and these bylaws and shall appoint standing or special committees as necessary and appropriate to the Chapter business. The President shall represent the Law School Student Chapter at all local and national events and meetings, and shall make an effort to ensure that a representative be present when he/she is unavailable.

(b) Vice President. The Vice President shall perform the duties of the President in the event of the absence or inability of the President to discharge the duties pertaining to that office, and shall perform such duties as may be required by the President.

(c) Secretary. The Secretary shall furnish notice of election results to the Law School Student Chapter members and to the National FBA office; conduct the general correspondence of the Chapter and officers and membership informed; give notice of all meetings as may be required by Article VI hereto; keep a record of the proceedings of the meetings of this Law School Student Chapter; keep a roster of the membership; act as parliamentarian; and perform such other duties as properly pertain to this office.

(d) Treasurer. The Treasurer shall collect and receive all monies due to the Law School Student Chapter; maintain Law School Student Chapter deposits in such bank or banks as may be designated by it; make disbursements therefrom only as authorized by two officers of the Law Student Chapter or a majority vote of the active members present at any Chapter meeting; and keep the Secretary informed of the financial standing of the Law School Student Chapter. The Treasurer shall keep an itemized record of all monies received and disbursed by or to whom paid and for what purpose, and shall submit to the Chapter membership, when requested and at the end of the fiscal year, a report in writing itemizing the receipts and disbursements for the year. The Treasurer shall keep all books, vouchers and records available for audit and he shall perform such other duties as properly pertain to the office.

(e) Membership Chair. The Membership chair shall be charged with the duty of working with the President to formulate a membership plan for the academic year and executing said plan. An illustrative list of responsibilities includes but is not limited to: managing membership spreadsheets, taking and recording attendance at general membership meetings, promoting Law Student memberships, assisting with membership applications, distributing membership information, and managing membership information table at organization fairs and other events.

(f) National Liaison. The National Liaison shall serve as the liaison between the Law School Student Chapter and the National FBA Law Student Division Board. The National Liaison shall regularly follow up with the National FBA Law Student Division Board Member assigned to their Circuit and report back to the membership any news or updates. The National Liaison shall perform such other duties as properly pertain to this office.

### **Section 4. Nominations.**

(a) Nominations. The Nominations and Elections Committee shall be appointed by the President and shall be charged with the duty of calling for nominations and presenting such slate of candidates to the general division membership via mail or email. Additionally, nomination of candidates for the elective offices of this Law School Student Chapter may be made by any member under the guidelines and dates set out by the Nominations and Elections Committee.

(b) Eligibility. All active members of the Law School Student Chapter at the time of appointment, whose dues are paid for the current fiscal year and who otherwise are in academic good standing, and meet all other qualifications, as may be required, shall be eligible for any office in the Chapter.

**Section 5. Elections.** The election of officers for all elective officers shall be by secret ballot, electronic vote, or by voice vote if there is no objection. The officers elected shall commence their term of office immediately following the election and shall hold office until the following election. Each Law School Student Chapter is responsible for holding elections in compliance with its bylaws no later than 30 days before the end of the school year for the following school year.

The outgoing officers shall meet with the incoming officers within one week of elections or as soon as scheduling allows to brief incoming officers on policies and procedure. It is the outgoing officers' duty to ensure a seamless transition between terms.

### **Section 6. Removal From Officers**

(a) Removal From Office. An officer may be removed from office for delinquency in attendance, inefficiency, neglect of duty, lack of academic good standing, or for other causes only upon a three fourths vote of members voting at a meeting called for such purpose by the Executive Committee.

(b) Removal for Lack of Academic Good Standing. Removal shall be automatic in the event an officer is no longer in academic good standing or has violated a policy or rule of the Law School. It is the duty of the respective officers to inform his fellow officers that he must step down. The advisor of the Law Student Chapter shall be charged with the duty of ensuring good standing of each candidate and standing officer.

### **Section 7. Vacancies of Officers**

In case of death, resignation or removal of the President, the Vice President shall succeed to officers. The position of Vice President shall then be filled by an election by the general membership as soon as an election can be organized pursuant to these Bylaws. In cases of the death, resignation or removal of any other officer, the vacancy will be filled by election by the general membership as soon as an election can be organized under these Bylaws.

### **ARTICLE II. Meetings**

Section 1. The regular meetings of the Chapter shall be held monthly, or as otherwise posted, unless otherwise ordered by the Chapter or by the Executive Committee. These meetings shall be general membership meetings open to any and all members who wish to participate in the meeting.

Section 2. Officers' meetings may be called by the President or by any two (2) Executive Committee Members not enumerated in this section. All meeting must be called in such a way as to give at least two (2) days' notice to all participating members. Officers' meetings are closed and confidential and shall consist of only officers and executive committee members.

Section 3. Special general membership meetings may be called by the President, two (2) members of the Executive Committee, or shall be called upon the written request of ten members of the Chapter. The purpose of the meeting shall be stated in the notice and three days' notice shall be given except in cases of emergency.

Section 4. One third (1/3) of the active membership of the Chapter shall constitute a quorum for conducting official Division business.

Section 5. Voting procedure in all business matters shall follow Robert's Rules of Order.

### **ARTICLE III. Budget**

Section 1. The Executive Committee shall create a budget prior to the start of the academic year or pursuant to the policies of the University and in compliance with the governing student chapter.

Section 2. Officers shall defer to the policies of the university or the rules pertaining to use as required by the source of any potential funding.

### **ARTICLE IV. Relationship**

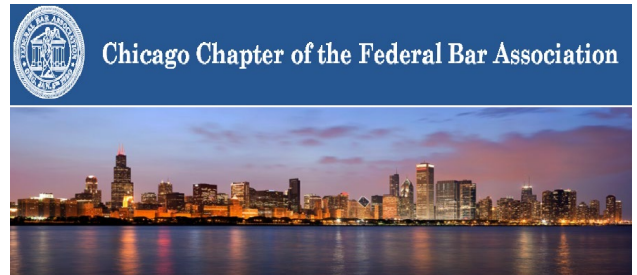
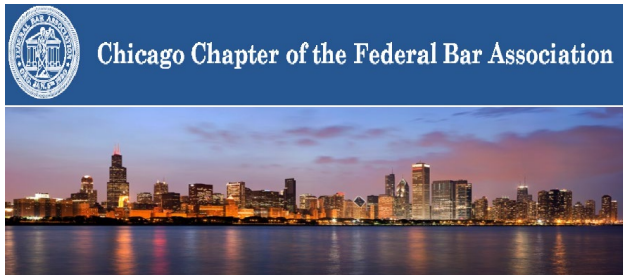
Section 1. The Law School Student Chapter shall be a chapter of the Federal Bar Association Law Student Division.

Section 2. The Law Student Chapter will remain respectful in its actions and programs to the goals, purposes and values of their Law School and will abide by all University policies and procedures.

### **ARTICLE VI. Amendments**

These bylaws may be amended by a simple majority vote of a quorum of the members of the Chapter.

### Sample Law Student Flyer



#### TOP FIVE FBA STUDENT MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

1. Membership in a national organization providing opportunities to meet and interact with lawyers who practice in the federal courts and to meet federal judges who participate in FBA functions.
2. Collegiality - Members create lasting relationships outside of adversarial settings and contribute to the profession and the community.
3. Opportunities to learn the practical aspects of federal court practice. Our continuing legal education (CLE) events are offered to law students at sharply discounted rates or for free and are taught by federal judges and experienced federal court practitioners.
4. Opportunities to attend programs of social and public interest. Recent and upcoming programs, offered for free to members, have commemorated Gideon v. Wainwright (right to counsel), the Voting Rights Act, and Miranda v. Arizona.
5. Have fun! Members socialize, network, and enjoy each other's company (and that of other FBA members) at a variety of events throughout the year, including our membership appreciation movie night.

To join the FBA, go to <http://www.fedbarchicago.org/membership/>

#### LAW STUDENTS ENJOY Free Membership to the FBA

1st year student:*	Free!
2nd year student:*	Free!
3rd year student:*	Free!
One-year-only option:	Free!

**\*Membership includes:  
(1) Your time in law school, plus (2) the first year after you graduate**