CONSTITUTION OF THE COLUMBIA NATIVE AMERICAN LAW STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Preamble

We, the Native Students of the Columbia University School of Law, acknowledge the need to assume a proactive role in the development of the Native American Legal Community, articulate and promote the needs of Native Law Students, increase the degree of professionalism among Native attorneys, encourage and prepare Native Secondary and Collegiate students for higher education, and increase the awareness of and a commitment to the needs of the Native Community as a whole, and do hereby establish the Constitution of the Columbia Native American Law Students Association.

The purpose of the Columbia Native American Law Students Association shall be to: articulate and promote the professional needs and goals of Native Law Students; foster and encourage professional competence; focus upon the relationship of the Native American Law Student and the Native American Attorney to the American legal structure; instill in the Native American Attorney and Law Student a greater awareness and commitment to the needs of the Native American community; influence the legal community to bring about meaningful change to meet the needs of the Native American community; adopt and implement a policy of economic independence; encourage Native Law Students to pursue careers in the judiciary; and do all things necessary and appropriate to accomplish these purposes.

ARTICLE I
Name

This organization shall be known as the Columbia Native American Law Students Association, hereinafter referred to as NALSA.

ARTICLE II
Affiliation

NALSA is a member chapter of the National Native American Law Students Association, Incorporated.

ARTICLE III
Membership

Section 1: Eligibility for Membership

All law students currently matriculated at Columbia University School of Law shall be eligible for chapter membership.

Section 2: Classification of Membership

1. Active membership of NALSA shall consist of dues-paying law students currently registered and attending Columbia University School of Law on a full or part-time basis having demonstrated a substantial prior
commitment to the development of the Native American legal community. Active membership may be conferred at any time by payment of dues.

**Nondiscrimination Policy.** Membership and leadership shall be open to all Columbia Law School students without regard to race, ethnicity, color, national origin, age, handicap or disability, sex, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, political affiliation, or the general exercise of a student’s right of free speech or association. Any group which selects a team to participate in an organized competitive activity is deemed to have a membership and leadership which is open to the entire student body so long as all students are allowed to apply or tryout for membership on the team.

2. **Inactive membership of NALSA shall consist of:**

   1. Non-dues paying NALSA law students currently registered and attending Columbia University School of Law on a full or part-time basis after attendance at least one general body meeting of NALSA; and

   2. Native and Non-Native law students matriculated but not currently registered or attending Columbia University School of Law.

Section 3: **Duties of Membership**

1. Regular participation in the activities of NALSA shall be incumbent upon each chapter member.

2. The dues-paying obligation of active members may be waived if a chapter member is unable to meet this requirement due to extenuating circumstances. The Executive Board shall make such determination.

3. Continuous commitment to the development of the Native legal community is incumbent upon each member.

Section 4: **Rights of Membership**

1. Only active members shall be entitled to all privileges of NALSA, including, without limitation, the privileges of voting, holding office, nominating a candidate for elected office, removing a member of the Executive Board and ratifying and amending this Constitution.
Section 5: Residual Rights

All powers not specifically delegated by this Constitution shall be reserved to the chapter membership.

ARTICLE IV

Officers

Section 1: Eligibility of Officers.

Persons eligible to hold office in NALSA must be active members and in good academic standing, pursuant to the guidelines of Columbia University School of Law.

Section 2: Classification of Officers

The NALSA officers shall be: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, First Year Representative.

Section 3: Executive Board

The Executive Board shall be comprised of the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Section 4: Term of Office

The term of office for each office shall be one year.

Section 5: Duties of Officers

The officers shall perform the following duties and all others necessary for the efficient functioning of NALSA and the Executive Board.

1. President: The President shall be the representative and spokesperson of NALSA. The President shall have ultimate responsibility for all activities and funds of NALSA. The President shall chair all meetings of the Executive Board and the chapter membership.
2. Vice President: The Vice President shall have responsibility for all committees of NALSA. In the event of the incapacity, absence or removal of the President, the Vice President shall assume the responsibilities of the President. The Vice President shall assist the President and other officers with any responsibilities as needed.

3. Secretary: The Secretary shall be responsible for maintaining records and correspondence of NALSA. The Secretary shall be responsible for the maintenance and distribution of minutes, agendas and announcements of meetings of the Executive Board and the chapter membership. The Secretary shall assist the President and other officers with any responsibilities as needed.

4. Treasurer: The Treasurer shall be responsible for the maintenance of all finances and overseeing and coordinating fund-raising activities of NALSA. The Treasurer shall be responsible for signing all checks issued by NALSA. The Treasurer shall also make monthly financial reports to the Executive Board and the chapter membership. The Treasurer shall assist the Chairperson and other officers with any responsibilities as needed.

5. First Year Representative: The First Year Representative shall be the representative of the first year class and may attend executive board meetings.

ARTICLE V
Election of Officers

Section 1: Election Committee
1. The Election Committee shall be composed of the Executive Board.

2. The Election Committee shall supply all necessary details for election procedure.

3. The Election Committee shall promulgate any necessary rules pertaining to proxy and absentee voting.

Section 2: Nominations
1. Candidates for all elected positions shall be self-nominated by submission of a written notice of candidacy to the Election Committee during a
nomination period to be determined by the Election Committee.

2. A candidates meeting shall be held following the nomination prior to allow all candidates to make brief statements and answer questions before the chapter membership. The time of this meeting shall be determined by the Election Committee.

3. At the beginning of the candidates meeting, additional candidates may be verbally nominated by active members. This nomination period shall expire before the candidates’ statements are presented.

ARTICLE VII
Governance

Section 1: The Executive Board and First-year Representatives

1. Each Executive Board member and First-year Representative shall have one vote.

2. The Executive Board and First-year Representative shall have the power to implement all programs and administer all business matters concerning NALSA.

3. The Executive Board and First-year Representative shall have the power to create committees as it deems necessary to carry out the objectives of NALSA.

4. The Executive Board and First-year Representative shall declare an office vacant if an officer becomes unable to serve for any reason.

Section 2: Special Powers of the Executive Board

1. The Executive Board shall have the power to appoint the chairperson of all committees.

2. The Executive Board shall train the newly-elected Executive Board members immediately following the election.

ARTICLE VIII
General Body Voting Procedure

Section 1: Quorum
Quorum shall consist of one-half of the active members of NALSA and shall be required for all votes.

Section 2: Discussion Period
There shall be a debate and discussion period, the length of which is to be determined by the presiding officer, on the date the vote is taken. Active members may move to call the question at any time during this period.

Section 3: NALSA Statements
Proposals for official NALSA statements to be released to the general public, not including general press releases regarding NALSA events, shall require two-thirds of present active members’ votes to pass.

Section 4: Constitutional Amendments
Amendments to this Constitution shall be adopted pursuant to Article IX below.

Section 5: Officer Elections
Officers shall be elected pursuant to Article V above.

Section 6: Other Matters
All other matters to be voted on by the general NALSA body shall require a simple majority of present active members’ votes to pass.

ARTICLE IX
Ratification, Amendments and By-Laws

Section 1: Ratification
This Constitution shall be adopted by a simple majority vote of active members, where there is a quorum consisting of one-half of active members.

Section 2: Amendments
1. This Constitution shall be amended pursuant to a motion receiving a two-
thirds vote of active members present in a meeting with a quorum consisting of one-half of the active membership. Such a motion shall be announced at least two (2) weeks prior to the said meeting in a manner reasonably calculated to notify the active membership.

2. There shall be a debate and discussion period, the length of which is to be determined by the presiding officer, on the date the vote is taken. Active members may move to call the question at any time during this period.

Section 3: By-Laws

This Constitution shall be supplemented with By-Laws. The By-laws shall be adopted by a simple majority vote in a regularly scheduled meeting where there is a quorum consisting of one-half of active members and shall be changed in the same manner.

ARTICLE X
Impeachment

Section 1: Grounds for Impeachment

An elected officer may be impeached for failure to fulfill his or her duties or for grave misconduct.

Section 2: Initiation of Impeachment Procedure

1. The Executive Board may initiate an impeachment proceeding by a simple majority vote.

2. The active membership may initiate an impeachment proceeding by circulating a petition stating the reasons for impeachment, attaining signatures of one-fourth of the active membership and submitting the petition to the Executive Board.

Section 3: Notice

The officer to be impeached shall be given written and verbal notice of impeachment and the reasons therefore within a reasonable time prior to the specially convened meeting referred to in Section 4, Subsection a. of this Article.

Section 4: Impeachment Procedure.

1. The Executive Board shall call a specially convened meeting for the chapter membership to hear the impeachment charge and defense.
2. The highest elected official not involved in the impeachment proceeding shall chair the specially convened meeting.

3. In the event the Executive Board initiates an impeachment proceeding, an Executive Board member, voting for the initiation of such proceeding, shall have an opportunity to present the case for impeachment at the specially-convened meeting.

4. In the event the active membership initiates an impeachment proceeding, a petitioner for the impeachment shall have an opportunity to present the case for impeachment at the specially convened meeting.

5. Any officer being impeached shall have an opportunity to respond to the case for impeachment at the specially convened meeting.

6. A vote for removal shall be held if a quorum consisting of one-half of active members is present.

7. The officer shall be removed if two-thirds of the votes cast are in favor of impeachment.