



**THE MIAMI LAW CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL LAWYERS
GUILD**

SPRING 2012



STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The University of Miami School of Law Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild is an association dedicated to the support and defense of economic and social justice, and to progressive change rather than the acceptance of the status quo.

We seek to educate ourselves and the community about issues affecting economic and social justice, provide law students with pro bono opportunities in support of these goals, and increase awareness of the Miami Law community on issues surrounding economic and social justice.

We seek to unite the lawyers, law students, legal workers, and jailhouse lawyers of America in an organization which shall function as an effective political and social force in the service of the people, to the end that economic and social justice are basic human rights and must be protected and expanded.

CONSTITUTION FOR THE MIAMI LAW NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD

ARTICLE I. NAME

Section 1: The name of the organization shall be the National Lawyers Guild, hereafter referred to as NLG.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE AND GOALS

Section 1: Our aim is to bring together all those who regard economic and social justice as essential to the freedom of all people everywhere; who recognize the importance of safeguarding and extending the economic and social freedoms, protections, and rights of people everywhere upon whom the welfare of the human race depends; who seek actively to eliminate oppression of women, the poor, and people of color through restriction of economic and social rights specific to them; who seek justice and resist various sorts of oppressive assaults on economic and social justice, and who work to maintain and protect our civil rights and liberties in the face of persistent attacks upon them; and who look upon the law as an instrument for the protection of the people, rather than for their oppression, and seek protection and expansion of economic and social equality and rights in that vein.

ARTICLE III. AFFILIATIONS

Section 1: This organization is affiliated with the national nonprofit legal and political organization “National Lawyers Guild”. The National Office of the National Lawyers Guild acts as an administrative hub for the Miami Law chapter, providing printed materials for recruitment and organization; publicizing events; providing guidance on media relations and other outreach; and brainstorming ideas for organization and recruitment.

Section 2: This organization is affiliated with the local Southern Florida chapter of the nonprofit legal and political organization “National Lawyers Guild”. The Southern Florida chapter of the National Lawyers Guild connects the Miami Law chapter with local NLG members and committees; provides resources and support for events; and facilitates the process of connecting NLG members with pro bono and community service opportunities.

ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: The majority of the membership of this organization shall consist of full-time enrolled Miami Law students.

Section 2: Membership is open to all members of the Miami Law community. There shall be no arbitrary exclusion from membership on the basis of sex, religion, sexual orientation, or disability. All members of the law school are invited to be members.

ARTICLE V. GOVERNMENT/ELECTIONS

Section 1: All NLG members are eligible to hold office. All NLG members can nominate and vote in the elections.

Section 2: Elections will be held each year to elect officers for that year. Elections shall be run by ballots. The positions shall last one year, although officers are free to run for office the following year. In the case of a tie, those who are running can choose to have a run-off election or share the position.

Section 3: Officers and voting members can create new elected positions when there is a need. A majority is needed to create a new position.

Section 4: An officer may be removed from office by proposal followed by a group-wide vote with 2/3 majority voting for removal.

Section 5: The officers of NLG are registered Miami Law students; we are responsible for organizing NLG activities and ensuring that the Miami Law community is aware of NLG events.

ARTICLE VI. OFFICERS

Section 2: The **President** shall represent the organization:

- A. Supervise and direct the affairs of the organization, such as registering NLG every fall with the Dean of Students, and convene a steering committee of all officers and committee chair members in accordance to the activities of the organization.
- B. Perform all duties incident to his/her office and such other duties as may be required, by the Articles of this organization, or which may be prescribed from time to time by the activities of the organization. Must act as representative to InterClub Council.
- C. Prepare and report annual activities of the organization to members twice a year, and maintain an open and honest line of communication with NLG advisor.
- D. Unless another person is specifically appointed as Chairperson, he/she shall preside and call for general meetings as needed, as well as meetings with the officers of the organization.

- E. Except as otherwise expressly provided by law or the articles of this constitution, he/she shall, in the name of the organization, execute such deeds authorized by its directives.

Section 3: The **Vice-President** shall:

- A. Serve as Liaison with external campus organizations, alumni network and others outside of Miami Law who are interested in matters and activities pertaining to the organization.
- B. Have other powers and perform such other duties as to support the activities of the organization and coordinate the work of the different committees of the organization.
- C. Perform all the duties of the President in his/her absence, and when so acting shall have all the powers of the office.

Section 4: The **Secretary** shall:

- A. Certify and keep an original or a copy of this Constitution as amended or otherwise altered to date.
- B. Maintain minutes of meetings, the names of those present or represented at the meeting, and the proceedings thereof; as well as maintain continuity of other records (including web page), and files to guarantee the perpetuity of the organization.
- C. See that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of the organization.
- D. Be custodian of the records of the organization.
- E. In general, perform all duties incident to the office of Secretary and such other duties (such as relating to public relations) as may be required.

Section 5: The **Treasurer** shall:

- A. Have charge and custody of, and be responsible for, all funds of the organization, and deposit all such funds in its name.
- B. Receive, and give receipt for, monies due and payable to the organization from any source whatsoever.
- C. Disburse the funds of the organization as may be directed by the President, taking proper receipts for such disbursements.
- D. Keep and maintain adequate and correct accounts of the organization's business transactions, including accounts of its assets, liabilities, receipts, disbursements, gains and losses.

- E. Keep and maintain the account books of financial records to be presented at steering committee meetings every two months.
- F. Render to the President, whenever requested, an account of any or all of his or her transactions as Treasurer and of the financial condition of the organization.
- G. Prepare and certify the financial statements to be included in any required reports.
- H. In general, perform all duties incident to the office of Treasurer and such other duties as may be required.

Section 6: **Duties of Committee Chairs** – In coordination with other members of the organization, committee chairs will:

- A. Have the powers to perform such duties that support the activities of the organization and coordinate the work of the different members of the organization in accordance to its objectives.
- B. Committee chairs will schedule committee meetings at their discretion and publicize committee meeting times and activities to all members.
- C. Committee chairs, when preceding over an activity relating to their committees, will lead the implementation of the activity in coordination with the organization’s elected officials.

ARTICLE VII. PROCEDURES

Section 1: There will be at least 3 meetings held for all the members each semester.

Section 2: Officers shall meet at least once a month and whenever the need shall arise.

Section 3: All policy decisions shall first be made by consensus. If this is not possible, voting members shall be called to vote and the majority will win. Officers will present positions to voting members, and after discussion, the voting members and officers will vote on the positions as a whole.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I. LEADERSHIP

Section 1: **Officers.** The chapter's leadership is divided among the following positions:

- A. President
- B. Vice-President
- C. Secretary
- D. Treasurer
- E. Public Relations Committee Chair
- F. Fundraising Committee Chair

Section 2: **Elections.** Elections shall take place annually at the beginning of each fall semester. Positions are filled based on majority vote. All chapter members or prospective members who attend the elections have one vote for each position.

ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP AND DUES

Section 1: **Chapter Membership.** No dues are required from law students who wish to join the Miami Law chapter.

Section 2: **National Membership.** Members of the Miami Law chapter are strongly encouraged to become Guild Members and may enroll at a rate discounted for law students, but Guild membership is not required to participate in chapter activities.

Law students who become Guild members shall be concurrent members of the Miami Law chapter and full voting members in their local non-student chapter. The NEC (National Executive Committee) will determine to which local non-student chapter each student is a member. Where there is no organized local chapter, membership shall be through direct affiliation with the national organization. Such persons shall be known as members-at-large.

Law student members may retain law student membership for one year following graduation or until he or she become eligible for another membership category, whichever comes first.

Section 3: **Objectives of the Organization.** Objectives shall be:

- A. To aid in making the United States and Florida Constitution, and the law and the administrative and judicial agencies of government, responsive to the will of the American people;
- B. To protect and foster our democratic institutions and civil rights and liberties of all people;
- C. To aid in the establishment of governmental and professional agencies to supply adequate legal services to those who are in need and cannot obtain it;
- D. To promote justice in the administration of the law;
- E. To aid in the adoption of laws for the economic and social welfare of the people;
- F. To keep the people informed upon legal matters affecting the public interest;
- G. To encourage, in the study of law, a consideration of the social and economic aspects of the law;
- H. To improve the ethical standards which must guide the lawyer in the performance of his or her professional and social duties; and
- I. To promote world unity through collaboration among the Bars of members of the United Nations
- J.

ARTICLE III. CHAPTER AUTONOMY

Section 1: **Autonomy.** The Miami Law NLG Student Chapter has complete autonomy subject only to the provisions of the National Constitution and By-Laws, to the referendum decisions of the national membership, and to the decisions of a National Convention or the National Executive Committee (NEC).

ARTICLE IV. NATIONAL CONVENTION

Section 1: **Authority.** The National Convention is the highest governing authority for the organization.

Section 2: **Convention Attendance.** The Miami Law chapter of the NLG endeavors to send as many law students as express an interest as delegates to the National Convention. Students will have the opportunity to participate in fundraising activities to supplement their travel expenses.

Section 3: **Voting.** Every dues-paying Guild member is entitled to one vote on matters under consideration at the National Convention, regardless of whether the Guild member personally attends the Convention. Procedures for voting are established in the National Organization's Bylaws.

ARTICLE V. AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS

Section 1: Bylaws not inconsistent with the Constitution of the National Lawyers Guild may be adopted or amended by a majority vote of chapter members.