

CONSTITUTION OF THE
BLINN COLLEGE
LEGAL ASSISTANT ASSISTANT STUDENT ORGANIZATION

ARTICLE I --NAME

The name of this Organization shall be the Blinn College legal Assistant Student Organization (LASO) and it shall be hereinafter referred to as "LASO" or "the Organization." LASO shall become affiliated with the National Association of legal Assistants, Inc. which shall hereinafter be referred to as "NALA," and will maintain that affiliation according to such rules as may be prescribed by NALA regarding student associations. NALA is a nationally recognized professional association chartered under the laws of the State of Oklahoma.

ARTICLE II --OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Organization shall be to encourage and to promote student awareness and participation in activities and opportunities to further develop and enhance professional skills within a collegial and congenial organizational context. Organizational activities will include regular formal meetings, interaction with similar organizations, and cooperation with the local legal community.

ARTICLE III --ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

General membership in this Organization shall be open to all full and part-time regularly enrolled students in attendance at Blinn College who have formally declared themselves to be pursuing majors in any program offered in the legal Assistant curriculum. Associate membership may be offered to interested non-student members in the local area who are actively engaged in providing or assisting in providing legal and/or law-related services to the communities in the counties served by Blinn College.

ARTICLE IV --OFFICERS

The elective officers of the Organization shall consist of a Chairperson, a Vice- Chairperson, a Secretary and a Treasurer who shall be selected by the general membership according to the By-laws. These elective positions plus the Faculty Advisor shall constitute the Executive Committee of LASO

ARTICLE V --MEETINGS

A minimum of one (1) general meeting shall be held each month during the regular academic year (Fall and Spring Semesters) at a time and place designated under the By-laws in accordance with meeting-room availability and Blinn College policy. Additional or special meetings may be called by the Executive Committee as provided in the By-laws. The Executive Committee will normally meet just prior

to any general or- special meeting. Dates and times for all meetings shall be posted at least one (1) week in advance. Any meetings will be subject to prior approval by the College Administration as required.

ARTICLE VI --PRINCIPLES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

The Code of Professional Ethics of the Organization shall be extracted from the NALA Code and shall govern the professional conduct of this student association and its general and associate members.

ARTICLE VII --AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the general membership present and voting. Any general member may present proposed amendments any time to any member of the LASO Executive Committee or present such proposed amendment(s) at any regular or specific meeting. Before voting on any proposed amendment(s) such amendment (s) shall have been posted in writing at least thirty (30) days prior to any regular or special meeting. Any amendments to this Constitution are subject to final approval by the Administration of Blinn College.

ARTICLE VIII --BY -LAWS

By-laws shall be approved by a majority vote of the general membership of the Organization. By-laws shall be consistent with NALA guidance and must also comply with any requirements established by Blinn College for student associations.

ARTICLE IX --FACUL TV ADVISOR(S)

The Organization shall be assisted by at least one (1) full time Faculty Advisor selected/appointed according to Blinn College policy. Honorary or Associate Advisors representing the local professional communities may also be invited to assist and participate in the Organization.

ARTICLE X --EFFECTIVE DATE

This Constitution shall be effective as of the date of its acceptance and approval by Blinn College as indicated hereon below.

APPROVED: _____ **SIGNATURE:** _____

**BY-LAWS OF THE
BLINN COLLEGE LEGAL ASSISTANT STUDENT ORGANIZATION**

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of the Organization shall be the Blinn College Legal Assistant Student Organization (LASO). This organization shall be affiliated with the National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

2.1 To establish good fellowship between this organization, the members of the legal assistant profession and the National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc.

2.2 To stimulate a high order of ethical and professional conduct.

2.3 To provide educational programs supplemental to regular course work.

ARTICLE III. POLICY

This organization shall be nonsectarian, nonpartisan, nonprofit and nonunion.

ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Membership in this organization shall be open to students enrolled in the legal assistant program at Blinn College.

4.2 Not all members shall be required to become NALA student members.

4.3 NALA headquarters must be provided with a membership roster upon affiliation and annually thereafter.

4.4 In order to qualify as a student association, membership must consist of 51% or more students enrolled in the legal assistant program at Blinn College.

4.5 General membership shall have all the privileges of membership and shall have the right to vote.

4.6 Associate membership shall have the privileges of membership, but will not have the right to vote.

ARTICLE V FACULTY ADVISOR(S)

A faculty advisor shall be designated by the school to offer advice and counsel in all programs of the organization and should attend all meetings. The name of the faculty advisor will be kept on file at NALA headquarters.

A minimum of one meeting per month shall be held during the school year. Additional meetings may be held as desired. The Faculty Advisor shall be advised of all meetings and programs.

Special meetings may be held as needed.

ARTICLE VI. DUES

The dues shall be fifteen dollars \$15.00 per year for membership in this organization. Dues shall be retained by the organization for use in programming.

ARTICLE VII. OFFICERS

8.1 Chairperson. The chairperson shall be elected annually in the fall by members of this organization to be responsible for chairing meetings and working with faculty advisor and NALA student school liaison. NALA headquarters and student liaison chairperson must be advised of the new chairperson in writing by the time of the first meeting of the year.

8.2 Vice-Chairperson. The vice-chairperson shall be elected annually in the fall by members of this organization to preside at all meetings in the absence of the Chairperson. In the event the Chairperson's term of office is terminated, the Vice-Chairperson will preside as Chairperson for the duration of the preceding Chairperson's term of office.

8.3 Secretary. The secretary shall be elected annually in the fall by members of this organization to announce all meeting information in advance to the membership. The secretary will serve at all meetings and keep accurate minutes of each meeting, prepare correspondence, and activate the membership at the beginning of the program year. Maintain an official register of all members with current home addresses, telephone numbers, and status of membership.

8.4 Treasurer. The treasurer shall be elected annually in the fall by members of this organization to be responsible for collecting all dues and making a financial accounting to the membership. When needed, the treasurer shall consult with the Faculty Advisor on any matters in connection with association finances. The treasurer must submit a roster of association members to NALA headquarters and the NALA student school liaison chairperson by the first regular meeting of the New Year.

8.5 Other Officers. Other officers may be elected as needed by the organization and as provided for in these by-laws.

ARTICLE VIII. FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of this organization shall be from October 1 through September 30.

ARTICLE IX. CODE OF ETHICS

Every member of this organization shall adhere to and be governed by the Code of

Ethics and Professional Responsibility of the National Association of Legal Assistants Inc., which reads as follows:

A legal assistant must adhere strictly to the accepted standards of legal ethics and to the general principles of proper conduct. The performance of the duties of the legal assistant shall be governed by specific canons as defined herein so that justice will be served and goals of the profession attained.

The canons of ethics set forth hereafter are adopted by the National Organization of Legal Assistants, Inc., as a general guide intended to aid legal assistants and attorneys. The enumeration of these rules does not mean there are not others of equal importance although not specifically mentioned. Court rules, agency rules and statutes must be taken into consideration when interpreting the canons.

Definition: Legal assistants, also known as paralegals, are a distinguishable group of persons who assist attorneys in the delivery of legal services. Through formal education, training, and experience, legal assistants have knowledge and expertise regarding the legal system and substantive and procedural law which qualify them to do work of a legal nature under the supervision of an attorney.

Canon 1. A legal assistant must not perform any of the duties that attorneys only may perform nor take any actions that attorneys may not take. .

Canon 2. A legal assistant may perform any task which is properly delegated and supervised by an attorney, as long as the attorney is ultimately responsible to the client, maintains a direct relationship with the client, and assumes professional responsibility for the work product.

Canon 3. A legal assistant must not: **A.** Engage in, encourage, or contribute, to any act which could constitute the unauthorized practice of law, and

B. Establish attorney-client relationships, set fees, give legal opinions or advice or represent a client before a court or agency unless so authorized by that court or agency, and

C. Engage in conduct or take any action which would assist or involve the attorney in a violation of professional ethics or give the appearance of professional impropriety.

Canon 4. A legal assistant must use discretion and professional judgment commensurate with knowledge and experience but must not render independent legal judgment in place of an attorney. The services of an attorney are essential in the public interest whenever such legal judgment is required.

Canon 5. A legal assistant must disclose his or her status as a legal assistant at the outset of any professional relationship with a client, attorney, a court or administrative agency or personnel thereof, or a member of the general public. A legal assistant must act prudently in determining the extent, to which a client may be assisted without the presence of an attorney,

Canon 6. A legal assistant must strive to maintain integrity and a high degree of competency through education and training with respect to professional responsibility, local rules and practice, and through

continuing education in substantive areas of law to better assist the legal profession in fulfilling its duty to provide legal service.

Canon 7. A legal assistant must strive to protect the confidences of a client and must not violate any rule or statute now in effect, or hereafter enacted, controlling the doctrine of privileged communications between a client and an attorney.

Canon 8. A legal assistant must do all other things incidental, necessary, or expedient for the attainment of the ethics and responsibilities as defined by statute or rule of court.

Canon 9. A legal assistant's conduct is guided by bar Organizations' codes of professional responsibility and rules of professional conduct.

ARTICLE X. AMENDMENTS TO BY -LAWS

These Bylaws may be amended by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the general members present at any meeting provided due notice is given. All such Bylaw amendments must be approved by the NALA Parliamentarian prior to ratification.

ARTICLE XI. DISSOLUTION OF ASSOCIATION

In the event of dissolution of this organization, all property and assets shall be distributed to a nonprofit charitable organization as defined by the Internal Revenue Code, to be selected by a majority vote of the remaining members of the organization, notice having been given to members of the organization and Faculty Advisor at least fifteen (15) days prior to meeting. In no event shall any of such property be distributed to any member of the organization or to benefit any member or private individual.

ARTICLE XII. AFFILIATION

These Bylaws must be submitted to the NALA Parliamentarian at the same time as request for affiliation is made. An annual affiliation fee is made to NALA. Any bylaw amendments without consent of the NALA Parliamentarian will be cause for removal of affiliated status. Affiliation with NALA is renewable each year by payment of the current affiliation fee. Payable by November 1 and attached to a current membership roster.