



VICTORIA LEGAL SUPPORT STAFF ASSOCIATION

CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

ARTICLE I - NAME

1. The name of this organization shall be Victoria Legal Support Staff Association formerly known as the Victoria Legal Secretaries' Association (referred to herein as the VLSA).

ARTICLE II - OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSES

1. To establish good fellowship among all legal support staff.
2. To stimulate professional development among all legal support staff.
3. To further our knowledge of the law and to uphold its honour and dignity.
4. To promote a higher standard of ethics among all legal support staff.

ARTICLE III - POLICY

1. The VLSA shall be non-sectarian, non-partisan, non-profit and non-union.

ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP

1. There may be five classes of members: active, honorary, life, associate and affiliate, but the eligibility of members shall not at any time conflict with the bylaws of the VLSA.
2. Active members shall consist of those persons currently involved in the legal field or such members who have subsequently retired and all such members shall be eligible to vote.
3. Honorary membership may be granted to any person who has performed some distinguished service to the VLSA or to the community in general, and who is not a member of the VLSA, and such members shall have all the privileges of active members, except the right to vote.

4. Any member of the VLSA who has performed some special service to the VLSA may be given a life membership by a majority vote of the active members present at a regularly called meeting of the VLSA. A life member shall not be liable for dues to the VLSA but shall be eligible to vote.
5. Associate membership may be granted to any person who is desirous of becoming involved in the legal field, provided that person is currently engaged in a legal training course at a local institution and shall pay a discount of the annual dues set by the VLSA. An associate member shall be allowed to retain such status for no more than one year but shall not be eligible to vote or hold office. An associate member may become a fully active member with all the rights and obligations of such membership when he/she can qualify as an active member.
6. A membership may be granted to any member of an affiliated association of the VLSA, provided the individual is currently involved in the legal field. Affiliation dues are payable by the affiliated association to the VLSA. Affiliate members are not eligible to vote or hold office in the VLSA.

ARTICLE V - MEETINGS

1. Regular meetings
 - (a) Regular meetings of the VLSA shall be held at least six (6) times per year.
 - (b) Any regular scheduled meeting may be changed by a majority vote of the membership. Such vote can be received via email, via telephone, via Skype type video/audio transmission over the internet or at a meeting with a motion put forth, and thereafter note of such change shall be given to all members of the VLSA at least ten days prior to such changed meeting or, at the discretion of the Executive, if the meeting falls on a statutory holiday the meeting for that particular month may be changed.
2. The regular meeting in April shall be known as the Annual General Meeting and shall be for the purpose of electing officers, receiving reports of officers and committees, and for any other business that may arise.
3. Special meetings may be called by the President, the Executive or by 20% of the active members.

4. The Executive shall hold a meeting at such time and place as may be designated by the Executive and may hold such other meetings as the President shall call.
5. Twenty-five percent (25%) of paid up members shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE VI - DUES

1. The annual dues shall be payable on or before the 30th day of April of each year.
2. Members who fail to pay their dues within sixty days of that date shall be considered delinquent and not entitled to the rights and privileges of membership.

ARTICLE VII - OFFICERS

1. The officers of the VLSA shall be: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Social Convenor, Legal Education Administrator, Program Coordinator, Scholarship/Mentorship Administrator and Website/Social Media Administrator.
2. The outgoing President shall hold the office of Past President for a term of one year to act in an advisory capacity only, and have the option of attending Executive Meetings without voting powers on Executive matters and should be kept advised of the date, place and time of all meetings.
3. The term of office for the Executive shall be two years from the date of elections or until their successors shall be elected and installed.
4. The term of office of the President shall commence on alternating years from the term of office of the Vice-President.
5. The term of office of the Treasurer may be longer than two years and held continuously provided that:
 - (a) the membership is satisfied with the current Treasurer; and
 - (b) no other member puts their name forward for election of the office of Treasurer at the Annual General Meeting.
6. No officer, with the exception of Treasurer, shall hold the same office for more than two consecutive terms.

ARTICLE VIII- NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. All officers of the VLSA shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting.
2. Prior to the Annual General Meeting, the President shall appoint a committee to be known as the Nominations Committee. Their duties shall be to receive nominations and prepare a list containing the names of all nominees for each office. At the Annual General Meeting, the Nominations Committee will present proposed officers to the general membership. At the Annual General Meeting, this Committee shall have general charge of the election, and nominations may also be made from the floor at that time.
3. A majority of the votes cast shall be necessary for the election of any officers. In the event any ballot cast does not show a majority for any one nominee for any office listed, the person having the lowest number of votes on the first ballot shall be eliminated, and on each succeeding ballot, the person having the lowest vote shall be dropped. This procedure shall be followed until a majority shall have been received.
4. No person shall be eligible to hold office in the VLSA who is not an active member at the time of election or appointment.
5. In the event of a vacancy in the office of President, the Vice-President shall succeed to such office for the unexpired term. Any other vacancy shall be filled by a member appointed by the Executive.
6. The Executive shall have the power to declare a vacancy in any executive office or standing committee by reason of the absence of an officer or chair for three successive meetings. With the exception of the office of President, any vacancy on the Executive shall be filled by appointment by the President, subject to the approval of the Executive.

ARTICLE IX - DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. The **PRESIDENT** shall preside at all meetings of the VLSA and of its Executive and shall perform such other duties as ordinarily pertain to this office. The President shall appoint the committee chairs, subject to approval of the Executive, and shall be an ex-officio member of all committees with the exception of nominations and elections.

2. The **VICE-PRESIDENT** shall preside in the absence of the President and shall perform such other duties as ordinarily pertain to this office. The Vice-President shall handle all Membership related duties including keeping a record of all members' contact information and their status in the Association; to promote goodwill within the membership and deal with new members; and to process initial membership fees of new members.
3. The **SECRETARY** shall keep a correct recording of the proceedings of all meetings of the VLSA and of the Executive and also preserve in a permanent file all records and letters of value to the VLSA and its officers, which shall be delivered to the successor at the close of the term. The Secretary in conjunction with the Website/Social Media Administrator shall produce a regular Bulletin to be distributed to all members, local laws firms and offices in the legal field and shall have the duty of handling all publicity on behalf of the VLSA, including arrangements for advertising our meetings through television, radio, newspapers and magazines.
4. The **TREASURER** shall keep an account of all receipts and disbursements, making a report at each regular meeting and providing a copy thereof to the Secretary on request. The Treasurer shall make disbursement cheques signed by any two of the following: President, Vice-President, or Treasurer. The Treasurer shall deposit the funds of the VLSA in such bank accounts as the Executive may direct. In addition, the Treasurer shall be supplied with a current copy of "Parliamentary Procedure at a Glance" (based on Robert's Rules of Order) and shall direct the proper procedure of business. The Treasurer shall also keep a complete history of the progress of the Association by maintaining the history books as well as providing photographs on a regular basis to the Website Administrator so that they can be posted to the website.
5. The **SOCIAL CONVENOR** shall plan the catering for all meetings of the VLSA and shall take care of reservations for all dinners and other affairs for which a charge will be made and collect the money and turn it over to the Treasurer. The Social Convenor shall prepare a list of attendees with name tags for each meeting and greet attendees at the door at each meeting.
6. The **LEGAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATOR** shall organize all workshops, lectures and seminars to promote legal education.

7. The **PROGRAM COORDINATOR** shall plan and provide a speaker for each of the regular meetings, subject to the approval of the Executive and shall send a Thank You note after each speaking engagement. Whenever possible, the Program coordinator shall advise at each meeting of the next guest speaker and ensure that it is posted to the website along with a "blurb" about the speaker and the topic. The Program Coordinator shall purchase and present the speaker's gift(s) and door prizes.
8. The **SCHOLARSHIP/MENTORSHIP ADMINISTRATOR** shall be in contact with schools offering a legal support staff program in order to promote the Scholarship program and shall provide them with the necessary criteria. The administrator shall accept letters of recommendation from the schools for potential recipients of the two annual scholarships presented by the VLSA and forward on letters of recommendation to the current President of the Victoria Bar Association ("VBA") for consideration of the VBA sponsored scholarship. In addition, the administrator shall accept names of those desiring to be mentored and those willing to mentor and match up suitable members to facilitate the Mentorship Program whose purpose is to pair up members with minimal experience to those with more experience to assist in the learning process as well as facilitate a stronger sense of community within the VLSA.
9. The **WEBSITE/SOCIAL MEDIA ADMINISTRATOR** – The Website Administrator shall oversee and implement the operation of the website, domain name and hosting, including making periodic updates and any necessary changes to the contents of the website. As well the administrator shall keep a list of all paid-up members seeking employment in the legal field and shall field telephone calls and emails from prospective employers of new job postings, the administrator shall send out email notifications to the general membership of all job postings and in addition, shall maintain and update the VLSA Website as well as any other social media site as the Membership sees fit to join to ensure the job postings are current.

ARTICLE X - INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

1. The newly elected officers shall be installed with appropriate ceremonies immediately after election.

ARTICLE XI - FISCAL YEAR

1. The fiscal year of the VLSA shall be from April 1st to March 31st.

ARTICLE XII - AUDIT

1. Approximately one month prior to the Annual General Meeting two members of the Association will be appointed by the Executive to audit the Treasurer's books, such audit to take place at the convenience of the members appointed and the Treasurer.

ARTICLE XIII - CODE OF ETHICS

The first duty of the legal support person is to strive to attain high standards.

It shall be the duty of every legal support person to maintain at all times a high standard of courtesy in all contacts with law offices, clients, courts and any and all persons.

It shall be unethical for any legal support person to violate any statute now in effect or to be enacted governing privileged communications.

It shall be unethical for any legal support person involved in legal work to divulge the contents of any confidential document in their employer's possession without first having obtained the employer's consent, or to discuss, maliciously or otherwise with any person, matters of a confidential nature or knowledge which may come to the legal support person by virtue of their employment.

It shall be the duty of every legal support person to maintain harmonious cooperation with their associates.

Every member of the VLSA shall subscribe to the Code of Ethics herein and agrees to be bound thereby. The Vice-President shall receive complaints as to violations of this Code and shall present them to the Executive who shall direct such action as it may deem necessary.

ARTICLE XIV - AMENDMENTS TO OR SUSPENSION OF BYLAWS

1. These bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the VLSA where there is a quorum of the members present, provided written notice of the proposed amendment shall have been given to each member at least fifteen (15) days preceding the meeting, at which time such amendment is to be submitted.

These Bylaws were amended at the Annual General Meeting on June 13, 2017.