

# THE LGBTQ+ BAR

## STARTING AN LGBTQ+ LAW STUDENT GROUP AT YOUR SCHOOL

### WORK TOGETHER

- ❖ Reach out to friends, peers, and classmates who may be interested in helping you establish an LGBTQ+ law student group on your campus. Having a few dedicated partners to help with the work associated with starting a student group will greatly increase your group's probability of success.
- ❖ Begin looking towards the future and establish a fair and inclusive change of leadership process for your group. It is important that your group welcome students in all three years of law school (or four, if you have a night school program) to increase your chances of having knowledgeable and passionate students to take the reins as students begin to cycle out and graduate.
- ❖ Identify ways in which your group can market yourselves as an inclusive and open space for other members of diverse and/or minority groups. Work with other student diversity bar organizations at your school to learn how you can partner together to support the members of your communities who may embody multiple identities.

### GET UNIVERSITY SUPPORT

- ❖ As minorities at your law school, it is in your best interest to acquire institutional backing for your group. Considering the vulnerable position of LGBTQ+ students, it is important to have a level of law school and broader university-level protection and support for your group in the event the group is subjected to any negativity or discrimination.
- ❖ Reach out to your law school's staff charged with overseeing diversity and inclusion efforts (i.e., your Dean of Students, Admissions Office, Career Services Office) to inform them of your plans. Reach out to ask a trusted law school faculty member to be an advisor to your group, to stand with and represent you.

## GET STUDENT INPUT

- ❖ In order to best serve the needs of all LGBTQ+ law students at your school - including those with intersectional identities - you must first understand the needs of those students. One way to get input from your peers is through informal interviews and/or listening groups, or anonymous surveys that reach beyond your group's current membership. You may also wish to reach out to recent graduates of the school to ask about their experiences. Establishing what issues and aspects of LGBTQ+ student life are most important to you and your peers will help your group to better serve your full LGBTQ+ community.
- ❖ Get connected by tapping into your social/academic networks to get more student involvement and interest in your group. Don't forget to engage allies and to signal to potential members that allies are welcome!

## MAKE IT OFFICIAL

- ❖ Look into your school's specific requirements for starting a new student group. These guidelines can typically be found on your school's website.
- ❖ Select a name for your group that is welcoming and inclusive! Be sure to avoid trademark issues with LGBTQ+ legal advocacy groups (i.e., avoid names like "Lavender Law" and "Lambda Legal.")
- ❖ Request that your group be listed on the school's student organizations web page, and apply for any portion of SBA group funding for which you may be eligible.
- ❖ Reach out to your nearest LGBTQ+ state or local Bar Association to let them know about your group!

## BECOME AN AFFILIATE

- ❖ Becoming an affiliate of the National LGBTQ+ Bar Association will ensure that your group will have assistance throughout the year as you work to grow and establish it. Becoming an affiliate status will also add an element of accountability to help your group stay the course throughout the year.
- ❖ As an affiliate of the Bar, we request that your group create your own organizational email address for ease and efficiency of communication, as well as continuity from year to year.

**CONGRATULATIONS!**