

BALIF BOARD ELECTIONS 2014

About the Elections

Offices up for election this year:

BALIF's Board of Directors has 18-20 members. Law student Directors serve one-year terms, while the other Directors serve staggered two-year terms. This year, members will elect two law student Directors, four male Directors, and three female Directors. Only law students vote for the law student Directors, but all members vote for all other Directors.

Board composition:

BALIF's bylaws require gender parity on the Board, with equal numbers of positions allocated to Directors who identify as male or female, and additional positions allocated to those who identify as gender non-conforming. Candidates seeking Director positions decide for themselves the category with which they identify. No one has elected to run in a gender non-conforming category this year.

CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

BALIF Male Board Candidates (Choose 4)

1M. Candidate Statement for Pete Catalanotti

BALIF members!

It has been my privilege to be a part of the BALIF Board for the past two years. I have held the position of OUTreach Committee Chair since I was elected. I created a new [online template](#) to streamline requests for advertising, scholarships, ticket swaps, and sponsorships. I have handled virtually every request from other organizations that has come in to BALIF asking our organization to advertise or publicize their event, sponsor, or donate.

If re-elected, I intend to focus my attention on rebranding BALIF. I want to update our logo, stationery, website, and Facebook page. As a corollary, I want to make our events more easily accessible to our membership. If you see an event on our newsletter you want to attend, I want you to be able to click once to add it to your calendar, for example. I also want to find out from our membership what events they want to see more of, whether they be social, educational, community, or family-oriented. Finally, I want to help bridge the gap between our law student members and our attorney members.

Remember to vote for CAT for re-election!!!

Thanks!

PETE

2M. Candidate Statement for Nick Clements

It has been a pleasure serving the BALIF community over the past two years as co-chair of the Programming Committee in 2012-2013 and chair of the Social Committee this last year. As co-chair of the Programming Committee, Lilah Sutphen and I put together the first-ever BALIF Homecoming event, which attracted hundreds of BALIF members, past-members, and guests. Champaign flowed, old friends got reacquainted, and the BALIF membership rolls swelled with former members rejoining. This year, as chair of the Social Committee, we organized a post-post-welcoming reception for the Lavender Law conference that attracted hundreds of BALIF members and LGBT Bar Association members from around the country to Minna Art Gallery. Social also threw a kick-ass Holiday Party at Tank 18 (if I do say so myself), and put together some fun (and different) Happy Hours. Of course, looking back on the last two years, parties and social events are probably quite far down the list in terms of what important things BALIF - including the BALIF Board - accomplished as a whole. Amicus briefs galore; career fairs, the best Bar Association Gala there is out there, and generally always out front leading the good fight for LGBT equality. These accomplishments - and the great people that make up BALIF and the BALIF Board - are the reasons are why I want to continue to be a part of this Board and hope that you'll vote for me for another term. Thanks!

3M. Candidate Statement for Dustin Helmer

Hello BALIF-ers!

My name is Dustin Helmer and I served on the BALIF Board as the law student representative for the 2013-2014 year. BALIF has allowed me to connect with law students and attorneys alike and I wish to give back to our attorneys and students for the opportunities afforded to me.

As the law student representative, I successfully organized BALIF's first ever "Need For Speed" interviewing skills and resume review workshop for law students which proved to be an invaluable experience. I have also assisted in both of BALIF's Career Expos.

If voted to the board, I will strive to give value to our all our members, not just our law students. Providing resources, business development and benefits to our extremely generous BALIF attorneys is a goal of mine. I hope to have the opportunity to be able to give back to the attorneys who have given so much of themselves to our law students. Additionally, I hope to develop pro bono opportunities for new attorneys and for those who want to delve into the pro bono world.

Thanks for your time and (hopefully) your vote!

4M. Candidate Statement for Brandon Lawrence

I have been an active member of BALIF since my first year of law school. I love the feeling of community and empowerment that I experience whenever I attend a BALIF event. As a young African-American staff attorney at a non-profit in San Francisco, I think that I could provide a unique voice and provide new and innovative ideas to recruit members, retain current members, and interact with other LGBT professionals in the Bay Area. I would really enjoy holding a position on the BALIF board because, as an attorney, I think it is important to foster a strong sense of community between all legal professionals, whether they are law students, lawyers, teachers, or prospective law students. With this opportunity, I will bring a level of excitement and enthusiasm that I know would be an invaluable asset to BALIF.

Thank you for your consideration,
Brandon Lawrence

5M. Candidate Statement for oN Lu

To me, BALIF is about meeting the needs of our community through innovative activities. This theme has hallmarked my four years of service on the Board, including two years as Co-Chair.

If you've viewed BALIF's monumental "It Gets Better" series, then you've seen my work product. I brought together BALIF members – all ages, all races, all genders -- to tell their stories. We affirmed not only that "it gets better" but also showcased what BALIF members are doing to MAKE IT BETTER.

When our young lawyers and law students were struggling to find jobs, I created the BALIF Career & Networking Expo. I also created BALIF's online job board; and our Stimulus Package to provide free membership to our non-working attorneys.

To address the dwindling number of LGBT appointed judges in SF, I overhauled our Judiciary Committee by infusing new leaders and new energy -- with the goal of inspiring our colleagues onto the bench.

I originated the Lesbian Comedy Night to reach out to our female members; and the Salon series to bring together BALIF's elder statesmen for evenings of dynamic dialogue. Recently, I brainstormed the BALIF Partners Exchange for firm owners to swap business development ideas.

I joined BALIF as a 1L at USF. I had just come out of the closet, and had never known any LGBT lawyers. Three years later, I became USF's first openly-gay, student body president. My welcome into the BALIF community was staggering and has stayed with me to this day. Today, I am a Partner at Novak Druce, and lead our Asia Practice Group.

I still have more ideas to transform into action. It would be a privilege to serve you for another term.

oN

6M. Candidate Statement for Mike Riess

Mike is an attorney with Jones Day whose diligence and enthusiasm would be assets to the BALIF board. For Jones Day, Mike already chairs the BALIF-Jones Day Pride Breakfast and knows firsthand how to organize and lead BALIF events. Mike is also working to help develop the first BALIF In-House Group to help strength ties among LGBT in-house attorneys in the Bay Area. Mike is personable and approachable, which would make him a great ambassador of the organization, and his commitment to service and the values of BALIF would help to drive the organization forward. Since graduating from law school, Mike has regularly given of his time and skills to provide pro bono legal work for individuals and various not-for-profit organizations, most recently, the San Francisco LGBT Center. Mike demonstrates the utmost professionalism and integrity, which along with his diligence and enthusiasm make him an amazing candidate of the BALIF board and representative of the Bay Area LGBT legal community.

7M. Candidate Statement for Dmitri Pikman

Dear BALIF Members,

I wanted to express my interest in running for the BALIF Board of Directors for the 2014-2016 term. I am very familiar with BALIF's important work through my ongoing efforts as a co-chair of its Social Justice committee, and my current position as a Staff Attorney at the AIDS Legal Referral Panel (ALRP), where we assist clients with an HIV or AIDS diagnosis with a variety of civil legal issues.

As part of the Social Justice committee I helped organize BALIF's monthly Happy Hour in February, with the proceeds going towards a fund set up to help LGBT Russian Refugees. I am proud to say that, due to the generosity of BALIF members, we exceeded even our wildest dreams for that fundraiser, and I am excited to organize many more impactful events and volunteer opportunities.

As a board member I will continue to invest my time and energy towards public interest causes, as this is something I am very passionate about. I believe that BALIF can continue to be an organization that benefits not only its members but our entire community.

There is still a lot of work to be done on behalf of various LGBT issues, and I know that BALIF can be at the forefront of that vital effort!

Thank you for your consideration,
Dmitri Pikman

Female BALIF Board Candidates (Choose 3)

1F. Candidate Statement for Denise Bergin

Hi BALIF members. My name is Denise Bergin and I have been on the Board since this past September, currently serving as Public Relations Chair. The Public Relations Committee has the benefit of working with all of the other Committees to publicize their amazing work – I’ve had the pleasure of working with the Judiciary, CCBA, Gala, Amicus, and Communications Committees since joining the Board. I’ve sent out many BALIF press releases that were picked up in papers like the Bay Area Reporter, and expanded our social media presence on YouTube and Twitter (follow us at @BALIFSF). There is still work to be done, and if elected, I would love the chance to continue growing our social and traditional media presence.

I am also a member of the BALIF Conference of California Bar Associations Committee. I had the honor and fun of being a BALIF Delegate to the Conference in 2013 and look forward to doing it again in 2014.

Outside of BALIF, I am a partner at Weaver Austin Villeneuve & Sampson in Oakland, focusing on patent portfolio development. I live with my wife and fellow BALIF member Theresa Witherspoon in San Francisco. We are new moms to our 3-month old daughter Thelma, who made her BALIF debut at this year’s Gala as the youngest attendee.

The BALIF Board is full of hard-working, dedicated, and imaginative people. I would be honored to have the opportunity to serve the 2014-2016 term with them.

2F. Candidate Statement for Felicia Medina

My name is Felicia Medina and I am eager to join BALIF’s board to further serve the Bay Area’s LGBT community. I am currently the Managing Partner of Sanford Heisler, LLP's San Francisco Office. My firm is a public interest firm that specializes in class action wage and hour and employment discrimination cases. At Sanford Heisler, I was part of the trial team that secured the largest employment verdict in U.S. history on behalf thousands of women, and I continue to advocate on behalf of individuals with race, gender, and sexual orientation claims.

I was previously a Board Member of San Diego’s LGBT lawyers’ organization, the Tom Homann Law Association. I focused my efforts on increasing membership, event planning and raising funds for the No on 8 Campaign.

I hope to bring to the BALIF Board my own diversity in background and perspective. As a Mexican-American with deep ties to the Latino community, I am excited to develop stronger relationships with other underrepresented minority groups here in the Bay Area. I would like to create even more opportunities for people of color to join BALIF and support its initiatives. I am also committed to supporting BALIF events and legal scholarship.

I have long admired and the active the force BALIF has been in the Bay Area and I would appreciate the opportunity to be a part of such a prestigious and out organization.

3F. Candidate Statement for Meaghan Zore

As someone who moved to San Francisco after graduating from an out-of-state law school, I missed out on the many opportunities being a local law student provides to connect with the community. BALIF has been an invaluable resource helping me to integrate into San Francisco's legal network. Having benefited from the organization's mentorship program, resume writing workshops, and networking opportunities, I've appreciated the opportunity to give back and help BALIF continue to create opportunities for LGBT legal professionals.

I joined the board this past September as Co-chair of the Membership Committee. Since then, the Membership Committee has increased BALIF's membership by 12%, rolled out a new Member Discount Program, and initiated BALIF Membership Cards (available soon!). I hope to continue this momentum forward and find new ways to add value to being a BALIF member. It would be a privilege to serve the organization and help to create opportunities for others similar to the ones that BALIF provided to me. I appreciate your support.

Candidates for Female BALIF Law Student Board Member (Choose 1)

1F-Student. Candidate Statement for Midori Hirai, USF School of Law

I have had the honor of being one of your BALIF law student representatives for the past year. When I ran for this position last year, I stated that my number one priority was to help LGBT law students increase their opportunities to network and to create their own job prospects. My number one priority has not changed—I want to ensure that at the end of law school, BALIF students are in the best position to find a job.

This past year, we began the process of helping students by hosting the Need for Speed Networking event, where students had 5 resume reviews and 5 mock interviews with actual attorneys and by hosting the second annual BALIF Career Expo with three informative panels and a job fair with over 40 participating firms and organizations. We also sent over twenty students to the annual Lavender Law conference where students could attend panels and the giant career fair.

Next year, as your BALIF law student representative, I want to continue this focus on professional development by continuing our existing professional development events and by adding at least one more opportunity for students to develop their skills. I also will continue to

encourage law students to come out and network with BALIF attorneys at happy hours, panels, and other events by reaching out to the student leaders at our eight BALIF schools.

I am passionate about helping the LGBT community grow and thrive, and I want to continue to serve you as a member of the BALIF Board of Directors. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your consideration.

2F-Student, Candidate Statement for Mona Hosseiny, GGU School of Law

It would be my honor to serve as BALIF's law student representative for the 2014-2015 year. I am a 2L student at Golden Gate University School of Law (GGU), and I have been a member of BALIF for a year.

Since August of 2012, I have served as a student representative and secretary to the Northern California chapter of the Iranian American Bar Association. Thus, I am very familiar with executing action plans and promoting events. I have also been very active in the LGBT community as the Co-Chair of the Queer Law Students Association (QLSA) at Golden Gate University. Through QLSA, I have conducted fundraisers, happy hours, community events, and student volunteering opportunities. This year, I also directed a benefit performance of "The Vagina Monologues" for V-Day 2014. This event raised \$1000, which was donated to local organizations that help victims of domestic violence.

Being a member of BALIF has inspired me to be more active in the LGBT community because of BALIF's passion and continued devotion to the community. In fact, last year, BALIF members encouraged me to apply for internships with prominent non-profit gay-friendly firms. In turn, I clerked for the National Center for Lesbian Rights, and this semester for AIDS Legal Referral Panel.

Additionally, I strive to bring diverse legal professionals together, and connect law students with lawyers in their areas of interest. I am confident that I can bring a diverse perspective to BALIF because I identify as a female, lesbian, and I am Iranian-American. As a BALIF student representative, I will act as a liaison between the BALIF board and the LGBT student organization leaders.

Candidates for Male BALIF Law Student Board Member (Choose 1)

1M-Student, Candidate Statement for Joseph Rocha, USF School of Law

My name is Joseph Rocha, and I respectfully submit my candidacy for the BALIF Board elections as a 1L at the University of San Francisco School of Law.

This year I was elected Vice President of USF Pride Law, and in undergrad I served as President of University of San Diego Pride. I am a co-founder and co-president of an LGBTQ Christian Young Adults group at Most Holy Redeemer Catholic Parish.

I also have a strong foundation of public service. I served for Congresswoman Susan Davis at her district and federal offices, as Deputy- Field Director for the Bevan Dufty for Mayor Campaign, and as a public policy intern to the former President of the Detroit City Council.

Most recently, I was selected to become a Marine Corps. Officer this summer, and will serve in the JAG Corps. after law school graduation. This is especially meaningful to me as an overseas veteran. I was kicked out under the former “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy and later testified in the federal court challenge that ruled the law unconstitutional and unenforceable. I later had the honor of serving as the first president of The LGBT Veteran’s Wall of Honor of the City and County of San Diego.

I share in the values embodied in BALIF’s mission, to pursue justice and equality through empowerment, opportunity, and coalition building. These ideals are both important and personal to me. I will bring to the Board and its efforts empathy, leadership, and enthusiasm. Thank you for your consideration.

2M-Student. Candidate Statement for Dalton Rodriguez, Stanford Law School

Greetings, y’all! My name is Dalton Rodriguez. I am currently a 2L at Stanford Law School, and I want to be your Law Student Representative. A Texas transplant to the Bay Area, I am fortunate to be part of this accepting community. Sadly, not all places share the same values. I came out the summer before law school, and after being disowned by a parent with an uncompromising ideology, found myself two months later on a plane with a carry-on suitcase, headed for a new life. My time in the Bay Area has shown me that building and maintaining an accepting community can renew and enrich the lives of its members.

I have been an active member of Stanford’s OUTLAW. I currently serve as Social Chair, planning and coordinating social and professional events, including a member retreat to Russian River last fall. It has been wonderful helping LGBT students in the law school, new and old, form lasting bonds of friendship.

I want to bring members of the wider LGBT community together and, as a Law Student Representative, would work to tighten the bonds between LGBT groups at member law schools. I will apply the skills I used as Social Chair to BALIF, planning and coordinating volunteer opportunities, career expos, and social gatherings, events that build up our community and strengthen our social and professional ties. In addition, I hope to increase law student membership, emphasizing through outreach the benefits that come from joining a community support system.