GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR NOMINATIONS
TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
UNIVERSITY LEGAL SERVICES

(1) The Board shall represent the interests of the disability communities and the low-income housing communities that ULS serves.

(2) Board members shall be appointed based on demonstrated interest and experience in issues affecting the communities that ULS serves.

(3) At least half of the Board shall be consumers, or their family members, of disability services in the District of Columbia.

(4) Board members shall also, to the extent possible, reflect the socioeconomic and geographic demographics of the District of Columbia.

(5) ULS shall ensure that it fulfills these principles by:

   (a) Publicizing prospective vacancies on the Board by posting relevant information on its website and, if feasible, by posting links to other relevant websites, and

   (b) Urging interested persons to submit or support nominations.
SUMMARY OF FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ULS BOARD MEMBERSHIP

(1) How many people serve on ULS’s Board of Directors?

Currently we have nine members although the Board can have up to 15 Directors.

(2) Who appoints members of the Board?

The incumbent Board members.

(3) How long are the terms of each appointment?

Each term is three years. Members may be reappointed for one additional consecutive term; former board members may seek reelection after being off the board for one year. One third of the board is up for election each year.

(4) What are the requirements for Board membership?

Board members should have an interest and experience in low income housing issues or issues affecting persons with developmental disabilities.

(5) How many Board meetings are held each year, and where are they held?

The Board usually meets four times a year at ULS’s offices at 220 I Street NE, Suite 130, Washington, DC 20001. The Board meetings usually begin at 4:00 pm or 5:00 pm and last for two hours. Committees of the Board also meet occasionally, sometimes just by teleconference.

(6) How may I apply for Board membership?

Announcement of future Board vacancies are posted on the ULS website, which also has links to websites of other organizations, particularly in the developmental disabilities field. Interested parties may write (or e-mail) ULS’s Executive Director (currently Jane Brown) or the Chairman of the Board (currently Margaret Drachslor c/o ULS), explaining the bases for the person’s interest in serving on the Board.

(7) Are Board members insured against claims of liability?

Yes. ULS has a directors and officers liability policy that is standard for non-profit organizations.

(8) Where can I get more information?

Please call Jane Brown 202-547-4747. You also can visit the ULS web site at www.dcpanda.org for more information about the programs and services ULS provides.
University Legal Services (ULS) is a non-profit, 501(C)(3) organization that was established in 1967 to provide legal services for people of low and moderate incomes in the District of Columbia. The founders of ULS, four Catholic priests, were all affiliated with Catholic University in some form and desired to create a clinical program for law students at the university. The program lost all ties to Catholic University shortly after it was started. ULS began receiving funding from the United Way, the Campaign for Human Development, the DC Bar and the Dominican Order.

In the early days, ULS handled many landlord and tenant cases before the existence of the District’s Rental Housing Act of 1985. This Act was built upon cases won in the 1970's which focused on protecting tenant’s rights. One such case was Mendes v. Johnson in which ULS attorneys argued against the landlord’s common law right to self help evictions. Through Mendes new caselaw was made in the District and as a result, landlords were required to seek court action in pursuance of evictions against tenants.

Since its beginnings ULS has continued in its mission and goal of serving those who have not been served by others, in particular, through the provision of legal and housing services.

ULS has contracted with the D.C. Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for many years to provide housing counseling services to D.C. residents who are renters but who desire to become owners of single-family homes. The housing counseling services ULS provides include pre-purchase counseling, renter, eviction, money and home management, social and economic and housing rehabilitation counseling. Through its counseling efforts, over 8,000 ULS clients have infused millions of dollars into housing sales, realtor fees, inspection companies, financial institutions, city real estate tax coffers, and home contractor businesses.

The Home Purchase Assistance Program (HPAP) is the primary vehicle by which ULS clients become homeowners. ULS in an intake center for the HPAP program which is funded by the DC Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

ULS has another long-standing contract with DHCD know as the Tenant Purchase (TP) contract. Under the TP contract ULS provides technical assistance to tenant groups interested in forming a tenant association, purchasing their apartment building and converting the building from rental units to the ownership vehicle of a cooperative or condominium. ULS clients typically convert their buildings into low-yield, or below-market rate coops, thereby allowing for the preservation of affordable housing since such coops require minimal subscription fees and low monthly coop fees.
In 1996, ULS won several federal and local grants to provide advocacy services for people with disabilities. Having received these grants through a competitive process, ULS is now the Protection and Advocacy (P&A) agency for the District of Columbia. The P&A grants require ULS to provide administrative and legal advocacy in the protection of the legal and human rights of individuals with disabilities. The P&A grants that ULS receives as the P&A are the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI) grant; the Protection and Advocacy for Developmental Disabilities (PADD) grant; the Protection and Advocacy for Individual Rights (PAIR) grant; the Client Assistance Program (CAP) grant; the Assistive Technology (AT) grant; the Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS) grant.

Under our P&A grants, ULS staff directly serve hundreds of individual clients annually, with thousands more benefitting from the results of class action litigation and group advocacy efforts. ULS staff address client issues relating to the improper use of seclusion, restraints, medication, abuse and neglect, community integration, wrap around services, accessible and affordable housing, financial exploitation, access to health care services, individual choice, employment, benefits, special education, and the care and treatment of people with disabilities in facilities.

The organizational structure is that of a non-profit corporation in that there is a Board of Directors, and ULS has a 501(C)3 designation. There are currently nine board members, thirty three staff, and three student interns. The Board meets at least three times per year and reviews ULS policies, finances and programs.