LSSO Programming Adjustments for Autumn 2020

1. In autumn, LSSO or LSA sponsored events that would normally be held in the Law School, must be conducted virtually (lunch talks, board meetings, planning sessions, social events, etc.).

2. For the start of the autumn quarter, no LSSO or LSA events may be held off campus, whether at someone’s home, or at a business establishment. We will revisit this policy as we progress through the quarter.

3. LSSOs should not plan to spend money on food/beverage delivery services via giftcards (Grubhub and the like), for LSSO sponsored events on or off campus. Spending on GrubHub or other food/beverage delivery service giftcards for student groups will not be reimbursed.

4. In autumn, if student groups want to make expenditures, they are welcome to spend funds using the LSSO spending guidelines. Any expenditures not on the list can be discussed with Robin Graham, rgraham1@uchicago.edu. Groups may also consider waiting until winter or spring to see if in-person events can occur with a return to normal spending.

5. If LSSOs purchase physical items for their members or group as outlined in the attached guidelines, the Dean of Students Office will work to store their purchases securely and schedule pick up in a safe manner.

6. Our hope is that groups can be creative and flexible in how they structure their virtual autumn quarter programming, while also not feeling pressure to maintain the same level of programming as in past quarters due to the added stress of an already heavily virtual learning environment.

2020-2021 FAQs for Student Organization Programming Due to COVID-19

Will there be in-person lunch talks in Autumn Quarter?

Unfortunately, we will not be able to have any in-person lunch talks or events in the Law School during Autumn Quarter. Our priority for Autumn is safely resuming in-person classes. For that reason, we will limit activities in classroom spaces to instruction only. This will also help keep the cleaning of spaces manageable and limit the amount of contact time individuals have within the building. All events for Autumn will need to take place remotely. Some students who have class in the building both before and after lunch may wish to join lunch events remotely while they sit in the Green Lounge or other approved places provided there is space.

However, we also encourage LSSOs to think about alternative times for holding student org events, such as starting at 6:00 PM or later. Having later events will allow students who need to travel over lunch to or from campus to still be able to participate live in Law School activities.
Since we will not have in-person lunch talks, can an LSSO hold an off-campus event?

For the start of Autumn Quarter we will not be able to accommodate off-campus LSSO sponsored events or lunch talks. We will continue to monitor the situation and revisit throughout the quarter.

Why are LSSO sponsored events not allowed in-person, either on or off campus in autumn?

Our goal is to make sure that our main mission of education under the combined remote and in-person model is successful. Limiting contact in autumn to classes, will help further this goal.

What are some ways that LSSOs can use their funding in the autumn?

Please review this link for a full description of possible ways for LSSOs to spend their funds. This list includes:

- Speaker Fees (up to $750)
- Virtual Experiences, with approval
- Items that are long-term investments for your group (banners, event supplies, table skirts)
- Swag for members or other printed materials

Items not on the list will need prior approval by the Dean of Students Office.

Why is the use of food/beverage delivery service giftcards not allowed in the autumn?

There are a variety of reasons that food/beverage delivery services will not be allowed for LSSOs on or off campus in autumn quarter:

- **University Policy:** The Dean of Students Office received special permission from central university administration to allow the use of food delivery cards for spring quarter student events. This permission was not granted for autumn.
- **Tax Implications:** for tax purposes, food delivery gift cards are considered cash. Once the amount provided to an individual student reaches a certain level, this amount becomes taxable and would need to be tracked.
- **Equity:** Not all students are in areas where they are able to use food delivery services. This means that not all students attending a particular program will have access to this benefit.
- **Resource Management:** Food delivery services have high fees and taxes which don’t allow for the giftcards to go far in providing food for students who receive them.
- **Concerns with Company Ethics:** Many students have expressed concerns with the ethics of food delivery services and their effects on local businesses.
- **Accountability:** LSSOs don’t have the ability to track whether students are using the cards as intended and at the time intended.

Can students be reimbursed individually for lunch spending?

Due to the large number of events that LSSOs typically host, individually reimbursing students for lunch would require the processing and mailing of potentially hundreds of reimbursements for food per week. Dean of Students staff cannot support this level of payment processing.
Will I be able to travel in autumn for a conference or as part of an off-site LSSO event?

The University is continuing the suspension of university-sponsored international and domestic travel until further notice.