April 28, 2021

Dear Prospective Members of the Class of 2023:

We invite you to apply to join the staff of The University of Chicago Legal Forum. This letter describes our journal, the staff selection process, and the responsibilities of staff members.

Who We Are

The University of Chicago Legal Forum, first published in 1986, is the Law School’s second-oldest journal. Our yearly publication is based on a unique approach to legal academia: we focus on a single cutting-edge legal issue each year, presenting an authoritative and timely approach to the selected topic.

Each fall, the Legal Forum hosts a Symposium on the year’s selected topic, and the participants contribute articles for the volume. Legal Forum staffers can expect to edit innovative and timely scholarship on the topic, in addition to writing their own Comments. Recent topics have included “Law in the Era of #MeToo,” “Law for the Next Pandemic,” “Does Election Law Serve the Electorate?,” and “The Civil Rights Act at 50 Years.”

Since our founding, several eminent members of academia, the judiciary, and the bar have participated in the Legal Forum Symposia. Prior participants and published authors include Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Judge Richard Posner, Judge Frank Easterbrook, Judge Diane Wood, Judge Abner Mikva, Judge Patricia Wald, Judge Danny Boggs, Judge Rebecca Pallmeyer, Dean Lee Bollinger, Professor Randall Kennedy, Professor Cass Sunstein, Professor Lani Guinier, Professor David Strauss, Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Professor Aziz Huq.

In addition to promoting legal scholarship, the Legal Forum affords students the opportunity to research, write, and publish a Comment. Staff members also learn a great deal of substantive law through their editing responsibilities and Comment writing.

Staff Selection

This summer, you will have the opportunity to join the staff of the Legal Forum through the Writing Competition. Selection to the Legal Forum is based solely on your performance on the Writing Competition, with no regard to 1L grades.

The Writing Competition consists of three components: the writing portion, the editing portion, and a short personal statement. Because the Legal Forum values writing ability above all, sixty percent of a student’s Writing Competition grade will be based on the writing portion, and thirty percent of the grade will be based on the editing portion. The final ten percent of the student’s Writing Competition grade will be based on the personal statement. Participants should allocate their time accordingly. In evaluating the personal
statement, we are interested not only in the diverse perspectives candidates can bring to bear but also their interest in serving on our journal.

Consistent with other journals, the Legal Forum’s grading and selection process is completely anonymous. Additionally, interested individuals may also join the Legal Forum during their second or third year at the Law School through the Topic Access program. Please contact Topic Access & Recruitment Editor E.J. Morera at ejmorera@uchicago.edu with any questions.

Staff Responsibilities

The three main responsibilities of staff members are writing a publishable Comment, editing both Comments and Articles, and participating in our fall Symposium. Membership on the Legal Forum is a two-year commitment. Staff members will earn three credits for their time on the journal.

Staff members actively contribute to the editorial functions of the Legal Forum. Beginning in the summer and continuing throughout the academic year, staffers will be responsible for at least one editorial cite check, one publication cite check, and participation in Edit-Fest. In general, a cite check involves gathering the sources cited in an article, reading those sources for accuracy, and correcting Bluebook formatting and citations. The Legal Forum board strives to make the workload manageable and predictable for new staffers.

Throughout the year, staff members also work on their Comments. Journal membership requires completion of a Comment of publishable quality, which satisfies the SRP graduation requirement. Members work under the guidance of the Executive Comments Editor and a Comments Editor, both of whom provide feedback throughout the writing process. Members are also assigned a Faculty Advisor. Faculty Advisors provide review and guidance during the drafting process. They also determine if members should receive SRP credit and/or three credits for their Comments.

Why the Work Is Worth It

The Legal Forum values personal growth, development, and excellence. We hope to provide a home for the ambitious, involved student who wants to engage with and think deeply about the law. Along the way, we will help improve your legal research and writing skills, as well as your editorial skills. Employers—whether at a law firm, clerkship, public interest organization, or corporation—will always value the skills you acquire while on the Legal Forum.

Additionally, staffers will gain a new group of friends and colleagues. The Legal Forum strives to be an inclusive environment that promotes intellectual and personal curiosity and development.

Being a member on the Legal Forum is a challenging but rewarding opportunity. Our staffers come into their Legal Forum experience capable and well-rounded. They leave better prepared. We hope you will consider applying. Please contact Executive Comments Editor Kathleen Schmidt at kcschmidt@uchicago.edu or Editor-in-Chief Lauren Spungen at lspungen@uchicago.edu with any questions.
Sincerely,

The 2021–22 Legal Forum Board:

Lauren Spungen, Editor-in-Chief
Vatsala Kumar, Executive Editor
Kathleen Schmidt, Executive Comments Editor
Dylan V. Moore, Executive Articles Editor
Mitchell Caminer, Managing Editor
E.J. Morera, Topic Access & Recruitment Editor
Hannah Fisher, Symposium & Membership Editor
Timothy J. Carey, Articles Editor
Tawkir Chowdhury, Articles Editor
Natalie Granda, Articles Editor
Crofton Kelly, Articles Editor
Eleanor F. Brock, Comments Editor
Nena Gallegos, Comments Editor
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