April 27, 2016

Dear Prospective Members of the Class of 2018:

We invite you to apply to join the staff of The University of Chicago Legal Forum. This letter describes the Legal Forum, 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 and the participants contribute articles for the volume. The November 2015 Symposium focused on “Policing the Police” and the articles will be published as Volume 2016. Topics in recent years have included “Does Election Law Serve the Electorate?”, “The Civil Rights Act at 50 Years,” “Frontiers of Consumer Protection,” “Combating Corruption,” “Governance and Power,” and “Crime, Criminal Law, and the Recession.”

For the 2016 Symposium, the Legal Forum will invite scholars to engage the topic of “Law and the Modern Workplace.” Recent regulatory reforms under the Fair Labor Standards Act, trends in alternative dispute resolution, decisions by the National Labor Relations Board and the Supreme Court, and state-level responses to changes in the work environment make this a compelling moment to evaluate developments in the law. Staffers can expect to edit cutting edge scholarship on these issues, as well as write their own comments on legal questions at the intersection of labor law, constitutional law, administrative law, statutory interpretation and economics, among other fields.

Since our founding, several eminent members of the academy, the judiciary, and the bar have participated in 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, Dean Lee Bollinger, Professor Randall Kennedy, Professor Cass Sunstein, Professor Lani Guinier, Professor Richard Epstein, Professor Akhil Amar, Professor David Strauss, Professor Tracey Meares, and Professor Aziz Huq.

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

Staff Selection

This summer, you will have the opportunity to join the staff of the Legal Forum through the Writing Competition. The sign-up period will run from May 3 to May 26. All participants will then receive the instruction packet on June 6. The competition itself will begin on June 7 and conclude on June 19. Selection to the Legal Forum is based solely on your performance on the Writing Competition.

The Writing Competition consists of two parts: the writing portion and the editing portion. Because the Legal Forum values writing ability above all else, 80 percent of a student’s Writing Competition grade will be based on the writing portion and 20 percent of the grade will be based on the editing
portion. Participants should allocate their time accordingly. Consistent with other journals, the Legal Forum’s grading and selection process is completely anonymous. Additionally, interested individuals may join the Legal Forum during their second or third year at the Law School through the Topic Access program.

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 yearlong commitment.

Staff members actively contribute to the editorial functions of the Legal Forum. During the Winter and Spring Quarters, staffers will be responsible for at least one editorial cite check, one publication cite check, and participation in one Edit-Fest. The substantive cite check is the first and in many ways most important part of the editing process. 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.

Over the course of the year, staff members also work on their comments; completion of a comment of publishable quality is a requirement of journal membership and satisfies the SRP graduation requirement. Members work under the guidance of a Comment Editor, who provides feedback at each stage of the comment process. Members are also assigned a Faculty Adviser with expertise in their selected topic area. Faculty Advisers determine if members should receive SRP credit and/or three credits for their comments.

Why the Work Is Worth It

The Legal Forum provides a fantastic opportunity to improve and develop your legal research and writing skills, as well as your editorial skills. Employers in law firms and clerkship settings highly value the skills acquired via membership on a student journal.

Additionally, new staffers will gain a deep understanding of the complexities and intricacies of next year’s Symposium topic. Beyond writing, reading, and editing the most cutting-edge scholarship on a given topic, staffers will also have the opportunity to meet and network with many of the preeminent legal scholars invited to the Symposium during dinner and breakout sessions over the weekend.

Being a member on the Legal Forum is an exciting opportunity and a rewarding experience. We hope you will consider applying. Please contact Executive Comments Editor Nate Enfield at nenfield@uchicago.edu or Editor-in-Chief Joe Wenner at jwenner@uchicago.edu with any questions.

Sincerely,

The 2016–17 Legal Forum Board:

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