

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE

Committee on General University Policy

GP.16.04 Annual Report for 2015-2016
(Final; Information)

The Senate General University Policy Committee (GUP) is responsible for studying, reporting and making recommendations to the Senate concerning general University policy in broad terms. This report summarizes the activities of GUP during the 2015-2016 academic year. GUP met nine times (September 8, October 6, November 10, December 1, January 19, February 16, March 8, April 12, and May 3). More detailed information is provided in the minutes of those meetings.

Items that were under active consideration this year (2015-16):

GP.16.01 Advice of the Committee on General University Policy on Resolution 16.04

At the request of the Senate Executive Committee (SEC), GUP provided advice on a resolution forwarded by a group of senators that asserted that the policy on criminal background checks adopted by the Board of Trustees constituted employment discrimination. GUP's unanimous advice to the sponsors was that the draft document relied on selective quotation from legal and statutory documents, and that an examination of the quotations in their original context actually undercut the claim that background checks were "inherently" discriminatory. The authors of the resolution chose not to revise the document in accordance with GUP's advice. GUP's report was placed on the Senate agenda, but was not discussed by the Senate, and the Resolution passed.

GP.16.02 Comments on the Background Check Policy

GUP provided its own extensive comments on the Board's background check policy and on the campus implementation plan to Vice Provost Benmamoun, suggesting a number of areas in which both documents could be clarified or improved in their protections of the rights of applicants and in their presentation of the University and campus missions.

GP.16.03 General University Policy Committee Proposal to Establish a Joint Advisory Committee on Socially Responsible Licensing and Investment

At SEC's request, GUP met with members of the current Ad Hoc Licensing Advisory Committee to consider whether the committee should be disbanded, codified as a standing committee, or otherwise reconstituted. The LAC discussed the areas in which their charge needed to be expanded beyond licensing issues to other areas of corporate responsibility, as well as areas in which they had been asked to take on advisory roles not properly within their charge. GUP asked LAC to propose language for a new committee charge and membership. GUP then expanded on that text, providing more detail and proposing that the committee be constituted as a jointly appointed body, and submitted that proposal to SEC. After SEC referred the proposal to the Senate Committee on University Statutes and Senate Procedures (USSP) to draft enacting language for the *Bylaws*, GUP met jointly with USSP to discuss USSP's suggested revisions to GUP's language. The Senate voted on May 2 to formally approve the establishment of the new committee.

Faculty Mentoring: Guidelines

GUP reviewed and provided feedback to Associate Provost Bill Barnhard on this new set of guidelines. GUP was strongly supportive of providing academic units with clearer advice on best practices in this area.

IT Accessibility Policy

GUP met with John Hart, Chair of the Senate Committee on Information Technology, to review draft language for this policy. GUP endorsed the draft with minor edits.

Open Access Policy

GUP met with the chair of the University-wide Open Access task force, Dean John Wilkin, on May 6, 2015, to review and provide feedback on this policy. The Senate approved the policy on October 19, 2015.

Report of the Senate Committee on Information Technology on University Access of Employee Electronic Communications

GUP reviewed a draft of this new set of proposed guidelines and met with the Chair of the Senate Committee on Information Technology to provide its feedback. The members of GUP suggested some editorial revisions and then endorsed the draft document.

Letter from the Senate Committee on the Budget to the governor and state assembly on the impact of no state budget for higher education

GUP reviewed and provided feedback to the Senate Committee on the Budget on this letter.

Resolution on Native American Symbols

GUP developed a statement on the need to establish a new symbol/mascot/sports identity for the campus, and to change attendant rituals such as the “Three in One” halftime music. GUP members were unanimous in their belief that until a new, positive center of identification is established, disputers over the Chief, and accusations regarding the racist character of the Chief, will continue to embroil the campus in divisive controversy. When GUP was informed that the students on campus were initiating their own proposal to create a campus mascot, GUP decided that it was better to shift its focus from its own statement to supporting the student initiative. After meetings with Interim Chancellor Wilson, Vice Chancellor Romano, and the student sponsors of the proposal, GUP drafted and distributed a statement of support for that initiative.

Items that are being monitored by the committee:

GP.07.04 Multi-Year Contracts Policy and Implementation

In 2004, GUP was charged by the Senate with monitoring the percentage of specialized faculty with multi-year contracts. In relation to this charge, GUP inquired of the Provost’s Office about figures on the campus website that suggested that the percentage of specialized faculty had skyrocketed in the past year. Vice Provost Benmamoun investigated and reported back that the figure was erroneous and had been corrected.

GP.09.01 Academy on Capitalism and Limited Government Foundation

GP.13.09 Records and Information Management Communication

GP.15.05 Review the Confucius Institute (Will be conducted in 2017)

Administrative Hiring Practices

Tenure Review Processes

GENERAL UNIVERSITY POLICY
Nicholas Burbules, Chair
Richard Gegg
Kim Graber
Patricia Rodriguez
Jay Rosenstein
Gabriel Solis
Joyce Tolliver
Conrad Wojtan
Abbas Benmamoun, *Ex officio*