

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE
Prefiled Resolution

RS.16.02 Resolution on the Postponement of the Criminal Background Check Policy

WHEREAS academic departments on the Urbana campus conducting employment searches in Fall 2015 have been instructed that their advertisements must include the sentence “The University of Illinois conducts criminal background checks on all job candidates upon acceptance of a contingent offer”; and

WHEREAS some but not all of the advertisements for open faculty positions listed on the University Job Board (<https://jobs.illinois.edu/academic-job-board>) include this sentence; and

WHEREAS the University of Illinois Board of Trustees formally adopted a criminal background check policy on September 10, 2015 only after such instructions were issued to academic departments; and

WHEREAS the new policy on criminal background checks does not adhere to the standards recommended by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) recommendations as stated in its 2015 Policy Documents and Reports on balancing the need for proportionality of institutional risk with individual’s rights of privacy because it does not state:

1. that a candidate must authorize a background check in writing;
2. that the candidate must be given a copy of the final report;
3. that no adverse action may be taken on the basis of the report unless and until the prospective employee has had an opportunity to contest or clarify its accuracy;
4. that if a report is retained in a successful candidate’s file, it should be corrected to remove all inaccuracies;
5. that all irrelevant personally identifiable information in a faculty member’s file should be destroyed;

WHEREAS Senate Resolution RS.15.08 of March 9, 2015, as adopted by the Senate, noted that “substantive reviews of candidates’ qualifications,” by bodies other than duly appointed faculty search committees and deans would damage the competitiveness of the University in hiring the best faculty and undermine shared governance, “in particular the faculty’s responsibility to maintain academic excellence and the high professional standards appropriate to one of the world’s premier research universities”;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Urbana-Champaign Campus requests the Board of Trustees to urgently and immediately postpone implementation of the new criminal background check policy until these problems and inconsistencies can be discussed, addressed and resolved with input from the Senate.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that the Senate Executive Committee will refer the policy to the appropriate Senate committees.

Signed and submitted by senators:

Teresa Barnes, History and Gender & Women’s Studies

Jessica Greenberg, Anthropology

Harriet Murav, Slavic Studies

Mark Steinberg, History