

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE

Committee on University Student Life
(Final; Information)

SL.16.01 2015-16 Annual Report

The following report summarizes the activities of the Senate Committee on University Student Life (USL) during the 2015-2016 academic year. The Committee met six times: October 28, November 11, December 9, February 18, March 17, and April 21. One of USL's primary functions is to serve as a liaison between Senate and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. Another is to raise, discuss, and act on issues of particular concern to student life.

Throughout the year, Vice Chancellor Renee Romano brought information to USL on new programs and student affairs issues. Student Senator Madison Scanlan reported on activities of the Illinois Student Senate. Assistant Provost Kathryn Martensen kept the committee informed on activities in the Office of the Provost of interest to the committee.

A number of issues have been raised and addressed during the year. These included:

- Campus Climate Study on Sexual Assault
 - USL discussed the study, which took place in the Fall (2015), and some of the initial findings. There was also discussion of the campus Sexual Harassment Online Training, and how information from both might be shared in the future. Findings from the training are a possible agenda item for follow-up in Fall 2016.
- Student Senator Discussion Regarding a Potential Mascot
 - The meetings led by ISS resulted in a plan to move the discussion about having a mascot forward. USL discussed some of the feedback from both sides of the issue that was raised in the open meetings.
- Discussion of the African American Cultural Center
 - Possible locations were discussed in Fall, based on planning for the Center at that point in time, as well as other actions the University is pursuing to find a permanent home for the Center.
- Ergonomic Student Seating
 - In response to student concerns expressed to ISS reps, USL investigated possible ways to introduce standing seating in classrooms and libraries on campus. Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) was consulted, and they recommended that students can either get individual accommodations, if they register and a standing desk is an appropriate accommodation, or consult with Facilities & Services or campus departments on installing standing options as a standard part of classroom configuration. Chair Ward is pursuing standing options in the Undergraduate and Grainger Libraries, and Associate Vice Chancellor Ballom suggested that the new Universal Design for classrooms discussions currently underway would be a good forum to implement standing and other ergonomic seating in a more uniform way. This is an item for follow-up in Fall 2016.

- Mental Health Issues
 - Vice Chancellor Romano and others raised concerns over rising suicide attempts at the University of Illinois. Bill Roberts, Director of Clinical Services at the Counseling Center, visited USL and discussed the issue in more depth, including both reported attempts and methods currently underway to bring more aid to students in need. These include increasing the number of staff, seeking additional space for the Counseling Center, as well as more regular patrols of areas known to be sites of attempted and successful suicides. USL discussed ways for faculty to assist, including possible training and classroom resources for when students self-identify as having thoughts or concerns about suicide. One suggestion from USL was to investigate a program where colleges can have a faculty members trained as a resource person with the Counseling Center to share information and strategies with colleagues in their departments on an ongoing basis, through faculty meetings and other communications. This is an item for follow-up in Fall 2016.

USL urges that student input be solicited through as many Senate committees as possible. The Committee especially urges that USL be included in all Senate deliberations in which university student life is or may be affected. This will be particularly important as campus leaders consider allocation of future budgets.

COMMITTEE ON UNIVERSITY STUDENT LIFE

David Ward, Chair
 Damarys Canache
 James Dadabo
 Mark Dressman
 Kerri Green
 Trymore Magomana
 Marissa Roberson
 Madison Scanlan
 Susan Thomas
 Christie Avgar, *Ex officio*
 Kenneth T. Ballom, *Ex officio*
 Mitchell Dickey, *Ex officio*
 Kathryn Martensen, *Ex officio*
 Renee Romano, *Ex officio*