

Board Meeting
July 22, 2010

APPROVE REVISIONS TO STUDENT LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAMS, URBANA
AND CHICAGO

Action: Approve Revisions to Student Legal Services Programs

Funding: Student Fees

The Chancellors at the Urbana and Chicago campuses recommend that the Board authorize revisions to Student Legal Services programs currently in place at Urbana and Chicago and authorized but not operational in Springfield.

In 1978, the Board of Trustees approved a “Student Legal Services Plan” for the Urbana campus in order to establish a program “whereby students will receive legal counseling and advice. . .” from students’ attorneys who “shall be retained annually under contract with the Board of Trustees and shall have the status of independent contractor and not employee of the University.” The Board established a Student Legal Services program on a trial basis at the Chicago campus in 1985 and on a permanent basis in 1988. The Board authorized the establishment of a Student Legal Services program in Springfield in 2003, although a program is not currently in operation. Through the programs, students may avail themselves of legal services in a limited range of areas, including landlord-tenant issues, small claims, traffic tickets, certain misdemeanor charges, ordinance violations, and various other matters. Certain other

services are expressly excluded from the program (e.g., student vs. student, student vs. University or State, felonies, income producing activities, real estate, wills and trusts, contingent fee matters, and others).

Students highly value the service, as demonstrated by the large volume of students who have used Student Legal Services. The Student Legal Services offices are not a campus or University department and do not report directly to any University unit. The contract is managed by the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, since the Students' Attorneys provide a direct service to students that is funded by student fees. The Students' Attorneys are currently retained as independent contractors on an annual basis.

Since the Board's initial approval of the Student Legal Services program in 1978, the types and scope of services performed by the Students' Attorneys have significantly increased. In order to improve oversight and control, and ensure compliance with tax laws, it is recommended that the Chancellors be authorized to approve appropriate modifications to their campus' plans, including conversion of the Students' Attorneys from contractors to University employees. Such actions would be consistent with the governance and administration of similar programs at other universities.

At the Urbana campus, Student Legal Services is currently funded through the Student Organization Resource Fund (SORF), which is a refundable student fee. At the Chicago campus, funding is provided through a portion of a non-refundable student fee as part of the normal student fee process. It is recommended that funding for the

Student Legal Services program at the Urbana campus be converted as soon as practicable to a non-refundable student services fee similar to the Chicago campus.

This Board action supersedes previous actions taken by the Board and authorizes the Chancellors and other authorized administrators to develop, approve, and update from time to time as needed the Student Legal Service Plan for each campus and to perform any other actions necessary to carry out the purposes of the Board's action consistent with the Board's direction herein.

The Board action recommended in this item complies in all material respects with applicable State and Federal laws, University of Illinois *Statutes*, *The General Rules Concerning University Organization and Procedure*, and Board of Trustees policies and directives.

The President of the University concurs.