Approved by the Board of Trustees

January 18, 2024

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Board Meeting

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## ESTABLISH THE GOVERNMENT FINANCE RESEARCH CENTER, COLLEGE OF URBAN PLANNING AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS, CHICAGO

**Action:** Establish the Government Finance Research Center, College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs

**Funding:** No New Funding Required

The chancellor, University of Illinois Chicago, and vice president, University of Illinois System, with the advice of the University of Illinois Chicago Senate and the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs (CUPPA), recommends the establishment of the Government Finance Research Center (GFRC).

The purpose of the GFRC is to shape and inform public policy and scholarly discourse on government and public finance by identifying, planning, and executing research; providing reports and informed analyses; offering educational opportunities and technical training; and offering inclusive venues to convene national and local discussions on fiscal and governance issues. The GFRC is the only research center affiliated with a public university in Illinois whose mission supports the practice of public finance for both state and local governments in the greater Chicago area, throughout Illinois, and across the United States. Focusing on state and local government finance allows a bottom-up understanding of the possibilities and constraints on government actions that most closely connect to the daily lives of citizens and residents.

The GFRC was created in 2018 by CUPPA Dean Emeritus and Founding Director Michael A. Pagano, which was made possible by a $1 million anonymous gift to the college. At its founding, half of the initial donation was permanently endowed, and annual interest earnings from the endowment, along with the remaining half of the initial gift, continue to support its daily operations. The donor subsequently made two additional gifts totaling $450,000. The GFRC operates with a director and associate director, postdoctoral research associate, affiliated faculty, and graduate research assistants. An external advisory panel and faculty advisory panel guide and support the policies, priorities, and work of the GFRC. Administrative support is provided by CUPPA staff through a shared services agreement. The center is located in CUPPA Hall utilizing preexisting space in the building, so no new space or funding was needed or provided by the university to support the physical needs of the center.

GFRC staff and affiliated faculty conduct nationally recognized research that concentrates into the following clusters: tax policy and administration, fiscal policy and financial position, debt and long-term obligations, and energy and water policy. Most of the center’s work is community-driven and policy focused, with research requests coming from community organizations, grant making foundations, government entities, and other stakeholders. In addition, most of the center’s work is accessible to public officials and informs policy decisions. Since 2018, the GFRC has received nearly $3.5 million in research grants and contracts; been quoted in more than 125 news articles, radio programs, and television segments; released and/or authored more than 90 blogs, commentaries, columns, and op-eds and more than 30 original research reports; and hosted five pre-COVID events, including an academic conference held at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago.

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 executive vice president and vice president for academic affairs concurs with this recommendation. The University Senates Conference has indicated that no further Senate jurisdiction is involved.

The president of the University of Illinois System recommends approval. This action is subject to further review by the Illinois Board of Higher Education.