

February 25, 2004

William Porter Payne
Gleacher Partners LLC
3455 Peachtree Road, N.E.
Suite 975
Atlanta, GA 30326

Dear University of Georgia Foundation Trustee:

I am writing on behalf of the Georgia First Amendment Foundation. We are an organization that seeks to advance the cause of open government and monitors freedom of information issues throughout this state.

The University of Georgia Foundation improperly closed its meetings of February 12 and 13th, 2004 to the public, in violation of O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1 *et seq.* This practice is contrary to the Open Meetings Act and the state's public policy. The Foundation acted to close its meetings, despite the clear advice of the Attorney General of the State of Georgia.

The discussions during your meetings are exactly the type of debate that must take place in the open for the public to have confidence in institutions such as yours'. As trustees of the University of Georgia, you are stewards of the public's interest, and the public trusts you to vigorously, intelligently, and **openly** debate the issues before you.

I have enclosed a copy of "Georgia's Sunshine Laws: A Citizen's Guide to Open Government," which discusses the Open Meetings Act as well as other open government issues pertinent to your work. Similarly, this foundation would be pleased to visit with you and conduct a workshop on the mechanics of both the Open Meetings and Open Records laws.

We would appreciate an explanation as to what will be done to remedy this Open Meetings violation that goes against both the law and the interest of the public. We also would appreciate your commitment to conducting your future business in a manner open to the public and consistent with the Open Meetings Act. We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience in this regard. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Hollie Manheimer

Enclosure