



OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE OF ILLINOIS

KWAME RAOUL
ATTORNEY GENERAL

October 7, 2025

Via electronic mail

Mr. Sam Stecklow
Invisible Institute
foia@invisibleinstitute.com

RE: FOIA Request for Review – 2025 PAC 88300

Dear Mr. Stecklow:

This determination letter is issued pursuant to section 9.5(c) of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).¹ For the reasons set forth below, the Public Access Bureau concludes that no further inquiry is warranted in this matter.

On June 26, 2025, you submitted a FOIA request to the University of Illinois (University) seeking copies of the curriculum, lesson plans, and slides of the University's Police Training Institute (Institute) that "relate in any way to the use of Involuntary Commitment Petitions in mental health cases by law enforcement officers[,]" from January 1, 2019, to the present.² On July 11, 2025, after extending the time to respond by five additional business days pursuant to section 3(e) of FOIA,³ the University denied your request pursuant to sections 7(1)(j)(iv) and 7(1)(g) of FOIA.⁴

On July 30, 2025, this office received your Request for Review contesting the denial. With respect to the University's assertion of section 7(1)(j)(iv), you argued that the police training instructors did not qualify as "faculty members" involved in "educational matters," and that the Institute is a training facility, not an educational institution.

¹5 ILCS 140/9.5(c) (West 2024).

²E-mail from Sam Stecklow, Invisible Institute, Experimental Station, to [University of Illinois] (June 26, 2025).

³5 ILCS 140/3(e) (West 2024).

⁴5 ILCS 140/7(1)(j)(iv), (1)(g) (West 2024).

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Section 7(1)(j)(iv) of FOIA exempts from disclosure "course materials or research materials used by faculty members" in connection with "educational matters." This office has previously determined that the plain meaning of the term "course materials" encompasses materials such as curricula, lesson plans, and slides that are used in an educational setting. *See* Ill. Att'y Gen. PAC Req. Rev. Ltr. 78019, issued January 5, 2024; Ill. Att'y Gen. PAC Req. Rev. Ltr. 64950, issued October 8, 2020.

In response to your request, the University stated that it classifies the Institute's instructors as faculty of the University under certain provisions of the University's own statutes, as well as state and federal law. In particular, the University cited section 4(a) of Article IX, which defines the Institute's instructors as members of the University's academic staff.⁵ Additionally, section 3(a)(2) of Article II of the University of Illinois Statutes provides that members of the Academic Staff having the title "Instructor," may be extended faculty privileges under the bylaws of the particular academic unit.⁶ Furthermore, as the University argued in its response, the Institute's instructors are part of "[t]he teaching, research and extension faculties of" the University.⁷ Black's Law Dictionary defines "faculty" as the "[t]eaching staff of a school." Black's Law Dictionary 534 (5th ed. 1979). Although the Institute's instructors are not tenured professors, they are nonetheless part of the University's "faculty."

The Institute is affiliated with the University, and it offers "specialty classes" in a variety of subjects relating to police training, in addition to a "basic law enforcement course."⁸ It has an academic research division which it describes as focusing on "producing new and more effective teaching methods[.]"⁹ Moreover, the Institute's website highlights its use of an "Adult Learning Model," which it describes as "a shift from military-style police academies to police training institutes based on adult learning principles."¹⁰ In contrast to the basic training a police officer may receive on the job, or from superiors in their own police department, the Institute offers educational courses in its association with a university. Therefore, the materials used in those courses pertain to educational matters.

⁵Art. IX, Sec. 4(a), University of Illinois Statutes, as amended July 20, 2023, available at <https://www.bot.uillinois.edu/governance/statutes>.

⁶Art. II, Sec. 3(a)(2), University of Illinois Statutes, as amended July 20, 2023, available at <https://www.bot.uillinois.edu/governance/statutes>.

⁷*See* 110 ILCS 70/36e (West 2024).

⁸University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Police Training Institute, <https://pti.illinois.edu/about/> (last visited September 16, 2025).

⁹University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Police Training Institute, <https://pti.illinois.edu/about/> (last visited September 16, 2025).

¹⁰University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Police Training Institute, <https://pti.illinois.edu/about/> (last visited September 16, 2025).

Mr. Sam Stecklow

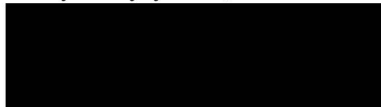
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Because the records you requested are course materials used by faculty members in connection with educational matters, they are exempt from disclosure pursuant to section 7(1)(j)(iv).¹¹ Accordingly, this office has determined that no further action is warranted in this matter.

This file is closed. If you have any questions, you may contact me at michael.knight@ilag.gov.

Very truly yours,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Michael J. Knight.

MICHAEL J. KNIGHT
Assistant Attorney General
Public Access Bureau

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cc: *Via electronic mail*
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Vice President, External Relations and Communications
Chief Records Officer
University of Illinois
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¹¹Because the requested records are exempt from disclosure under section 7(1)(j)(iv), this office declines to address the applicability of section 7(1)(g).