

# UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

URBANA-CHAMPAIGN • CHICAGO • SPRINGFIELD

OFFICE FOR UNIVERSITY RELATIONS  
Freedom of Information Act 2013 Year-End Review

Reported to the Board of Trustees  
May 14, 2014

The Office for University Relations processes FOIA requests regarding all three campuses as well as University Administration. Under the direction of Executive Director Tom Hardy, Assistant Director Kathy McCarthy, a licensed attorney, coordinates this centralized processing, manages the distributed FOIA processing staff, serves as liaison to requestors and to the AG's Public Access Counselor, and finalizes all response letters. She works as a team with communications and administrative staff throughout the University to ensure proper and timely sharing of information.

Request processing is assigned based on the particular strengths and subject matter expertise, including intimate knowledge of the organization of each campus, of each FOIA coordinator (all of whom have other responsibilities). Jaclyn Banister at Urbana, Jenny Fontaine at Chicago, and Melanie Kuehn in University Administration bring their particular organizational backgrounds to their processing of campus-specific requests. Ms. Kuehn also processes Springfield requests. Jill Weathers joined University Relations in August 2013. Ms. Weathers handles commercial requests and is being trained to provide additional processing capacity for other requests.

The OUR executive director is the signatory of response letters as chief records officer for the institution.

## 2013 SUMMARY

- In calendar 2013, 621 requests were received. The FOIA team processed (opened and closed) 612 requests, provided more than 69,000 pages of records and reviewed more than 77,000 pages. Urbana campus units were the subject of 58 percent of all FOIA requests filed in 2013. Media and commercial requests each accounted for 21 percent of all requests filed (total of 42 percent). See Appendix A for details.
- 2013 requests were varied and less driven by emergent issues of media interest than in previous years.
- From the time Google Analytics were applied to the FOIA website, in March 2013, through the close of 2013 the FOIA website was viewed more than 6,500 times. The FOIA log page was viewed over 3,700 times and the available records page was viewed more than 1,100 times. These are the pages that most directly promote University transparency. See Appendix B for details.
- Of the 621 requests received in 2013, 12 (2 percent) were sent to the Public Access Counselor for review. Five of these were filed by the same requester. Two requests were withdrawn by the requesters prior to an opinion being issued and the PAC responded in our favor to two more; eight are still under review.
- Presentations regarding FOIA and departmental responsibilities were given to five groups and approximately 80 employees.
- The University Relations FOIA team – Ginny Hudak-David, Kathy McCarthy, and Melanie Kuehn – were awarded the 2014 DELTA (Distinguished Employee and Leadership Team Award) University Administration team award for planning the FOIA consolidation process and for the successful implementation of the first year of combined, single-intake institutional processing.

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- Executive Director Tom Hardy served on a FOIA panel at the 2013 annual meeting of the Illinois News Broadcasters Association.
- Assistant Director Kathy McCarthy attended several seminars during the Chicago Headline Club's "FOIA Fest."
- Weekly meetings of all FOIA processing staff were held to discuss issues, processing policies, and new developments with the law.
- The office has begun documenting FOIA processing best practices and resources.

### **FOIA Costs**

The cost of processing FOIA requests includes time, effort, and materials and is difficult to calculate with accuracy. Other public bodies have attempted to document costs but no Illinois public body has identified an appropriate algorithm.

From the time a request is received through the University's response, a FOIA may be handled by a dozen individuals. To recap the process: A request is received in University Relations. Assistant Director McCarthy assigns the request to a coordinator, who contacts the unit(s) most likely to have responsive records. Following a search for responsive records, the unit representative(s) forwards records to the coordinator. She compiles all records, reviews each page, and marks redactions. The assistant director also reviews each page and consults with legal counsel as well as other staff in University Relations as needed. A response letter is prepared, the final (possibly redacted) documents are assembled, and the response is tendered to the requestor. In some cases, responsive documents are too large to be sent as an email attachment. In that case, a cloud storage folder is established and the responsive documents are uploaded.

### **COLLABORATION FOR COMPLIANCE**

Staff across the University are valuable – and vital – partners in the University's compliance with the Act.

## Appendix A: FOIAs Received in Calendar 2013

By Month	Total Received	Total Closed	Total Pages Provided	Total Pages Reviewed
January	57	29	1,861	1,220
February	66	54	9,136	8,198
March	51	59	3,309	3,756
April	58	68	3,585	3,360
May	34	39	7,262	7,911
June	45	35	1,777	1,942
July	47	47	5,600	7,650
August	61	53	7,593	6,942
September	50	58	5,520	6,055
October	56	54	14,106	14,926
November	50	54	6,264	11,660
December	46	43	3,385	3,403
<i>Total</i>	<i>621</i>	<i>612</i>	<i>69,398</i>	<i>77,023</i>
<b>Average</b>	<b>51.75</b>	<b>49.42</b>	<b>5,408.15</b>	<b>6,150.85</b>

\*The term "closed" means (1) our office issued a final response approving or denying the request; (2) our office issued a request to narrow letter, which the requestor did not respond; or (3) the request was withdrawn.

By Month	Total Media Received	Total Commercial Received	Total Private/Other Received
January	17	15	25
February	13	18	35
March	12	8	31
April	10	10	38
May	6	8	20
June	8	5	32
July	14	10	23
August	11	13	37
September	6	12	32
October	15	16	25
November	9	7	34
December	9	7	31
<i>Total</i>	<i>130</i>	<i>129</i>	<i>363</i>
<b>Average</b>	<b>10.83</b>	<b>10.75</b>	<b>30.25</b>

\*\*\* Due to the way the data is saved, it is not easy to pinpoint the month when the pages were actually reviewed (i.e., if a request comes in the last week of March and responded to in April, it is unknown when the actual review took place.) For the purposes of this report, the assumption is that the review took place the same month in which the response was issued.

**Requests for Review received:** 12 (2% of total requests received in 2013)

## Campus of Interest Statistics

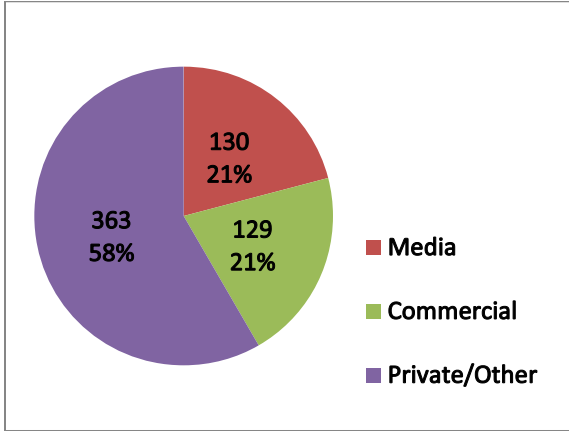
<b>Campus</b>	<b>Number of Requests</b>	<b>Percentage of Requests</b>	<b>Pages Reviewed</b>	<b>Pages Provided</b>
Urbana	361	58.13%	43,363	38,969
Chicago	141	22.71%	12,976	12,164
Springfield	31	4.99%	2,376	2,315
UA	64	10.31%	16,006	13,530
Multiple Campuses	24	3.86%	2,302	2,420

\*For purposes of this report, all FOIA requests opened in 2013 are counted. For example, a FOIA received in December 2012, but responded to in 2013, was not counted as being processed in 2013. However a FOIA opened in 2013, and responded to in 2014, is included. This provides a more accurate representation of the work being done during the year. This approach is used here and in future reports to ensure consistency.

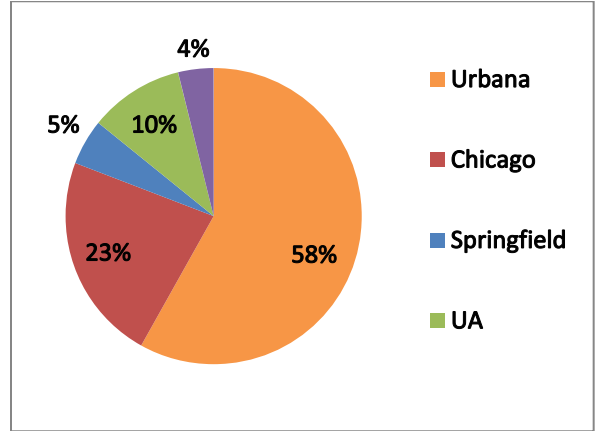
## Requests by Campus

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Urbana</b>	<b>Chicago</b>	<b>Springfield</b>	<b>UA</b>	<b>Multi</b>
Number Media	130	82	22	3	19	4
Number Commercial	129	44	50	13	15	7
Number Private/Other	363	236	69	15	30	13
Percent Media	20.90%	63.08%	16.92%	2.31%	14.62%	3.08%
Percent Commercial	20.74%	34.11%	38.76%	10.08%	11.63%	5.43%
Percent Private/Other	58.36%	65.01%	19.01%	4.13%	8.26%	3.58%

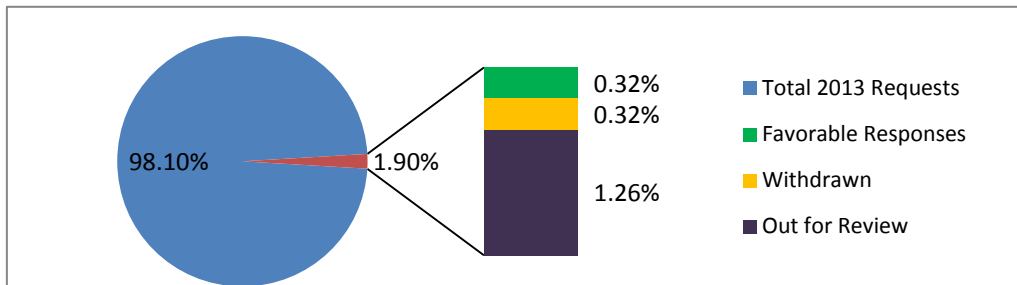
**Percentage of Requests by Requester Type**



**Percentage of Requests by Campus**



**Request for Review Statistics**



# Appendix B



www.FOIA.uillinois.edu - http://www.foia.uillinois.edu  
All Web Site Data

Jan 1, 2013 - Dec 31, 2013

## Visits

**6,693**

% of Total: 100.00% (6,693)

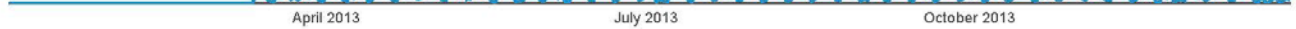


## Visits

● Visits

500

250



## Pageviews by Page Title

Page Title	Pageviews
Illinois Freedom of Information Act	6,042
FOIA Log - Illinois Freedom of Information Act	3,731
Filing a Request - Illinois Freedom of Infor...	1,139
Available Records - Illinois Freedom of Info...	1,133
Frequently Asked Questions - Illinois Freedo...	483
Response Timeline - Illinois Freedom of Info...	417
2012 FOIA requests - Illinois Freedom of Inf...	411
Charges - Illinois Freedom of Information Act	245
General Records - Illinois Freedom of Inform...	237
Nov-Dec 2011 FOIA requests - Illinois Freedo...	82

Website traffic was particularly high in June due to a particular FOIA that was of interest to Urbana social media.