Dear Colleagues,

We want to thank the Stewarding Excellence Police Training Institute Project Team for its thoughtful and diligent work during the review of the Police Training Institute (PTI). The review focused on the core issue of identifying the appropriate level of campus support for PTI. The Project Team commented on PTI’s continued fulfillment of the University of Illinois’ “broad mandate to provide ‘public service and economic development’ to the people of Illinois.” The Project Team concluded, however, that distributing $900,000 from the University’s General Revenue Funds (GRF) to PTI on an annual basis cannot be justified. We agree with this conclusion. In the face of the state’s dwindling support of the university, those funds are needed for more core missions of the campus.

We are mindful of the state legislature’s establishment of the PTI at Illinois. We are proud of PTI and its long and esteemed history of being the state’s premier law enforcement training center. The state legislature’s creation and placement of PTI at Illinois was an acknowledgement of the importance of law enforcement training and the trust that the state legislature had in our ability to provide the highest level of professional and cutting edge training to the law enforcement officers of our state. The establishment of the police academy came with a specific appropriation to help support its operations. The state currently does not support PTI at a level that avoids a subsidy from campus funds.

We want to acknowledge and commend PTI’s aggressive and proactive response to control and manage the organization’s deficit primarily caused by the decline in enrollment due to municipal budget difficulties across the state and existing contractual obligations. Since FY 2008, PTI has reduced its expenses by 45 percent. PTI also renegotiated more favorable leases and continued to work with the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board (ILETSB) on its deficit reduction plan. In this fiscal year, PTI will improve its cost structure by eliminating $666,251 from its budget, including reductions in personnel. The Project Team estimated that PTI would end the last fiscal year with a $262,000 deficit, but this amount remains uncertain given that it is dependent on course enrollments.

We have extensively studied the possibilities for PTI to remain open and secure permanent, stable funding from other sources. We have concluded that the prospects for additional funding or new partners are slim at this time. Given the long history of PTI at Illinois and the legislative mandate that PTI exist at the University of Illinois, it is with considerable sadness that we arrive at a decision to take the necessary steps to close PTI no later than December 31, 2011. We believe this decision to be necessary because we cannot justify using
resources to fund PTI that derive from student tuition and the shrinking state funding available for our core education and research missions. PTI staff have served the organization faithfully, and our decision is no reflection on their competence or commitment. Fundamentally, our primary mission of educating Illinois' undergraduate, graduate and professional students must remain a priority.

We will cooperate fully with the ILETSB and the state legislature in finalizing the plans for the closure of PTI’s operations. We have notified the ILETSB of the intention to close PTI. We will honor all of our obligations to the staff of PTI and will assist them in their career transitions. The charge for Executive Director of Public Safety and Interim Director of PTI Barbara O'Connor and her staff going forward will be to work cooperatively with the ILETSB on a transition plan for ceasing operations by the end of December 2011.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Easter
Chancellor and Provost (Interim)

Richard P. Wheeler
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (Interim)