

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT

In the Matter of a Complaint by

FINAL DECISION

Michael Gyetvan,

Complainant

against

Docket #FIC 2025-0698

Megan Philippi, Director, Public Records,
State of Connecticut, University of
Connecticut; Public Records, State of
Connecticut, University of Connecticut,
and State of Connecticut, University of
Connecticut,

Respondents

July 22, 2026

The above-captioned matter was heard as a contested case on April 27, 2026, at which time the complainant and the respondents appeared, stipulated to certain facts and presented testimony, exhibits and argument on the complaint.

After consideration of the entire record, the following facts are found and conclusions of law are reached:

1. The respondents are public agencies within the meaning of §1-200(1), G.S.
2. By letter dated August 1, 2025 and filed August 4, 2025, the complainant appealed to this Commission, alleging that the respondents violated the Freedom of Information (“FOI”) Act by failing to provide him with a copy of certain records. The complainant also requested that the Commission consider the imposition of a maximum civil penalty against the respondents in this case.
3. Section 1-210(a), G.S., provides in relevant part that:

[e]xcept as otherwise provided by any federal law or state statute, all records maintained or kept on file by any public agency, whether or not such records are required by any law or by any rule or regulation, shall be public records and every person shall have the right to . . . (3) receive a copy of such records in accordance with section 1-212.

4. Section 1-212(a), G.S., provides in relevant part that “[a]ny person applying **in writing** shall receive, promptly upon request, a plain, facsimile, electronic or certified copy of any public record.” (Emphasis added.)

5. It is found that the instant complaint arises out of a previous Commission decision captioned *Michael Gyetvan v. Director of Public Records, State of Connecticut, University of Connecticut, et al.*, Docket #FIC 2024-0378 (June 11, 2025) (“*Gyetvan I*”). The Commission takes administrative notice of its Final Decision in *Gyetvan I*.

6. Specifically, in *Gyetvan I*, the complainant made a request for twenty-six categories of records. It is found that the following five requests out of the twenty-six original requests addressed in *Gyetvan I* are the subject of the instant complaint:

- a. Request 2.g: All records involving the externally submitted and awarded National Science Foundation, Award Number 2152202, grant titled “Transdisciplinary Convergence in Educational Neuroscience Doctoral Training Program” awarded to UConn’s Department of Psychological Sciences and Department of Educational Psychology;
- b. Request 2.h: All post-enrollment records created for all UConn Behavioral Neuroscience Program, Neuroscience Graduate/Biomedical Science Program, PNB Neuroscience Program, and Interdisciplinary Neuroscience Program students;
- c. Request 2.s: All records involving the creation of any new or revised UConn Graduate School Catalog policies or writing, in any Graduate Catalog since 2019 including, but not limited to, policies, appeals of any kind, advisor and advisory system policies, and/or any other academic regulations;
- d. Request 2.t: All records involving the creation of any new or revised Policies and Rules for Graduate Study in Psychological Sciences handbook since 2019 including, but not limited to, policies, appeals of any kind, advisor or advisory system policies, and/or any other academic regulations; and
- e. Request 2.u: All records involving the removal of the “BNS Brochure” from UConn’s Department of Psychological Sciences website in or around 2022

7. In *Gyetvan I*, the Commission made the following findings with respect to the five requests referenced in paragraph 6, above:

- a. With regard to the request set forth in paragraph 2.g, above, it is found that the respondents provided the complainant with all records pertaining to the grant entitled “Transdisciplinary Convergency in Educational Neuroscience Doctoral Training Program.” It is further found that, after such records were provided to the complainant, he requested emails involving the grant. In this regard, it is found that, at the second contested case hearing, the complainant requested that the respondents run the title of the grant through the electronic mail accounts of *all* UConn employees with a date range of August 1, 2012 to the date of the request.
- b. With regard to the search for post-enrollment records responsive to the request set forth in paragraph 2.h, above, the Respondent Director testified, and it is found, that the respondents ran the complainant’s last name through the electronic mail accounts of *all* UConn employees from August 1, 2019 to August 2, 2023. It is further found that all non-exempt responsive records from August 15, 2019 (the date that the complainant was no longer enrolled at UConn) through August 2, 2023 (the date of the request at issue in this case) were provided to the complainant. The Commission notes that the respondents agreed that all responsive records which were not provided to the complainant would be submitted to the Commission for in camera inspection.¹
- c. With regard to the request set forth in paragraph 2.s, above, it is found that the respondents provided the complainant with all responsive policies by providing him with a link to the meeting minutes where such

¹ With respect to the request set forth in paragraph 2.h, above, the Commission in *Gyetvan I* noted in a footnote that:

...at the second contested case hearing, the complainant contended that the running of his last name through all electronic mail accounts of *all* UConn employees may have been an insufficient search, and he requested that the respondents run his initials through the electronic email accounts of *all* UConn employees with a date range of August 1, 2019 through the date of the request. ...

policies were discussed. It is further found that, after such records were provided to the complainant, he requested all emails relating to the subject matters in such request. In this regard, it is found that, at the second contested case hearing, the complainant requested that the respondents run the words “graduate catalogue” through the electronic mail accounts of all graduate deans; all associate deans of the graduate school; Cinamon Adams; all assistant deans of the graduate school; Stuart Duncan; and Megan Petsa, Director of Graduate Student Administration, with a date range of August 1, 2019 through the date of the request.

- d. With regard to the request set forth in paragraph 2.t, above, the respondents contacted the department head of Psychological Sciences at the respondent University (the “Department Head”), requesting that records responsive to such request be forwarded to the Respondent Director. It is further found that the Department Head informed the Respondent Director that there were no responsive records. It is further found that the complainant then requested all emails relating to “the creation of any new or revised Policies and Rules for Graduate Study in Psychological Sciences handbook since 2019.” In this regard, it is found that, at the second contested case hearing, the complainant requested that the respondents run the words “department handbook” through the electronic mail accounts of all individuals who met about the handbook, including Barnes-Farrell; James Chrobak; Dixon; Green; Quinn; Johson; Magley; Etan Markus; Milan; Naigles; and John Salamone, with a date range of August 1, 2019 through the date of the request.
- e. With regard to the request set forth in paragraph 2.u, above, the respondents contacted the Department Head ...requesting that records responsive to such request be forwarded to the Respondent Director. It is further found that the Department Head informed the Respondent Director that there were no responsive records. It is further found that the complainant then requested all emails relating to “the removal of the BNS Brochure from UConn’s Department of Psychological Sciences website in or around 2022.” In this regard, it is found that, at the second contested case hearing, the

complainant requested that the respondents run the words “BNS Brochure” through the electronic mail accounts of the individuals from the psychological department, including James Chrobak, Etan Markus; Roselin “Holly” Fitch; Harvey Swadlow; Heather Read; Ean Stevenson; Maxim “Maksim” Volgushev; Robert Astur; John Salamone; and James Green, with a date range of August 1, 2019 through the date of the request. With regard to the request set forth in paragraph 2.t, above, the respondents contacted the department head of Psychological Sciences at the respondent University (the “Department Head”), requesting that records responsive to such request be forwarded to the Respondent Director. It is further found that the Department Head informed the Respondent Director that there were no responsive records. It is further found that the complainant then requested all emails relating to “the creation of any new or revised Policies and Rules for Graduate Study in Psychological Sciences handbook since 2019.” In this regard, it is found that, at the second contested case hearing, the complainant requested that the respondents run the words “department handbook” through the electronic mail accounts of all individuals who met about the handbook, including Barnes-Farrell; James Chrobak; Dixon; Green; Quinn; Johson; Magley; Etan Markus; Milan; Naigles; and John Salamone, with a date range of August 1, 2019 through the date of the request.

See Gyetvan I, ¶¶ 22, 23, 25, 26, 27.

8. The Commission also made the following findings and determination in *Gyetvan I* with respect to the requests referenced in paragraph 7, above:

In response to the searches formulated [by the complainant] at the second contested case hearing, the respondents contended that the requests...**should be considered new requests, and it is so found.** Because the searches and related parameters were raised and defined during the second contested case hearing, **such requests are beyond the scope of the request set forth in paragraph 2, above, and will not be further addressed herein...**The Commission notes that the respondents agreed that, **upon receipt of a request for copies of such emails, they would conduct the searches described in**

the [New Requests].

Gyetvan I, ¶ 28, n.6 (emphasis added) (the “New Requests”).

9. In the instant case, it is found that the complainant did not make a written request to the respondents for a copy of the records responsive to the New Requests as required by §1-212(a), G.S.; rather, it is found that the complainant engaged in some discussions with the respondents following the second contested case hearing in *Gyetvan I* concerning some of the search parameters raised and defined during such hearing, and then filed a complaint with the Commission alleging the respondents’ noncompliance.

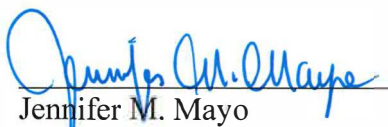
10. Recently, the Superior Court again emphasized that a written request is the condition precedent that triggers a public agency’s obligation to provide a requester with a copy of public records. See *Mozzochi v. Freedom of Info. Comm’n*, No. HHB-CV-24-5036819-S, 2026 WL 1244602, at *4 (Conn. Super. Ct. Apr. 27, 2026) (“The court notes that only written requests for records trigger FOIA disclosure obligations.”), citing *Plan. & Zoning Comm’n of Town of Pomfret v. Freedom of Info. Comm’n*, 130 Conn. App. 448, 456 (2011) (“The language of §1–212(a) clearly and unambiguously requires that an individual seeking to receive a copy of a public record...must reduce the request to writing in order for the request to be enforceable by the commission....”).

11. Because the complainant did not make a written request for a copy of the records he sought from the respondents prior to filing his appeal, it is concluded that the respondents did not violate the FOI Act as alleged in the complaint.

The following order by the Commission is hereby recommended on the basis of the record concerning the above-captioned complaint.

1. The complaint is hereby dismissed.

Approved by Order of the Freedom of Information Commission at its regular meeting of July 22, 2026.


Jennifer M. Mayo
Acting Clerk of the Commission

PURSUANT TO SECTION 4-180(c), G.S., THE FOLLOWING ARE THE NAMES OF EACH PARTY AND THE MOST RECENT MAILING ADDRESS, PROVIDED TO THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION COMMISSION, OF THE PARTIES OR THEIR AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE.

THE PARTIES TO THIS CONTESTED CASE ARE:

MICHAEL GYETVAN, c/o Attorney James T. Baldwin, Coles, Baldwin & Kaiser, LLC, 1 Eliot Place, 3rd Floor, Fairfield, CT 06824

MEGAN PHILIPPI, DIRECTOR, PUBLIC RECORDS, STATE OF CONNECTICUT, UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT; PUBLIC RECORDS, STATE OF CONNECTICUT, UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT; AND STATE OF CONNECTICUT, UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT, c/o Attorney Nathan P. LaVallee and Attorney Shannon Walsh-Whitty, Office of the General Counsel, University of Connecticut, 343 Mansfield Road, Unit 1177, Storrs, CT 06269-1177


Jennifer M. Mayo
Acting Clerk of the Commission