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FILE NO. S-1489

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE:
University Police

Honorable Thomas J. Difanis
State's Attorney
Champaign County
Court House
Urbana, Illinois 61801

Dear Mr. Difanis:

I have your letter in which you ask whether the Champaign County sheriff may authorize the University of Illinois police to enforce State and local law whenever a violation comes to their attention, whether or not the violation concerns the University of Illinois. For the reasons suggested in your letter, it is my opinion that he may not.

Section 7 of "AN ACT to provide for the organization and maintenance of the University of Illinois" (Ill. Rev. Stat. 1977, ch. 144, par. 28) provides in pertinent

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part:

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The Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois, subject to the applicable civil service law, may appoint persons to be members of the University of Illinois Police Department. Members of the Police Department shall be peace officers and as such have all powers possessed by policemen in cities, and sheriffs, including the power to make arrests on view or warrants of violations of state statutes and city or county ordinances, except that they may exercise such powers only in counties wherein the University and any of its branches or properties are located when such is required for the protection of university properties and interests, and its students and personnel, and otherwise, within such counties, when specifically requested by appropriate state or local law enforcement officials; provided, however, that such officer shall have no power to serve and execute civil processes.

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(Emphasis added.)

Under the terms of section 7, the jurisdiction of the university police extends only to the protection of university properties or personnel. University police officers are peace officers as defined in section 2-13 of the Criminal Code of 1961 (Ill. Rev. Stat. 1977, ch. 38, par. 2-13), only within that jurisdiction. Ill. Rev. Stat. 1977, ch. 144, par. 28; see, Arrington v. City of Chicago (1970), 45 Ill. 2d 316; People v. Picha (1976), 44 Ill. App. 3d 759, 762.

University police officers may exercise authority

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outside of their defined jurisdiction only when their assistance is "specifically requested" by State or local law enforcement officials. The phrase "specifically requested", not being defined by statute, must be given its ordinary and popularly understood meaning. (See, People v. Dednam (1973), 55 Ill. 2d 565, 568.) Webster's Third New International Dictionary defines "specific" to mean: "restricted by nature to a particular individual, relation, or effect". It therefore follows that a specific request for the assistance of university police, relates only to a particular situation, and that a local law enforcement official, such as the sheriff, has no power to issue a general or blanket authorization and the university police have no power to act under such a general authorization.

However, a university police officer is not obligated to ignore a criminal violation, which occurs in his presence, even if such violation is not of direct interest to the university. Like other citizens, university police officers may make citizens' arrests when acting outside their defined jurisdiction. (Ill. Rev. Stat. 1977, ch. 38, par. 107-3.)

It is therefore my opinion that the University of Illinois police may not be given blanket authority to enforce

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State and local laws within Champaign County whenever violations are brought to their attention.

Very truly yours,

A T T O R N E Y G E N E R A L