Information Release Guidelines

Compliance Guides For Employees

Introduction
As technology has advanced, both the need and demand for access to timely information have increased. It is vital that all employees treat university information properly by observing Baylor University's information policies. This Quick-Reference Guide is designed to:

- Outline the principles related to information policies as stated in the Personnel Policy Manual and the Student Handbook.
- Cite specific examples employees may encounter in their daily work.

Take Personal Responsibility
As a Baylor University employee, you are personally responsible for the proper use of information available to you. Failure to comply with University policies could:

- Subject an employee to disciplinary action or even termination.
- Result in the loss of state and federal financial aid to students.

Prevent Unauthorized Access
Access to University information must be limited to authorized persons. Observe the following guidelines to ensure...
security:

- Computer Password Security
  - Do not reveal your password to anyone: students, coworkers or supervisors.
  - Select your password carefully.
    - Wrong: Your name, a family member's name or "Baylor".
    - Right: Unusual word or combination of letters and numbers.
  - Do not write your password down.
  - Do not post your password on or near your computer workstation.

- Information Systems
  - Log out of the computer when leaving your work area.

- Sensitive Information
  - Retrieve printed copies immediately from the printer.
  - Transmit electronically or in a sealed/signed envelope.
  - Shred or destroy paper copies when ready for disposition.

Protect Confidentiality

The Need To Know
Before accessing or releasing any University information, ask:

- As part of my assigned job duties, do I have a legitimate need to know the particular information?
- Does the person requesting the information have a legitimate need to know the information as part of his or her assigned duties, and am I authorized to release the requested information? If the answer is "no" to either question, you may be violating University policy by accessing or releasing information.

Employee Records

Employee information is classified as either directory or non-directory information. Directory information is defined in the PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL. Directory information about individual employees may be released to the general public. (See NOTE below.)

Employee non-directory information may be released by authorized offices to:
• Employee’s supervisor or department head.
• An attorney in the General Counsel’s Office.
• University official with the rank of Vice President or higher.
• Personnel/Payroll supervisory personnel.
• Assistant Vice President Information Management & Testing Services
• Administrative personnel with written authorization of the President.
• Other requests for non-directory information should be referred to the appropriate office as specified on the attached chart.

**Student Records**

Students have a federally guaranteed right to private and confidential University records as provided by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), more commonly known as the Buckley Amendment. All information contained in student records is classified as either directory information or non-directory information.

**Student Directory Information** about individual Baylor students may be released to the general public. (See NOTE below.)

- Directory information is defined in Student Policies and Procedures.
- The general public is anyone not employed by the University.

**Student Non-Directory Information** is restricted and should not be released without appropriate authorization. In general, non-directory information can be released only by approved offices and individuals as specified on the attached chart.

Non-directory information may be released by authorized offices to:

- The student who requests only his or her own records and who provides identification.
- Baylor employees with legitimate educational interest.
- Parents of a student if
  - Parent provides written evidence student is claimed as a dependent on IRS documents or
  - Student provides specific written permission.
Examples Of Non-Directory Information

- Class grades
- Parent or guardian's name, address and phone numbers
- Grade point averages
- Social security numbers
- Class schedules
- Disciplinary records
- Health records

Posting Student Grades

- Post in a random order.
- Avoid posting for small classes since student identification is easier.

NOTE: University policy does not allow releasing lists of student or employee information to the general public.

When In Doubt - Don't
If you feel unsure about whether it is appropriate to release information, refer the person making the request to the office authorized for overseeing the information in question. See the attached chart which designates the custodians of various University records.

Reviewed February 24, 2014