FERPA/ Handling Student Records

FERPA

The Family Education and Right to Privacy Act (FERPA) governs the disclosure of student records. The university's official position on Student Records can be found [here](#).

For a quick tutorial about FERPA and how it might apply to you, view the FERPA PowerPoint presentation used for department chair training. FERPA provides that student records other than published directory information must remain private and confidential. Student non-directory information which this law protects includes class grades and gradepoint averages; social security numbers; disciplinary records; parent or guardian's name, address, and phone numbers; class schedules; and health records. However, this law does permit the disclosure, without the consent of the student involved, of confidential student information to faculty members with legitimate educational interests. Such requests for confidential student information must be presented in writing and signed by the faculty member requesting the information. Requests for confidential student information are retained in the Office of Academic Records. If a faculty member posts student grades, he or she should not use the student's social security number or Bear ID but should employ a method of posting that maintains the student's privacy, for example, by using an arbitrary number system and by posting grades in a random order. Grades for students in small classes should not be posted.

Access to University information must be limited to authorized persons. To ensure security of the computer network, faculty members should select their computer passwords carefully, should not write the password down or post it on or near the computer, and should not reveal their computer passwords to anyone. When dealing with confidential information,
faculty members should retrieve printed copies immediately from the printer, should transmit electronically or in a sealed/signed envelope, and should shred or destroy paper copies when they are ready for disposition.

Before accessing or releasing any University information, a faculty member should ask “As part of my faculty responsibilities, do I have a legitimate need to know the particular information?” and “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 to any one of the questions is “no,” a faculty member may be violating University policy by accessing or releasing the information.

**Maintaining Student Records**

Faculty members are responsible for maintaining for at least three years all class grades and attendance records for students enrolled in their classes. Papers, examinations, and other class assignments which a student submits in a course and which are considered in determining a student's grade must either be returned to the student or retained by the instructor for at least one full semester beyond the end of the semester in which the student took the course.

Faculty members who leave the University should, prior to their departure, convey to their department chair all student records from at least the previous three years.

Outdated student records or papers should be shredded.