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Overview of FERPA for Faculty

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 was enacted to protect the privacy of education records, to establish the right of students to inspect and review their education records, and to provide guidelines for correction of inaccurate or misleading statements. In addition, it gives students some control over the disclosure of information from education records.

To avoid violations of FERPA rules, DO NOT:

- ever link the name of a student with that student's social security number or student ID number in any public manner
- circulate a printed class list with student name and social security number or ID number or grades as an attendance roster
- leave graded tests or papers in a stack for students to pick up by sorting through the papers of all students
- discuss the progress of any student with anyone other than the student (including parents) without the consent of the student. Exception: you can discuss student academic progress with administrators who have legitimate educational interest.
- provide anyone with lists of students enrolled in your classes for any commercial purpose
- provide anyone with student schedules or assist anyone other than university employees in finding a student on campus

Email Communications:

- Exercise special care with email communication. Email sent to a student's New School GroupWise account is allowed under FERPA because the student alone has the password to read the email. Email communications sent to a student's non-GroupWise account (Hotmail, Yahoo, etc) can potentially violate FERPA. This means that if you send a student an email with non-directory, private information to one of these accounts and this email is read by a third party, then the university has violated FERPA. In general, use GroupWise email accounts.
- Be careful about what information you include in an email; it can be printed, forwarded, or read by a third party. Use group email only to communicate general procedures and information. If you need to communicate sensitive information to a student, send the student an email asking him or her to come to your office.

If you have any FERPA questions, contact Bill Kimmel, University Registrar.