

FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)

Condensed Guide for Faculty

FERPA is a Federal Law designed to protect the privacy of a student's educational records by giving students the right to

- ☞ inspect and review the educational records
- ☞ have the records amended, if necessary
- ☞ have some control over the disclosure of information from the records

Students over 18 years old are considered to be adults under this law. FERPA prevents University officials, including faculty, from discussing a student's academic record or performance with anyone except the student - including parents. Exceptions to this are made if

- ☞ the student has provided written permission which is on file at the Registrar's Office
- ☞ the student brings another person to a meeting with a University official,
- ☞ a parent provides certification that their student is a dependent (the most recent Federal Income Tax statement must be filed with the Registrar's Office).

The Act applies to all educational records maintained by the University which are directly related to the student, including records containing a student's social security number. Never post social security numbers or other personally identifiable information. Do not post grades in any way that the students can be identified! The best strategy, if you need to post grades, is to assign a random number to each student in the class that only the student knows. The grade posting list should be in random order – not alphabetical or by seat assignment.

FERPA allows the University to disclose student academic records, without prior consent, to the following:

- ☞ University employees, acting in the student's educational interest, who have a need to know
- ☞ Other schools to which the student is transferring
- ☞ Certain government officials in order to carry out lawful functions
- ☞ Appropriate outside parties in connection with financial aid to the student
- ☞ Persons who need to know in cases of health and safety emergencies

The University may disclose *directory* information without consent. West Chester University has defined the following as *directory* information that may be disclosed: name, address, telephone number, e-mail address; date and place of birth; major field of study; dates of attendance, degrees and awards received; the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student; participation in officially recognized activities and sports.

If you have any questions, call the Registrar, Mr. Joseph Santivaschi, at 610-436-3085.