

# **FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT OF 1974, AS AMENDED**

## **New Staff Orientation**

### **What is FERPA?**

FERPA is the acronym for the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 as Amended, sometimes known as the Buckley Amendment. The Federal Department of Education (DOE) oversees compliance with FERPA, investigates any charges that may be lodged against an institution and may, if negligence is determined, deny the institution the right to participate in Federal Financial Aid programs.

FERPA was originally intended to allow students access to their educational records. However, over the years the emphasis has been changed to placing the responsibility on schools to NOT release private information concerning a student. Therefore, information normally included in a printed student directory, is classified as DIRECTORY INFORMATION and may be released to outside parties. Students are given the opportunity to request that even directory information be restricted and not released to outside parties. In those cases, no information may be released.

Each institution has the obligation to formulate a FERPA policy of their own. They are charged with defining Directory Information and informing the student how to restrict the release of Directory Information. However, the institution must comply with agencies concerned with Financial Aid in relation to verification of enrollment. Webster University has chosen to establish an internal policy that requires that addresses, phone numbers and student's daily schedule NOT be disclosed. The FERPA policy may technically allow us to release that information, but Webster wishes to respect the privacy of the students by not routinely releasing this information.

### **Why do I care you ask?**

Because improper releasing of private information, or restricted information, would give a student the opportunity to file a complaint with the DOE, it is important for all employees of Webster University to understand the implications of FERPA. Equally important is the right of the student to expect us to be good guardians of their records.

### **Why am I telling you all this?**

Student records are housed electronically on a networked computer system, CARS. Therefore, staff working in many offices may have access to student records traditionally housed in the Registrar's Office. So the problems once unique to registrars, has been passed on to all staff! To remind staff of this fact,

a screen alerting you to the FERPA restrictions, will appear when you sign onto the CARS system.

### **What are the basic do's and don'ts?**

If a student requests information about themselves, that is a class schedule, a look at their grades etc., ask for a picture ID - all Webster students are issued a picture ID but a driver's license will be fine. If you are satisfied that it is the student, then feel free to release information to them. If it is their spouse, their significant other, their parent, their friend, their enemy, their UN-involved third party - **DO NOT RELEASE ANY INFORMATION**. If you are uncertain just what to do, call the Registrar's Office for directions. Faculty, advisors and in general, members of Webster's staff are considered to have a legitimate educational interest in the student and thus may be given information. However, they must not be looking at a student's information for personal reasons (it is their son, their daughter's boyfriend, their parent etc.). Don't be intimidated by a subpoena, a badge, a reporter or an irate parent, direct them to the Registrar's Office. We will gladly take the responsibility to disclose or withhold information.

### **CARS sign-on screen**

THIS NOTICE IS TO REMIND YOU THAT YOU MAY BE ACCESSING STUDENT INFORMATION THAT IS PROTECTED BY THE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA). DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL STUDENT INFORMATION (NON DIRECTORY INFORMATION) TO THIRD PARTIES IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED. SCHOOL OFFICIALS WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SAFETY OR EDUCATIONAL WELFARE OF THE STUDENT MAY ACCESS ANY NECESSARY INFORMATION.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS CONCERNING DISCLOSURE OF STUDENT INFORMATION OR WOULD LIKE A COPY OF WEBSTER UNIVERSITY'S FERPA POLICY, CONTACT THE REGISTRAR'S OFFICE, AT 314/968-7450.

IF A STUDENT HAS REQUESTED TO HAVE DISCLOSURE OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION RESTRICTED, THE RESTRICTED DATA WILL BE HIGHLIGHTED ON THE 'DATA ENTRY/PROGRAM ENROLLMENT' SCREEN.

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## **Security Policy for Users of CARS, Webster's student information system**

All employees of Webster university (administrative, academic, staff and student workers) are required to abide by the policies governing review and release of student education records. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), also know as the Buckley Amendment, mandates that information contained in a student's education record must be kept confidential and outlines the procedures for review, release and access of such information.

Access to CARS will be granted to those individuals who have been determined, by their Administrative Vice President, to have a legitimate educational interest in the data. Individuals who have been granted access to any part of the CARS database must understand and accept the responsibility of working with confidential student records. The following rules apply to all university employees with CARS access:

1. Every employee given access to the system will be assigned an operator number and a password. Passwords are to be kept confidential and should not be shared or given to anyone, including supervisors, co-workers or friends.
2. In all transactions, employees shall use their own sign-on and password. When authority to access additional screens or systems is needed, employees should make a request through their departmental supervisor to Mary Petersen, Director of the Administrative Computer Center. Mary will consult with Don Morris, University Registrar before assigning additional access.
3. It is the responsibility of each employee to keep his/her password confidential and to change passwords whenever they feel someone else may have obtained access to your password or log-in.

The complete FERPA policy statement is found in your New Employee Orientation folder. Additional copies of the guidelines can be found in the Office of the Registrar. In part, the policy states that faculty, staff and student workers of the University may be given access to student education records on a "need-to-know" basis and that such access must be limited to job related, legitimate or educational interest. The information contained in a student's education record may not be released to a third party without the written consent of the student. Directory information which, by law, may be released is listed in the complete FERPA policy.

Examples of inappropriate use of student records are:

1. Accessing or reviewing a student's record without a legitimate educational interest.
2. Releasing confidential student information to another student, University organization, or any person who does not have a legitimate education interest, or parents or spouse of a student, without the student's written authorization.

3. Leaving reports or computer screens containing confidential student information in view of others who do not have a legitimate educational interest in the data.
4. Using the student information for personal business.
5. Giving your password to another individual not authorized to use the CARS system or to view a particular screen.
6. Discussing the information contained in the student record outside of the University or while on the job with individuals who do not have a legitimate educational interest in the information (need to know).
7. Leaving data displayed on the screen and your computer terminal unattended while you are logged onto CARS.

Under no circumstances should an employee give confidential information about students to any other student, to other employees, or to any person who has not been authorized to receive such information by their position or by their departmental supervisor. Although, by law, directory information may be released without prior consent, any request coming from students or from anyone off-campus should be referred to the Office of the Registrar. Students may request that directory information concerning them not be released. If that occurs, a highlighted field will appear in the student data screen. Webster University seeks to respect the privacy of students and does not routinely release directory information, mailing lists of students or other lists of students to any third parties.



**CONFIDENTIALITY TRAINING  
FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Employee's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dept \_\_\_\_\_  
Please print name

Your signature acknowledges that you have been informed about the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act. Willful noncompliance with this law may be considered gross misconduct and could result in termination of employment.

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