

# Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

## Training for Student Employees



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# What is FERPA?

- Definitions
  - A **student** is any person age 18 or attending an institution of postsecondary education
  - **Education records** are any records that are **related** to the student and **maintained** by the institution
- FERPA is a federal law that protects the privacy rights of students. FERPA grants several rights to students, among them are the right to:
  - inspect and review education records;
  - seek amendment of education records;
  - consent to the disclosure of education records;
  - file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office in Washington, D.C.

# Disclosure of Education Records



- Generally, the college must have **written permission** from the student before releasing information from a student's record.
  
- **Exceptions** include, but are not limited to:
  - ▣ **directory** information (public information)
  - ▣ **school official** with **legitimate educational interest**.



# School Official

– that's you!



- To be a **school official** with **legitimate educational interest**, you must be:
  - ▣ performing a task that is specified in your position description or contract;
  - ▣ performing a task related to a student's education or a student's discipline;
  - ▣ providing a service or benefit to the student;  
or
  - ▣ maintaining safety and security on campus.

# Your Responsibilities



## □ Security and Confidentiality

- You may not release or otherwise disclose any information to which you are privy to **any third party** (including the **parent or spouse**) and/or to another college official who does not “need to know”.
  - CURIOSITY is not “need to know”
- You are **not permitted** to seek personal benefit or to allow others to benefit personally by knowledge of any confidential information which has come to you as a result of your work assignment.
- You should **report any violations** of FERPA to your supervisor **IMMEDIATELY**.

## □ Best Practices

- Do not discuss information contained in an educational record in an open area where others might overhear you.
- Encourage students to keep their OLSIS IDs, passwords, and any other materials that contain their educational records in a secure location.



# Examples of a violation:



- ❑ Making a copy of your friend's transcript so that he/she can send it to another institution.
- ❑ Telling a friend about the grades of another friend that you saw while you were filing or imaging records.
- ❑ Leaving reports or computer screens containing confidential information in view of other students who are checking in to see their advisor.
- ❑ Using your access to look up your friend's class schedule.
- ❑ Allowing another person to use your access.
- ❑ Throwing away a paper with identifiable information (student information must be shred!).
- ❑ Openly discussing the reason for an academic dismissal in the hallway.

# REMEMBER...



...your job is to **protect the student**...so when in doubt...don't give it out!

## ■ WHO TO ASK:

- Your immediate supervisor
- Center for Student Services (*Ext. 310*)
- Office of the Vice President for Academic & Student Affairs (*Ext. 209 or Ext. 242*)
- Other Resources:
  - Department of Education:  
<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>
  - Records Resources, click on FERPA (Student Privacy):  
<http://www.wvup.edu/current-students/registrar/records/>