

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) provides students with the right to (1) inspect and review their record, (2) restrict the disclosure of their record, and (3) seek to amend their record. Students have the right to expect that information in their educational records will be kept confidential, and will be disclosed only with their permission or under the provision of the law.

It is *very important* to note the following:

- Grades may *never* be posted outside your office or classroom unless you've developed a random, confidential coding method that is so complicated, no one but the student will know which is their grade (believe me, it's too much trouble).
- If a parent calls regarding a student in one of your classes, no information about the student may be given out. You may not even say that the student is doing great or doing poorly; no indication of any grade or performance is allowed, *unless* you have written permission from the student. And if you do have written permission, keep it or have a secretary put it in the student's file. If the parent persists, refer her or him to Registration and Records (753-0681)—they are the only ones who are authorized to give out information.
- If a student and their parent(s) are in your office to talk about a grade or anything else, you must get written permission from the student before discussing it with or in front of their parents.
- DO NOT provide any information regarding a student to prospective employers, associations, honorary organizations, etc., without the student's *written* consent.
- DO NOT ask any of the secretaries to give you academic information regarding any student; in other words, you do not have access to their files to "check out" their performance in any other classes or on standardized tests, unless, of course, you are on a committee to determine admission to a program.
- DO NOT discuss your students' class performance with your colleagues unless a legitimate educational interest exists.
- Any paper that has anything about any student on it should be shredded (this includes class lists, grade reports, personal notes, etc.). If you wish to discard any of this, please put it in the shredding container outside Jan's office.

Basically, the rule is, don't give out any information regarding any of your students to anyone. There is some information, known as "directory information" (see below) that is available to anyone. However, unless you check it out in the *current* NIU *online* phone directory (<http://www3.niu.edu/cgi-bin/ph>) OR have a secretary check the Registration and Records screens to see if you're allowed to give it out, do not assume you may. If a student has stated that they want no release of information, it's almost as if they don't exist. We may not even say that they are students here. All you can say is, "I have no information I can give you." Again, if someone persists, refer him or her to Registration and Records.

The following is considered "directory information," subject to public disclosure in accordance with FERPA, *unless the student has requested NO RELEASE OF INFORMATION:*

- ✓ Student's name
- ✓ Address
- ✓ Telephone listing
- ✓ Date and place of birth
- ✓ E-mail address
- ✓ Electronic or photographic picture or image
- ✓ Major field of study
- ✓ Classification (senior, junior, etc.)
- ✓ Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- ✓ Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- ✓ Dates of attendance
- ✓ Degrees and awards received
- ✓ Most recent previous education agency or institution attended by the student

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Jan Vander Meer, the office administrator.