

Ohlone College Faculty Responsibility with Student Educational Records

Educational records are records which -

1. contain information which is directly related to a student and
2. are maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting for the agency or institution (faculty members would constitute "a party acting for the agency or institution").

Record means any information maintained in any way, including, but not limited to the following:

- Handwriting
- Video or Audio Tape
- Computer Media
- Film
- Print
- Microfilm and Microfiche

Personally Identifiable Information includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Student's Name
- Parent's Name
- Address of the student or student's family
- A personal identifier, such as a Social Security Number or student number
- A list of personal characteristics or other information that would make the student's identity easily traceable

Eligible Students means a currently enrolled or formerly enrolled student at Ohlone College.

Note: The definition of eligible student *does include* K-12 students enrolled at Ohlone. The only exception to the disclosure of information to parents is if the College has documentation that the K-12 student, under the age of 18, is a dependent for tax purposes. During the application process, Admissions and Records collects a signature from each K-12 student's parent that the student is a dependent for tax purposes. However, once the K-12 student turns 18, the tax dependency status does not allow parents access to student records and the student must give written permission for his/her parents to have access to his/her records. If faculty members have questions about discussing a K-12 student's performance with the student's parents and/or guardian, the faculty member should check with the Admissions and Records Office or the Director of Admissions and Records.

1. California Education Code gives faculty the authority and responsibility to evaluate student academic performance. The official recording of a student's evaluation of performance is typically in the form of a grade filed with Admissions and Records.

2. Faculty use of WebAdvisor is an appropriately secured, and preferred, electronic means of recording official grade marks. A faculty member has access only to her/his class rosters. Students have access only to her/his academic records. E-mail communication to students about their grades is not a recommended practice. Faculty need to be confident that the e-mail is to the student and not used by other family members or friends. Bottom line, use WebAdvisor for electronic grade posting.
3. The public posting of grades either by the student's name, institutional identification number, or Social Security Number without the student's written permission is a violation of Ohlone College policy and the federal law, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Even with names obscured, numeric student identifier numbers are considered personally identifiable information. Therefore the practice of posting grades by Social Security Number or student identification number violates FERPA.

Instructors may do the following:

- a) Use WebAdvisor to post final grades and encourage students to use WebAdvisor to view their class grades.
- b) Gain the students' un-coerced written permission to post grades. All students wishing to have his/her grade posted in a class would need to give this permission. The faculty member must send the written permissions to Admissions and Records to be maintained as part of the students' official academic records.
- c) Use randomly assigned code words or randomly assigned numbers that only the instructor and the individual student know. Regardless of code words or numbers, the order of posting should not be in an order that may be determined by a student. This means, for example, do not post in alphabetical or in numerical order.
- d) Ask interested students to complete a self-addressed, stamped letter/envelope. The instructor may send the student's grade to the student when grades have been determined.

For complete information on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), please see the U.S. Department of Education web site: www.ed.gov. Type in FERPA to their Web site search dialog box and you will be able to read in more detail the FERPA regulations.

Ohlone College Policy can be found on the Ohlone College Web site.