

# **FACULTY & STAFF GUIDE: Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) protects the privacy of educational records. Take the online FERPA training for a complete understanding of how FERPA works:

<http://depts.washington.edu/registra/learning/ferpa-resources-for-faculty-and-staff/>

UW Tacoma will **NOT** release the following information without the written consent of the student:

- Address
- Date of birth
- Schedule of classes or number of credits enrolled
- Grades or grade point average
- Social Security number
- Emergency contact information

## **As a faculty or staff member, please remember:**

1. You are considered a school official and required by law to take every precaution to protect the privacy of students.
2. Student papers and exams should be handled as confidential and should not be left out where there is any chance others may have access to them.
3. When preparing an email distribution list—unless you have written permission of the student to publish their email—be certain you use a listserv or blind copy, to prevent inadvertently publishing the email address of a student who has requested that we not disclose his or her Directory Information.
4. Do not give a student's graded paper or exam to anyone other than the student without written permission from the student.
5. Be cautious about what information you share and with whom you share it, particularly over the phone.
6. Any anecdotal information you share with others becomes part of the student's record.
7. You are not required to—nor should you—speak to special investigators who are seeking information about students who have applied for government positions. Feel free to refer them to the Office of the Registrar.
8. Writing a letter of recommendation may require written permission from the student allowing a faculty member to disclose confidential information from a student's educational records to a third party. It is recommended that before writing a letter of recommendation that contains confidential information—i.e. grades, GPA, class rank, etc.—faculty receive the student's written permission to specifically release this information to a third party. Personal observations about a student may be disclosed with the student's consent.

The university is required to prevent improper disclosure of information. Although FERPA authorizes the release of information, we are seldom required to release any information. If you have any questions about FERPA, please contact the Office of the Registrar at 253-692-4913.

## **When in doubt...don't give it out!**