

UNM Department of Biology SOP—Maintaining Student Privacy

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to identify Biology Department procedures that protect the privacy of students.

Policy

This procedure applies to employees and faculty dealing with requests or dissemination of student information in the Department of Biology.

Definitions

Privacy: Under the Family Educational Right to Privacy Act (FERPA) the only information allowed to be disseminated about a student is the general directory information. However, students with a privacy flag on their information may have absolutely no information released.

Student: Any past or present student enrolled in classes at UNM.

FERPA: The Family Educational Right to Privacy Act. Information on that act may be found at:

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

Controls

All employees and faculty dealing with students will be aware of this SOP by reading and reviewing it. All new employees must read and review this and the link to FERPA regulations in this SOP before dealing with students in any way. All employees should take the Securing Private Data training through Learning Central.

Completion of the review of this information by any staff should be sent directly to the Department Administrator by the supervisor of the employee. All faculty will be reminded by the Chair of the Department each fall to review FERPA regulations and take the Securing Private Data training.

Responsibilities

Employees: Employees are responsible for ensuring that they know the regulations about releasing student information.

Supervisors: Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that their employees have reviewed the necessary SOP Student Privacy Trainings.

Department Administrator: The Department Administrator is responsible for verifying employees' have completed reviewed the regulations.

Department Chair: The Department Chair will ensure that faculty are reminded each year to review the regulations.

Specific Instances:

- 1) Accessibility exam missing from lock up.
- 2) Graded exams or final papers.
- 3) State or Federal officials arrive to ask you for the schedule of a certain student, or whether the student is in your class.
- 4) Parents call asking about their student's grades.
- 5) A parent calls and asks you to find their student's schedule, saying it is an emergency.
- 6) A Federal officer comes to do a background check on a student.

Resolved:

- 1) Should this situation arise and an accessibility exam goes missing, an Email will be sent immediately to the UNMBIO list serve. The question will be asked for faculty who recently picked up exams to check the exams they picked up and make sure they only have their own exams. This will keep the request anonymous, but will also ensure that a student is able to have their exam graded and recorded in a timely manner.
- 2) Graded exams or homework will not be accepted in the main office for distribution to students. For students wanting final exams or papers we recommend that the student give the instructor a stamped, self-addressed envelope large enough for the requested materials. The instructor then can drop the envelope off to be mailed in the front office.
- 3) You must send the requesting personnel to the Dean of Students who will handle the request. You may send them to the front office to speak to the Department Administrator if they are insistent on an action.
- 4) If you read the FERPA regulations, you know that you may not release any information about a student except their general directory information to anyone but the student. The only exception to this rule is

a written permission by the student to have the information given to a certain person. At that time, you should demand to see the written permission and some form of photo id to ensure that the person indicated on the permission form is the correct person accessing the student's information. This generally helps you with persons requesting the information via the phone—unless you have the written permission and id, then you cannot give any information.

- 5) Refer the caller to the Office of the Dean of Students. Do not give out schedule information under any circumstances.
- 6) You may talk to the officer if they a) have an official badge and photo id identifying them with the investigative bureau, and b) they have an official signed permission from the person they are doing a background check on. Unless they have both these pieces of evidence, you may not discuss anything with them.

Other Situations

On occasion, something unusual will come up in regard to students and information about students. The Department would like to recommend that in instance where you are unsure on how to proceed that you do nothing. Refer those making these requests to the Dean of Students.

Approvals and Authorization

Name:		Title:
Revision Number	Approval Date	Comment
1	6/9/2014	Approved—Robert D. Miller, Chair

Revision Detail:

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