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Policy on Student Records, Date Unknown

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ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

POLICY ON STUDENT RECORDS

The University accumulates data and keeps records in order to enable faculty and administrators to plan educational opportunities to meet the needs of the individual student, to better understand the students, to counsel more effectively with them, and to assist them in placement in graduate education or employment after graduation. Because the scope and number of requests from external agencies for information about students is increasing the following policy for the utilization of student records is issued. The purpose of this policy is to outline the development, maintenance, and use of student records. Individual offices may develop more detailed policies regarding student records as long as such policies are not inconsistent with this policy. All policies should be evaluated annually.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES GOVERNING USE OF STUDENT RECORDS

The following principles guide the professional staff of the University in the utilization of student records.

A. Need for Records. Unless a demonstrable need for a record is established which is reasonably and justifiably related to the basic purposes and necessities of the University, no records should be made or maintained.

B. Confidentiality. In its relations with students the University will preserve the confidential character of communications and records so as to insure that its educational counseling processes are carried forward in the most effective possible manner.

The obligation of confidentiality is relative rather than absolute since there are conditions which can alter it. This obligation may lapse when the common welfare of the University community or the welfare of the individual demands revelation such as in the case of suicidal preoccupations, expressed homicidal thoughts or actions, commissions of a felony or similar cases. Likewise, material which is already public or can easily become so is not bound by confidentiality.

The acquisition and dissemination of information for records is based on a respect and concern for the privacy and protection of the individual student. All persons handling records shall be advised of the confidential nature of such information and their responsibilities in this regard. Evaluation and interpretation of information about a student shall be done by a professional and qualified staff person.

C. Release of Information. Information will be furnished of a "public" or "directory" nature, that is, information which has appeared at one time or another in publications that are available to the general public or are a matter of public record. Requests for public or directory type student data from agencies outside the University which are not considered educational institutions shall be denied. Such agencies should be referred to the Student-Faculty directory.

Some examples of public or directory type information are: (1) student's name, (2) parent's name, (3) home address and telephone number, (4) campus address and telephone number, (5) dates of attendance at the University, (6) full or part time enrollment status, (7) major, (8) degree earned, (9) age, (10) citizenship, and (11) data to verify identification (picture or date and place of birth). Providing the above information or material is available on a student, it may be released without a student's knowledge or consent on an individual basis.

1. Requests from Prospective Employers

The University will respond to inquiries for non-public or non-directory type information only with the written consent of the student concerned. Information submitted by applicants to the Bureau of Appointments is considered to be confidential and will be released subject to conditions stipulated by the applicant and the Bureau at the time of registration.

2. Requests from Other Educational Institutions

The University will send written reports concerning academic and disciplinary standing and other information including transcripts to other educational institutions only with the consent of the student concerned.

3. Inquiries from Investigators Representing Private or Governmental Agencies

In the event of inquiries from investigators, the following procedure is to be followed:

(a) The investigator will be given a copy of the following statement:

TO: Investigators Representing Governmental or Private Agencies

RE: Student Records

Unless an investigator has a written authorization from the individual who is the subject of an investigation, we will disclose only public information about that individual. We require, therefore, that the investigators obtain an authorization prior to visiting the University for the purpose of investigating student's or former student's records.

(b) After the investigator has read the statement, he should be given any public information he requests. In addition, it is appropriate in response to a question to tell him whether we have a confidential file and verify any confidential information which he already has on the student he is investigating.

(c) If the investigator has written authorization or if there are questions of interpretation, he should be referred to the Dean of Students.

4. Requests from Faculty Members

A faculty member may request information contained in permanent academic records when needed in discharge of his official duties. A faculty member may request confidential information with the student's consent or when a counselor, dean, or other person is mutually involved with the student.

5. Request from Parents

The University recognizes the legitimate interest of parents and guardians to consult with the professional staff about the academic and personal well being of their sons, daughters, and wards. This consultation must be consistent with the basic policy regarding confidential student records.

6. Information about Organizational, Political, Racial, or Religious Affiliation

The University does not maintain records of membership of student organizations. Organizational membership is not recorded in student records unless the student expressly requests the inclusion of such information. This is released only if the student so requests. Information relative to an individual's race or creed may be provided under circumstances dictated by law. Information about student views, beliefs, and political associations which professors acquire in the course of their work as instructors, advisors, and counselors should be considered confidential. Protection against improper disclosure is a serious professional obligation.

For the purposes of communication with the University, student organizations are required to provide the Coordinator of Student Activities with the names of the officers to whom communications are to be directed. When new officers are elected, names of the former officers are discarded.

7. Academic Achievement

Academic eligibility of students being considered for membership in honor societies for honors, awards, or scholarships may be furnished the committee responsible for making the awards. (Specified grade point averages can only be released at the request of the student.)

8. Research Information

Researchers have the right to study human phenomena and the responsibility to seek the cooperation of individuals and the University in a manner which clearly respects the right or privacy and the protection of anonymity. The confidentiality of the individual student's record is paramount. When there is any doubt about the identity of the student or the content of the data being safeguarded, the person's consent to use it should be formally obtained.