

## POLICY GUIDING FACULTY/STAFF ACCESS TO STUDENT INFORMATION

Source: Registrar's Office, Nov 29, 1999

The Family Education and Privacy Act (FERPA) applies to all schools that receive funding from the Department of Education. Breach of FERPA enforcement could result in the revocation of all federally-awarded financial aid funding. Breach of institutional policy could result in revocation of a faculty or staff member's student-access privileges (IRISlink), revocation of the member's College computer account, or dismissal from the College (following applicable due process procedures), depending upon the severity of the breach.

Upon reaching the age of 18 years, the right of restriction of access to certain types of information transfers from the parent to the student. A student is defined as one who has been admitted to the College and is attending class or was formerly enrolled. Applicants for admission are not protected by FERPA until they enroll in classes and attend.

Catawba College upholds a dual commitment regarding student records, both hard copy and computerized:

- \* to respect and protect the privacy of students' information according to the College policy and FERPA, and
- \* to provide student information necessary for the work of College personnel.

**All College personnel**, by virtue of their employment, **are accountable for the responsible use of student information**, to include insuring the confidentiality, integrity, and accuracy of student records. Use of student records should be limited to specific institutional purposes within the official duties of each faculty and staff member. FERPA stipulates that information may be released to College employees only when the disclosure of information is to a faculty or staff member who has "legitimate educational interest" in the student information. "**Legitimate educational interest**" is defined by that person's role with the College. Information cannot be provided to external parties for commercial or unauthorized use, nor can information be used for purposes outside on one's job responsibilities.

College policy and federal law recognize two types of information: directory and non-directory. College policy and federal law permit the release of **directory information** on any student, unless a student as signed a "Request to Prevent Disclosure of Directory Information" form kept on file in the Registrar's Office. The Registrar's Office, Public Relations, or Athletics usually release directory information. The following information is considered public or directory:

- |  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| * Student Name   | * Parent Names            |
| * Local Address  | * Local Phone Number      |
| * Permanent Address  | * Permanent Phone Number  |
| * E-mail Address   | * Date and Place of Birth |
| * Major/minor Fields of Study                                | * Dates of Attendance     |
| * Degree and date awarded                                    | * Academic honors         |
| * Classification   | * Religion                |
| * Photographs  | * Student Schedules       |
| * Participation in NCAA sports/weights and height of Members |                           |

**Non-directory information is confidential.** It is made available to College employees for legitimate educational purposes. Examples of non-directory information include, but are not limited to, social security number, academic evaluations and course grades, financial records, and transcripts. Release of personally-identifiable nondirectory information to third parties requires written approval from the student, unless the third parties are legal authorities: federal,

state or accrediting agencies; or appropriate persons in the case of safety emergency.

FERPA mandates protections against disclosure of student information to third-parties, so the College has established the following guidelines to ensure such protections:

- \* Information about students will not be released to other persons except those that meet the criteria of acceptable usage identified above.

- \* Information that is not considered "directory" (as identified above) will not be released; if in doubt, the Registrar's Office should be consulted.

- \* Personal computer account passwords should not be given to others and written passwords should not be stored in a desk.

- \* A computer should not be left unattended when logged into IRISlink.

- \* Information about a grade should not be released over the phone or via e-mail.

- \* Printed documents should not be left in view of others who may enter one's office or workstation.

- \* Information, specifically grades, should not be released to friends, parents or spouses of students one's class.

**Special Note Regarding Parents.** Information contained in the educational records of students who are 18 or enrolled in post-secondary institutions may be sent to parents without the written consent of the student IF the student is a financial dependent of his/her parents as defined under Section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. Catawba College requires that affidavits from parents stating the above be on file in the Registrar's Office. These affidavits must be updated yearly.