

## Release of Student Academic Information and FERPA

Parents occasionally call faculty for information about how their sons and daughters are faring in courses. Under federal law--the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (as Amended), known as FERPA, students are afforded certain rights concerning their education records, and colleges and universities may disclose information from those records only in certain circumstances. Below are some guidelines developed by the Academic Affairs Committee, and conforming to federal law, concerning what kind of information in a student's education record you, as faculty, may disclose to a parent or guardian.

The following guidelines apply only to students under 24 who are dependent upon their parents for tax purposes and who are U.S. citizens. International students, students over 24 or those who are under 24 but not financially dependent may permit disclosure of information, but they must provide the College with written permission to do so. These guidelines apply to students who are currently matriculated at Trinity, including those who are on voluntary or required withdrawal; they do not apply to students who have transferred from Trinity or have graduated.

*How do I know if information about a student may be disclosed to parents?* Dependent students submit a signed form indicating their dependent status to the Dean of Students Office when they first enroll at Trinity. You may call the Dean of Students Office or the Registrar's Office to determine whether the student is a dependent and has authorized the release of grades to parents. You can also ask the student directly if you have permission to speak with their parents.

*What kinds of information may I as a faculty member disclose?* You may disclose information that pertains to a student's academic performance in your course. If you are a student's advisor, you may also disclose information about overall academic standing. Such information may include grades, midterm progress reports, attendance records, as well as observations about how the student is studying--study habits, behavior in class, time management issues, etc.

*What kinds of information may I **not** disclose?* You cannot disclose any information that is non-academic, including, but not limited to, health records, campus employment information, and information maintained by the Campus Safety Office. Queries concerning a student's non-academic conduct, such as disciplinary information, should be referred to the Dean of Students Office.

*Am I required to disclose information to parents?* **You are not obligated to release information to parents.** If you wish to disclose academic information about a student, you may. If you do not wish to disclose information, you may refer parents to the Dean of Students Office or the Registrar.

*Where can I refer parents who wish information I do not have, may not disclose, or feel uncomfortable discussing?* Ask them to contact the Dean of Students Office or the Registrar.

*What if the parent calling is a non-custodial parent?* Under state and federal law, the non-custodial parent is entitled to information unless the dependent student has specifically restricted access for that parent.

If you have any questions about this information or any other questions regarding FERPA, feel free to contact Registrar Alexis Yusov or Senior Associate Dean of Students Ann Reuman.