

## A Faculty Member's Guide to FERPA

### concerning students' rights of confidentiality and access to records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) regulates policies concerning students' rights in academic settings. From a faculty member's perspective, there are several points that are particularly important to remember:

- Both current and former students have the right to inspect and review their academic records; therefore, *it is critical that faculty members maintain accurate, complete, and professional records.*
- Philadelphia University will not release or provide access to a student's education records to any individual, agency, or organization [except as provided by FERPA] without the written consent of the student. Appropriate professionals within the university, such as advisors, may review a student's records if they are performing a task relating to a student's education or a student's well being. Another example: an advisor or professor may inquire about a student's tutoring records.

*In practice, faculty members may not share any specific information [e.g. grades] about a student with parents or any outside third party unless the student has granted written permission on a University consent form. Faculty must also show discretion in leaving messages on voice mail that might be heard by someone other than the student, especially if such information would imply academic standing or academic concern.*

*If anyone other than a student contacts a faculty member regarding that student's academic records, the faculty member should indicate that such information cannot be shared with an outside party, including family members. Faculty may refer such calls to the school dean or the dean of Graduate and Continuing Studies.*

- Consent forms are available from the Learning and Advising Center or from the Learning and Advising Center's public folder if students wish to have any part of their academic record available to one or more designated persons. Without a consent form, information can be disclosed only to appropriate persons in the event of an emergency, *i.e.* to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons.
- Students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the University to comply with FERPA and U. S. Department of Education Regulations requirements.
- Copies of the complete text of the University's Student Records Policies and Procedures under FERPA are in the Philadelphia University Student Handbook.
- A final note: do not give students copies of their transcripts or schedules. Only the Registrar's Office can do so.