Notice of Student Rights Under FERPA

On Thursday 9/21/23, an email was sent to all students informing them of their rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the federal law that governs the release of and access to student education records.

I am writing to provide you with a copy of the student notification they received and to review your FERPA responsibilities as a staff or faculty member at the University.

Student’s Rights
As outlined in more detail in the Annual Notification of Student Rights, FERPA grants all University students (including minors) the following specific rights:

• The right to inspect and review their own education records (as broadly defined by the statute), with certain limited exceptions.
• The right to seek the amendment of their education records in certain circumstances.
• The right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in their education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
• The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the University to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

Faculty and Staff FERPA Responsibilities
If you have access to student data, you are responsible for its proper handling. No matter what the form or content, you are accountable for handling student records in accordance with the law and University policy.

• With only a few exceptions (described in more detail here), student records are considered confidential and neither they nor personally identifiable information from them may be disclosed to others without the written consent of the student.
• As a faculty or staff member you have a legal responsibility to protect student records in your possession from unauthorized disclosure, access, or use.
• As a faculty or staff member you may access student information only when and to the extent that it is needed for legitimate completion of your responsibilities as a University employee.
• With only limited exceptions, students have a right to see our records about them, including even casual and informal records such as emails and handwritten notes to the file; with that in mind, all records about students should be created deliberately and thoughtfully.

Please visit the Instructor & Staff Information FERPA page for additional information.
Refresh Your FERPA Knowledge
As part of the onboarding process, all University employees who utilize student data to complete their job duties complete FERPA training.

The FERPA training courses for instructors and instructional support teams, and University staff have been recently updated to include information on the FERPA Health & Safety Emergency Exception. If it has been a while since you completed the training, I encourage you to refresh your FERPA knowledge and re-visit the course.

Staff FERPA Retake Guide
Instructor FERPA Retake Guide

The Office of the Registrar has made several updates to how FERPA is presented on our website, and I invite you to familiarize yourself with the information if you need to reference it in the future.

If you have any questions about FERPA, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of the Registrar and/or the Office of General Counsel.

Sincerely,

Alex Underwood
University Registrar
The University of Arizona