

Advising Students with Disabilities

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Advising students with disabilities presents many challenges to the college advisor. However, skilled advising can go a long way towards insuring the success of a student with a disability. To effectively advise a student with a disability, it requires a thorough understanding of the student's goals as well as the student's disability, the barriers the institution may have inadvertently created and the resources the college provides that can be used to assist the student in pursuing his or her educational aspirations.

Advisors who become familiar with the difficulties imposed by a particular disability can logically deduce the importance of some advising practices. For example, if the student is taking medication, are there certain times of the day when the student is less alert? This could have important implications when developing a class schedule. In a similar fashion, students experiencing clinical depression often have more difficulty in the morning.

Information concerning the impact of various disabilities is particularly important in attempting to determine if the college poses structural, educational or bureaucratic barriers for a student. Many colleges have buildings that were constructed before federal laws regarding accessibility were implemented. Awareness of the campus could prevent enrolling a student who uses a wheel chair in a class that can only be accessed by a stairway. Depending upon the amount of time allowed to pass from one class to another, any student with a mobility issue might have difficulty with classes scheduled back to back in different buildings.

Educational barriers are less visible but no less demanding for students with disabilities. Students with learning disabilities often have difficulty with structure and organization. Instructors who break material down into small sequences and then present it in a logical step-by-step fashion serve them well. Advisors should attempt to learn something about the teaching style of various instructors and enroll students with disabilities accordingly.

It is also important for advisors to know the rules and regulations of their institution. Only if you know the rules are you in a position to take advantage of them for the benefit of the students with whom you are working. Financial aid and course substitutions are two obvious examples of areas that can be used to a student's advantage. A student with a disability can receive a full Pell Grant even though the student is enrolled in less than twelve hours, if their disability warrants

it. Other students may qualify for a course substitution. Advisors need to know the procedures on their campus for such things as obtaining a course substitution if they hope to assist students who qualify.

Finally, when working with a student who has a disability, an advisor would be wise to develop collaborative relationships with faculty, financial aid, counseling and other organizations within the college. This can be one of the most important tasks an advisor can undertake. Earlier it was suggested that a knowledge of the campus could prevent enrolling a student in a class they could not physically access. A working relationship with those in the college who schedule classes can preempt such a problem by insuring that additional sections of the course are available in classrooms that are accessible. In the unlikely event that only one section of a required course is being offered and the classroom is not accessible, strong allies can help to persuade the administration to move the course to an accessible classroom or create an additional accessible section.

There are two important allies an advisor should network with for assistance with such problems. The first is the individual designated by the college to enforce compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The second ally is the person or persons at the college responsible for establishing eligibility for accommodations, determining the nature of the accommodations needed by a particular student and helping to insure that the student receives the accommodations for which they are eligible. While the titles for these two potential allies may vary from one campus to another, federal law requires that they exist and that they be readily identifiable on any campus.

Advising students with disabilities may present many challenges, but meeting these challenges can provide long-term rewards for you and the students you serve.

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Disability Services for Students

<http://www.socc.edu/disability/pgs/faculty/students-with-emotional-disabilities-responding-to.shtml>

NACADA: Students with Emotional Disabilities: Responding to Advisor's Concerns and Questions

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Students with emotional disabilities are attending institutions of higher education in increasing numbers. Professional considering appropriate postsecondary classroom accommodations and support may face advising challenges. However, most advisors have little training in responding to the needs of students with emotional disabilities. Answers to eight questions that advisors frequently ask about working with students with emotional disabilities, practical guidelines, and experience-based examples and resolutions are offered.

KEY WORDS: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), counseling high-risk students, mental health issues, student privacy rights.

Introduction

Despite the increasing numbers of students with emotional disabilities attending college and universities, academic advisors find themselves with limited information on how best to accommodate these students. Because of this limitation, we prepared this article to provide academic advisors and university professionals with background information related to working with students with emotional disabilities. Eight questions advisors may ask about working with these students guide the discussion. The questions and their answers are not intended to be comprehensive and are certainly not a substitute for legal counsel; however, the discussion provides advisors with a basic grounding on the topic.

Warning Signs

What are the warning signs that a student may be struggling with an emotional disorder? Although not typically having the expertise or responsibility to diagnose emotional problems in students, advisors are often the first to recognize changes in students' well-being. The key to emotional disorder recognition is sensitivity to changes in student behaviors: loss of interest, unexpected absences or tardiness, heightened emotional reactions, social withdrawal, unexpected changes in mood (rapidly angry or sad), or limited/excessive verbalizations. Students may report problems with sleep, appetite, or energy. In some instances, students will overtly express their sadness by communicating a loss of home or becoming tearful.

If a student is new to an advisor, the identification may be particularly challenging; nevertheless, sensitivity to a student's actions or words will provide a means to recognize a troubled emotional state. An emotional reaction that seems

unexpected, extreme, or prolonged for the circumstances may be a warning sign of an emotional disorder. Although such behaviors may also suggest developmental or maturity issues, an advisor should not assume that the student simply needs to grow up. In fact, if the behaviors represent a significant change from those the advisor has previously experienced with the individual, the advisor should be alert to other signs of an emotional disorder.

Inquiries about a Diagnosis

If I suspect that a student has an emotional disorder, should I ask him or her about it? The answer to the “should I ask” question often depends on the advisor-student relationship and their individual comfort levels. What if the student says, “Yes”? In our experience, gentle offers about resources available to help one cope with stressors are usually well received.

If a student is receptive and a referral appropriate, refer the student to a specific person. When possible, walk the student to the counseling or student disability center so that the daunting prospect of making an appointment seems easier to her or him. If the situation is an emergency (e.g. the student admits to being a danger to self or others), contact the counseling center or the campus police immediately. This is not a time for advisors to go it alone. Advisors and faculty members should know university policy for providing psychological and emergency services.

Students may decline mental health services, which is within their rights. However, this should not stop an advisor from taking immediate action by contacting the appropriate campus resource if a student is a danger to self or others.

Reluctant Disclosure

If a student has an emotional disorder, why doesn't the student just tell me what is happening? Student reluctance to discuss emotional concerns with advisors and faculty members may come from a fear of discrimination and stigmatization, and their fear may be well-founded. Their reluctance may reflect prior experiences with advisors and faculty members who have been intolerant of students with emotional disorders. Educators, as well as members of the general population, may succumb to media's representation of people with emotional disorders as dangerous. According to Mowbray and Megivern (1999), 13% of faculty members sampled reported that they would feel unsafe leading a class attended by a student with mental illness. However, the Mental Illness Research Association has reported little risk of violence from casual contact with a person with an emotional disorder, and the American Psychiatric Association reported that most violent people do not have mental illnesses.

Because students with mental disorders may perceive society as unsympathetic and apprehensive about them, they would benefit from a supportive academic advisor who is aware of their challenges. Without the trust cultivated by an advisor's initiative, students may be uncertain of the advisor's reaction and reluctant to disclose their diagnosis.

Relationship Building

What disorder-related concerns or impediments should I keep in mind when trying to build a relationship with a student who has an emotional disorder? A student is greater than a diagnostic description, and each has unique limitations and concerns as well as strengths and assets. Despite this caution about individual differences, certain characteristics of emotional disorders may, in general, present challenges for advisors trying to develop relationships with students.

Students with major depression may have difficulty keeping an early morning appointment, struggle with focus or concentration, or have problems managing a large number of tasks from an advising session. During a manic phase, students with bipolar disorder, an illness in which a person experiences periods of elevated energy or elation followed by significant depression, may seek an advisor's support to register for far more hours than they can realistically complete. Students with agoraphobia (fear of public places) or panic disorders may experience episodes when attending classes in person may be nearly impossible, which may mean they will face challenges in meetings at a very public or open advising center.

Advisors may encounter even greater difficulty in establishing relationships with students with severe emotional disabilities, such as those who exhibit heightened suspiciousness, extreme confusion, or distorted perceptions. The thought patterns of students with severe emotional disorders can be difficult to follow. Some students may have poor interpersonal skills and may express no emotion while talking to their advisors.

When a Disorder is a Disability

When is an emotional disorder a disability? What is the college's responsibility to accommodate a student who has an emotional disability? The decision regarding the presence of a disability is typically the function of personnel in the disability services office. At their own expense, students are required to provide documentation from a qualified professional about the disability. In the case of an emotional disability, students may provide documentation from a psychologist or psychiatrist (or other physician). In a newsletter to higher educators, Dawn Meza-Soufleris, assistant to the vice president and Director of Student Conduct and Conflict Management Services at Rochester Institute of Technology, is quoted as follows: "We may think that the students are mentally ill and they may say that they are mentally ill, but unless it is documented by disability services, it is not a disability."

If a student qualifies for accommodation, an institution is prohibited from discriminating against the student in the areas of recruitment, application to programs, testing, interviewing, or acceptance. In sum, this means a student is to have access to programs and services of an institution regardless of the disability and is to be provided accommodations, as appropriate, to have access. Institutions, however, are not required to provide accommodations that fundamentally alter the essential qualities of a course or program.

In accommodating a student, an advisor should receive a letter from the disability

office identifying the student, verifying a disability, describing the limitations the student may have, and recommending accommodations. Neither the student nor the disability office is required to disclose the specifics of one's disability. Questions about providing accommodations should be directed to the disability office and through consultation with the student.

Accommodations versus Requirements

How far must my college go to accommodate a student's emotional disability, especially if the college considers certain requirements of its programs essentials? Disability law is not intended to give a student an unfair advantage or to weaken academic requirements. Under the ADA Act (1990) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a college need not waive a course or other academic requirement essential to obtaining a degree. However, the definitions of essential courses or assignments must not be arbitrary. Personnel in charge of accommodation decisions must give serious consideration, which may involve a panel of professionals inside and outside the college, when determining if a course or task is essential to the degree or program.

For example, a student undergoing chemotherapy missed more than 20% of the class periods. The student filed a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR). OCR found in favor of the college, which had proven the attendance policy was essential to the degree, mandatory for all students and applied nondiscriminately.

Inappropriate Behavior

If a student with an identified emotional disability becomes disruptive or threatening, does the college have to tolerate or accommodate this behavior? Just because someone has a documented disability doesn't give him or her permission to make threats or send inappropriate emails. This points to the inherent necessity for advisors to know due process procedures at their schools. They need to understand how to inform the threatening student that his or her behavior is not appropriate and to know where and how to document the interaction with the student. Students should not be dismissed from the university based on hearsay or unsubstantiated rumors about alleged dangerous behavior but on facts based on a school's due process procedure. By communicating and developing a supportive relationship with campus police, the institutions general counsel, and counselors from a mental health center and the disability services office, the advisor further facilitates effective management of disruptive students.

When a student filed a complaint with OCR because a university restricted his use of the library's technical resource room, OCR discovered that the student had made loud outbursts and had sexually harassed employees while using the resource room and that he had been notified that his behavior had violate the published University's Code of Conduct. OCR found in favor of the university.

Medications

May an institution require a student to stay on his or her medication for an emotional disability? Not all students with psychological difficulties take medications, and those who have been prescribed medications may choose to remain unmedicated. Unless students are a danger to themselves or others,

college professionals can do little to ensure that students take their prescriptions.

Student may resist taking prescribed medication if side effects disrupt their lives. The effects of medication may range from relatively minor inconveniences or medical irritations, such as diarrhea, constipation, nausea, rashes, blurred vision, weight gain, sexual dysfunctions, and hair loss, to more severe reactions, such as seizures, or in rare cases, death. Some students feel frustrated that they are dependent on a drug to feel good or “normal.” Some medications affect concentration and memory, which may, in fact, be considered disabling and require accommodations. Advisors may also feel frustrated as students struggle with issues that could be ameliorated by medication.

Conclusion

The sheer number of students with emotional disorders that may be attending institutions of higher education and the magnitude of the challenges these students may experience strongly suggest that advisor, faculty members, and staff of colleges and universities need enhanced training to work with these students. Such training of college professional may include the means of developing a keener sensitivity to the signs of emotional disorders and engaging students with disorders. It should include suggestions on appropriate responses to direct students to the necessary support or advising services.

Because some students with emotional disorders may also qualify as students with disabilities, professionals should be aware of institutional policies regarding the acquisition and application of disability-related accommodations. In meeting the needs of student with emotional disabilities, however, the college need not compromise essential elements of its programs nor tolerate inappropriate or threatening behavior.

This article is a primer for use by college professionals to address the needs of students with emotional disorders and should be recognized as a beginning point in their exploration of the issues. Advisors and faculty members must consider many issues that they may encounter in working with students with emotional disabilities. Our hope is that this article provides at least a basic framework, based on the questions and concerns we often hear, in helping students with disabilities achieve equal access. However, there are no fail-proof answers. We encourage advisors and faculty members to learn as much as they can about disability issues, but it is always best to consult with the individual students about their specific needs for accommodation.

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Veteran Guidelines and Best Practices in the Classroom

The following guidelines and best practices have been found helpful when working with veterans of war. Not all veterans found in college/university classrooms will suffer from traumatic brain injury or post-traumatic stress disorder, however many do. It is important to remember that war and combat, as well as many other traumatic experiences that occur in the military, represent experiences that most civilians would not be able to imagine unless they had first-hand experience. It is our intent to help instructors and faculty members understand that homecoming for a veteran involves recreating oneself, and reaching for goals that may have been delayed by military service.

American veterans have a long history of returning from war, overcoming personal and emotional hardships, and using their collection of unique experiences to become dedicated students, professionals, family members, and community leaders. It is our intent with these guidelines and best practices, to offer college and university staff and faculty important insights and suggestions that will help veterans come home, and achieve their academic goals and objectives. These guidelines and best practices are offered to assist in the journey toward *veteran cultural* competence. We also know that providing a list of ideas may not be sufficient for all veterans and situations. Therefore, we also offer training and the invitation for consultation regarding any situation that represents a threat to life, safety, or other challenges within the classroom or on campus. We want veterans to succeed, and we will help create service linkage and other support where ever possible to this end.

We ask that you first consider the following as part of the need for Personal Reflection about matters related to veterans.

1. When you hear the word *veteran* or *military service member*, what images, thoughts, sensations, emotions, etc., come to mind? When you see someone in uniform what is your personal reaction or experience? What comes to mind when the reference is to a *female veteran*?
2. What's your attitude or belief toward the military? Why do you think people elect to join the armed services, guard or reserves?
3. What opinions do you hold of war or those who have served in a combat area? Do these opinions become projected indirectly or directly on the veteran or a person known to be serving in the military? Do you confuse the war with the warrior, and those who have served in combat? What worries or concerns might you have over someone who has served in combat being in your classroom?

4. How comfortable are you with people who have physical challenges and those who may demonstrate behavioral health issues from experiencing war trauma? How might your opinions or reactions represent biases toward someone who has an invisible wound such as depression, anxiety, PTSD, anger, startle response, severe sleep problems due to nightmares, or mild to moderate traumatic brain injury? What steps can you take to become more familiar and knowledgeable about these?
5. Who can you go to if you have questions about a veteran? Who is your college or university designated veteran representative who certifies educational benefits? Which campus personnel serve on your Veterans Coordinating Council or Veterans Resource Team? What resources exist in the academic community or the larger local community that are available to veterans and their families?

Classroom Practices

The following ideas have been formulated to help faculty think about veterans and their unique, sometimes very difficult, life experiences.

These considerations are not an exhaustive list, and will be supplemented as we identify issues we learn of that are troubling veterans or academic staff. We invite your input about these suggestions, and encourage you to offer your own discoveries and recommendations.

While the classroom can be very threatening to many war veterans, not all veterans are alike, and their individual reactions to war trauma may be quite varied, representing everything from being significantly troubled by their war time duty, to being very philosophical or reflective. Getting to know the veterans in your classroom will likely help them connect with the goals of the academic institution and your course. Making connections may also offer you, the professor/instructor, a wonderful opportunity to become acquainted with people who are searching for the deeper themes and purposes of life – struggling at times with issues at several developmental stages at once. Their search is often much more complex than that confronting other students of the same age. As a result, professors and instructors often find veteran students to be the most interesting and growth-capable among all of their students.

1. Be careful about thanking a veteran for their military service, unless you have a relationship with him/her – that is you can predict how they will react to your comment. One does not always know if the veteran has had a positive or negative experience while in the military or what their current experience is now that they are home and have had time to think about their service. Being out of the military often takes away the support system that helps to justify actions in combat. This can mean they are now reconsidering their actions, and often this can mean they are not sure of their own opinions in this regard.

2. Unless the course content dictates talking about military service or the war, it is best to refrain from expressing such opinions in class. Whether you are for or against the war, democrat, republican or independent doesn't matter. This might be a good time to check your own political leanings at the door. A veteran took an oath to serve the commander in chief and our nation for a period of time no matter the circumstances. Sharing personal opinions can become a distraction to their learning and to your relationship with them, and in some cases this is a source of intense reactions and anger. Empathy about the experiences of a wartime veteran is very valuable in these situations.
3. Veterans come from all walks of life and experiences. Avoid suddenly placing the veteran in an uncomfortable position in the classroom by asking him or her to share experiences or disclose opinions, unless a prior relationship has been developed, or prior permission has been given. Being taken by surprise by circumstances like this can lead to a fight or flight type response for some veterans. Either way, it can be very disturbing.
4. Veterans are serious about college because they are very dedicated as a group to supporting their families, holding jobs, and because they are required to submit documentation to the Veterans Administration that they are attending and obtain passing grades in their classes. Hearing the complaints of other students over due dates, the need for more time to prepare for an exam or homework, or about the difficulty of a course may frustrate them. The lack of commitment by other students toward learning will also be a source of conflict and frustration. They expect others to be 100% part of the mission.
5. Survival in the military depends upon discipline, obedience, and conformity. In return, the active duty military member is granted services whenever needed. In higher education the student is expected to think independently, process abstract material, think in terms of more grey than black and white. Needed services and assistance are typically a challenge to navigate, leaving the veteran frustrated. Also, campuses do not offer a hierarchy or unit commander to whom the student might go to resolve a problem. This very different system structure and culture can be very difficult for veterans. Professors and other authority figures may have projected upon them authority and responsibility. As a result, it is not uncommon for veterans to seek guidance and support from such authority figures. You can help them navigate the system by listening to their frustration and guide them toward advisors or others who will help. Many academic settings now have veteran clubs or appointed liaison who can assist.
6. Veterans may find small group discussion and group decision-making processes difficult. Survival in the military depended upon decisions being made quickly, by a superior, or by the individual when circumstance demanded. Quick and decisive responses and actions were the norm in the military, especially in combat. Time taken to process information through group process and discussion may be a challenge, since in the military *thinking* could get oneself or others

killed. The academic setting will be foreign in this respect for many veterans as they learn the business of give-and-take, deliberate discussions, and thorough considerations of many variables and opinions. For a while some veterans may see these processes as a waste of time, but will usually learn the value of this form of teamwork if they can see the results of this collaborative effort.

7. Reintegration and homecoming may be a frustrating, confusing, and is often a lengthy experience for the veteran. Sometimes it is a matter of explaining the differences between military and higher education culture that will put the veteran at ease. Knowing that there is someone within the system that they can talk with when things become confusing provides a powerful solution to those times when stress and fear are intense and also act to create feelings of panic and the need to escape.
8. Unresolved emotions from military service often continue for years in the lives of some veterans. Course content such as personal writing assignments, videos, and certain discussion topics may lead some veterans to experience painful memories and create emotional discomfort. It is not uncommon for writing or classroom discussions to act as a point of revelation about some of these life problems. Faculty should be ready to take time to talk with students whose homework or classroom behavior may reveal troubling emotions.

If you observe what may seem to be problems that are distracting to the veteran, find a way to talk with him or her when not in front of the other class members. Attempt to understand what it is that is causing distress, or the extent of its impact in his or her life. Let the veteran know that they are not in trouble, but that you hope to help them gain as much from the class as possible, and that if you can help in some way you hope to do so. It is not appropriate for the instructor to take the role of the counselor, but to refer such matters to a knowledgeable provider.

In other cases, it might be very obvious that the veteran is struggling with a variety of concerns, and it would be totally appropriate to attempt to determine the extent of their distress. We have found that asking about sleep problems, depression, anxiety, ideas about self-harm, can lead the veteran to finding the help needed. Learn about the services on campus or in the community, and let the veteran know there are places and people who are dedicated to helping make things easier for them. If this approach is uncomfortable, seek immediate consultation with designated campus staff that attends to student services, counseling, and crisis. Often the Dean of Student Affairs, Student Services, or Counseling Services, will be available to help you and the veteran.

9. During Vietnam and other wars, one of the most insensitive questions asked of returning veterans was, "Did you kill anyone?" This question should never be asked and if another student asks it in your classroom, you need to be ready to say that this is not something we bring up in this context. In other words, *you*, the instructor or professor, will not want to put any war veteran in that position

and be ready to stop such questions. It could be very emotionally damaging to the veteran, result in a panic attack, or departure from school altogether. Empathy on your part is essential, and a consideration of the impact such questions would have on the veteran student.

10. Some veterans have standing and long awaited appointments with the Veterans Administration - often months in advance. Changing these appointments may mean having to wait many more months, denial of benefit examinations or treatment. While most veterans do not wish to miss class, sometimes it is inevitable to do so. Flexibility in this area is appreciated. The VA Medical Center in Seattle and other veteran service providers have begun to offer limited after hours appointments for veterans who work or attend school. This however remains very limited. Also, it is important to remember that the mere act of going to the VA hospital for appointments may be very stressful, involve working on war trauma issues, or treatment for wounds and injuries which themselves often represent stored memories of war trauma. In other words, your willingness to be understanding of these issues will likely create a veteran – professor/instructor relationship that will be much stronger and success oriented.
11. Consider random (self-selected) rather than assigned classroom seating. Many veterans who have served in a war zone prefer to sit in the back of the classroom with their back against the wall. This seating choice allows the veteran- student the best method of attending and learning to class content. The reason for this is that most war veterans require a higher level of environmental control, and seeing everyone in the room from the back, permits there to be no surprises. Respecting this adaptive pattern is important.
12. If any veteran seems to be severely depressed, suicidal, or appears to be having other significant problems, it is important to seek consultation. This can be done by contacting the individuals on this webpage, or calling the VA Medical Center in your area. A brief discussion with a professional in the field of war trauma treatment can be extremely helpful. There are seven federal Vet Centers in Washington State, and 34 Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs - PTSD Program Counselors throughout the state.
http://www.dva.wa.gov/ptsd_counseling.html

Please remember: The key variables for a veteran’s success on a college campus include relationships, social support, and having alternatives on campus when problems arise. College employees who are aware of the challenges experienced by veterans as they reintegrate to civilian life and the higher education arena, will play a major role in their personal homecoming and academic success. Employees who show empathy for a veteran’s situation, are customer friendly, helpful, and represent the best academic leaders in our state. It is the goal of the WDVA - Higher Education Outreach Program to provide you with the necessary information to be an agent

of change for our student veterans. Let us know how we might be able to help to fine tune your personal and campus wide efforts.

You are welcome to call the WDVA PTSD Program Director, Tom Schumacher, M.S., LMHC, NCC, CTS: 360-725-2226 tom@dva.wa.gov This number and email address are not sources of emergency services, but calling this number will lead to a dialogue and consultation about the needs of veterans on your campus. Emergencies should always be handled in the normal manner as directed by policy on your campus, or suggestions that may be offered by the veteran in crisis.

The primary provider of direct training within this program is Peter Schmidt, Psy. D., LMHC, WDVA Contractor within the PTSD/War Trauma Program, Higher Education Outreach and Consultation Project: 425-773-6292, pgschmidt7@gmail.com or 425-640-1463, peter.schmidt@edcc.edu.

The goals of this program are to raise awareness about the student-veteran experience in higher education, their past and how it impacts their present and future. This program exists to assist campus employees to begin their personal journey toward a better understanding of the veteran cultural within academia, and to jointly find paths for all veterans to find their way home from war. It is also our goal for you as a faculty member or instructor to help us with your experiences and ideas.

What rights does FERPA afford students with respect to their education records?

- * The right to inspect and review their education records within 45 days of the day the university receives a request for access.
- * The right to request an amendment to the student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate or misleading.
- * The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

Who is protected under FERPA?

Students who are currently enrolled or formerly enrolled regardless of their age or status with regard to parental dependency. Students who have applied but have not attended an institution and deceased students do not come under FERPA guidelines.

Disclosure of educational records to parents of dependent students is at the discretion of the college. Shoreline Community College will not disclose information to parents of a dependent student unless the student gives prior written consent to the college to disclose educational information.

What are education records?

With certain exceptions, an education record is any record (1) from which a student can be personally identified and (2) maintained by the university. A student has the right of access to these records.

Education records include any records in

whatever medium (handwritten, print, magnetic tape, film, diskette, etc.) that are in the possession of any school official. This includes transcripts or other records obtained from a school in which a student was previously enrolled.

What is not included in an education record?

- * sole possession records or private notes held by school officials that are not accessible or released to other personnel,
- * law enforcement or campus security records that are solely for law enforcement purposes and maintained solely by the law enforcement unit,
- * records relating to individuals who are employed by the institution (unless contingent upon attendance),
- * records relating to treatment provided by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist or other recognized professional or paraprofessional and disclosed only to individuals providing treatment,
- * records of an institution that contain only information about an individual obtained after that person is no longer a student at that institution, *i.e.*, alumni records.

What is directory information?

Institutions may disclose information on a student without violating FERPA if it has designated that information as "directory information." At SCC, our practice is to disclose only:

- * Student's name,
- * Major field of study,
- * Dates of attendance,
- * Honors,

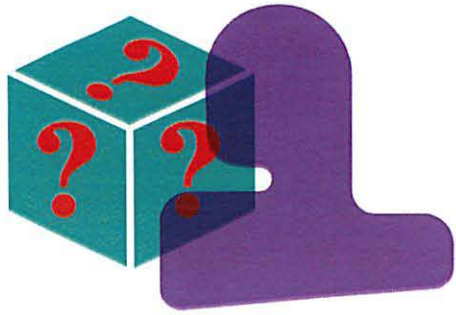
- * Photographs,
- * Major or field of study,
- * Date of graduation.

The college may disclose any of these items without prior written consent unless notified in writing to the contrary. Written notification is provided to the office of the Vice President of Student Services.

Who may have access to student information?

- * The student and any outside party who has the student's written request.
- * School officials (as defined by the College) who have "legitimate educational interests."
- * A person in response to a lawfully issued subpoena or court order, as long as the College makes a reasonable attempt to notify the student first. Normally, the College will comply with a subpoena after two weeks have elapsed from the day the subpoena was received.





When is the student's consent not required to disclose information?

When the disclosure is:

- * to school officials (defined in policy) who have a legitimate educational interest,
- * to federal, state, and local authorities involving an audit or evaluation of compliance with educational programs,
- * in connection with financial aid;
- * to organizations conducting studies for or on behalf of educational institutions,
- * to the Dept. of Veteran's Affairs for students receiving Veteran's benefits,
- * to accrediting organizations,
- * to comply with a judicial order or subpoena
- * in a health or safety emergency,
- * to the IRS in compliance with the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997,
- * releasing directory information.



When in doubt do not give out the information simply call or e-mail the Registrar for advice!

Chris Melton

(206) 546-4613

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An Educator's Guide to FERPA



The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

What is FERPA?

The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974* helps protect the privacy of student education records. The Act provides for the right to inspect and review education records, the right to seek to amend those records and to limit disclosure of information from the records. The intent of the legislation is to protect the rights of students and to ensure the privacy and accuracy of education records. The Act applies to all institutions that are the recipients of federal aid administered by the Secretary of Education.