

## **FERPA, Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), also referred to as the "Buckley Amendment," was the basis upon which Provost Henry V. Bohm wrote the WSU document titled "Guidelines for the Release of Student Records Information" in 1975.

The general answer to the question of what information about a student can be given out is "not very much, and then only with restrictions." A more precise answer would take into account who is asking for the information, for what purpose, and whether the individual has been given permission to receive it. Under FERPA, "permission" means written permission from the student to release information to third parties. There are numerous exceptions to the rule prohibiting third parties from receiving information about students, the most common being the parents of a dependent student: they have the right to have access to the student's educational records without written permission from the student.

There is in FERPA a Health and Safety exception to the restriction concerning the release of information. If there is an emergency, you can tell someone where the student is. The circumstances that constitute an emergency are rigorously defined but should be interpreted reasonably. If a police officer (or agent of the F.B.I., the C.I.A., etc.) is looking for the student, that person should be referred to Public Safety or to the General Counsel's office, 4249 FAB, 577-2268.

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>