FERPA Rights and Policy Notice

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law which was enacted in order to protect students' education records at all schools that receive funds under a program of the U. S. Department of Education. This document provides a summary of this law.

Rights of the Student or Parent
FERPA gives a student's parents certain rights over the student's education records until the student reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. At that time, the rights are transferred from the parents to the eligible student. These rights enable the eligible student or parents to:

- Inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. If the student and parents are unable to review the records at the school, they can request copies from the school (and may be charged a fee for them). Requests to review educational records must be directed to the Registrar and must identify, as specific as possible, the record(s) that the student wishes to inspect. The Registrar will contact the appropriate record custodian in the University who will make those records available to the student as soon as possible but no later than 45 days from the date of the request. The University has the right to refuse student access to records under certain circumstances.
- Request that a school correct the student's records if they believe they are incorrect or misleading. If the school chooses not to update the student's records, the student or parent has a right to a formal hearing. If, after the hearing, the school still decides not to modify the student's records, the parent or student can include a statement in the records which contests the information.

When a School Does Not Need Written Consent
Generally, a school must have written permission from the parent or student before releasing any information from the student's records. Schools can, however, disclose the student's records without the student's or parent's consent to any of the following parties or under any of the following conditions:

- School officials with legitimate educational interest
- Other schools to which the student is transferring
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation
- Appropriate parties in connection with the student's financial aid
- Organizations which are conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school
- Accreditating organizations
• In order to comply with a judicial order or a lawfully issued subpoena
• Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies
• State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law

A school official is a person employed by Gwynedd Mercy University in an administrative, supervisory, academic, research, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff); a person serving on the board of trustees; or a student serving on an official committee or as a federal work study student, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee. A school official also may include a volunteer or contractor outside of the University who performs an institutional service of function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of personally identifiable information from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent or a student volunteering to assist another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities for the University.

Disclosure of Directory Information
Schools do not need consent to disclose "directory" information. Directory information is defined by Gwynedd-Mercy College as:
• Student Name
• Address (including telephone number and GMercyU email address)
• Dates of attendance
• Course load (full/part time status)
• Class level
• Field(s) of study
• Degree(s) conferred and dates awarded
• Honors and awards
• Date and place of birth
• photograph

Schools must, however, tell parents and students about the directory information and give them a reasonable amount of time to request that the directory information not be disclosed (see Registrar’s Office web page for the “FERPA no disclosure form” if you would like the University to withhold directory information).
Annual Notification of Rights
Each year, schools are required to notify the student and parents of their rights under FERPA. At Gwynedd Mercy University, the student is notified through the distribution of the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs.

Non-compliance
A parent or eligible student may file a written complaint with the Office regarding an alleged violation under the Act and this part. The Office's address is: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20202.

For More Information
If you need additional information about FERPA, call 202-260-3887. Individuals who use TDD may call the Federal Information Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.