

Annual FERPA Notification Sent to USCA Faculty and Staff

The text that follows is an example of an annual notification sent to all faculty and staff at USCA.

STUCK LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ON PRIVACY LAWS?



For many years our office required that employees with access to confidential student information sign an annual confidentiality agreement. This had served as a reminder to all employees of the Family Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), the federal law that protects the rights of students, as well as USC Aiken policies. We are now trying to do this electronically by simply asking that you read this email. There is nothing you need to sign and return.

It is our desire that employees understand that by accepting the assignment of an IMS user ID which enables them to access student records information that they are responsible for maintaining the security and confidentiality of those records as required by federal law and University policy.

The Family Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA and also known as the Buckley Amendment) and University policy restricts use of student information. Student information accessed through IMS screens or printouts is available only to University faculty and staff when required for the performance of their duties. Users must have a legitimate educational interest. Federal law prohibits release to any other individual without written consent of the student.

Probably one of the biggest concerns of all us of these days is the prevalence of identity theft. The fact that the Social Security Number is still used as the student number at our school remains a great concern. The University has been taking precautions to make sure that only the last four digits of the SSN is printed on reports, VIP class and grade rolls, certain IMS screens, and so forth. So we ask that when emailing one another back and forth about a student, **please just indicate the last four numbers.** Those of us in Records, Admissions, Financial Aid, and Business Services are accustomed to this, and we encourage students to do this as well when they need to email one of our offices.

If you are ever unsure of how to respond to anyone requesting student information, simply refer such questions to our office. Very detailed information concerning the University's privacy policies and procedures can be found at:

<http://web.usca.edu/records/notification-of-student-rights.dot>. If you are new to the University, you might want to test you knowledge of FERPA policies and practices by taking the quiz at the following link: <https://vip.sc.edu/demo/ferpa.html>.

Thank you for your cooperation.

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