

From: Office of the University Registrar (registrar@vt.edu)

Subject: Annual FERPA Notification, Fall 2009

While this is a lengthy notice, it is important that you read it in its entirety so that you clearly understand which items of your educational record are public and which are disclosed only to university officials with an educational right to know. Also, read the important reminders on confidentiality and protecting the privacy of your information.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords you certain rights with respect to your education records. If you have not already done so, visit our website, <http://www.registrar.vt.edu/records/ferpa.php> to review further explanation of these regulations and pertinent contact information. FERPA allows you the right to review, to control access, to request amendments, and to file complaints in regards to your educational record at Virginia Tech

**DIRECTORY INFORMATION:** FERPA allows for the designation of certain academic record information as "directory" or public information [academic record information not requiring prior written permission to release]. Virginia Tech defines directory information as follows:

- \* Student's name
- \* Local and Permanent address
- \* Telephone Number(s)
- \* Major field of study (including second majors, minors, etc)
- \* Whether a student is currently enrolled
- \* Enrollment status (full-time, half-time, etc.)
- \* Class (freshman, sophomore, etc)
- \* Academic level (associate, undergraduate, graduate, professional)
- \* Anticipated graduation date
- \* Certification of application for degree
- \* Dates of enrollment
- \* Degree(s) earned, including date and level of distinction
- \* Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- \* Weight and height of members of athletic teams

NOTE: FERPA allows release of non directory information in the following cases: health and safety of student or others; judicial court order(s); and accrediting agencies carrying out their accreditation function.

**CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS:** You may choose to designate some or all of your directory information confidential. Students often choose to mark their address or email confidential to decrease the receipt of mailings from third party vendors. However, choose carefully the option of marking your entire record confidential. Doing so will result in the following:

- Student Name and Address excluded from web and printed directories
- Student Name and degree information excluded from all commencement programs and dean's lists and award listings
- Verification of enrollment, graduation, or degrees awarded will not be provided to third parties, including potential employers.

To mark part or all of your record confidential, you may do so via HOKIE SPA. In HOKIE SPA, choose the HOKIE PLUS menu, and click on "Confidentiality Options". Read the instructions carefully before processing. You may choose to mark all or a portion of your record confidential. Also, you may choose to mark the display of your EMAIL in People Search as confidential by visiting MY VT, personal folder option. Email addresses are NOT directory information. Emails are provided to departments and/or campus officials on campus who have a demonstrated educational right to know the information. Confidentiality designations remain in effect until you remove or request removal including after graduation or discontinuation of enrollment at Virginia Tech.

**TAX DEPENDENT?** Effective July 2008, the Commonwealth of Virginia required all higher education institutions to release educational record information to parents of dependent children. This state legislation is allowable within the guidelines of FERPA. If you are a tax dependent of your parent or guardian, you may authorize the receipt of educational record information via the **FERPA DISCLOSURE WEB FORM** available on HOKIE SPA. Just go to the main menu and click on FERPA (follows the Transcript menu). Note that a PASS CODE is required for full authorization of the third party. Third parties without the pass code will be unable to receive educational record information. If no FERPA disclosure is on file, the state law allows parents to request the information if they provide the university with proof of tax dependency. The university will notify you if such a request is received.

**FERPA WEB DISCLOSURE:** All students [regardless of tax dependency] may use the FERPA DISCLOSURE form on the web to allow third parties access to your educational records. Please note that you must assign a PASS CODE to the third party. The third party (for example, your parents), must have your student information as well as the PASS CODE to receive educational record information.

**GUEST ACCESS:** All students may authorize third parties to view their financial aid and academic record information (grades and transcripts) via the GUEST ACCESS SPA. You control the disclosure and may at any time void the access. The Guest Access menu is viewable via the main menu of HOKIE SPA. Awarding guest access to

a third party does NOT grant FERPA disclosure. The university will be unable to discuss your record with a third party without your written consent or a completed FERPA WEB disclosure.

**REPORTING FERPA COMPLAINTS:** If you wish to report a concern regarding exposure of your personally identifiable information without your permission, please contact Wanda Hankins Dean, University Registrar and Chief Transfer Officer, 250 Student Services Building, Virginia Tech 24060-0134. You may also file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington DC 20202-5901

**PROTECT YOUR RECORDS:** Remember to never use the automatic 'save' password feature on web browsers. Failing to secure your computer can lead to easy access to your records by anyone accessing your laptop. Do not share your HOKIE SPA ID/PASSWORD. Your SPA account should be treated with the same care as your online banking/credit card accounts. For important advice and information on securing your computer, please visit the Student IT Security Page at <http://security.vt.edu/studentspage.html>.

**FINANCIAL RECORDS:** Virginia Tech maintains compliance with the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act and subsequent regulations as published by the Federal Trade Commission. Further information is available at <http://www.policies.vt.edu/7025.pdf>.

**USE OF SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS:** Virginia Tech uses a generated nine-digit number as the student identifier. However, in some instances, students may be requested to disclose their social security numbers (e.g., recipients of Financial Aid and employees of the university). The policy on disclosure of Social Security Numbers is available for viewing, <http://www.policies.vt.edu/1060.pdf>

If you have any questions or concerns relative to this information, please email us at Registrar@vt.edu.