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Approved by: Academic Advisory Council – June 18, 2010		
Approved by: Senior Executive Committee		
Title Confidentiality of Student Records	Effective Date September, 2010	Replaces 1992

Rationale

In choosing to pursue a college education, students commit themselves to evaluate by college faculty. They are required to furnish the college with adequate documentation to support their admission, and the college in turn provides them with periodic feedback regarding their progress.

With such personal and academic data in its possession, the college has the obligation to protect an individual right to privacy as described in the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1990; thus, it must regard each student record as a unique, private document to which access is strictly controlled and governed essentially by the student's wishes and the college's responsibility. The guidelines listed below are a confirmation of this principle.

Academic Records

The Office of the Registrar is accountable for gathering and maintaining accurate data from students, agencies, institutions and faculty, and for providing appropriate information, on request, to the student or those persons or institutions designated by the student. Since the Office of the Registrar is the official repository of student records, all requests for information regarding students should be routed through it. If the request, in turn, involves information which can only be handled properly by faculty or dean, it will be referred to the appropriate area by the Registrar.

Access to student information through electronic methods must be controlled through conscientious use of the technology and adherence to the user guidelines provided by the Registrar. Typically these will address screen layouts, security codes, and general procedures.

With both manual and computer-based records, students are assured of the following principles:

- Data on the automated records system is available for their perusal, as is their file, under supervision of the Office of the Registrar staff.
- Data is used by the college only, for record keeping, reporting and analysis purposes.
- Data is updated, corrected, or amended upon notification and/or request, as appropriate.
- Data is protected.
- Data is maintained live only as long as is useful, after which time it is converted to storage medium.

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Contents of the Student Record

Current Record While a student is in attendance at the college, the following documents comprise their record:

- Application form and its documentation and admissions correspondence;
- Cumulative record of grades;
- Receipt of payment of fees;
- Record of changes of status (i.e., name change, address change, grade change);
- Record of withdrawal;
- Accounts of faculty decisions on standing and promotion;
- Record of requests for transcripts;
- Transfer Credit forms;
- Any in-course documentation from college or third party sources which concern student's status (i.e., letters from sponsoring agencies, record of disciplinary actions, etc.);
- Anecdotal description of student progress in specific programs (i.e., nursing clinical experience);
- The computer record carries the codes or full account of the current status created by the documentation identified above.

Permanent Record Two years after a student leaves the college, only the following documents will comprise the permanent record:

- Cumulative academic record (transcript);
- The permanent student record is retained for a period of 70 years after graduation. Documents not included in the permanent record are retained for a minimum of one year following graduation and then destroyed.

Access to Student Records

General Guidelines

The basic guideline governing the release of information is based on the belief that the Registrar acts with discretion upon authorization from the student. In response to third party enquiries, therefore, only what is public record may be released, namely: whether or not the student is currently enrolled, and the date when certificate/diploma was awarded. No further information will be released without student authorization. This applies typically to requests from family members, prospective employers, police forces, credit bureaus, finance and loan companies, private investigation agencies, banks and similar organizations. Such requests made to departmental offices should be referred to the Registrar's Office.

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External requests for mass listing of directory information, typically from credit card agencies, will be denied. Where such listings have in-house legitimacy, such as the facilitation of student elections, they may be released with discretion.

The original documents of a student file will not leave the Office of the Registrar; appropriate copies may be released to deans when necessary. There are two exceptions; this rule is superseded by law in the case where a court subpoena is in effect (see Access by Third Parties outside the College and where an authorized search warrant is served.

Documents from other institutions, such as high school or university transcripts, which are submitted to support a student's application for admission and/or transfer credit may not be certified and released as part of the college record. However, if the college may cause excessive hardship to the student by not doing so, it may, at the discretion of the Registrar and with consent from the student, forward such a transcript with an appropriate disclaimer attached, and marked, to the receiver, for your exclusive use only.

Regulations and records of attendance in post-secondary courses are incorporated into the grading policy of each course. It is the professional responsibility of faculty to assess grades and the degree to which attendance plays a role in the assessment. Therefore, requests for records of attendance, typically from sponsoring agencies, are to be considered inappropriate and are to be referred to the Office of the Registrar

Access by the Student

Upon request, each student may access their own file, request its release to a third party, or request it to be held with no release allowed. At the same time, the college may hold back the release of the record of a student who has debts outstanding to the college.

Unless unusual circumstances prevail, no grades or certification shall be released by the Office of the Registrar to an individual student prior to the official release of grades and certification to all students by the Registrar.

Final grades are not official until recorded and released by the Office of the Registrar. If faculty wish to post grades, they must identify students by means other than name or I.D.#, and specify that such grades are unofficial. Generally, the practice of posting semester grades is discouraged.

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Access by College Personnel

Faculty, counselors and administrative officers of the college who have a legitimate requirement for the material of the record will be permitted access to the appropriate files. If there is any question regarding the legitimacy of the request, it will be clarified by consultation with the College Coordinator for Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy.

Access by Third Parties outside the College

Parents

Since the basis of all transactions with students assume adult levels of responsibility, transcripts will not be released to parents or guardians without the student's consent.

Sponsoring Agencies

Sponsors or employers paying fees on behalf of students are entitled to access to or release of student records or information contained therein only upon student's authorization. Exceptions to this policy (in response to unique requirements or legislation) may be determined only by the Registrar in consultation with the college coordinator for Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy, when appropriate.

Government Agencies

Properly identified representatives of federal, provincial or local government agencies, including local police, O.P.P. and R.C.M.P. will be treated as any third party; that is, student authorization must accompany their request for information (an exception to this is if the information is to aid an investigation undertaken with a view to a law enforcement proceeding is likely to result – FIPPA allows disclosure in this instance). If, in the opinion of the Registrar, however, denial of information could involve hardship to the student, appropriate details may be released. Typically, this would involve notification of a family death, search for legatees, and so on.

The Courts

In the event that a student record is subpoenaed by the court on behalf of the student, a certified copy of the full student record will be offered. Should the record be subpoenaed by a party other than that representing a student, a certified copy of the record will be offered to the judge alone, with an explanation of the college's reluctance to release a private document without student authorization. The decision will then rest with the judge as to the disposition of the record.

Researchers

Requests from researchers making statistical studies must be approved by the President or his/her designate under conditions that protect the student's privacy and guarantee the anonymity of the data collected.