

Ask Professor FERPA: Does a publicized Dean's List have FERPA implications?

Posted on August 19 2013



Dear FERPA Professor,

Our office of Marketing and Communications is considering the establishment of a web site which will serve to highlight our dean's list students' achievements. For every achievement earned, they propose to list the student's name, program, class year, hometown, and a photograph. While this information is considered directory information and this is made known to students, I am concerned that general GPA information would then be known about these undergraduate students " to qualify for dean's list at our institution, a student must have at least a 3.25 with no more than one C- grade. Conversely, someone going to this site could then determine, if they did not find a student on this site, that they had either not maintained a 3.25 GPA or better, and/or had received more than one C- grade. Is my concern valid, or is there no FERPA issue here?

Sincerely,

A Concerned Registrar

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Dear Concerned Registrar,

I have not seen an honor roll that includes in its definition no more than one C- grade along with the GPA required to qualify for the honor roll. Traditionally they would list only a GPA level that must be met or exceeded. Having said that, and while I would not recommend it as a best practice, if your institution has designated honors and awards as a directory information item, you could list the names of those students who have not opted out of directory information disclosure and who qualify for your dean's list designation.

I hope that clears up your concern,

The FERPA Professor
