

# Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 is a Federal law which states (a) that a written institutional policy must be established and (b) that a statement of adopted procedures covering the privacy rights of students be made available. The law provides that the institution will maintain the confidentiality of student education records.

Meredith College accords all the rights under the law to students who are declared independent. No one outside the institution shall have access to nor will the institution disclose any information from students' education records without the written consent of students except to personnel within the institution, to officials of other institutions in which students seek to enroll, to persons or organizations providing students financial aid, to accrediting agencies carrying out their accreditation function, to persons in compliance with a judicial order, and to persons in an emergency in order to protect the health or safety of students or other persons. All these exceptions are permitted under the Act.

Within the Meredith College community, only those members, individually or collectively, acting in the students' educational interest are allowed access to student education records. These members include personnel in the Offices of Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions and the Dean of Students, and academic personnel within the limitation of their need to know.

At its discretion the institution may provide Directory Information in accordance with the provisions of the Act to include: student name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance,

religious affiliation, degrees and awards received, the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student, participating in officially recognized activities and sports, and weight and height of members of athletic teams. Students may withhold Directory Information by notifying the Registrar in writing within two weeks after the first day of class for the fall term.

Request for non-disclosure will be honored by the institution for only one academic year; therefore, authorization to withhold Directory Information must be filed annually in the Office of the Registrar.

The law provides students with the right to inspect and review information contained in their education records, to challenge the contents of their education records, to have a hearing if the outcome of the challenge is unsatisfactory, and to submit explanatory statements for inclusion in their files if they feel the decisions of the hearing panels to be unacceptable. The Director of Career Placement Services at Meredith College has been designated by the institution to coordinate the inspection and review procedures for student education records, which include admissions, personal, academic, and financial files, and academic, cooperative education, and placement records. Students wishing to review their education records must make written requests to the office in which the specific records are kept listing the item or items of interest. Only records covered by the Act will be made available within forty-five days of the request. Students may have copies of their records with certain exceptions, (e.g., a copy of the academic record for which a

financial "hold" exists, or a transcript of an original or source document which exists elsewhere). These copies would be made at the students' expense at prevailing rates which are listed in the current catalog. Education records do not include records of instructional, administrative, and educational personnel which are the sole possession of the maker and are not accessible or revealed to any individual except a temporary substitute, records of the law enforcement unit, student health records, employment records or alumni records. Health records, however, may be reviewed by physicians of the students' choosing.

Students may not inspect and review the following as outlined by the Act; financial information submitted by their parents; confidential letters and recommendations associated with admissions, employment, or job placement, or honors to which they have waived their rights of inspection and review; or education records containing information about more than one student, in which case the institution will permit access only to that part of the record which pertains to the inquiring student. The institution is not required to permit students to inspect and review confidential letters and recommendations placed in their files prior to January 1, 1975, provided those letters were collected under established policies or confidentiality and were used only for the purposes for which they were collected.

Students who believe that their education records contain information that is inaccurate or misleading, or is otherwise in violation of their privacy or other rights may discuss their problems informally with the Director of Career Planning Services. If the decisions are in agreement with the students' requests, the appropriate records will be amended. If not, the students will be notified within a reasonable period of time that the records will not be amended; and they will be informed by the Director of their right to a formal hearing. Student requests for a formal hearing must be made in writing to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs who, within a

reasonable period of time after receiving such requests, will inform students of the date, place, and the time of the hearing. Students may present evidence relevant to the issues raised and may be assisted or represented at the hearings by one or more persons of their choice, including attorneys, at the students' expense. The hearing panels which will adjudicate such challenges will be the Vice-President and Dean of the College, representatives of the Vice-President for Student Development, and the Registrar.

Decisions of the hearing panels will be final, will be based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing, and will consist of written statements summarizing the evidence and stating the reasons for the decisions, and will be delivered to all parties concerned. The education record will be corrected or amended in accordance with the decisions of the hearing panels, if the decisions are in favor of the students. If the decisions are unsatisfactory to the students, the students

may place with the education records statements commenting on the information in the records, or statements setting forth any reasons for disagreeing with the decisions of the hearing panels. The statements will be placed in the education records, maintained as part of the students' records, and released whenever the records in question are disclosed.

Students who believe that the adjudications of their challenges were unfair, or not in keeping with the provisions of the Act, may request in writing assistance from the President of the institution. Further, students who believe that their rights have been abridged, may file complaints with The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Office (FERPA), Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D.C. 20201, concerning the alleged failures of Meredith College to comply with the Act.

Revisions and clarifications will be published as experience with the law and institution's policy warrants.

## Career Placement Notes

### Co-op Possibilities

Co-op Possibilities for spring and in the future -- Students interested in enrolling in Cooperative Education will want to investigate the following positions:

CAPSO-N (Capital Area Personnel Service Office--Navy) -- A CAPSO-N representative will visit Meredith on Sept. 30 to interview Business majors and students enrolled in Education programs for Spring Co-op positions as Supply Manager, Personnel Trainee, and Education Specialist. Interested students should investigate these positions immediately in the office of Career Services in order to be included on the interviewing schedule.

U.S. General Services Administration has slots for History and English majors as Archives Technicians and Editorial Technicians in Washington, DC, and other parts of the U.S. G.S.A. has a large Co-op program and these are only a few of the many types of Co-op positions for which students may compete.

Lynchburg Foundry in Lynchburg, Virginia, wants co-op students interested in business administration,

accounting, chemistry, and possibly personnel administration. Lynchburg Foundry presently employs 11 co-op students in its efforts to expand the co-op program to non-engineering areas. More information in the office of Career Services.

Interested in Personnel Work? -- Meredith College students have been invited to participate in the N.C. State Chapter of the American Society of Personnel Administration, a worldwide professional organization of personnel and industrial relations practitioners in business, industry, government, and education. The society's services cover a wide range of subjects pertinent to human resource management. The student club will meet once a month at N.C. State University. Programs may include trips to various employment sites and presentations by personnel administrators. Student members will have an opportunity to make professional contacts in the working world and to find out more about the personnel field. If interested, contact Ann Willson in the Office of Career Services, Cate Center, this week.



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