AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Policy Statement

Any employee, student, applicant for admission or employment, or other participant in programs or activities of The University of Southern Mississippi who believes she or he has been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, color, race, religion, national origin, disability or Vietnam-era veteran status by a university employee may file a complaint with the Office of Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity.

Reason for Policy/Purpose

This policy is required for the effective communication of university policy regarding affirmative action.

Who Needs to Know This Policy

All members of The University of Southern Mississippi community.

Website Address for this Policy

www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-stua-ds-003

Definitions

Policy/Procedures

Students or employees who wish to file complaints against students should contact the Office of the Dean of Students. Federal law, as well as university policy, prohibits any form of retaliation against a person who files a discrimination complaint in good faith.
Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity  
McLemore Hall, Room 310  
Office of the Dean of Students  
R.C. Cook Union, Room 231

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, university students have the right to inspect and review any and all records, files and data directly related to them. The university will not ordinarily release a student’s record to any outside agency without consent of the student. The University of Southern Mississippi may release directory information on students to any interested member of the public unless the student requests in writing that it be withheld. Directory information is defined as follows: student’s name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major, dates of attendance, classification, degree(s) earned, previous educational institutions attended and class rank. If you wish the university to withhold your name from the directory or the Internet and to withhold directory information from the general public, complete the Privacy form in the Office of the University Registrar, room 110, Kennard-Washington Hall.

NOTE: The release of information is a very controlled procedure. Unless the student has experienced particular problems, it is not recommended that his or her directory information be withheld. Completion of this form eliminates a student from the campus directory and any other publication concerning student enrollment.

EDUCATIONAL RECORDS FOR STUDENTS

A. Office of University Registrar: graduate and undergraduate academic records, course enrollments
B. Office of University Registrar: application for admission, test scores, official transcripts for all schools attended
C. Graduate School: academic program records, copy of Graduate School admission memorandum, application for graduate assistantship
D. Placement Office: employment credentials, letters of recommendation
E. Office of the Dean of Students: disciplinary records, grades
F. Financial Aid Office: application for financial aid
G. English Language Institute: test scores
H. Since the fall of 1997-98, transcripts have been provided at no charge.

Documents are released only upon written authorization. Transcripts are not released when there is indebtedness to the university.

RECORDS NOT AVAILABLE TO A STUDENT OR PARENTS

A. Confidential letters of recommendation filed prior to January 1, 1975, will not be made available as specified in the act.
B. Any letters of recommendation for admission or for employment to which the student has specifically waived a right to access will remain confidential.
DIRECTORY INFORMATION

The University of Southern Mississippi may release directory information on students to any interested member of the public unless the student requests in writing that it be withheld. “Directory information” is defined as follows: (1) student’s name, (2) address, (3) telephone number, (4) date and place of birth, (5) major, (6) participation in officially recognized activities and sports, (7) weight and height of athletic team member, (8) dates of attendance, (9) degrees and awards received, (10) previous educational institutions attended, (11) fraternity or sorority membership and (12) e-mail addresses.

OTHER ITEMS

A. Except as provided by the law, data released to sources outside the university will be in aggregate form, and no personally identifiable records will be made available.
B. Grades will be available through Southern Miss’ Online Accessible Records (SOAR). Students must have a valid password and ID to access records.

APPEALS PROCEDURE

A student who challenges the information in his or her educational record and who does not secure a satisfactory adjustment to that record by the appropriate record custodian may appeal by written permission to the chairperson of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Committee, Greg Pierce, at The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5006, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001. A hearing will be given to the petitioner, if requested.

FILING OF COMPLAINT WITH DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Individuals have the right to complain with the U.S. Department of Education concerning failures by the college to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-4605.

Review

The Dean of Students is responsible for the review of this policy every four years (or whenever circumstances require immediate review).

Forms/Instructions

N/A

Appendices

N/A
Related Information

N/A

History

11/01/11: Formatted for Institutional Policies website
02/05/13: Formatted for template. Minor editing throughout.
Amendments: Month, Day, Year – summary of changes
Authorization

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STUA-DS-000-003

As the Responsible Officer, I have reviewed this policy and believe it represents the current policy.

[Signature]
Responsible Officer

[Date]
April 4, 2013