In this issue: FERPA policy, sales and solicitations, e-mail issues, summer programs and the schedule of Summer Brown Bag Seminars.

FERPA Policy

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, commonly known as FERPA, is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. Educational records are broadly defined as records, files, documents, and other information directly related to a student which are maintained by an educational institution. Education records must be treated confidentially with the exception of certain information. It is important to be familiar with this law as it applies to anyone who has access to student information and records, and who may receive requests for that information.

FERPA generally provides to students:

- The right to access their education records;
- The right to expect that education records be disclosed to any other individual only with their consent; and
- The right to seek changes to educational records.

FERPA allows each educational institution to determine which educational information will be made available to the public. At Northeastern, this “directory information” consists of:

- College and major;
- Dean’s list and other recognition lists;
- Graduate degree and honors;
- Dates of attendance;
- Sports activity participation and information including team members’ height and weight;
- Playbills which indicate roles in performing arts production.

If you receive requests for any other information about a student, you must verify a student’s written consent before you provide any information. This is true with both phone and written requests for information (including emails).
If you have questions about whether to provide requested information, please contact our office at 2157.

Sale and Solicitation

The University’s policy on commercial sales and solicitations is printed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Student Handbook. While the policy is printed in the Student Handbook (because most sales campaigns will be targeted at students), it applies to the entire University community. The policy begins:

Northeastern University is not a marketplace. Sales of material or solicitations, such as newspapers and other printed matter, insurance, foodstuffs, and all other articles are prohibited without the express written permission of designated officials of the University. Solicitations of any kind are also prohibited without the express written permission of designated officials. Exceptions to this policy are made for recognized student organizations and residence hall residents. Residence hall residents should request permission to sell within their housing unit from the director of residential life; recognized student organizations should request permission for sales from the director of Campus Activities; all others should apply to the business manager of the University. Such permission, when granted, is for designated areas within the University and is subject to the restrictions imposed by the approving officials. General solicitation, especially in such areas as classrooms, lounges, and cafeterias, is not permitted.

The policy recently has been revised to emphasize that it applies to student groups, University departments and on-campus vendors. Compliance with this policy is essential given the University’s status as a non-profit institution. The policy applies to notices of community events, fundraisers, club/venue promotions, club cards and the like. Before planning and posting, you must contact the appropriate NU staff member listed.

Email Use

The University’s Appropriate Use of Computer and Network Resources Policy establishes the rules that apply to anyone who uses Northeastern University’s information systems, including e-mail. When you use the University’s computer systems, please realize that your personal confidentiality is not protected. In addition, new court rules also have been established which require individuals and institutions to preserve and share documents, email and other computer data in certain situations.
Here are a few reminders regarding use of email in any setting, including one of the University’s systems.

- Be mindful that emails can be retrieved (even after they have been deleted) and may be required to be shared in legal proceedings as evidence. The University’s computer systems are intended for the appropriate business purposes only.

- Make sure you know to whom you are sending your emails. Take the time to verify the identity of an individual purporting to be a parent, legal guardian or potential employer, for example. Especially take care when using the “reply all” option when sending email. “Reply all” sends your message to everyone listed in an original email.

### Summer Programs!!!

If your department is considering or planning a summer program, especially for K-12 students, please contact our office as soon as possible. These programs are regulated by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. We can assist you in identifying regulatory and other issues to address before the program concept is finalized, information is sent, and before the program begins.

### Summer 2007 Brown Bag Roundtables

Once again, the University Counsel Office will present lunchtime seminars on issues which are the topic of frequent questions. All are held on Wednesdays. Please bring your questions. All are welcome. Please call Karen Brown at x2157 to reserve your spot so that we can arrange for adequate space.

- **June 20**
  12:00 – 1:15 pm
  Contracts

- **July 11**
  12:00 – 1:15 pm
  Employment Issues
  What to Expect

- **July 25**
  12:00 – 1:15 pm
  Is This Information
  Private?
  How to Handle Requests for
  Student Information

- **August 8**
  12:00 – 1:15 pm
  Campuses in the News:
  Issues Following Campus
  Disturbances
If you have any questions you’d like to see responded to in this space, please submit them to the Office of University Counsel at 115 Churchill Hall. Depending upon the nature of your question, we’ll either answer you personally or address your issue in a future edition of this newsletter.

Of Counsel has been prepared as a general summary of important developments. It is not intended as individual legal advice. Should you have any questions or need information concerning a specific situation or any of the content of this advisory, please contact the Office of University Counsel, 115 Churchill Hall, x2157.

*This edition of Of Counsel was prepared with the assistance of Northeastern University law student Chris Eicher.*