Policy Number: 125

Policy Title: Protection of Student Information Online

Policy Council Review Date(s): 4/17/12, AAPC 3/18/2014

PPAB Approval Date: ________________________________

AAPC Comment: The AAPC reluctantly approved this policy because it seems under our current email situation there was no alternative. However, the AAPC decries the current situation in which GPC student e-mail is not secure and cannot be used to communicate sensitive information to students. We find the current system of using the extra security protocol to send sensitive information over GPC student email unworkable and deleterious to our retention efforts. A student must set up an account with a login and password to even access secure emails sent by his/her advisor, and students are unlikely to attend to the innocuous emails that advisors can send unsecured. We must have a secure, easily accessible channel for advisors to contact their advisees if we want our retention and graduation efforts to succeed. The AAPC strongly encourages the college to rectify this situation by securing student email, as other colleges have done.

POLICY:

Instructors must use approved mechanisms to securely transmit student information when communicating with students enrolled in the courses they teach.

Information controlled under the Family Educational Right to Privacy Act (FERPA) may not be transmitted by an instructor to a student enrolled in the instructor’s class through any electronic medium, including GPC e-mail, which has not been approved by the Chief Information Security Officer (CISO). Such information includes grades earned in the course, status in the course (e.g. failing), health information, and credit hours earned. Instructors may not post student information nor require students to post their own personal information to any third-party website without the approval of the CISO. (See Policy 506 Third Party Software and Services.)

The CISO has approved the use of iCollege. Student information may be transmitted to the student alone inside of iCollege using the internal messaging function. Student grades may also be posted using the gradebook function. Students may choose to release personally identifying information to classmates through discussion postings, profile pages, or similar functions in iCollege, but such release may not be a required element of the course. Only the first and last names and the gender of
each student in the course may be released by the instructor. Instructors will not release FERPA-controlled information through discussion boards.

The following are examples of information which can be posted through GPC e-mail:

“I would like to speak with you regarding the attendance requirements for this course. Please call me to discuss the details.”

“I would like to discuss your progress in the course so far. Please call me to discuss the details.”

See the U.S. Department of Education for more information on FERPA.

Approved by PPAB