

## **Instructional Use of Social Media Policy**

Oregon State University recognizes that online tools, forum, and networks provide opportunities for furthering student engagement in coursework. This policy attempts to honor that, while ensuring students' rights are observed. The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) outlines the protections of a student's education record. This includes any work completed as a part of the student's registration in a course. Courses that use social media or other online tools for course engagement must either: a) create an environment only accessible by those in the class, b) obtain student consent to display identifying information about the student and their enrollment in the course or c) anonymize the student's enrollment in the course.

**\*\*Note:** FERPA violations involve releasing education data that is not considered directory information. E.g. You write the name of the course on a blog and ask students to post on the blog—this displays that a student is enrolled in the course, which is protected data under FERPA. This would not be acceptable unless students consent to have their names appear on the course blog. However, you may remove the name of the course on the blog and ask students to post on the blog. Note that any student with a confidential flag cannot be expected to use their name for coursework that will appear publicly.

### *Methods for obtaining consent:*

In your course syllabus, note that the course will engage with online tools that may display the name of the course, the University, and/or student name(s). Ask students to fill out a form, such as the one attached, to determine if they would like to participate in the public forum. If there is no way for students to participate without releasing their education data, the engagement with the online tool will need to be changed. Students cannot be penalized for refusing to consent.

### *Other ways to use online tools without obtaining student consent:*

- Create a private environment that will not be accessible to those not registered for the course.
- Ask students to create a pseudonym at the beginning of the term that only you will know.
- Remove any course and University designation from the page, group, hashtag, et. al.
- Ask students to turn in their submissions to the site, forum, or other online tool directly to you.

FERPA questions? Let us know! Email [registrars@oregonstate.edu](mailto:registrars@oregonstate.edu)