SACS Comprehensive Standard 3.9.2

3.9.2 - Student Records

The institution protects the security, confidentiality, and integrity of student records and maintains special security measures to protect and back up data.

Judgment of Compliance

☑ In Compliance

Statement of Rationale for Judgment of Compliance

Chipola College protects the security, confidentiality, and integrity of its student academic records and maintains appropriate security measures to protect and back up data. Chipola maintains student records electronically as well as on paper.

Security

The Office of Information Systems is responsible for the security of the student database, which is stored electronically at Northwest Regional Data Center (NWRDC) in Tallahassee, Florida ([1]). The administrative on-line system is backed up systematically, and sent to an offsite location weekly. Other security measures include:

- Inactivity connection timeouts
- Mandatory password changes after 60 days
- Automatic operating system patches, fixes and updates
- Encryption of data to and from NWRDC

The Office of Information Systems also monitors the academic systems for the college, providing maintenance and upgrades as needed ([2]). The administrative computer system servers are secured in locked, access-restricted areas.

Confidentiality

The college complies fully with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) ([3]) and state statutes ([4]) governing student educational records. The FERPA policy is published in the Chipola College 2006-2007 Catalog ([5]), the Chipola College website ([6]), in the 2006-2007 Student Handbook/Planner.
The FERPA policy affords students the right to:

- Inspect and review their educational reports and records;
- Have privacy of their educational reports and records maintained;
- Require the college to obtain their written consent prior to disclosing personal identifiable information, except in those instances specifically noted in statute;
- Challenge the college to amend any portions of the students’ records that are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of student’s privacy.

FERPA training and a signed “Confidentiality of Student Records” form is also required of student workers employed at the college who may work with student records.

The Enrollment Services Department consists of the Admissions and Records Office, Financial Aid Office and the Testing Center. All Enrollment Services staff participate in appropriate list-serves as well as state and national conferences that provide information on student records management and federal regulations. Participation with these organizations provides useful information that enables the college to make informed decisions about policies and practices involving the security, confidentiality, and integrity of student records.

The department is responsible for providing guidelines for the maintenance, access, and disposal of student records. Records are disposed of in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the State of Florida General Records Schedule for Universities and Community College: Schedule GS5.

**Integrity**

The college’s Ethics and Compliance Program promotes integrity and professionalism at all levels. The Enrollment Services Department is committed to treating student records with appropriate respect and protection.

The Admissions and Records Office, which is a part of Enrollment Services, is responsible for processing student records and maintaining the integrity of the electronic student database, as well as paper documents relevant to all students. Chipola College provides lockable file cabinets which are stored in a vault housed in the Admissions and Records Office. To further protect the security of student academic records on paper, in 2003, the Chipola College Board of Trustees purchased an electronic records imaging system which has enabled the college to reduce significantly the number of student paper records. Access to scanned records is restricted and password protected. Scanned documents are also systematically backed up for added security, confidentiality, and integrity.
Student Records are backed up at least twice a week. The twelve most recent backups are available for reference at any time. In addition, backups taken at key times (after drop/add, prior to DOE database submissions, after grades are posted, etc.) are “stacked,” that is, copied to data sets that are kept indefinitely.

Chipola’s student records system is hosted at NWRDC, which takes a full system backup each Monday. Copies of complete NWRDV backups are stored offsite in another state. Admissions, human resources, and financial records are scanned into a digital document imaging system hosted on a local server. That server is backed up five nights a week. One of the backups is a full backup, the other four are incremental. Weekly backup tapes are archived until a “clean” monthly backup has been taken. Monthly backup tapes are archived for one year. All backup tapes are stored in a fire-rated, impact-rated safe in the college Data Center. Periodic backups are stored off-site for additional security. The current tape backup system will soon be replaced with a new disk-to-disk-to-tape backup system.

The college also protects data through dual air conditioning systems, dual battery backups, and physical security of the server room.

Documentation:

[1] Northwest Regional Data Center

[2] Chipola College Board Policy Number 1.005: Assurance of Data and Communications Accuracy & Integrity


[4] Florida Statutes, Section 1002.22. Student Records and Reports; Rights of Parents and Students; Notification; Penalty


[6] Chipola College website - Enrollment Services - FERPA


[8] Chipola College Board Policy Number 3.330: Student Records

[9] Confidentiality of Student Records (form)