IMPLEMENTATION OF FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT REGULATIONS

Office of Operations Review and Audit
University of Wisconsin System Administration

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Objectives

- Examine how institutions structure and provide administrative oversight for Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Regulations (FERPA) implementation
- Review FERPA policies and procedures
- Describe FERPA training
- Examine UW practices in areas such as records release and access
Enacted in 1974 to protect the rights and privacy of parents and students

Grants four primary rights to students who have attended an institution

Student educational records are presumed to be private

Disclosure allowable only with consent or if disclosure falls within an exception to the consent requirements
Audit Approach

- Conducted site visits at seven institutions (UW-La Crosse, Madison, Milwaukee, Parkside, Whitewater, UW Colleges, and UW-Extension)
- Performed limited procedures at all other UW institutions
- Interviewed staff
  - Registrars or assistant registrars
  - Financial aid directors
  - Admissions directors
  - Deans or associate deans of students
- Collected and analyzed UW institution documents on FERPA
Results

- UW institutions appear to generally be adhering to FERPA requirements
- Eight recommendations intended to further enhance the ability of institutions to effectively implement provisions of FERPA
Recommendations

1. Designation of Lead Office (impacted 4 institutions)
2. Centralization and Review of FERPA Policies (impacted 5 institutions)
3. Training for Individuals with Access to Student Educational Records (impacted 6 of 7 institutions at which site visits were performed)
4. Review and Consolidation of Annual FERPA Notice (impacted 5 institutions)
5. Review of Information Designated as Student Directory Information (impacted 1 institution)

6. Definition of “School Officials” and “Legitimate Educational Interest” (impacted 2 of 7 institutions at which site visits were performed)

7. Confidentiality Agreements (impacted 2 of 7 institutions at which site visits were performed)

8. Timely Removal of Access (recommended for consideration by all institutions)
Questions?