Student Privacy in Distance Education Courses Procedures/Policy

Xavier University of Louisiana complies with all of the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).   The statement of this policy is found in the University Catalog (http://catalog.xula.edu/content.php?catoid=3&navoid=102#family-educational-rights-and-privacy-ferpa-). In addition, the University is committed to protecting the privacy of a student's educational record regardless of delivery method. Because an online environment creates a record of student activity, it is subject to FERPA privacy rights unlike verbal exchanges in a physical classroom.

Identity Verification in Distance Learning Courses

The identity verification process for online courses protects students' privacy through the use of a secure login and student-selected password. Xavier uses Blackboard as its Learning Management System.

Faculty Responsibility

Faculty and staff understand and carry out a commitment to confidentiality, integrity and security to protect the privacy of students who participate in distance education. Students' records are kept private by the instructor, except in cases where the academic staff or administration accesses the course with legitimate educational interest under FERPA guidelines.

In order to maintain course security and protect student privacy, faculty do not access nor attempt to access another employee's or student's account without appropriate authorization.

Student Responsibility

In order to maintain confidentiality, login passwords are created by the student and any password reset is completed by the Xavier Office of Technology Administration after proof of identity. It is the students' responsibility to keep their password confidential. This responsibility is emphasized in the University's Network Use Policy found at http://www.xula.edu/itc/network-use-policy.html .

Please note that only work submitted to open forums like discussion boards can be accessed by other students. Other areas such as grades and correspondence are not viewable to other students.

Procedures used for faculty teaching online/distance education courses:
1. All Xavier faculty who are scheduled to teach a distance education course for the first time are required to complete the Quality Matters course, "Applying the QM Rubric."   This course includes information about best practices in offering online courses. One of these practices is the inclusion of important University policies, student privacy, accessibility, and academic honesty.
2. At the beginning of each semester, the Xavier Distance Education Coordinator sends a welcome email to all faculty who are new to teaching online and hybrid courses. This correspondence includes an Online Instructor Checklist.
3. Faculty who have taught online courses previously serve as mentors to faculty members who are teaching these courses for the first time, if requested.

4. Faculty members' Blackboard accounts contain a Faculty Resources tab maintained by the Office of Technology Administration. Within this page, faculty can link to various resources for assistance. Blackboard resources are also provided by Xavier's Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Faculty Development.

In addition, the following resources are provided to students:

1. An introduction of Xavier's technology resources is presented to students at New Student Orientation. This orientation includes a discussion about security of student passwords and accounts.
2. The University posts its Network Use Policy on the Office of Technology Administration webpage.
3. Students' Blackboard accounts contain a Student Resources tab maintained by the Office of Technology Administration. Within this page, students can link to various resources for assistance that include videos for students designed by Blackboard. Of particular note is the video entitled, "Editing Personal Information and Privacy Options." The Student Resources page has a direct link to this video with the link entitled, "Student Privacy." In addition, the Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Faculty Development provides Blackboard resources specifically for students.

These resources are updated on an ongoing basis as technology changes.