



Parent and Family Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2022 Issue 2

Sept. 19, 2022

Dear families and parents,

To keep you more informed about all that is happening on Minot State's campus, I am increasing this newsletter to bi-monthly while we are in term. I'm excited about the number of great activities we are offering and extend an invitation to visit Minot State during the school year, especially Parent & Family Weekend on Oct. 13 – 16. Please see the flyer on the following page for more information!

Respectfully,

Kevin Harmon,
Vice President for Student Affairs

Be seen. Be heard. Be empowered.



UPCOMING EVENTS & DEADLINES

SEPTEMBER

- 19** – Fall Assessment Day, no classes before 3 P.M.
- 21** – Last day to withdraw from all first 8-week classes with a 50% refund
- 28** – Last day to drop first 8-week classes
- 30** – Last day to withdraw from all 16-week classes with a 75% refund

OCTOBER

- 1** – Apply online at fafsa.gov for the FAFSA for the next academic year. The FAFSA is available to students who are U.S. citizens or eligible noncitizens with a valid social security number and accepted into a degree granting program.
- 7** – Spring semester graduation application due to Registrar's Office
- 12 – 13** – First 8-week final exams
- 14 – 16** – Parent and Family Weekend and Homecoming

View more dates, deadlines, and events at MinotStateU.edu/calendar.



Registered families will receive reduced admission at all sporting events, meals, and free use of the Wellness Center! Contact kevin.harmon@MinotStateU.edu to register or for more information.

THURSDAY, OCT. 13

Campus Tours: 10 A.M. and 1 P.M., Enrollment Services (Admin. 165)

Northwest Arts Center: Open 9 A.M. – 4 P.M. (Gordon B. Olson Library)

Wellness Center – Rock wall open 3 – 7 P.M. Group exercise class, time TBD

FRIDAY, OCT. 14

Campus Tours: 10 A.M. and 1 P.M., Enrollment Services (Admin. 165)

Northwest Arts Center: Open 9 A.M. – 4 P.M.

Wellness Center: Rock wall open 3 – 7 P.M. Group exercise class, TBA

Men's Hockey vs. Midland
Maysa Arena, time TBA,

Alumni and Friends Homecoming Social
7 P.M., The Original Bar and Nightclub (21+)

SATURDAY, OCT. 15

Homecoming 5K Fun Run and Walk
10:45 A.M., Participants will run/walk the parade route from Downtown Minot to the MSU campus. Find more information [here](#).

Homecoming Parade
11 A.M., Downtown Minot to the MSU Dome

Parent and Family Tailgate Party
Dome East lot, following parade

Football vs. Northern State University
2 P.M., Herb Parker Stadium

Women's Hockey vs. University of Jamestown
5 P.M., Maysa Arena

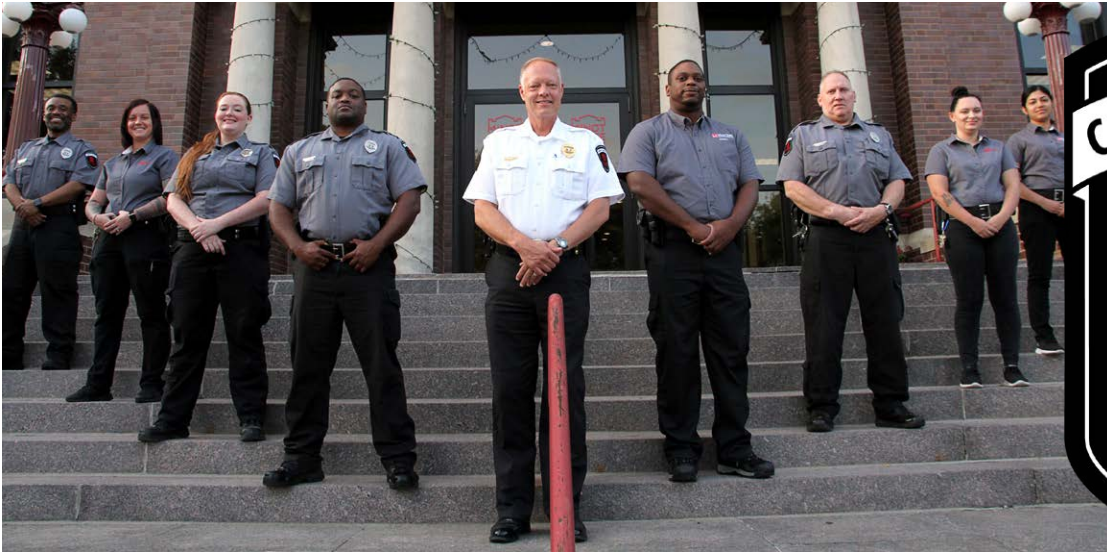
Men's Hockey vs. Midland
8 P.M., Maysa Arena

SUNDAY, OCT. 16

Music faculty recital: Dr. Jon Rumney
7:30 P.M., Ann Nicole Nelson Hall (Old Main)

Full Homecoming schedule coming soon! View updates at MinotStateU.edu/homecoming.

Spotlight on MSU Security



The Minot State University Office of Security and Safety exists to provide a safe learning and working environment for all students, faculty, and staff.

To accomplish this important mission, MSU Security officers maintain a presence on campus 24/7, including all holidays and scheduled school breaks. Our staff consists of six full-time and four part-time officers. One officer on duty always carries a dedicated cell phone to allow anyone to easily contact our office. The number is 701-500-2423 — it's a good idea for all students and employees to add this number to their cell phone contacts for easy reference.

MSU Security officers are not sworn law enforcement officers and do not carry firearms. While we enjoy a historically safe campus with very little crime, we have established and maintain a close working relationship with the Minot Police Department and other law enforcement agencies for cooperative assistance if needed.

MSU Security officers wear a professional, highly recognizable uniform to stand out to the campus community and to anyone visiting campus. Officers continually monitor campus through foot and vehicle patrols utilizing a marked patrol car. Officers routinely assist students and employees with incidental personal emergencies such as jump-starting vehicles and providing assistance with changing flat tires.

Officers are assigned to all campus athletic events. Duties at events include checking for weapon and alcohol as spectators arrive, providing security for referees during half time and at the conclusion of games, and responding to any medical emergencies.

The Safe Walk program is a service offered by MSU Security for anyone who may feel uncomfortable walking to their vehicle or residence hall. Anyone calling 701-500-2423 may request an officer to their location and walk with or give a ride anywhere on campus. Although we have a very safe campus, there are times — such as night — when someone may feel more comfortable if an officer is present!



One of MSU Security's main responsibilities is to make sure exterior and interior doors of all campus buildings are locked every night after hours. We employ four student workers to assist uniformed officers with building lockup. Student workers also assist at event security such as football games and other large events, like high school state tournaments held at the MSU Dome.

MSU Security utilizes approximately 390 cameras located in public areas of buildings and monitors parking lots, sidewalks, and other areas of campus. Each camera is motion detector activated to record about 30 days of activity. We have assisted Minot PD by providing video footage to help them identify vehicles traveling on public streets adjacent to campus relating to active investigations.

In 2015, Minot State University installed a system of 26 emergency station Blue Lights across campus. All Blue Lights locations are generally within sight of each other to allow for easy access. Each Blue Light has a



camera that allows an immediate view of the area around the Blue Light — these cameras also can store recorded data for approximately 30 days.

The Blue Light stations serve as not only a visual deterrent, but a way for the public to communicate directly with MSU Security or with Minot Central Police Dispatch. Communication is accomplished by a speaker/microphone combination incorporated into the body of the Blue Light station. There is a black button to establish contact with the MSU Security cell phone and a red button to contact Minot Central Dispatch. Each Blue Light station is GPS identified to allow rapid response by law enforcement to any area of campus. We test each Blue Light location monthly to ensure proper operation.

MSU Security also works closely with several academic departments to assist in required background checks for students entering careers such as teaching, nursing, social work, and communication disorders. We utilize an inkless electronic fingerprint scanner to easily take and print official fingerprint cards for individuals needing an FBI and NDBCI background investigation. On average, we provide this service to approximately 250 students per year. A student or employee with a current MSU ID can have their fingerprints scanned and cards printed free of charge by officers.

If you would like additional information regarding safety and security at Minot State University, you may access the Annual Security Report written in compliance with the federal Clery Act. The report is available at [MinotStateU.edu/safety/](https://www.minotstateu.edu/safety/). The Annual Security Report contains detailed information regarding MSU campus crime statistics for three previous years. The report also describes policies and procedures relating to personal safety, fire safety, and crime prevention activities. The 2022 edition containing 2019, 2020, and 2021 crime and fire statistics will be published by Oct. 1.

The number one goal of MSU Security is to provide the safest learning and working environment possible. If you have a question or concern, you may contact me at gary.orluck@minotstateu.edu or call my office at 701-858-4016. The MSU Security website also contains a link to anonymously report a tip or concern.

Gary Orluck
Safety and Security Director

Navigating Student Privacy Within FERPA

By David Tuttle, CollegiateParent.com

In considering how much college staff members will and won't share with you about your student, understand that institutions are trying to teach students to be adults by treating them as adults. What's more, institutions strive to be student-centered. To build relationships with students, it's important to treat them with respect and to guard their privacy.

Good institutions also want to partner with families to help their students succeed. These things (student and family centeredness) can co-exist, and as a parent, you can be an advocate for your student without acting on behalf of them. Hopefully, your student's college or university will let you.

FERPA (the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act) was created in 1974 for students and families to ensure that student records were accurate, could not be shared arbitrarily with others, and could be reviewed and corrected. Records, generally, involve grades, finances, and conduct. Interactions between student and clergy, counselors, and doctors have a higher level of protection. Confidentiality is key in those relationships.

Administrators can talk to parents about most anything else. For example, if the student has developed a pattern of belittling staff members, this is not a student record — it's an observation. If attempts to get through to the student don't work, a phone call to a parent can be effective. In extreme cases, students who are no longer attending classes, or who are not responsive to attempts to address their mental health, including suicidality, institutions may want to contact family to loop them in to help the student and this is not prohibited by FERPA.

If a parent calls the Residence Life department about a roommate conflict, a staff member can absolutely discuss it — or at least listen. In my experience, this is an area when adding the emotional voices of parents actually complicates matters. But sometimes the parent can offer valuable information and insight that may add context help the staff figure out how to address the situation.



The important thing to reinforce here is that FERPA addresses student records, not much else. Be wary if someone says they can't talk to you because of FERPA. They may be reluctant because of the aforementioned reasons related to privacy (student-centeredness and building trust with students).

In addition, entry-level staff and faculty may fear that a violation of FERPA will result in the school losing federal aid. This is extremely rare. Most upper-level and seasoned professionals are more experienced in navigating all of this. So sometimes, parents need to move up the organization chart to get assistance.

As a parent of a college student, here are some important things to know about FERPA and your student's privacy.

Students Are Considered Adults

This is a central philosophy of college administrators. Unfortunately, admission to college does not miraculously turn an adolescent into a fully functioning adult. Having witnessed cases of improper student behavior, I can say for sure it's generous, at best, to confer adulthood onto 18-year-olds.

Indeed, there is plenty of evidence that the brain isn't close to full development until the mid-20's. What college staffers want is aspirational. They want to establish that it's time for students to take care of their own business. This is part of the learning process, and is an important component of the college experience.

In theory, I love this. However, sometimes students exhaust all manner of reasonable attempts to get assistance from staff members and they NEED an experienced person (parent) to step in. Sometimes parents simply know how to be assertive (hopefully not aggressive or threatening) and to help or get clarity on policies and procedures.

Sometimes it is even simpler. When I was a new student and had an issue with my bill, I asked my mom to call the business office because I didn't understand the situation. It was easier and more efficient for her to do this, and made me no more or less a grown-up. It was a one-off. I got the hang of it. I still grew up and became responsible in many ways (mostly by being an RA). This phone call was better for me and the school. And mom got to be my hero for once.

More About Privacy

The dilemma for administrators is determining when to pull in parents. Most use the health, safety, and success of the student to guide them. These can be really gray areas and decisions can have major consequences. Staff can't be effective if they run to parents every time the student gets in trouble, or if they blab whenever a parent calls them. On the other hand, they don't want to answer questions from a parent about why the family wasn't informed of something.

FERPA allows universities to inform parents of alcohol and drug violations. This can help in redirecting a student's trajectory. I used it at times, as a dean of students, to help get the student to prioritize education over substance use and related shenanigans. I also sometimes contacted parents if the student was a threat to self or others, also allowed by FERPA. But this was used selectively. Typically I encouraged students to involve those best positioned to support them. Often, they did so when it was too late to have an impact.

With the cost of education, schools should also cultivate parent relationships. This isn't nefarious,

and in fact, it can be very helpful in offering nuanced perspectives to parents, if not outright offering more accurate facts. Parents aren't wrong when they say they are the ones paying and therefore should have more involvement in their student's education. But still, it's complicated. I had a colleague who used to say he would never take a parent call. This was dumbfounding to me. Sometimes just helping a parent be heard and understand decisions is all a parent needs to be satisfied.

So, What Can Parents Do?

1. Have your student sign the waiver

This is where you have leverage, and it is with your child. If you are the primary funding source, by all means, you should insist that your student sign a FERPA waiver which will allow you to discuss student records. Check the registrar webpage for your student's school or search for FERPA waiver. Be proactive in making this happen.

And don't forget, most instructors give less graded work in college than in high school so if your student says they don't know what their grade is in a given class, this may be accurate. But you should definitely feel comfortable asking them how they will communicate with you about how they're doing academically.

2. Gently push back on FERPA

If you're getting the FERPA silent treatment, ask the person you're speaking with to explain what record is being protected. And challenge them if this is an issue of their confidentiality and privacy preferences, rather than the regulation. This will at least give you a sense of how the college is approaching student privacy. You can acknowledge this and still pursue your questions.

Without belittling the staff member, perhaps ask to talk to someone at a higher level with more experience who can navigate these issues and speak with more confidence. If that doesn't work, then speak to the dean of students or the registrar. These persons are used to this and are experts and should be either more informative about the school's approach and/or more forthcoming.

3. Speak hypothetically

I have done this as a parent, calling a child's therapist or school administrator. If they won't talk to you about your student, say, "I understand." And

then say you want to speak to them hypothetically, so they know what you are up to. “Let’s say a student has a roommate whose boyfriend has essentially moved into the room. How would a student address this without looking like a rat? Who can help and advise them?” (A good staff member will have an RA discreetly look into the situation, by the way.)

I did this with a child’s medical bill recently. “I know you can’t acknowledge they are a patient, but how can I as a parent determine if a bill has been submitted to insurance?” You would be amazed at the adept ways someone can tell you what you need to know without telling you anything specific.

4. Say this, not that

Generally, administrators are responsive to the term “student success.” So, if you are being shut out, express that you are interested in your student’s success, and ask the person if they support this (they’d better!). This can help loosen things up. Without threatening that your student might transfer, it’s okay to discuss wanting your student to be retained and finish their experience at the school. Every school is worried about retention and graduation rates.

And state that you know your student needs to advocate for themselves, meet with the appropriate people, and manage their situation. Make it clear that you’re seeking information, or advocating for your student, and the action steps are up to your student.

Telling a staff member that you pay, or that you know someone in the upper level of the administration, generally just leads a staff member to dig in their heels.

Lastly, if you are unhappy with the condition of the dorms, the food, textbook prices, class availability, and parking, consider letting these things go. Students have avenues for their complaints and this is when they should make their feelings known through student government or to appropriate university officials. Your general complaints may simply derail staff from managing more important things that truly do require their attention.

5. Don’t call or reach out to professors

You know who will rarely talk about students and their grades and academic performance?

Professors. They are almost always big believers that students are adults and that classroom learning is not to be mucked with by parents. They believe firmly that this isn’t high school any more. And they don’t care about FERPA. They can’t be bothered in most cases with this.

Your better approach will be to talk to an academic advisor or someone in academic or student services who may be able to ascertain how a student is doing. As a dean of students, I could reach out to faculty members about student grades, attendance, and engagement and have a pretty good picture of where a student stood academically within 24–48 hours. This could be very helpful in generally painting the full picture for a parent (and student) and help in advising how to salvage the semester.

In Summary

Understand that institutions are trying to treat students as adults and want to guard their privacy. At the same time, good institutions want to partner with families and students to help them succeed. These things can co-exist and as a parent, you can be an advocate for your student without acting on behalf of them. Hopefully, your institution will let you.