

The Successful Registrar

Managing Records, Systems and Staff

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 9

NOVEMBER 2002

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COMPLIANCE

Gardner-Webb University is in an uproar after the president maneuvered to get the star of the basketball team eligible.

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RECORDS MANAGEMENT

A registrar explains how he built campuswide support before implementing a policy to put disciplinary notations on transcript.

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TOOLS OF THE TRADE

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NEWS & NOTES 2

Earthquake spurs Cal State Northridge to imaging, more efficient work process

Aftershocks of the 1994 earthquake that hammered Northridge, Calif. continue to reverberate — but in a good way at **California State University-Northridge**. No longer is there a separation between the records and admissions offices, a consequence of a revamped work process.

No longer is the operation subject to the unpredictability of another damaging rumble, where temporary offices had to be set up without the ability to communicate internally.

Imaging permits access to documents anywhere on campus, leaving inconvenience down there with the rubble. And CSUN made that the cornerstone of its recovery plan — to emphasize processing of transfer students' transcripts, since it receives about 42,000 per year.

"We were trying to recover from the quake and rebuild our enrollment," says **Eric Forbes**, director of operations.

After the earthquake, CSUN focused on transfer students because they were the new constituency.

(See **IMAGING** on page 4)

MORE ON PAGES 4-5
• GET WHAT YOU NEED
• EASING THE BURDEN

Institutions are well-schooled at dealing with parents demanding to see child's grades

Technology has brought great improvement to the workplace, simplifying chores and providing convenience to our culture. Across the country institutions are taking advantage of students' ready access to computers and have ceased mailing grades home.

Students can get their grades much faster and institutions have trimmed the printing and mailing expenses.

See survey results, page 7

Of course, when an angry parent calls to say he wants to see his child's grades and feels darn well entitled to them, as the footer of the bill, you have to wave the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act** at him.

The Successful Registrar surveyed institutions that have stopped mailing grades to see how they have handled an issue that can be volatile, and some colleges and universities are adept at resolving the problem.

"We explain that getting a grade report is easier than ever," says **John Hall**, executive director of enrollment services and registrar at **Southern Methodist**

(See **PARENTS** on page 6)

Meeting calendar**TACRAO (Tennessee)**

Nov. 20-22

Location: Nashville Airport
Marriott Hotel, Nashville, Tenn.**CACRAO (CAROLINAS)**

Dec. 1-4

Location: Kingston Plantation,
Myrtle Beach, S.C.**VACRAO (VIRGINIA)**

Dec. 2-4

Location: Marriott Crystal
Gateway, Arlington, Va.**MSACROA**

Dec. 2-5

Location: Trump Marina, Atlantic
City, N.J.**SACRAO (Southern)**

Feb. 9 - 12, 2003

Location: Biloxi, Miss.

WACRAO (Washington)

Feb. 12-14, 2003

Location: Rainbow Lodge, North
Bend, Wash.**NJ-NYACRAO**

March 6, 2003

Location: Kean University,
Union, N.J.**AACRAO**

April 6 - 9, 2003

Location: Washington, D.C.

This month's ethics question ...

To allow a student-athlete to play, your institution's president demands you recalculate the student-athlete's grade point average, ignoring the F that was received for cheating. What do you do?

Direct your thoughts and comments on this month's ethics question to Editor Jay Margolis at jmargolis@lrp.com.

INS investigates Iowa State professor's transcripts

Phony academic transcripts are at the heart of an investigation into whether an **Iowa State University** professor was studying and working illegally in the United States, *The Des Moines Register* reported.

The **Immigration and Naturalization Service** is looking into an allegation that **Li Cao**, an assistant mechanical engineering professor, obtained her visa with faked records.

Complaints from Cao's husband, **Ziyi Dai**, ignited the investigation. Dai, a former graduate student at ISU, was recently sentenced to 15 years in prison after pleading guilty to attacking his wife with a knife and cutting her fingers, hands and arm.

He claims he was set up by Cao so he couldn't notify authorities about using the bogus documents to enter the United States.

The **National Science Foundation** is also scrutinizing Cao's academic credentials after awarding her \$375,000 to do a seven-year study concerning engineering and biotechnology.

Cao's academic records were requested from the **University of Minnesota**, the **University of Cincinnati** and the **Beijing Institute of Clothing Technology**. ■

English students get forge-proof test certificates

Students in England who pass matriculation examinations now receive forgery-proof exam certificates, according to the BBC.

The anti-counterfeiting measures include a hologram, an ultraviolet image that can't be seen by a human eye and heat-sensitive ink that disappears if photocopied. ■

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Get everyone on board before implementing notations policy

Before your institution begins implementing a policy for including disciplinary notations on student transcripts, follow this advice from **Yechiel J. Rosenrauch**, senior registrar at **City University of New York Hunter College**, which has had success with its policy:

- Develop and publicize a very clear policy to regulate disciplinary notations.
- Establish a committee and a process for determining when to make and how to word transcript notations.
- Get all key administrators on board with the policy.

"Here it works very smoothly," Rosenrauch says. "As long as there are established rules and everyone's aware of them, implementation is very, very easy."

Although most transcript notations are for academic reasons, some are for disciplinary reasons, but the notations do not distinguish between the two.

"Disciplinary charges could be brought for various reasons — grade changes, plagiarism, theft, anything that happens at the institution," Rosenrauch says.

To those who say the student's transcript is solely for academic notations, he says: "It's part of their life at the college, so I don't really see the distinction between academic and disciplinary. Anything that goes on at the institution, it's part of the record, the way I see it."

The policy had been on the books for a few years before Hunter College decided to implement it, he says. Now, only a handful of notations are made each semester.

"They felt this was the best way to stop some of the things that were going on," says Rosenrauch, declining to elaborate on the incidents.

Making disciplinary notations on students' records is important because "students need to know there are consequences for their actions," he says.

Disciplinary or academic notations help maintain the institution's integrity, he says, and keep grade changing, plagiarism and cheating from becoming commonplace.

Although notations do not usually mention the violation or behavior that led to the suspension, expulsion or

How Hunter College's process works

This is **Hunter College's** disciplinary notations process:

1. Disciplinary charges are brought against a student.
2. The charges go before the disciplinary committee.
3. The disciplinary committee decides the outcome, or sanction, such as suspension or expulsion, which may include a transcript notation.
4. The disciplinary committee provides the wording of the notation to the registrar's office.
5. The registrar puts notation on student's transcript.
6. The student may appeal to the college president. (If the president agrees with the student, the president tells the registrar to not make the notation.)
7. Notations remain on the student's transcript indefinitely, even after completion of the suspension period. (The exception would be if the disciplinary committee had included a "rare, built-in statement, 'to be removed at end of suspension,'" Rosenrauch says.)
8. When a student requests a transcript be sent out, the institution will receive a transcript including the notations. ■

other outcome, Rosenrauch says institutions receiving the transcript can easily read between the lines.

Here are samples of recent notations he's made:

- Student ineligible to repeat (specific) class. Student will have an F grade in (specific) class. (Read between the lines: cheating, plagiarism.)
- Student suspended for theft; items must be returned.
- Student has to reimburse institution for damage.
- Student suspended for two semesters.
- Repayment plan will be made between student and the office of continuing education.
- Student suspended from the college.
- Student expelled, effective immediately.

For more information, contact **Yechiel J. Rosenrauch** at yechiel.rosenrauch@hunter.cuny.edu. ■

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Partnership with company helps university get the product it needs

There is more to a transcript than just the document itself.

“Scanning a transcript is not an easy thing,” says **Doug Norton**, general manager at **Hershey Business Systems Inc.** “A transcript is similar to a form. It has a structure to it. It’s because of the structure we were able to build a template. We then apply the template to the image we scan and we can extract all the pertinent information that is key-entered into the information system.”

Working closely with a university and creating a partnership gave Hershey invaluable insight into the needs and practices of higher education. The company worked with both the **University of Alabama** and **California State University-Northridge** to develop solutions that worked for each, examples of how Hershey has leveraged the relationships to create 13 products.

This article is not intended to endorse Hershey, but to show the value of working with a company to develop a

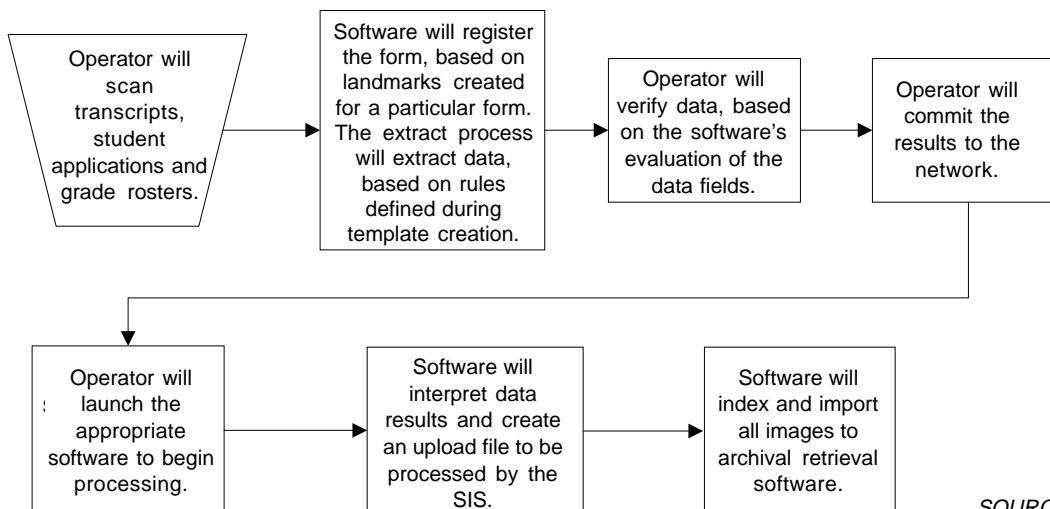
product that meets your needs instead of purchasing a product made for a business-world environment and modifying it to suit the world of higher education.

Beyond just imaging documents, Hershey provided a method for extracting header information (name, Social Security number) and all the student’s coursework. The process saves three to five minutes of the time it takes for a clerk to enter the data manually, according to Hershey research.

Having the transcript online permits any number of people to access it at the same time.

For institutions that acquire a new information system with a degree audit module, they still need to get the data into the system, Norton says.

The technology can be used by 90 percent of higher education, he says. As examples, he cited human resources to process employment applications and the finance office to process invoices. ■



This chart traces the route a transcript takes from when it is scanned into the computer system until it arrives at the archive.

SOURCE: Hershey Business Systems

IMAGING (continued from page 1)

“We beat the problem by turning the thing inside out,” Forbes says. “The degree audit now functions as an admissions tool. The key was scanning — extracting data from the transcripts.”

The strategy worked. In 1994, CSUN had 2,312 transfer students. In five of the last eight years, it has surpassed 3,300.

His evaluators needed a year to develop a sufficient level of rules for courses from other institutions to begin realizing a benefit. A priority was placed on establishing the rules for 20 institutions in the Northridge area that provided the majority of transfer students. Then evaluators worked on courses from other institutions.

As a result, staff no longer had to key in transcript information. With that process, transfer students usually

didn’t know until the end of their first semester what courses they would need to fulfill degree requirements.

“It’s an outreach and recruiting tool. We’re helping students by giving them the information while they’re attending another school,” Forbes says. “It becomes an advising tool, a retention tool, a support tool.

“It’s a huge, powerful weapon against mediocrity in helping people find their way through college. The time for transfers to graduate is less.”

CSUN receives transfer applications from 9,000 students and another 5,000 for graduate applications, and each student averages three transcripts. Forbes said a student following a catalog as stipulated and graduating in four years “is a rare person.”

For more information, contact Eric Forbes at eric.forbes@csun.edu or (818) 677-3776. ■

Technology eases transcript evaluation burden at CSU-Northridge

Sometimes it pays to be a saver. When **California State University-Northridge** needed the right imaging product, **Eric Forbes**, director of operations, pulled out the business card a pesky salesman handed him 18 months before.

Though the salesman had left his company, his successor assessed CSUN's situation and recommended **Hershey Business Systems Inc.**

Hershey had established a reputation for integrating products to create something new, and the company sat down with CSUN to think through the issues, Forbes says.

"It isn't just scanning. It's extraction," he says.

CSUN devoted 25 people to evaluation before imaging. Today there are seven. The records office informs students of how their courses meet requirements and what they have to take within a week so they can select the courses they need with certainty for their first semester.

Fewer people are now needed to evaluate transcripts and CSUN eliminated the paper flow.

"You get an archive accessible to anyone with a personal computer and you get the data extraction," Forbes says.

The workflow changed. Transcripts were scanned into the system and verified as they came in. Each evaluator is 10 times more productive and there are no files to manage. On average, 378 transcripts have to be evaluated each day, and they all get done. When employees go on vacation, Forbes can manage the workflow around their absences, and students still get a quick response.

"This technology has a lot of applications," Forbes says.

One of those applications is taking paper applications and imaging them. He's working on an electronic transfer agreement with community colleges that will encourage students to complete basic subjects before transferring to CSUN. Through the pact, students will know how their community college's courses will fulfill the university's requirements.

"We're trying to make the relationship as seamless as possible," he says.

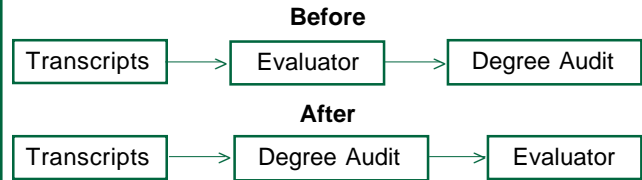
"We're trying to provide service and keep the students in the center of the process. Technology is the spine that helps us. We changed our business practices to conform to the way technology could deliver it."

A partner that provides the support and experience for a project like this was key to CSUN getting what it wanted. Forbes praised Hershey.

"What makes the difference is the insight into the educational environment," he says. "Everything is different for every campus. An imaging architect can come in and help you think through those options."

In other words, taking the lowest bid isn't necessarily the wisest decision. ■

How the workflow changed



The introduction of the imaging process at **California State University-Northridge** allowed the registrar to change the workflow. In the old system, the file was reviewed by the evaluator before the degree audit could be done. Today, imaging with archive and extraction occurs between transcripts and the evaluation. ■

SOURCE: California State University-Northridge

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PARENTS (continued from page 1)

University. “All parents have to do is ask the student to hit the print icon and hand them the printed output. Or the parents can request a transcript once we have a declaration of dependency on file or student release.”

“Grades are available online,” says **Bobbye Fry**, registrar at the **University of the Incarnate Word**. “We tell parents to ask their child to provide them access to that information.”

“We tell parents to have their student show them their grades online,” says **Richard Morrell**, registrar at the **University of Kansas**. “It is harder to forge a screen than it is a paper document.”

The survey

The Successful Registrar sent a survey on how parents react to not seeing their child’s grades to 133 institutions. There were 65 responses. A couple of institutions have either just stopped mailing grades or are about to. Others provided information but didn’t fill out the survey. See chart on page 7.

Some institutions haven’t mailed grades for up to 10 years, so parents are prepared.

“We’re a large, public commuter institution,” says **Anita Hall**, registrar at **California State University-Sacramento**. “By and large, parents don’t have the sense of entitlement to their children’s

educational reports that I hear is more common in smaller, high-cost institutions.”

It’s been six years since her campus mailed grades and fewer than 10 parents have been angry enough to talk to Hall.

‘It is harder to forge a screen than it is a paper document.’

— **Richard Morrell**,
University of Kansas

“About half provided proof of dependency and the remainder went away to work it out with their children,” she says.

“On occasion, I have spoken to the students and urged them to come clean with their folks, either because I was going to have to release the grades anyway or because one or both parties was inclined to use my office as middleman for family business.”

During registration, **Oral Roberts University** students declare their status online.

“If parents do not agree with what the student has entered, they can provide the registrar’s office with a certified copy of their most recent tax filing form showing the student has been claimed as a dependent,” says **Sheree King**, ORU’s registrar.

Students have been told that ORU will amend inaccurate information.

“We are in the process of creating an audit trail so that we can track when any information is entered or updated in this field,” King says. “If a student does not have any entry in the status field, we treat that student as independent.”

Centenary College of Louisiana stopped mailing grades five years ago and has received six complaints, says **Gary Young**, registrar and director of institutional research.

“We consider our decision not to mail grades to be one of our wisest decisions in recent years,” he says.

Virginia Wesleyan College stopped mailing grades in August 1998.

“I can’t remember a single parent who was upset, as parents who had a good enough relationship with their child to see the paper copy also have a good enough relationship to look over the child’s shoulder on the computer or to simply ask for the login and password,” says **Bobbie Adams**, VWC’s registrar.

Parents are informed of how students receive grades at VWC orientations.

“Gone are the days when parents would call me and say that the grades haven’t arrived yet,” Adams says. “I would tell them the date they were mailed and we generally figured that Johnny or Mary simply beat them to the mailbox. In the meantime, they were blaming the school for not mailing the grades or claiming they must have been lost in the mail.”

Pepperdine University in California does not mail grades except to students of the School of Business and Management because many of them are reimbursed by their employers, says **Emelita Dacanay**, acting registrar.

Lewis University in Illinois recently reinstated the practice of mailing grades, a change made without explanation by senior administrators. ■

Another reason to mail grades

The machine that folded and stuffed envelopes that **Oklahoma State University** used to mail grade reports to students malfunctioned. Many grade reports were mailed to the wrong student. *Letter re: Oklahoma State University* (FPCO 05/08/02)

As soon as OSU discovered the problem, the machine was fixed and the students were notified.

The university issued an apology to the students and asked them to destroy grade reports they received that were not theirs. The university stated that beginning this fall, it will no longer mail individual semester grade reports.

OSU notified the **Family Policy Compliance Office** that it had inadvertently disclosed education records.

The FPCO thanked the university for the information describing the inadvertent disclosure and the remedies the university had undertaken.

It advised the university that if a complaint should arise, the FPCO would notify the university, but the prior information would be helpful in determining how to handle. ■

Institutions get smattering of parent complaints, TSR survey shows

Institutions that stopped mailing grades see very few, if any, complaints from angry parents, according to *The Successful Registrar's* survey. The results show some of the ways institutions let parents know what to expect and how to work with their child to see the grades.

Institution	Have parents been upset they were not seeing their child's grades?		How have you handled the situation?	What the registrars say
	No	Other		
Angelo State University	No	Other		Student does have option to have grades mailed, but must make request
Boise State University	No	Other		Give students a chance to designate to whom they want grades released
California State Dom. Hills	Yes	Other		Talk with parents, who usually say they'll discuss issue with student
California St. Sacramento	No			Parents don't have a sense of entitlement to grades
Centenary College of La.	No			Direct parent to their child to get a copy of the grades
College of Eastern Utah	No	Affidavit, case by case		
Crown College	A few	Other		Form in registration packet for student to permit or withhold access to grades
DeVry University, K.C.	Yes	Other		All new students can sign a release so parents can receive information
Drake University	No	Let family figure it out		
Edinboro University	No	Other		Tell students to show grades to their parents. At orientation, parents see how students access online account. Tell students and parents to work together
Edison Community College	No			
Fort Lewis College	No	Other		Have student sign release form or share PIN, parents provide tax return
Ithaca College	No	Other		Students sign a form granting parents access to grades at semester's end
Jacksonville University	No			
Louisiana State University	A few	Case by case		Explain to parents that they must prove their students are dependents
Macalester College	A few			Students can give parents username and password to access academic record online or give permission for registrar to mail grades to parents
Miami-Dade CC	No			Rarely have to deal with an unhappy parent
Miami University (Ohio)	No			
N.J. Institute of Technology	No	Let family figure it out		
Ohio State University	No			Parents can prove dependency. OSU urges parents, students to communicate
Olympic College	No	Other		If parents want grades, their student can sign a release
Oral Roberts University	No			No longer mails grades to students, but does to parents of dependent children
Pepperdine University	A few	Affidavit, other		Students sign a form authorizing release of grades to parents
Rhodes College	No	Affidavit, other		Send a hard copy upon request to the student's home address
Rutgers University	No	Case by case		Policy is not to release grades to parents. They must get grades from student
Saint Louis University	No	Other		Will release grades if proper proof is submitted
Saint Xavier University	No	Case by case		
Samford University	No	Other		Explain to parents how their student logs on and can show them the grades
Southern Methodist University	No	Affidavit, let family figure it out		Explain that getting grades is easier than ever, either getting student to print out grades or requesting a transcript once affidavit or student release is on file
Southern Oregon Univ.	No	Other		Tell the parents this is an issue between them and their student
Southern Utah University	No			
Texas A&M University	No	Other		Parents can file certificate of dependency and access grades by phone
Texas Christian University	No	Case by case		
Trinity College	Yes	Other		Collect dependency statement from students/parents at matriculation
Trinity University	A few	Other		Developed a student release form. Parents can submit tax return
Univ. of California, L.A.	No			When a disgruntled parent calls, office reads him the student's FERPA rights
University of Connecticut	No	Other		Suggest to parents that they ask child to show them the grades
University of Houston	No	Affidavit		
U. of Illinois, Champaign	No	Case by case		
Univ. of Illinois, Chicago	No			Release grades only to students
Univ. of the Incarnate Word	No			Tell parents to ask their child to provide them access to the online information
Univ. of Louisiana, Monroe	No	Case by case		
University of Kansas	A few			Tell parents to have students show them their grades online
University of Montavillo	No	Case by case		
University of Oregon	No	Let family figure it out		Students and parents are encouraged to resolve the matter before matriculation
University of San Francisco	No	Other		Suggest the parents get student's PIN for access to grades online
University of Utah	No	Affidavit, other		Suggest that parents ask student for a copy of the grades
Virginia Wesleyan College	No			
Western Illinois University	No	Affidavit		
Winthrop University	No	Other		Tell parents it is up to student to let them see grades

GPA scandal tears university apart, forces president to resign

Inevitably, **Chris White**, president of **Gardner-Webb University** in North Carolina, had to resign.

His demand that the registrar recalculate the grade point average of the star basketball player to keep him eligible had simmered for two years, long after the team had won the **National Christian Collegiate Athletic Association** championship.

The GPA scandal embroiled the university community in two camps, one that worshipped White's leadership (his name is on the divinity school) — and viewed the episode as a faculty-orchestrated coup — and one outraged at the unethical action of the president and the damage to the university's reputation.

But once events erupted in September, with the board of trustees demoting two administrators for violations of the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act** while permitting White to remain in office, the anger among students, parents, faculty and alumni built to the inexorable resolution that White would have to go.

It took more than a month, but White finally resigned on Oct. 11. And it wasn't the trustees who pushed him out the door.

The trustees' decision to demote **Gil Blackburn**, vice president and dean of academic affairs, and **Phil Williams**, assistant vice president, was based on the report by the law firm of **Decker, Hallman, Barber & Briggs** investigating the scandal. Williams calls the report "a whitewash job."

White, the trustees said after a 10-hour meeting on Sept. 27, demonstrated "a lapse of judgment," but escaped punishment.

At a faculty meeting, Blackburn used an overhead projector to display the student's transcript. Students, news reporters and staff, people who had no "legitimate educational interests," as the law reads, attended the meeting.

Williams was also accused in the law firm's report of using the projector to display the transcript, a charge he denies.

In the original version of the report, the trustees were left with the impression that the basketball player, **Carlos Webb**, could sue the university under FERPA for millions of dollars in civil damages, Williams says. The second version of the report drops that assertion, but says the **U.S. Department of Education** could withhold federal funds.

Webb and two other students were accused of cheating in Religion 102 in the fall semester of 1999. The other students were not athletes. Only Webb's case received White's attention, Williams says.

"Our point of view is there were no FERPA violations," he says. He believes White had already released the most

How the Gardner-Webb scandal unfolded

On Jan. 17, 2000, **Carlos Webb**, star of the **Gardner-Webb University** basketball team, was told he received an F for cheating in a religion course.

Under university policy, a student can retake a course and remove the grade from the first attempt — except for academic dishonesty.

Webb's grade point average was 1.7. He needed a 1.9 to remain eligible to play basketball.

That summer, Webb told **Jeff Tubbs**, the faculty athletic representative, the grade he earned retaking the religion course and asked what he needed to remain eligible. Tubbs told Webb an A and two Bs, unaware that Webb had received an F for academic dishonesty. According to Gardner-Webb's policy, when a GPA is calculated, an F for academic dishonesty is counted.

Chuck Burch, the vice president of athletic affairs, asked **Gil Blackburn**, the vice president and dean of academic affairs, to intervene three times. Blackburn refused each time.

Burch convinced **Chris White**, Gardner-Webb's president, to intercede. White ordered the registrar to recalculate Webb's GPA, without counting the F for academic dishonesty, claiming the student-athlete was misadvised.

With a 1.9 GPA and 16.3 points per game, Webb led Gardner-Webb to the **National Christian Collegiate Athletic Association** championship and was honored as the most valuable player in the tournament. ■

confidential information in a statement to a local newspaper and to faculty members.

The original transcript had to be shown at the faculty meeting to prove White's unethical action, Williams says.

"It was like the blue dress in the Clinton affair," he says. "There was a need to know on the part of the whole faculty."

White's resignation is just the beginning, according to Williams.

Blackburn has been assigned no classes to teach and Williams just two. Students, parents, faculty and alumni appear determined to have them reinstated to their administrative positions.

A new board of trustees could be appointed at the November meeting of the **Baptist State Convention of North Carolina**.

And the **National Collegiate Athletic Association** is investigating the Gardner-Webb athletic department.

"It's a sad story. We're trying to pick up the pieces," Williams says. ■

Gardner-Webb timeline

These are the recent events leading to the resignation of **Chris White**, president of **Gardner-Webb University**.

Sept. 10: Dean **Gil Blackburn** confronts White, about the Oct. 30, 2000 memo ordering the registrar to disregard a student-athlete's failing grade for cheating in a course in calculating his grade point average. Blackburn accused of waiting two years to disclose memo.

Sept. 10: Faculty issues vote of no confidence in White. GWU says meeting was not scheduled with required week's notice.

Sept. 16: Representatives of **National Christian Collegiate Athletic Association** arrive to begin investigation.

Sept. 17: The law firm of **Decker, Hallman, Barber & Briggs** begins investigation for GWU trustees, four days after issuing opinion to executive board that White had done nothing wrong.

Sept. 27: Trustees meet to review Hallman report and demote Blackburn and **Phil Williams** from their administrative positions back to teachers.

Oct. 11: After two weeks of protest from students, parents, faculty and alumni, White resigns.

MEMORANDUM

To: Stephen Sain, Registrar

From: M. Christopher White

Subject: [REDACTED]

Date: October 30, 2000

Please allow the regular repeat rule to be used regarding [REDACTED] grades for Religion 102 (Fall 1999 and Summer I 2000). This means that his grade for the summer school class is a normal repeat.

My decision is based on my investigation into the circumstances regarding the grades.

Thank you.
(Signed by White)

This is a reproduction of the memo sent by Chris White, then president of Gardner-Webb University, to the registrar to establish the eligibility of the star of the basketball team.

The lesson is the danger of giving in to pressure

At the heart of the grade point average scandal at **Gardner-Webb University** was a memo dated Oct. 30, 2000 to the registrar by **Chris White**, the president.

In the memo, White ordered the registrar to ignore university policy in calculating the GPA of **Carlos Webb**, star of the basketball team.

Claiming he had conducted an investigation that merited his intervention, White told the registrar not to count the first Religion 102 course Webb had taken — and received an F for academic dishonesty.

White said the reason for his unusual request was Webb was not advised properly about the courses he should take to pull his GPA up to the 1.9 level he needed to remain eligible.

Actually, advisement was irrelevant, according to **Phil Williams**, who was demoted to a teaching position from assistant vice president by the university's trustees. Religion 102 is a required course that Webb had to repeat.

Webb was told he needed to get an A and two Bs in the second summer session to remain eligible. He earned the grades, but the faculty advisor had made his calculation unaware of the F for cheating.

The date of the memo is important. White timed his order to the Gardner-Webb registrar for the day White was flying to Estonia, accompanied by **Gil Blackburn**, vice president and dean of academic affairs, Williams says. White knew the registrar would be unable to check with Blackburn and was faced with an impending deadline for certifying athletes' eligibility for the basketball season.

There is a two-year gap between the memo and Blackburn's disclosure. Citing an interview Blackburn gave to a North Carolina newspaper, Williams says Blackburn was concerned he would be fired for making the incident public and accomplish nothing.

"He's been the best boss I've ever had. He's such an ethical man," Williams says.

The scandal can be a learning experience for registrars.

"If there is a lesson for registrars, it's to know when to say no to an illegal order," Williams says. "It indicates the danger of what happens if you do give in to the pressure.

"I have a feeling the (Gardner-Webb) registrar from now on will say, 'Show me the investigation and show me the policy that says the president is allowed to change the grade.'" ■

Notebook

Notebook provides information on IT as it relates to registration. If you have info to share, send it to jmargolis@lrp.com.

- **Virginia Tech** selected **SMARTS** service assurance software to manage its operations center.

The program will help the university's information technology staff streamline and centralize management of the IT infrastructure and maintain network-based services for students, staff and faculty.

- The **University of Louisville** is using **Novell's** secure identity management system, adopting a Web-based environment to solve access, security and identity issues.

- **Oracle** has expanded its Student System with new features for financial aid management and student recruitment.

- **eCollege** rolled out Integration Solutions, integrating student and faculty information between online programs managed by the eCollege platform and any other student information system. The company has introduced Academic Service to help faculty design an online course.

Technology permits forms to be filled out by voice

The day may come when you need to speed up the way students fill out a form for your office, they don't have access to their computers and there's a line at your counter.

Well, the technology now exists to accommodate them and you without adding to your staff's burdens.

Hand them a VoiceViewer, instead of a pen. With their voices, students can fill in the form, then look through a viewer to check to make sure the information is correct.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

This regular feature offers tips, suggestions and guidance to help you manage your technology systems and staff.

“You essentially have a handheld personal computer that is voice activated,” says **Mike Petera**, president and chief executive of **VoiceViewer Technologies**. Petera combined the Viewmaster principle with voice technology, cellular phone technology and Linux Software technology to develop the VoiceViewer.

VoiceViewer Technologies relies on a server-based speech recognition system, breaking a form down into information fields. Each field, such as name, address and dates, has a limited range of responses and confines the speaker to those ranges.

“Your database integrity is very high because you're allowing only certain answers,” Petera says.

The speaker is prompted to enter his name, and the viewer shows on the screen how to pick out the correct spelling, or the speaker may input his name by spelling phonetically. VoiceViewer employs the same technology American Airlines employs with its reservation system, according to Petera.

“Of course, we have to filter out the ‘uhs’ and ‘I don't knows,’” he says.

The form feeds directly into the inquiry database, permitting an institution to grab the information, save it and store it.

“We're replacing the keypad input with the student's voice,” Petera says. “In terms of a labor-saving device, it's phenomenal. All you're doing is holding an interactive conversation.”



The VoiceViewer provides a window that looks exactly like a 19-inch computer monitor in which to check the accuracy of the form a student has dictated.

Time is saved by not having to repeat information or functions — whether rekeying information or administering data.

Once the prospect is finishing speaking, he looks in the window of the VoiceViewer.

Money is also saved because institutions can spend staff resources elsewhere.

Petera has developed a version to be used by admissions representatives at college fairs. The **University of Wyoming**, Petera's alma mater, will be the first institution to use the VoiceViewer.

Admissions representatives can fill out their report with their voices while they are packing up the booth after a college fair.

VoiceViewer leases the handsets for about \$150 per month because evolving technology permits it to continue to upgrade the units. The company sells software tool sets that enable institutions to create their forms, overlay the voice component and then test the product in a personal computer environment to ensure the voice and prompts are correct.

“We don't want to recreate anyone's forms,” Petera says. “We allow you to voice-ify those forms.”

VoiceViewer Technologies has developed products for use by government, the **U.S. Air Force** and medical clients. Over time, Petera expects to see student service offices on campus using the technology.

Go to www.voiceviewer.com or contact **Mike Petera** at (602) 995-3623. ■

■ Termination

■ Decision:

A breach of contract claim goes back to the trial court.

■ What it means:

An employment handbook may create a contract.

In June 1994, when **Howard University** decided to restructure the workforce, eliminating 620 positions, **Paulette Dantley** was as an admissions assistant.

When Dantley began working there in 1988, she received an employee handbook. The handbook contained a disclaimer which stated, “[t]his document is not to be construed as a contract.”

In November 1994, Howard eliminated her position.

Dantley sued the university for wrongful termination, alleging the handbook constituted a contract for employment.

The trial court granted summary judgment to the university on the grounds the handbook was not a contract. *Dantley v. Howard University*, No. 00-CV-1672 (D.C. 06/27/02).

The **District of Columbia Court of Appeals** reversed the trial court’s decision in an unpublished opinion.

Dantley admitted she did not have an express contract with the university but claimed she had an “implied contract” because of the handbook.

The court did not go so far as to say she had an implied contract, but decided summary judgment was not appropriate.

The court said the trial court failed to address whether Dantley’s termination resulted from an “abolishment of position” or “reduction in force” under the handbook. Therefore, the trial court must determine whether the disclaimer in the handbook was “rationally at odds with other language” in the handbook. ■

■ FERPA

■ Decision:

No portion of a student’s Social Security number may be used for posting grades.

■ What it means:

Have instructors assign students a code to which only the instructor and the student have access.

A computer science professor at **City University of New York Hunter College** posted students’ grades on a Web page with the last four digits of the students’ Social Security numbers, a student said, complaining to the **Family Policy**

Compliance Office about a violation of the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act**. *Letter to: City University of New York Hunter College*, (FPCO 09/27/02).

The professor did not get permission from the students.

The FPCO advised the university that personally identifiable information, under FERPA, includes a student’s Social Security number. “Because a social security number, or portions thereof, are by definition ‘personally identifiable information’ under FERPA, this Office finds that the College violated _____ [sic] rights under FERPA as alleged.”

The FPCO added that an institution may assign a number to students for the purpose of posting grades, as long as the number is known only to the student and school officials who assigned it. ■

■ FERPA

■ Decision:

University may disclose disciplinary records for crimes of violence.

■ What it means:

When disclosing records, be sure to redact personally identifiable information.

The editor of the **Kennesaw State University** student newspaper submitted a request to the university for disciplinary records “relating to incidents that occurred in student housing.”

The director of judiciary programs at the university in Kennesaw, Ga., asked the **Family Policy Compliance Office** for an opinion on whether compliance with Georgia’s open records request would violate the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act**. *Letter to: Kennesaw State University*, (FPCO 09/27/02).

Campus police maintain incident reports, with names redacted, that are available to the public. But, if information regarding disciplinary proceedings and sanctions were compared with these reports, student identities could be determined.

FERPA gives students the right to prohibit the disclosure of their educational records without their prior written consent.

But, the FPCO said, “[p]ostsecondary institutions may — but are not required by FERPA — disclose the final results of a disciplinary proceeding in which the institution determines that the student perpetrator committed a crime of violence or non-forcible sex offense.”

Where a crime of violence is not involved, FPCO said that under *Gonzaga University v. Doe*, No. 01-679 (06/02/02), student records regarding misconduct are subject to FERPA.

A general request for disciplinary records is not prohibited under FERPA as long as the personally identifiable information to the student (including easily traceable information) is redacted. ■

LAWSUITS & RULINGS

This regular feature keeps you informed about recent lawsuits and FPCO letters.

—Jeanenne Rothenberger, Senior Business Analyst, Purdue University—

Technology proves to be a fountain of youth for Rothenberger

Once upon a time, long, long ago when **IBM** was the **Microsoft** of the day, **Jeanenne Rothenberger** was a high school math teacher. She would take computer courses at nearby **Purdue University** and sit in on other courses, essentially adding a minor in a fledgling industry.

Rothenberger was standing in a line in the registrar's office to get a transcript when she read an item on the bulletin board about a computing position, then a new aspect of the office. Her interest in computing was growing and she decided to apply. In her new career, she discovered a fountain of youth.

Purdue was making the transition away from IBM cards to automation, and that was Rothenberger's first assignment.

"It was problem solving and using new tools to solve that really interested me," Rothenberger says.

She got in on the ground floor and soon was leading projects such as gaining query access directly to registrar data, establishing integrated data stores in the days before relational databases, and creating systematic e-mail systems for student processes. She also implemented and managed a minicomputer system for the registrar's office, leading to desktop computing long before it was in vogue.

Rothenberger played a prominent role in the consolidation of multiple student information files on the mainframe, a different office maintaining each. She designed a new file structure and was a co-leader of a project to combine the files with in-house development.

In 1989 Purdue established an online information system for students, allowing them to maintain their address information, view schedules and see other records. Rothenberger directed the effort. The system is now Web-based and Rothenberger trained and mentored her successor.

Rothenberger was the first person at Purdue to encourage direct mass communication with students through e-mail.

She kept following the technology path and became prominent in the SPEEDE movement to standardization.

She has received national recognition, winning the Distinguished Service Award and APEX award from the **American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers**.

Her accomplishments belie the fact that she has spent her career in the trenches. Rothenberger has never been concerned with who gets the credit for a successful project,

Registrar requires multitude of skills

A good grasp of technology is just one of the assets a registrar of the future will need, says **Jeanenne Rothenberger**, senior business analyst at **Purdue University**.

"Registrars need to understand large computing systems, be able to help faculty understand the demands of record-keeping, state and federal reporting, and institutional research, while being devoted to providing quality service to the various customers," Rothenberger says.

"The registrar must be a diplomat, a statistician, a query specialist, an educator and a mother substitute." ■

a spirit instilled by a mentor, former Purdue registrar **Betty Suddarth**.

"She wanted to get the job done, and if someone wanted the credit, she didn't get in the way," Rothenberger says.

At an AACRAO conference in 1988, a speaker mentioned the need for standards in transmitting transcripts. Rothenberger volunteered Purdue as the site for the first meeting.

Rothenberger advocated security for electronic transmissions, urging a more protected system than existed for paper. It takes more skill to falsify an electronic transcript than a paper one. The X12 committee on which she participated developed standards for the transcript, request for transcript, a response for the request and an acknowledgment that the transcript was received, application for admission, and testing service report.

Once the effort received the **American National Standards Institute** endorsement and vendors began to incorporate the standards, the project could see it was making progress, according to Rothenberger.

"We felt for the first time we were addressing issues from across the nation," she says. "Unless you have a standard and understandable code, what you get is no more versatile than a piece of paper. You don't have the commonality.

"It was one of the more exciting things I've been involved in," she says. "We were making changes that will make a difference and move us ahead in the future. We made a step away from 'the only thing we can do is put this piece of paper in the U.S. mail.'"

Today Rothenberger is working as an analyst on a project to totally replace student systems at Purdue.

The rapid evolution of technology and the challenges that come with it has allowed her to stay young, though she is near retirement age.

"I don't have any intention of retiring any time soon," Rothenberger says. "I'm having too much fun."

Contact Jeanenne Rothenberger at jeanenne@purdue.edu. ■

Who do you want to read about?

It could be an expert. A mentor. Someone you admire. Tell us whom you would like to see featured in *The Successful Registrar's* monthly feature *Leaders & Innovators*. E-mail suggestions to jmargolis@lrp.com. We will consider your suggestions for future profiles.