



# The Art of Effective Conversations with Parents

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# Parent Phone Calls

What do you think or feel at the prospect of talking with a parent of an advisee?



# Session Overview

- ▶ Understanding Parent Perspectives
- ▶ Confidentiality Considerations
- ▶ Strategies to Facilitate Positive Interactions
- ▶ Small Group Discussion

# Generations

- ▶ Baby Boomers – 1946-1964
- ▶ Generation X – 1965-1979
- ▶ Millennials – 1980-1994
- ▶ iGen – 1995-2012

# Baby Boomers

- ▶ 1946-1964
- ▶ Driven by new philosophies and government change
- ▶ Rebelled against authority
- ▶ Driven to fight for what they believed was better for society

# Generation X

- ▶ 1965-1979
- ▶ Single parent households, latch-key kids
- ▶ Grew up in a society that advocated individual freedoms and looking out for #1

# Millenials

- ▶ 1980-1994
- ▶ Born to Baby Boomers and Generation Xers
- ▶ The largest, healthiest, most wanted and most cared for child generation in American history
- ▶ Accepts their parents as personal advocates

# iGen

- ▶ 1995-2012
- ▶ Smart phones have been around their entire lives
- ▶ Get less sleep
- ▶ Delaying getting jobs
- ▶ Delaying getting their driver's license



# Parents of Millennials & iGen

- ▶ Waited to have kids, have fewer kids
- ▶ Very involved in their students' lives
- ▶ Have managed many aspects of their student's life thus far
- ▶ This involvement carries over into college life
- ▶ Consumer mentality

# What have our students' parents experienced for the last 15 years?

- ▶ Emails from teachers
- ▶ Weekly class updates
- ▶ Parent Teacher Conferences (WITHOUT the child present!)
- ▶ Online tools to monitor students' progress



# Transition to College...

Not just for students!

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## FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) was enacted to protect the privacy of students' education records, to establish the right of students to inspect and review their education records, and to provide students with an opportunity to have inaccurate or misleading information in their education records corrected.

- [Annual Notification](#)
- [Notification of Rights Under FERPA](#)
- [What Faculty and Staff Need to Know](#)
- [Information for Students and Parents](#)
- [Faculty/Staff Tutorial](#)
- [Custodians of Records](#)

# Confidentiality Considerations

- ▶ Has the student consented to release their educational records?

# Confidentiality Considerations

- ▶ No Consent? No problem!
- ▶ Following the law doesn't mean you can't be helpful

# Our Office Philosophy Related to Parent Phone Calls

- ▶ Take or make the call - parents deserve a call back
- ▶ Take a positive tone
- ▶ Don't break the law

# Strategies to Facilitate a Positive Interaction

- ▶ Monitor
- ▶ Listen
- ▶ Ask
- ▶ Respond



# Monitor Your Self Talk

- ▶ Set positive expectations
- ▶ Don't take it personally
- ▶ Panic can cause what we fear the most
- ▶ Demonstrate respect for the person, not the behavior

# Listen

- ▶ Let them vent
- ▶ Identify the concern
- ▶ Empathize with their feelings
- ▶ Clarify - try to repeat exactly what was said

# Ask

- ▶ Asking questions allows you to:
  - ▶ Clarify the situation
  - ▶ Assure the parent you want to understand their concerns
  - ▶ Clarify what is in your purview
  - ▶ Make progress towards a resolution

# Respond

- ▶ Agree with something
- ▶ Identify what you can offer
- ▶ Add your suggestions, move toward problem-solving
- ▶ Check in with them regarding their thoughts on the action

# Respond

- ▶ Share your goals for working with students
- ▶ Be prepared with strategies for when time is short
- ▶ End with action/next step

# Information for Parents

- ▶ Orientation presentations
- ▶ Parent newsletters
- ▶ Parent tab on website

# Final thoughts.....

- ▶ Understanding the caller and their motivations can be helpful to the interaction.
- ▶ Remember that parental involvement contributes to student success in many situations. Parents can be our allies.
- ▶ Your mindset going into the call will make a difference.