

Policy for Student/Parent/Guardian Engagement in Academic Affairs

I. SCOPE

This policy pertains to undergraduate students, their families, and support systems.

II. STATEMENT

At Goucher College, we deeply respect our students' agency as young adults and seek to equip them to positively resolve any difficulties they encounter both here and once they graduate. We understand that traditional-aged students are going through a developmental process in which they are increasingly able to act independently from their parents/caregivers. The Goucher experience is scaffolded over four years of a student's journey and is more structured in the first year and promotes self-efficacy by the sophomore, junior and senior years.

For matters related to students' educational progress, it is the expectation that Goucher students, not their parent/guardian/support system, contact faculty staff, and administrators.

III. DEFINITIONS

FERPA: The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (commonly referred to as the "Buckley Amendment" or "FERPA") is designed to protect the confidentiality of education records and to give students access to their records to assure the accuracy of their contents. The Act affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. See [FERPA policy](#).

IV. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of Goucher students to:

1. read and be familiar with the academic policies and procedures. These may relate to [academic honor code](#), [accommodations](#), [grievances](#), [grade appeal](#), etc. Please visit the [webpage](#) of the Office of the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies and the [policies website](#) for additional protocols, procedures and policies.
2. read all communications sent by staff, their faculty or administration. This includes emails and Academic Progress Reports (APRs) among others.
3. check their email daily and respond to all emails needing their attention or follow-up within two business days of the email being sent (see [Electronic Communication Policy](#)).

V. STUDENT COMMUNICATION WITH ACADEMIC AFFAIRS OFFICES

Students should expect to receive responses within two business days; however, matters might take longer to be resolved. Students should be aware of the [Academic Calendar and Important Dates](#) to inquire about procedures with ample time to receive a response and to get their issue resolved before deadlines.

If a student contacts a faculty member or faculty advisor or an academic affairs office such as the [Office of Accessibility Services](#) (OAS), the [Academic Center for Excellence](#) (ACE), the [Community Based Learning Office](#), the [Career Education Office](#) (CEO), the [Office of Global Education](#) (OGE), the [Goucher Prison Education Partnership](#) (GPEP), or the [Library](#) and does not receive a response within two business days, they may send a second email copying the department chair (see [academic program contacts](#)) or the director of the Office (visit the website of the relevant office). This does not include weekends or holidays, when a staff/faculty member is off due to personal matters or illness or when faculty members are off contract during the summer. In these cases, the student will receive an automated message informing them when to expect a response or who to contact.

VI. FACULTY AND STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Faculty and staff are responsible for communicating with their students and advisees throughout the academic year on issues related to a student's academic experience. These communications may include information related to academic progress, course work, advising, reminders regarding important dates, support services on campus, etc.

Faculty and staff are responsible for responding to students within two business days (see section V).

Faculty and staff in Academic Affairs do not as a matter of policy discuss academic matters with parents, guardians, family members, therapists, attorneys, and other outside parties. As such, it is not appropriate for parents/guardians/external support to attend or listen in on in-person or virtual advising sessions.

VII. ASSOCIATE PROVOST OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES AND CARE TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

The Office of the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies contacts parents/guardians who are on their student's FERPA on several occasions during their Goucher academic journey:

1. Around week 5 and week 10 of students' first and second semester, when students receive APRs showing that they are at risk in two or more classes.
2. At the end of every regular semester (fall and spring), when students are placed on probation or suspended because their cumulative GPA is under 2.0 (see [academic standing](#) procedures).

It is the responsibility of students who receive an email from the Office of the Associate Provost of Undergraduate Studies with a copy to their parents/guardian (if they are on FERPA) to act and respond either to the associate provost and/or to get in touch with their faculty/success advisor to discuss a plan of action.

The purpose of the above actions is to make students and parents/guardians on FERPA aware of the academic progress/standing of their student so that they might have a conversation with their student and create a plan of action. Parents/guardians may engage with their students by reviewing with them their APRs in [Navigate](#) and encouraging their students to write to their faculty (#1 above) or to their faculty/success advisor (#2 above) to draft a plan to attain sustainable academic success.

The associate provost, the associate VP of Student Success, or some other member of the CARE team will proactively reach out to a parent/guardian of an upper-level student when there is a persistent pattern of academic concerns, and the student is not responsive to the outreach of their academic advisor or another administrative staff member of the College.

As academic hardship might be symptomatic of larger social or health issues, the Coordinator for Student Affairs and Parent/Family Engagement within the Office of the [Dean of Students](#) is available to parents and students for any matter related to students' wellbeing.

VIII. PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

Throughout the college experience, traditional-aged students go from being teenagers to young adults. It is natural for parents/guardians to show concern for their students and their academic progress. We encourage parents/guardians to agree on guidelines for communication with their students while they are away in college. Students may share with their parents/guardians their grades/assignments/professors' comments in Canvas and their faculty APRs in Navigate.

In extenuating circumstances, such as when a student is taking or returning from a compassionate, medical, or mid-semester withdraw, it is appropriate for a student to request a meeting with the associate provost for undergraduate studies to discuss the academic implication of such actions and to invite their parents. Unless a student is impaired and unable to meet (i.e., hospitalized), they are expected to be present and partake in any conversation related to their academic experience at Goucher College (i.e., accommodations, attendance, credit completion). Parents/guardians should always copy their student when contacting a staff member in Academic Affairs. The mental health and general wellbeing of students is the utmost priority of the Goucher community. It is for this reason that we believe that students who are not ready to participate in conversations with their faculty, advisors, and other Goucher administrators are not ready to return to the College.

Having said this, we welcome parent's engagement as valued members of the Goucher Community in conversations about the College and its educational mission.

IX. RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL

For more information or if you have questions about this policy, please contact the Office of the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies at associateprovost@goucher.edu.

X. HISTORY

Adopted: December 2023.