PROTECTING THE PRIVACY OF STUDENTS IN A NETWORKED ENVIRONMENT

POLICY STATEMENT

The privacy of students is crucial to the successful operation of Mount Olive College. At Mount Olive College a two-tiered program protects student privacy with responsibilities assigned to administration, faculty and staff as well as to the student.

REASON FOR POLICY/PURPOSE

Mount Olive College’s regional accrediting body, the Commission on Colleges (COC) of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), requires that academic institutions protect the privacy of their students. Specifically, SACS Comprehensive Standard FR 4.8.2 states:

“An institution that offers distance or correspondence education documents each of the following: has a written procedure for protecting the privacy of students enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses or programs.”

Additionally the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) mandates the privacy of the individual enrolled in an educational institution. Specifically, FERPA protects a student’s educational records; since student grades are posted in MOODLE, FERPA applies to the protection of those records.

This policy also insures that its elements are periodically assessed, widely disseminated, support the achievement of goals consistent with the College’s mission, and conform to commonly accepted practices in higher education.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): A federal statute, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99, that protects the student’s privacy of his/her educational records. Passed in 1974, FERPA is applicable to any school that receives federal funds. The three major rights that FERPA grants to students, and to parents if consent is granted by the student, is 1) the right to review educational records, 2) the right to contest the content of educational records, 3) the right to disclose the educational records.

MOODLE: A course management system that allows for the transmission of course material and content between instructor and student. The system can be employed in distance education courses, hybrid courses or seated courses.
Moodle is used for such specific tasks as discussion forums, grade posting, the delivery of assignments and resources to support those assignments, video and audio file transmission, emailing between individuals and groups, etc. All courses taught by Mount Olive College have a Moodle course page.

**Distance Education:** A formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. A distance education course may employ correspondence study, or audio, video, or computer technologies.

**MyMOC:** A community SharePoint portal that provides access to the various resources of Mount Olive College. Access is differentiated among users, including the general public, applicants, admitted students, enrolled students, faculty, staff, alumni, and adjuncts. The portal provides role-based content access to each group, ensuring the relevancy of the content to a particular group.

**Encryption:** The process of changing data such as text into code so that it is unreadable and unrecognizable.

**Domain Controller:** A specialized server that authenticates users, checks user permissions before granting access to network resources, and stores user account information in a Microsoft Windows Network environment.

### POLICY/PROCEDURES

The college uses the course management system MOODLE, an online platform that allows for seamless transmission of course material, communication and the uploading of student work. Specifically, instructors use Moodle to post course materials such as syllabi, lecture notes, handouts, and streaming video and audio files; to send announcements; to email students in their course; to collect assignments; to facilitate student collaboration and discussion using discussion forums; to deliver secure online examinations and quizzes; to securely post grades, and to take attendance. Students access MOODLE and myMoc, a community SharePoint portal, using their Mount Olive College username and password.

Mount Olive College assumes the initial responsibility for issuing and maintaining a **secure username and password** to all students. The password is encrypted and stored on the college’s domain controller. Other than the user, no one (to include technology workers), knows the password. Mount Olive College provides a means for students to change their passwords remotely, and a counter is displayed on the student’s MyMOC portal page which shows how many days remain on a password before it expires and must be changed.

The student is responsible for maintaining the security of his or her login credentials in accordance with section 5.2 of “Mount Olive College Technology Services and Support Policies and Procedures” document revised July 2012. Specifically, a student must not disclose his or her username and password to anyone for any reason, or record the username and password on any media without encrypting the information before recording it.

### CONTACTS

Director of Technology, Department of Technology Services and Support

### APPROVED BY

Director of Technology

Chair, Instructional Technology Committee (Faculty)

Executive Council

Board of Trustees
## APPENDICES (INCLUDING ANY FORMS/INSTRUCTIONS)

Mount Olive College Technology Services and Support Policies and Procedures, Section 3.2, (July 2012 revision)

## HISTORY/REVISION DATES

Original adoption date(s): July 18, 2012

Last Amended date:

End Date for Policy (if applicable): N/A

## RELATED COMPLIANCE STANDARDS/EXTERNAL POLICY DOCUMENTS:

SACS FR 4.8.2 (Distance education – Student Privacy); related document “Distance and Correspondence Education”