



State University of New York

*Memo to Pres.
xref Data Files*

Memorandum to Presidents

Date: January 6, 1978

Vol. 78 No. 1

From: Office of the Provost

Subject: Policy on the Use of Data Files, Disclosure of Information, and Notification of Study

The University's unwritten policy with respect to data collected on fiscal matters, enrollment, physical space, and other areas has been to preserve this information as a valuable asset, to protect its integrity, and to supply it in the aggregate in a reasonable and meaningful manner to various governments, educational bodies, and the public in compliance with lawful regulations. Now, however, the necessary collection of detailed records on employees and students, and an increasing number of studies based on quantified data, has created a need for a more formalized policy on use of data files, disclosure of information, and notification of study.

A primary concern in developing a better articulated policy is our dual responsibility for developing data and information while, at the same time, protecting individual privacy. Under the terms of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, the central administration is a "component" of the State University having a "legitimate educational interest" in information. Central Staff's possession and utilization of "personally identifiable information" is subject to the conditions of the Act, and the policy on data files necessarily makes specific reference to it. A Memorandum to Presidents of August 20, 1976, Volume 76, No. 14, contains University Counsel's interpretation of the Act.

University policy, as formulated and as reviewed by the Council of Presidents, is as follows:

Utilization of Data Files

Data files in the possession of the Central Staff will be utilized primarily to satisfy the internal needs for statistical information to study, manage and deploy resources of the total University and each campus thereof, and to fulfill external requirements for statistical information by various governmental agencies, educational bodies, and the public. However, no

individual student records will be released except pursuant to the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.

Accuracy of Data Files

The campuses and the Central Staff are jointly responsible for the accuracy of the data collected and used by the Central Staff. Campus officers will be responsible for the accuracy of the data submitted and Central Staff will be responsible for the accuracy of subsequent data modifications and uses.

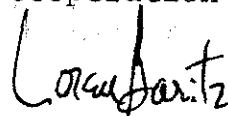
Access to Data Files and Disclosure of Information

Statistical or factual calculations¹ regarding the University are in the public domain and may not be withheld except while a data file, or a portion thereof, is being completed. Personally identifiable information will be furnished by Central Staff only with the consent of the campuses involved, in accordance with existing laws and with the approval of the Chancellor or his designee.

Notification of Study

Central Staff will consult and inform campuses regarding the methodology and the results of analytical and policy-oriented studies initiated and conducted by Central Staff that use central data files prior to the release of results to organizations or agencies outside State University. In addition, Central Office will consult the campuses regarding the results of the larger or more comprehensive analytical or policy-oriented studies before using them internally in significant decisions.

We appreciate your advice and cooperation in the maintenance and articulation of this policy.



Loren Baritz

¹See Article 6 of the Public Officers Law

cc: Institutional Research Officers

This Memorandum addressed to:
Presidents, State-operated Colleges
Presidents, Community Colleges
Deans, Statutory Colleges

Copies for information to:
President Rose
Vice President Cook