Dr. Randy Pierce
President
Georgia Highlands College
3175 Cedartown Hwy, SE
Rome, Georgia 30161

OCT 7 2009

Complaint No. (b)(6)
Family Educational Rights
and Privacy Act

Dear Dr. Pierce:

This is in regard to the complaint filed by (b)(6) (Student) against Georgia Highlands College (College) under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). By letter dated April 5, 2007, we informed the College of the Student's allegation the College violated § 99.30 of the FERPA regulations by improperly disclosing information from his education records without his prior written consent. Specifically, the Student alleged the following:

> On or about March 1st, 2006 my rights regarding [FERPA] were violated. My (b)(6) 1010 instructor, (b)(6) distributed a spreadsheet to the entire class with my complete grades for the entire semester. This document also contains the grades for the entire semester for the whole class.

By letter dated April 30, 2007, you responded that (b)(6) did in fact circulate the spreadsheet as alleged and that when asked about it she thought that she was clarifying with students that she had properly recorded the laboratory grades to date. (b)(6) was then informed of the requirements of FERPA and that the College took additional steps to ensure compliance with FERPA as a result of what you describe as a regrettable matter. Those steps included the preparation of an updated version of the FERPA brochure distributed to faculty and an August 2006 In-Service Meeting for all partime faculty that included a FERPA training session.

As you know, § 99.30 states:

> The parent or eligible student shall provide a signed and dated written consent before an educational agency or institution discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records.

In this case, the College admitted that the disclosure of the Student's education records did occur. Therefore, we find that the College violated FERPA as alleged. Based on the corrective actions taken by the College after receiving this complaint, which include FERPA training for appropriate staff, we are closing this complaint and will notify the Student by copy of this letter.

Thank you for your cooperation with regard to this matter.

Sincerely,

Paul Gammill
Director
Family Policy Compliance Office

cc: Student