Colleague and FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) grants students specific rights of privacy to their education records. According to this act, schools only may disclose without consent student directory information, such as a student's name, place of birth, and dates of attendance. Even with directory information, students may refuse the school permission to disclose this data.

At Worcester State College, only officially designated agents may have access to student education records. Within the context of academic departments, only faculty members, department chairs, and department secretaries may access student education records. While it has been common practice in the past for student assistants to help faculty and department secretaries retrieve and prepare student records for advising and other purposes, such practices run counter to FERPA.

Please note that student assistants may not access student education records in any fashion. Additionally, student education records must be kept in secure locations in order to protect individual privacy rights. Student records may not be left in any common areas, including department printers and faculty mailboxes. When student records are accessed electronically via Colleague or LancerWeb, care must be taken to ensure that casual onlookers cannot view the computer's display. All security best practices associated with Colleague and LancerWeb must be observed at all times.

What this means is that individual faculty members and department secretaries are obligated to protect the privacy and security of student education records. What this also means is that student assistants cannot obtain, prepare, or distribute student education records for any purpose. If you would like more information regarding FERPA, please contact the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs or visit:

http://www.ed.gov/offices/OM/fpco/ferpa