When a Nicolet employee gives student references, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 restricts the release of educational record information about students or graduates. The College and individual employees may be held liable for releasing unauthorized information about a student. For further information on FERPA, see AP 2.02 Privacy of Records – Release of Written Information.

The College must abide by state and federal employment laws; therefore, all students must be offered an opportunity to apply for and compete for jobs announced through the College.

Employees should require students to provide a signed Authorization for Release of Reference Information form prior to releasing any non-directory information about them for a reference. The College has defined Directory Information as:

- student name;
- full-time or part-time status;
- major field of study;
- dates of enrollment;
- degrees and awards received;
- photos and videos of students for use in College press releases, publications, and websites; and
- Nicolet College assigned student email accounts.

The signed Authorization for Release of Reference Information must identify the name of the individual, agency, or employer to whom the disclosure may be made. The signed document must also indicate that the student is authorizing the employee to disclose general information about the student’s performance as a student at Nicolet College, and the student’s potential as a future employee. The employee should retain the form for a period of seven (7) years.

If the student wishes to authorize the release of confidential student information (GPA, transcript, academic progress, registration information, financial aid information, etc.) to a third party, the student must sign an Authorization for Release of Confidential Information form. This release of information is to be handled through the Registrar’s Office.

Employees should direct employers to place all job requests or announcements on the TechConnect System. This will ensure that job information will be distributed to all
students and graduates who are registered with TechConnect. Sharing requests with only select students or graduates is in violation of the law.

Employees must not release information protected by the Wisconsin Fair Employment Act (WFEA), even if the student provides written permission to release any and all information. The WFEA prohibits releasing the following:

- age;
- ancestry;
- arrest record (a person is considered innocent until convicted);
- color (pigmentation of person’s skin);
- conviction record (conviction record can be considered only when the conviction is substantially related to the specific duties of the job);
- creed (religious affiliations or beliefs);
- disability (includes having a physical or mental impairment, a record of having such an impairment, a perception of having an impairment, or being related to a person who has an impairment);
- genetic testing;
- honesty testing (polygraph);
- marital status;
- military membership (type of discharge or current member of Army Reserve, National Guard, or some other type of military service);
- national origin (birthplace, culture, or linguistic characteristics common to a specific ethnic group, accent);
- pregnancy or childbirth;
- race;
- sex;
- sexual orientation;
- use or non-use of lawful products off the employer’s premises during non-working hours (off-hours use of alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, etc.).