

Case Studies

1. Volunteer Behavior

Scenario

A community volunteer who is an active participant in an international spouses' group sponsored by the international office, invites a few of the women to her house for a potluck lunch. After lunch, she takes them into her living room where tables are set up with merchandise. She proceeds to do her sales pitch. The international student spouses feel awkward as well as obligated to their hostess, but do not want to purchase her products. Later, the spouses share this situation and their concerns with staff members in the international student office.

Question

Was the volunteer's sales pitch ethical?

2. Optional Information in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)

Scenario

In an attempt to follow all the requirements for SEVIS, the FSA/DSO at a small Midwestern school puts in all information on students requested by SEVIS, including the Social Security number, driver's license and Individual Taxpayer identification numbers, all of which are optional items in SEVIS and not required by the regulations. Some of these students had an official request on file with the university that directory information not be released.

Question

Has the FSA acted unethically in providing U.S. ICE with optional information?
Has she violated FERPA?

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3. Faculty Roles and Responsibilities Abroad

Scenario

Upon arriving home from a study abroad trip to Greece, several students drop by the Study Abroad Office to report on their adventure. After visiting with the students and reviewing their written evaluations, the director notes repeated references to intoxication and other unprofessional behavior on the part of the professor assigned to lead the group. One report states that the professor was not available to the students during a four-day period in which he attended a professional conference. In a discussion between the director and the faculty member, the latter acknowledges the veracity of the allegations and promises to mend his ways. When the professor recommends offering the same program for the following year, the director (in consultation with the dean) denies the request.

Question

Was the director's action unethical?

4. Admitting Students without Required English Proficiency

Scenario

The intensive English program (IEP) on the campus of a four-year college works in tandem with the Biology Department to develop a six-week non-credit international project for students with low intermediate levels of English proficiency. The project calls for three hours of English each morning, followed by an afternoon of non-credit course work with biology faculty. At the conclusion of the program, as a courtesy to the sponsor and the Biology Department, the IEP administers a pencil-based TOEFL; students score in the 440 – 470 range.

When the group sponsor expresses a desire to enroll three of the students, who meet academic standards, the academic department head requests that the college's language requirement (525 pencil-based TOEFL) be waived. When admission is denied, the department head then seeks support from higher-ranking administrators, who in an effort to foster a good working relationship with the sponsor, direct that the students be admitted.

Question

Is this an ethical course of action?

