Hi, my name is Lauren and I am in the MA in Educational Leadership. This program allows me to concentrate on higher education, so all of my “cases” and internship postings will be focused on higher education. I work full-time at FGCU as a Graduate Assistant in the Office of Graduate Studies, so I will be completing half of my internship in that department. I will be going above and beyond my normal job duties under the supervision of our Assistant Director, Jennifer Johnston. The other half of my internship will be under Dave Jaeger, Director of E-Learning, Publications & Web Development at FGCU. I am excited to learn from both departments!

**Experience**

*Cognos Training/Retention Report*

For my internship duties in the Office of Graduate Studies, I was trained to use Cognos, the new student data reporting system that integrates with Banner, our student database system. This will enable us to gather data on our students to better support and direct our recruitment and retention efforts. It is important to use data when implementing new programs and as school officials, we are able to use this data for the school’s benefit. According to Cheung, Clements, & Pechman (1997), “The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) makes it clear that ‘school officials with legitimate educational interests’ may be given access to personally identifiable information about students” (p.58).

Monitoring the school environment allows us to use the information we find to dissect our student body to see where recruitment and retention efforts need to be focused. Analyzing data is important for our office as there is valuable information that can be pulled from our student databases that will help us build our graduate programs. We are also able to track our growth by looking at the number of applicants, admitted students, and enrolled students throughout the years. We can filter data by college, ethnic background, gender, program, age, credits, GPA, etc. to get the information we are in need of.

I have learned that if we are going to use the data to contact students, we must obey the confidentiality laws. Some students have requested their information remain confidential and we must honor that. For example, we wanted to see who was newly admitted or currently enrolled in a particular graduate program in the Fall 2008 semester that did not graduate and did not return for the Fall 2009 semester. This retention effort will help us pinpoint those students who became inactive and “dropped out” of graduate school. We are still deciding what to do with this information, but we may end up sending an email survey to those students to see why they dropped out. In the event that we contact students, we would need to be careful not to send emails to those students who chose for their file to remain confidential as it
would be unethical and illegal to breach their confidentiality. “The use and misuse of student data are covered to some extent by professional ethical standards” (Cheung, Clements, & Pechman, 1997, p.59). Essex stated that “Prudence and sound judgment are essential in handling students’ confidential files” (p.1). Keeping students’ information confidential is one of the most important jobs we play as school administrators. “School personnel must exercise extreme caution in handling student records by assuring parents, guardians, or eligible students that they are afforded full protection regarding disclosure of educational records without their consent. Failure to do so can prove very costly in terms of litigation” (Essex, 2000, p.1).

**Standards**

The two standards that best reflect this activity are Standard 8: Learning, Accountability and Assessment, and Standard 10: Ethical Leadership.

**Standard 8**
Retention is part of this standard because as school administrators it is important to monitor our students and find out what is causing students to leave school. This incorporates our mission for student success. Being accountable to our numbers and growth is also important to remain competitive in the marketplace and keep growing as a university.

**Standard 10**
One of the articles I read stated using prudence (one of the four virtues from our book) when handling student files. School administrators are required to act in an ethical manner and obey the law and school policy. The confidentiality of students’ information is of utmost importance to an administrator. When dealing with technology and personal information in the form of data, this is extremely important. This information could get in the wrong hands and cause huge problems.

**Experience**

**Recruitment Events**

Usually our Graduate Coordinator, Debora Haring, attends recruitment events, so my internship allowed me to take over for a few to get a glimpse into her recruiting world. One of the recruitment events I attended was the Lee Memorial Hospital Career Fair. This allowed us to showcase our graduate programs and recruit quality candidates in the area. Teaming up with local businesses is a great way to recruit students who would be interested in our graduate degrees. With many of our degrees in the nursing and health fields, this was a great opportunity to recruit working professionals that may want that upper hand in the job market by completing their graduate degree. Quarterman (2008) featured a research study on recruiting a diverse graduate student body. “The most dominant themes to emerge as
strategies for recruitment were facilitating personal contact through visits, the need for recruitment fairs, and career days at HBCUs and availability of financial resources” (p.947).

Working with departments within FGCU is also a great way to form positive relationships and a “community feel” across campus. I was able to represent our office at the Alumni Bookstore Graduation Fair where I interacted with many recent graduates of FGCU undergraduate programs who were interested in continuing their education. Being visible on campus and in the community is very important for our office. In Fall 2009, we moved across campus, away from the highly visible and active student plaza area which has proved challenging for us.

*Next week I will attend an Enrollment Retention Management Committee meeting, receive training on Website development, and start working on a newsletter for our office.*

**Standards**

The standard that best reflects this activity is Standard 4: Community and Stakeholder Partnerships

Collaborating with local businesses allows us to respond to the community interests and needs and mobilize the community resources. Our community becomes more educated if we promote our programs to our local residents and recruit them to further their education. This will build our workforce and eventually give back to our community by creating more intelligent members of society. Forming partnerships in the community is important for our image and to unite as people who live in the same community. We ultimately want what is best for our economy and society. Building positive relationships within our own school community is also important so that other departments can speak highly of us and promote our programs to students/prospective students with whom they interact with daily. Our office recently moved from the student plaza area to Lutgert Hall, so it is a challenge for us to market ourselves and be seen on our own campus. We are hidden on the second floor rather than available for those who are walking around the plaza area. So, having a great recruitment program is very important to us.

**References**

