



820 N. Washington Ave  
Madison SD, 57042

March 4, 2025

We deeply regret to inform you about a recent data security incident that may have affected some of your personal information. Your trust is of utmost importance to us, and we are committed to protecting your data. We discovered that some of your information may have been exposed by mistakenly including graduate personal information within an email communication. We take your privacy seriously and want to explain what happened and what we are doing to address it. We deeply regret any inconvenience this may have caused and are committed to ensuring the security of your personal information.

### What happened?

The unintended disclosure of student information resulted from a technical error during the use of Word Mail Merge to generate email communications. Mail Merge is designed to personalize mass emails by extracting data from an Excel document; however, in this instance, a processing error led to the inclusion of multiple students' information within the same message. Consequently, recipients were able to view not only their own details but also those of other students. The university sincerely regrets this incident and is implementing immediate corrective measures, including a thorough review of mail merge procedures and enhanced data security protocols, to prevent similar occurrences in the future. The university has conducted a thorough investigation of the incident and has reasonably determined that the disclosure will not likely result in harm to any of the affected individuals.

### What information was involved?

- First name, middle name, last name
- Student email address
- Student home address
- Student ID number

### What We Are Doing.

1. **Notification:** We are taking steps to prevent situations like this from occurring in the future. We have notified the Department of Education and after reviewing the details of the security incident they recommended no further action beyond our current measures.
2. **Enhanced Security Measures:** We've addressed the process that allowed unauthorized access to student information and will continue to minimize data exposure channels.
3. **Training and Awareness:** We are conducting security awareness training sessions for faculty and staff to ensure they understand the importance of data security and how to protect personal information.
4. **Regular Audits:** We will perform regular audits of our data management systems to identify and address potential vulnerabilities.

We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused and want to assure you that protecting your information remains DSU's top priority.

Sincerely,

*Shawn Jaacks*

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