

Visa

continued from page 1A

creation and funding of a database of international students, setting up new requirements for schools and universities and new INS admission procedures.

"(The proposals) may be controversial, but there has to be recognition that this is an unprecedented time in the country, and our national security depends on our system functioning to ensure that terrorists do not take advantage of the vulnerabilities in the student visa program," Feinstein said.

Feinstein first spoke of the proposals last Thursday in an interview with the New York Times. Although University and other higher education officials were not surprised by the proposals, many questioned the need for such strong measures.

"It would be a shame to see this kind of reaction in response to the

events (of Sept. 11)," said Ginny Stark, associate director of the Office of International Education and Exchange.

Student leaders agreed. "In the past, the Oregon Student Association has opposed any and all efforts to restrict access to education," said Joelle Lester, OSA executive director.

A spokesman for Feinstein said higher education officials were consulted during the formulation of the proposals, which attempt to fill in gaps in regulations in student visas.

"It was the educators who told us there were (visa) monitoring gaps," said Jim Hock. "The student visa category is the most unregulated and exploited visa category."

Hock said reforms are necessary to the student visa program because officials believe at least one of the suicide pilots involved in the attacks enrolled at a college in Oakland, Calif., in November 2000, but never appeared at school. He also said the proposals should come before a committee in the next two weeks.

Many officials lay fault on lax processes by the INS. Stark said that all international students must go through rigorous application and screening processes before being accepted to the University.

However, once the student enters the University, "there is never any follow-up by the INS," Stark said. After international students have entered the country, Stark said, the INS should do a better job in tracking students' movements.

Academic officials and the federal government have often been at odds over many issues relating to international students. Many Universities and NAFSA: Association of Higher Educators complained this summer about the rising number of student visa rejections in some countries, notably China. Also, many officials fought with the INS over the proposed Student and Exchange Visitor Program, a database which will track international students and scholars. At one point, the INS attempted to force universities to collect a \$95 fee from each international student to pay for the program.

Feinstein's proposals address many issues surrounding the database, including full financial support. Rogers, who is also the chairman of a consular-affairs working group for NAFSA, fears the database will be too obtrusive and error-prone.

"The government has the need to obtain information, and I don't have

an issue there," Rogers said. "The potential for abuse and fraud is enormous. We all know how hard it is to change federal records when something wrong goes in."

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Faith events

Monday, Oct. 1

Band rehearsal: Wesley Center's "Praise and Worship" band invites new members to join its rehearsal. 6:30 p.m. Wesley Center, 1236 Kincaid St. Free. For information, call 346-4694.

Wednesday, Oct. 3

Worship: Student worship service. 7 p.m. Wesley Center.

The Emerald will soon offer a full calendar of events online at www.dailyemerald.com. Send information on campus events to calendar@dailyemerald.com.

Senator Feinstein's Student Visa Proposal

• Six-month moratorium on foreign student visas

This would give INS time to develop its foreign student tracking system

• Full funding for an electronic tracking system

This would authorize \$32.3 million in spending for INS

• New INS admission procedures

All foreign students would have to submit applications to INS before going to the State Department for a visa

• New requirements for schools accepting foreign students

Schools would have to sign an affidavit agreeing to comply with the new requirements and would have to report to INS on a quarterly basis

• Enhanced INS data collection

INS would be required to upgrade its computer systems to include fingerprints and photographs of all foreign students applying to enter the United States, as well as integrate its system with the FBI, the State Department, ports of entry and the U.S. Customs Service

• Enhanced security at U.S. ports of entry

Additional INS and Customs inspectors would be used at vulnerable ports to inspect incoming foreign students

Source: Senator Feinstein

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