



Jessica Waters Emerald

Peter Eberhardt, SEVIS Coordinator for the University Office of International Programs, examines some of the forms used to collect information from international students.

International

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and few staff members were available the following week as they worked full time to enter student data into SEVIS. Records include information ranging from students' home addresses to their majors.

All students on F-1 visas were then issued new I-20s; visiting scholars on J-1 visas received new DS-2019 forms. The forms have a barcode with a unique number assigned to each student, and scanning the barcode at any U.S. port of entry or consulate automatically brings up a student's information. Schools are required to update the system with any changes in student status, such as failure to register for classes.

Eberhardt and about six other staff members registered 1,260 students in "active status" and 637 students in "initial status" — students expected to begin in the fall.

"We will reconcile this fall to see the students who showed up and those who didn't," Eberhardt said.

The records were painstakingly entered one at a time by logging onto the SEVIS Web site. Eberhardt said the University's Computing Services office is still trying to develop a batch system allowing staff to enter hundreds of records at once. He said he hopes the batch system will be in use by fall term.

"If we don't have it ready by then, it's going to overwhelm us," he said. "The race is on to get it ready."

Due to kinks in SEVIS, the data entry process is subject to glitches, however.

"We had problems where you're in the middle of a record and then 'poof' — you lose the Web connection," Eberhardt said. At times, the record was even lost completely and had to be re-entered.

And at one point, school officials nationwide would print out an I-20 and the wrong record from a different university would print. Eberhardt said they would pick up an I-20 and wonder, "What's this about? Why am I getting a University of Texas record?"

Another problem is that the U.S. Department of State, which oversees consulates, is not directly linked into SEVIS. Homeland Security has to copy records to the State Department, and not all records get copied. Eberhardt said that in certain cases students with authentic SEVIS documents have arrived at embassies in their home countries and been turned away because officials couldn't find their record.

"Obviously (the record) is in the database, but the State Department doesn't have it," he said. "They're not

going to give you a student visa if you're not in their database."

In addition, SEVIS lists the University as "Oregon University System," which poses a problem when officials at one school want to create paperwork for students transferring to the University. Eberhardt said the international programs office has received several calls from other schools who cannot find a listing for the University on SEVIS.

The University also had to foot the bill for implementing the system. For instance, Eberhardt's position was specifically created to implement the system at the University, and the international programs office had to buy two new computers and a printer to process the new documents. Funds are also being spent to develop the batch technology that will allow several records to be entered at once.

Director of International Programs Office Ginny Stark was unable to put a dollar amount on the new requirements.

"It's just very difficult to tell what it's costing us," she said. "It'll probably take a few months to regularize the cost."

Despite the problems and a few minor mistakes on some documents, most students received their paperwork in time for the summer vacation.

Sophomore biology major Pin-Chun Lin, a resident of Taiwan, said she had no problems getting her new I-20, adding that she thinks the new system is good for the government because it can track students more effectively.

"If you're doing things properly, you're actually being a full-time student, then there's no problem," Lin said.

Graduate student Yashar Kafi of Iran has similar sentiments, saying the system is a practical way for the government to make sure students in the country are doing the right thing.

"Nowadays you always have to keep an eye out for the rules," he said.

Kafi said he is happy the international programs office has made concerted efforts to publicize the new system because all students can now be registered on time and also be aware of different immigration laws.

Students who were not entered into the system are now considered out of status. Eberhardt said there are a few records for students at the University which are still outstanding.

A report on CNN.com stated that 5,937 schools had made the Aug. 1 deadline, but that nearly 600 schools still needed to comply.

Contact the reporter at ayishayahya@dailymerald.com.

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C	R	A	I	G	O	N	E	S	N	I	L	E
H	E	S	S	E	R	O	O	T	G	A	L	S



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CAMPUS BUZZ

Tuesday
University journalism professor Lauren Kessler will host a book reading from her new book, "Clever Girl," 7 p.m., Knight Library Browsing Room. Kessler's 10th book follows the story of a woman

who paved the way for the age of McCarthyism. Linguistics lecture by George Lakoff, 4 p.m., 180 PLC. Lakoff will discuss "The Mind and Language: Issues in Cognitive Linguistics."

Photography lecture by San Francisco photo collage artist Mary Daniel Hobson, 2-4 p.m., EMU Ben Linder Room. Hobson's work is currently being displayed in the Adell McMillan Gallery in the EMU.