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EDITORS: Major principles outlined in the report on privacy follow asterisks.

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STANFORD —

Following recommendations of an ad hoc committee on privacy of information, Stanford will not collect or use social security numbers in connection with student records, Acting President William F. Miller told the Faculty Senate Thursday, Oct. 26.

(Registrar's officials note that Stanford has never collected or used social security numbers from students. Data has been released to outside agencies only with a student authorization or a subpoena, in which case students are notified and given an opportunity to respond.)

Miller said Stanford will continue to use social security numbers in connection with staff and faculty files "where required to do so or where separation or division of files is either impractical or ineffective."

Each office responsible for the maintenance of data systems will be responsible for developing procedures to assure control of access to data on a "need to know" basis, he added.

Likewise, they will be asked to develop means for preventing "unauthorized or accidental passage of data from the University data systems to non-University data systems," he noted.

"The University will not distribute to outside agencies unaggregated data unless required by law or requested to do so by the student or employee."

Miller said James Siena, legal adviser to the President, will be responsible for reviewing procedures, rendering interpretations on privacy issues, and investigating any complaints received in this area.

The ad hoc committee, whose report was issued last April, spent more than two years studying the problem. Initiated by Miller, a computer scientist, its report is still believed to be one of the first and most thorough of its kind ever developed at any major academic institution.

Single copies of the report are available free of charge from Stanford News Service, Stanford CA 94305, or from Committee Chairman George T. Gregory, associate general secretary and associate staff general counsel of the University.

The committee suggested 10 principles as guidelines for the University:

1. *"The University should obtain information only with the informed consent of the individual"*. Even when obtained, "consent should not be taken as a warrant for the unrestrained acquisition or the dissemination of information"
2. *"The University should collect information about individuals only to serve clearly defined purposes. If requested information is 'optional,' that fact should be clearly stated at the point of request, together with the purpose for which it is being collected."*

3. "The University should not collect information about individual political and social beliefs. Information about race, ethnic and national backgrounds and religious affiliations should be collected only to serve compelling needs and, if collected, should be voluntary and should not become part of the individual's record." Where government agencies require collection of statistics regarding race or national origin of employees and students, the information "should be used only for the purpose indicated on request on a one-time basis and should be severed from the names of individuals before the information is processed."

4. "Personal information, other than that which is public, collected by the University from individuals, is presumed to be confidential."

5. "Personal information, other than ordinary news or public information, derived from official University records, should be disseminated outside the University only 1) with the consent of the person, 2) when required by legal process, 3) when funding institutions or agencies require limited financial or professional information, or 4) when approved by a standing committee reviewing categories of releasable information." Illustrating this point, the committee said "we do not approve of the release of student grades or deficiency notices to parents without student consent, or patient health reports beyond [the] immediate family or as directed by [the] physician. Advanced written consent is preferable to oral consent."

6. "Individuals should be able to learn easily of the existence of systematically collected information concerning them, the purposes for which the information was collected, and the persons to whom it is made available. . . . Individuals should be able to learn the content of information systematically maintained about them."

7. "Information about individuals should be assigned an appropriate life span and stored with all practicable security, consistent with the level of sensitivity of the material."

8. "Except where required by law, University collection of personal information should not include unique, identifying data elements that interlock with non-University data systems. . . . for this reason, the committee opposes the use of the social security number by the University except for reporting income and withholding taxes, as required by law. . . . Coding schemes, file structures, and data field formats should be designed as far as technically feasible to suit Stanford's needs only."

9. "Each office, including departmental offices, systematically maintaining personal information for administrative purposes should promulgate and publish guidelines stating: the nature of the information, the purpose for which it is collected, the population represented, the persons to whom and circumstances under which the information is made available, the method and period of storage, and the life expectancy of files and computer records."

10. "There should be a continuing review of and responsibility for matters of privacy at Stanford." The committee suggests this responsibility should be lodged in a presidentially appointed faculty member or senior staff officer. It suggests that privacy aspects of all behavioral science research should be reviewed by the Committee on Research on Human Subjects an existing group.