

NOVA workshop permits feedback opportunities

by Steve Kadel

"The job you are doing is the most important job an American can perform today," Bob Kohls told the NOVA (Nebraska Opportunity for Volunteers in Action) volunteers from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, University of Nebraska-Omaha, and NU Medical School Monday.

NOVA is a federally funded project allowing college students academic credit for working in poverty areas, and Kohls is the coordinator of training for the program on the UNL and UNO campuses.

HE SPOKE Monday at a luncheon at the Nebraska Center, concluding a two-day workshop that brought the volunteers together for the first

time since they went to work Sept. 1. The purpose of the workshop was for the volunteers to provide feedback about their experiences in the field, including problems they've faced and ideas for new job areas.

"For the first time we have the emergence of people who are as equally concerned about the dignity of others as their own dignity," Kohls said.

He told the volunteers they should go out to learn, rather than to teach.

"It is impossible for you as a NOVA volunteer to go into ghettos, reservations and white low income sections of the state and leave the fact that

you are from middle class America behind," he said. "This is a problem you probably would like to shuck off, but you can't."

THERE ARE currently 32 NOVA volunteers on the UNL campus, 31 at UNO and 3 at Medical Center. These students will work in their chosen areas for 12 months and receive 30 hours of college credit. They also receive \$190 per month from the Federal Government.

The jobs picked by NOVA volunteers are diverse and range from organizing theater groups in a north Omaha church to working on problems in elementary education and housing at the Santee Sioux Indian Reservation near

Niobrara.

According to Gene Harding, Lincoln NOVA director, most of the volunteers are working in the Omaha and Lincoln areas. In the future the program directors will stress placement in western Nebraska, he said.

"NOVA IS A valuable program because it gets young people to work in poverty areas, while giving the student a chance to learn in an experiential situation," Harding said.

The program has openings for 15 new students beginning in January, Harding said. Students who want to work for a shorter period (4-7 months) will receive college credit on an

equal ratio, but get no salary.

Some of the areas where NOVA volunteers may work next semester are a Chicano youth project in Grand Island, recreation programs in Humboldt, and with minority groups in Scottsbluff, Chadron and Alliance.

"WE'RE ALWAYS looking for people with skills," Harding said. "We want people who have something to give."

Anyone who is interested in joining the program can get more information by contacting Harding or Mick Zangari, Lincoln Field Supervisor, at the Ag Administration Annex, 3700 Holdrege. The University telephone number is 2357.

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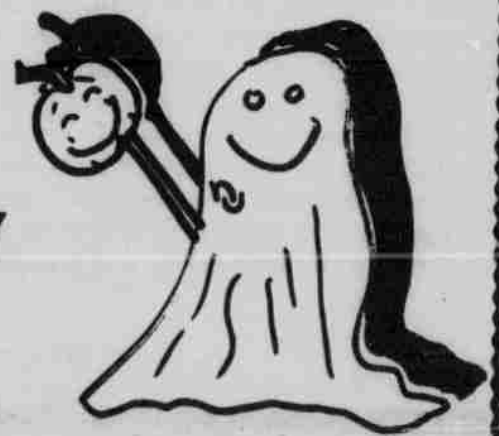
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