

... and what's being done about it



The problems came to a head when UNL Housing Operations Coordinator Dick Strait (above right) met with the dorm residents. The students listened to Strait's proposals (right) and then began listing their complaints and suggestions (above).

by John Russnogle

Urinals still stand in the women's restrooms. Toothpaste freezes solid overnight in winter. Rain seeps in through windows mistakenly built flush with the outside wall instead of recessed. Windows in the men's restrooms have been broken and not replaced for over a year. As a result, "a lot of guys are freezing."

An administrator has labeled the problems "relatively simple, but unrecognized and unattended."

The place is Burr-Fedde dormitory complex on East Campus; the administrator is Dick Strait, coordinator of UNL Housing Operations.

After several years of frustration, letter writing and non-committal replies, the situation came to a head this fall when East Campus dorm residents invited Strait to discuss the problems. They met Sept. 26th in Burr Hall lounge.

"We might as well start this meeting off friendly," Strait began, but the students were not set for a social tea.

Strait said he thought there had been a serious communication gap between East Campus dormitory students and the Housing Office. The response he received that night seemed to indicate the gap was quite a bit wider than he imagined.

Strait admitted he was hearing about most of the problems for the first time. He said he "couldn't argue the fact that the repairs should have been made a long time ago." The failure to make the repairs Strait attributed to human error and not malicious intent.

Students told Strait they even would provide the work force for some repairs if it would get repairs done faster.

Strait was reluctant to accept the offer, saying there probably would be a conflict with the University Job Pool if the students did the work themselves.

The Housing Office was aware of some of the problems and Strait was able to report some progress.

According to Strait, no one knows how to operate the heating controls in the East Campus dorms. But he told the students that new controls, like the ones in all City Campus dormitories would be installed by November. Also, many broken windows now have been replaced.



Most of the problems with the dormitories stem from "building the dormitories to hold a maximum number of students for minimum cost," according to Strait. In some cases doors, which are supposed to act as a substructure support for the wall, are actually being held up by the wall.

Strait said the Housing Office has a stereotype of East Campus students, but quickly added it was a "positive