

Suter— gadfly, advocate for UNL

by Sara Hinds

"In the worst sense I'm a gadfly and in the best sense a kind of consciousness." That's how James Suter, UNL's first ombudsman, describes himself.

Joining over 150 college campuses, UNL last March created an ombudsman's office.

Located in 110 Burnett, Suter can be reached by phone at 472-2633. He caters to all University members—faculty, students and administration.

It's his job to help find the answer to problems after all else fails.

He averages 20 to 30 calls each week. Eight to 10 people personally seek his help in that same amount of time.

According to Suter, about 80 per cent are students, five per cent faculty and 10 per cent administrative staff.

Problems range from housing and misplaced records to the status of a teacher assistant.

"I'm interested in equity. An ombudsman's job is much more valuable than a student advocate. I serve everybody and seek fair solutions for all. But this also makes my job more difficult," Suter said.

Although earning \$18,600 annually, Suter said no specific salary is allocated to his position. The salary depends upon the individual. Suter, who has been at UNL for two years, is an associate professor of architecture and planning.

Suter says his only influence is having access to the same information the chancellor's office does.

"After I've done the investigating (on a complaint), I'll make a recommendation. If this isn't accepted, I'll give it to someone who is appropriate. My final recourse is public forum where I can release anything to anyone. I can blow the whistle as I see it," Suter said.

Two thirds of all the calls are settled on the phone. About half of complainants who come in have their problems resolved on the spot or are referred to the correct place.

"If a student comes in with a bad grade, chances are that I can't do anything. He should talk with the instructor, then appeal it to the department and then to the college. After that, I can get involved," Suter stated.

The main problem is timing. Students and faculty cannot wait, and Suter says he can cut in and get the information.

Progress has been made in individual rulings, according to Suter. Regulations haven't been changed, but instead



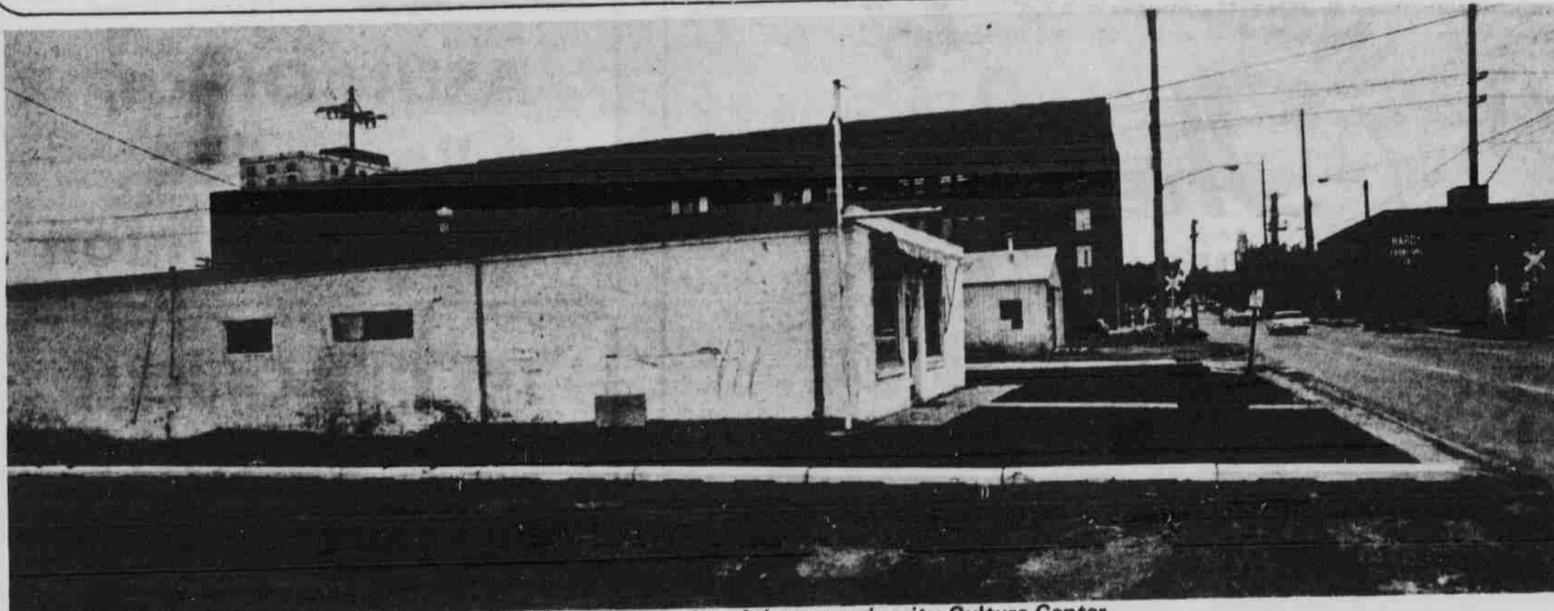
Ombudsman Suter... "No one is plotting against you."

interpretation and implementation by administrators has changed.

"A new function needs time to break in and get going. But I feel the position of the ombudsman is viable. It's been needed, effective, and from the feedback we've gotten, we have helped people," Suter commented.

Suter says his job is hectic, he's overworked at times and he's intrigued with the job's diversity. Though he says it's a rotating position, probably changing hands in three years, he has found the job satisfying.

"I'm becoming increasingly convinced that most people most of the time are trying to do the right thing. No one is out plotting against you."



1012 No. 16th . . . site of the new minority Culture Center.

Students initiate minority center

by Sara Schwieder

A new Culture Center is taking shape for UNL students at 1012 North 16th St., according to the Minority Affairs office.

Designed as a place for students to relax, with recreational and club rooms, and as a site for cultural programs, the Cultural Center will serve as a clearing-house for educational and social activities with the emphasis on minority cultures.

The center will be funded by a \$12,000 gift from a donor through the Nebraska Foundation. Another \$3,500 each year for three years has been donated the Athletic department's discretionary fund, UNL Chancellor James Zumberge.

The Culture Center should be in operation in a month, Minority Affairs Director Leroy Ramsey said Wednesday. It must be remodeled before programs can begin there.

The Culture Center is student-initiated and directed. Students planned the entire project.

"Some of us got together last year and discussed our ideas," steering committee chairman Richard Glover said. "The emphasis is on black people, but it will not be restrictive at all," he said.

Glover said he envisions the Center as a place for people of all races to get together and have fun, and get involved in the University.

"Whites shouldn't feel paranoid at the center," committee member Ike Thomas commented. "There's no reason to, the door's always going to be open to everybody."

Committee member Jeanine Station said the idea for the center had been tossed around for about three years. She started working on it a year ago.

"Lincoln is a farmer's town," she said. "Black students really need a place to go where they can just have a good time."

She envisioned many different uses for the center; aiding culturally deprived people; helping students; offering tutorial sessions; library space; music rooms and kitchens.

She said the Center needs more funds for remodeling and to support its programs.

The remodeling alone may take all of the \$12,000 from the Nebraska Foundation, she said, so the finance committee plans a fund-raising drive in the weeks ahead.

Pass/fail deadline Oct. 24

Perk up. All is not lost. This semester students are allowed to change a course to pass-fail from a graded basis until Oct. 24, according to Gerald Bowker, UNL director of administrative services.

Prior to this semester, students had to make the change during the first school week or during the add period, Bowker said.

In order to make the grading change a student must procure a drop-add form, obtain his advisor's signature, get approval from the appropriate college dean's office and submit the completed form with the \$5 fee to Administration 103, Bowker said.