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"The program went through last year with minimal kinds of concerns," Bader said. "We made an effort from our side to make sure they were getting the right kind of advice from the faculty advisers. And to make sure they were getting some work requirements in the departments."

The PERP report card was satisfactory as a result of the students' first good marks. All of the original students came through "in good order" academically, according to Bader. In fact, Whiting told the *Omaha World-Herald*, their grades were all As, Bs, and Cs. The original three enrollees then were permitted to live at the halfway house. But, Bader said, they had rigid "expectations" from the penitentiary's standpoint.

"They had to tell Mrs. Whiting where they were on campus all the time," Bader said. "That's not to say they couldn't go into the library or the Union, but there were some expectations."

convicts in college



"It isn't meant to show a lack of trust, but simply that there was trust on the other end to help them (the convicts) develop their own destiny with regard to the educational program."

The "expectations" allow them to mix with students on campus in a limited fashion. For instance, no convict is permitted to talk to any woman when she's alone. And the extracurricular activities allowed are almost nil.

"It depends what you mean by 'extracurricular,'" Bader said. "They can participate in things only to the extent that they can go to the Union and listen to a speaker or get a Coke. But as far as being involved in student organization, that is not now, I believe, possible."

"I realize that education has many parameters. I think we have to think of rehabilitation on the broadest parameter. But we've got to face the fact that these men have a serious commitment and they've got to get themselves academically sound first."

Officials at UNL and at the Penal Complex have decided to keep the names of the convicts a secret and the convicts are not required to reveal their backgrounds to students.

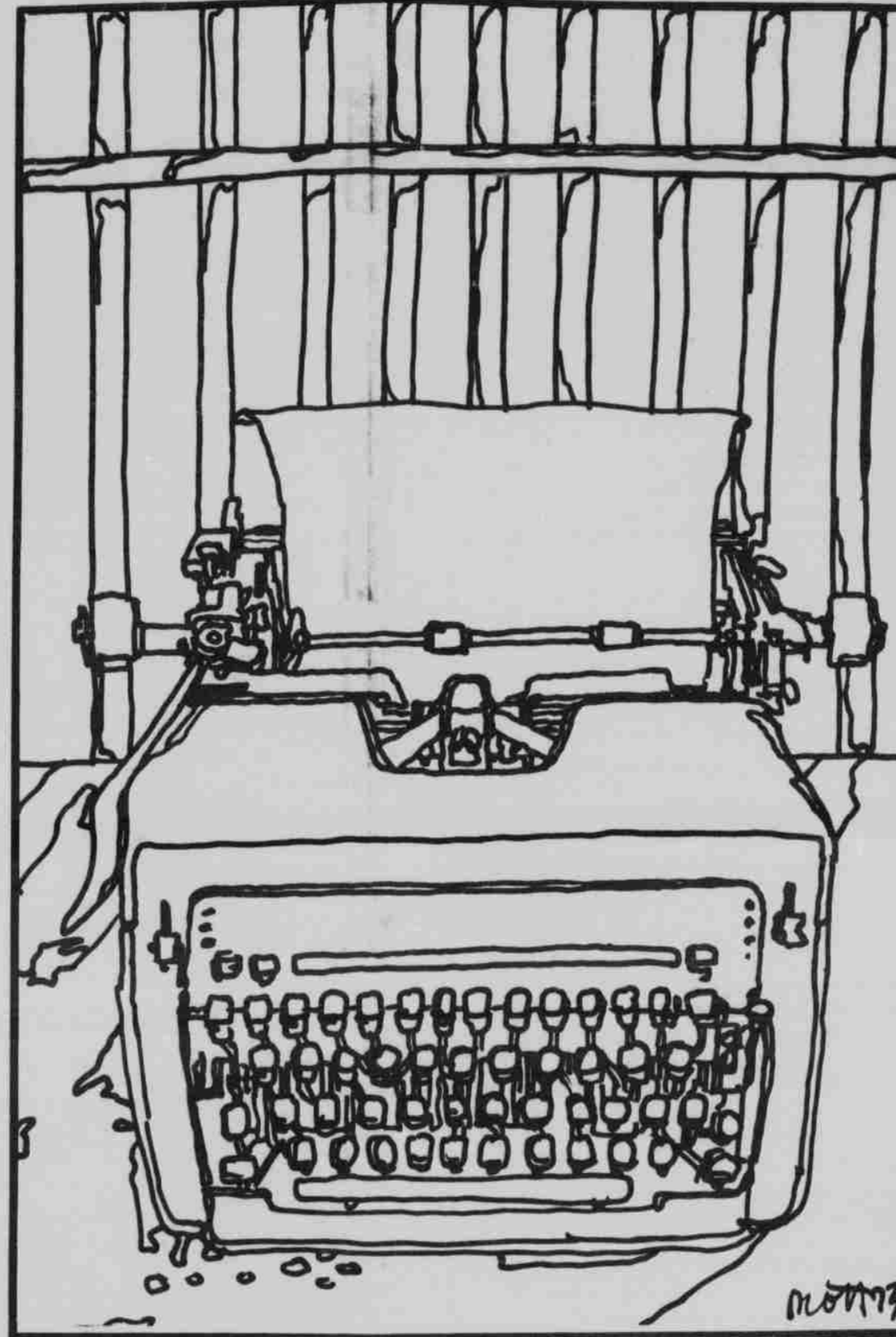
"We want to retain the anonymity of these individuals," Bader said. "I think there would be undue pressure brought to bear if they would be put on a pedestal as being different than any other student."

The first year of the PERP was run on a relatively informal basis between UNL and the Penal Complex. But this year an advisory board was formed. The members of the board are: Warden Charles Wolff, Bader (the chancellor's designee), Radcliffe (the faculty adviser), Larry Bundy (representing Academic Services), a release student and a student preparing for the release program.

The board was formed "so we would know the expectations of the penitentiary and more importantly to make sure that we are providing all the resources available here on the campus for a social environment and an educational environment," according to Bader.

Although the alliance of UNL and the State Penal Complex is certainly an innovative one, it is not without precedent. Some states, particularly Washington and Oregon, allowed large numbers of prisoners to attend classes on campus.

"Most of the states have failed because they haven't developed a philosophy that puts more emphasis on quality than on sheer numbers," Bader said.



One campus that has run a similar program for some time is Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. There, a degree program is offered within the institution itself. The educational release program admits any inmate eligible for parole.

At any one time, the Illinois program may have 20 to 25 students enrolled. And some students have graduated.

But Bader doesn't anticipate that volume of individuals in the local program. Although expansion is a definite possibility it may take other directions than just numbers.

"We can expect a leveling out of individuals in the program at any one time of around 12 to 15," he said. "I

don't anticipate a large number ever on our campus. We would not have any concerns if there were. I don't see any great risk factor."

Sometime next year, one of the participating students will probably receive his degree. And that will certainly be cause for a PERP victory celebration. But the threat of failure hangs over the program at all times.

"If failure ever happens academically it is going to be a travesty," Bader said, "because failure is not a good thing in terms of rehabilitation. We're all conscious that we want to do everything possible on our end to make it possible for the inmates in the program to succeed."



Bader, center . . . relaxes with UNL Chancellor James Zumberge, left and Nebraska Union Director Al Bennett.



Janet Krause . . . coordinates the program at UNL.