

DOLLAR\$ AND DORM\$

by H.J. Cummins

University tuition may be raised next year. Dormitory rates were raised \$80 a year at the March NU Board of Regents meeting. Many UNL students predict the regents will reject new proposals to liberalize dormitory rules.

Financial aid is becoming increasingly hard to get. Nebraska high schools have stopped graduating increasingly large classes.

With the end of the draft young men are expected to feel less pressure to enter college.

Despite all this, UNL administrators and dormitory staff members who've studied the question predict little if any decrease in occupancy in UNL dormitories.

First, because freshman applications are running even to those of last year, according to University Admissions Director John Aronson.

And secondly, because students now in UNL dormitories have indicated no outrage with the residence halls, according to UNL officials and dormitory staff members.

"I interpret lack of protest as contentedness," said Housing Director Richard Armstrong.

Ely Meyerson, housing director before Armstrong and currently Student Affairs dean of administration and a member of the Council on Student Life concurred.

"The Housing (Office) staff held meetings in every (residence) hall after dorm rates were raised," Meyerson said. "The average turnout was 40-50 students. One can only assume nobody is too fired up."

Dormitory rates were raised from \$940 each year to \$1,020 a year for a double room; \$1,140 a year to \$1,320 a year for a single room.

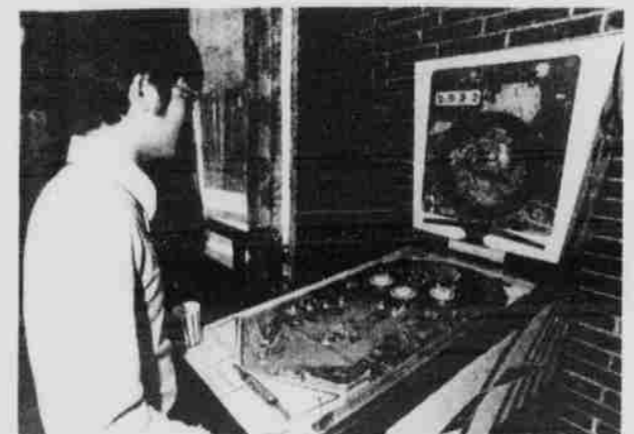
Armstrong said the largest factor in the increased rates is higher food costs. Other major expense increases are salary raises for full-time dormitory staff members and student employees, and lost revenue because dorms were not as full as expected this year, he said.

There are currently two proposals to liberalize dormitory rules before the Board of Regents.

One would allow students to have alcohol in their rooms and, on special occasions, outside their rooms if 85 per cent of the residents vote in favor of it.

The other proposal would extend dormitory visitation hours from the current six hours daily to eight hours on weekdays and 12 hours on weekends. Students would still be required to leave their doors open when they have guests of the opposite sex.

Passage of either proposal is thought to be unlikely and many students argue the extended



visitation hours are minimal and hardly worth the effort.

Armstrong said he doesn't think the plans' failure to pass would have much effect on dormitory occupancy rates.

However, he said he favors both proposals, seeing them as the regent's chance to let students know the board sees them as adults. But, he said students always have returned to dormitories under their current rules, and probably will continue to do so.

Dormitories were at 100 per cent occupancy last spring; they are now at 87 per cent occupancy, a normal decline in the course of a school year, Armstrong said. The 10 UNL dormitories when full, house 5,326 students.

Margaret Wenke gave the following break-down of total dormitory residents according to class: freshmen: women 57%, men 46%; sophomores: women 26%, men 25%; juniors: women 10%, men 15%; seniors: women 4%, men 8%; graduate students: women 2%, men 4% and the High School Equivalency Program (HEP) 3%.

CSL has directed one of its subcommittees to study housing and offer a "coordinated plan" for dormitory policy, not because members expect occupancy decreases but because housing is "a major concern" of CSL, according to CSL Chairman Don Shaneyfelt.

"It's an area where students spend a lot of their out-of-class time and that's what CSL is concerned with," Shaneyfelt said.

CSL has approved the extended visitation hours, alcohol in campus living units and a proposal, "in concept," for co-ed living on the

seventh and eighth floors of Abel Hall, now a men's dorm.

Student Affairs has also approved the alcohol proposal and the extended visitation privileges plan, Meyerson said. The Abel Hall plan has not reached Student Affairs yet, he said.

Meyerson said "expanded options" for student living on campus has been a goal he's long supported.

He said he'd like to see UNL offer students such options as a residential college similar to Centennial, co-ed living arrangements of various types, honor student dorms, dorms for people with similar interests, dorms with liberal social freedoms and dorms with restricted social freedoms for those who preferred them.

"I'm generally pleased with the experience a first-year student has in dormitory living," Meyerson said. "We're not serving the upperclass people as effectively, though."

Meyerson argued liberalized social rules in dormitories probably would not bring more upperclassmen back to dormitories because, he said, other schools with more liberal policies still have fewer upperclassmen in their dormitories.

He said he sees the variety in life style programs and "giving students a continuous voice in running their dormitories" as the keys to enticing upperclassmen into dormitories.

Meyerson favors retention of the current policy that requires all freshmen, and all sophomores under 19 years old to live in on-campus, supervised housing.

That includes dormitories, student co-operatives and Greek houses.

"There's enough evidence to show that the adjustments of the first year of college are more easily made by students in on campus housing," he said.

As for the annual decrease in occupancy from the fall to spring semesters, Meyerson said there are ways through which the University could tighten contracts and insure fewer students leave the dorm throughout the year.

The programs would mean reduced rates for dormitory students, who must now make up for the loss in anticipated revenue from students who leave, he said. But when the programs were presented to hall residents, Meyerson said, they rejected them, apparently feeling they may some day wish to leave mid-year.

He said he favors the present policy, too, feeling it means only students who want to remain in the dormitories do.

"It makes for a much more positive climate," he said.



and east campus agreed that the majority of students in their living unit favor alcohol in dormitories and expanded visitation privileges, although few have actively agitated for passage of the proposals.

Thomas Moat, Selleck's residence director, said residents there were initially outraged by the rate increases, but have since decided the general inflation justifies the rate jumps.

Moat said residents in Selleck use the visitation privileges a lot, some floors six of the seven nights a week regularly. Selleck has five floors of men, 11 of women and two smaller graduate halls.

Schramm Hall, co-ed for three years, has about 60 per cent upperclassmen, according to Residence Director Jane Lyons.

Students there are no longer very "issue oriented" Lyons said, but tend to be slightly more liberal than residents in other dorms. So she feels they'd favor the proposed liberalizations of living rules.

Residents in East Campus' Fedde Hall usually use visitation privileges on weekends and one weeknight each week, according to Agnes Brehm, Fedde Hall residence director there. The dorm houses about 70 women.

All three predict no decrease in occupancy for next year.

Evelyn Lemmon, corresponding secretary for Cornhusker Co-op, said she's been receiving more calls than in past years from dormitory students inquiring about living in the co-op.

"Our lower rates look good to them, I guess," Lemmon said. Residents pay \$720 a year and share house chores for an average of an hour and a half a week, she said. The rate for fall, 1973, will be \$760 a year, she said.

Should dormitories empty in the future, they would probably be converted to married student housing, Armstrong said.

Meyerson said he doubted UNL would ever hand over their dormitories to private companies to own and manage, as other campuses have done.

It would hurt rather than help students, he said, because the dormitories would become "hotels" without any of the student services the University now offers students and rates would have to go up because private companies would have to make a profit, which UNL does not.

