

'More than places to house bodies'

Joe McCarty led a 10-member subcommittee of the ASUN Environmental Task Force, which produced "An Evaluation of UNL Residence Halls."

McCarty, now in his last year of architecture, has spent a year and a half in dormitories during his four years of college.

He became interested in the effect of dormitories on students psychologically. This included the psychological effect of the physical environment of the dormitory on students.

The Housing office is not meeting its stated objectives, McCarty said, "if they (Housing personnel) met them in the real spirit, we would have dormitories with no

problems."

Dormitories should be more than places to house bodies. Most students live there because they have no apartment to move into, or because they are forced to because they are freshmen, or as a convenience, he said.

"There are no real reasons to live in a dormitory," he said.

McCarty suggested changing one lounge on each floor of Abel Hall into a activity room where residents would know pool, bridge or art materials always were available.

McCarty said he also thought students would be willing to pay more money for additional services. Therefore, he said, he felt dormitories should offer different

services.

"Options should be available to students. Maybe a student only wants a bed to sleep in and doesn't want to study in his dormitory room. He should be able to have it," he said.

McCarty pictured the dormitory rooms as cages. "You can have someone else in your cage for six hours a day, but you can't close your door. Your furniture is bolted down; you can't move it.

"The zookeeper sets all the rules...the animals must adapt to the cage as students must adapt to their cages.

"Students should be able to do in their dormitory what someone living off-campus could do," he said.

The first thing McCarty would like to see changed is restrictions on visitation and alcohol in dormitories.

"If the regents have any sense at all, the alcohol and visitation restrictions would be removed. If the Housing Office had its way, the rules would be dropped," he said.

"Right now, students are trying to be polite but firm—but not firm enough. We got the visitation hours we have now by laying our cards on the table."

"If the regents don't act within a reasonable period of time, mass violation is the only solution. Enough proposals have been taken to the regents—extended visitation on Saturdays is just a token. The regents think if they ignore it, it will go away."

McCarty said he thought alcohol in the dormitories might create some discipline problems. "However", he said, "if the university was doing its job, there would be no discipline problem. There's something wrong with the university system if 22-year-old people have to make a spectacle of themselves to have a good time."

He also said the way dormitories now are arranged is conducive to vandalism and rowdiness. Part of the problem is that men and women are separated and that people are placed in social groups according to floors.



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