

University as Mom and Dad

By Steve Arvanette

Has the term *in loco parentis* become outmoded or does the University still attempt to serve as a substitute parent for the student while he is away from home?

"Universities did assume the status of substitute parents at one time," said Ken Bader, UNL vice chancellor for student affairs. It was accomplished largely through dress codes, curfews and other rules directly governing a student's social activities.

"People didn't view it as a substitute parent then," the UNL administrator said. It wasn't until the civil rights issue became so prominent that the topic was really discussed, he said.

"It really became obvious there were some marked conflicts," he said, when Nebraska lowered the age of majority to 20 and then 19 years of age.

The concept of the University acting as a substitute is not completely gone, according to Bader. "We still have it."

The areas most often mentioned as being remnants of the *in loco parentis* concept are the present prohibition against alcohol on campus and limitations on visiting privileges in residence halls.

Regent Robert Koefoot doesn't believe those rules mean the University is serving as a parent for students away from home.

"Just because you make rules and regulations doesn't mean you are acting as a parent," Koefoot said. The rules governing alcohol are present for everyone on campus, he said.

"Students are at the University for an education, not to drink booze or have visitation all day," he said.

Regent Ed Schwartzkopf said his primary consideration in establishing rules governing students is whether they "improve the learning program." He said he looks at each proposal and attempts to judge it on its merits.

"What is the overriding purpose for coming to a school of higher education?" he asks.

On the alcohol topic, he said the presence of liquor in a dormitory around minors would place the University in a position of almost encouraging the breaking of laws.

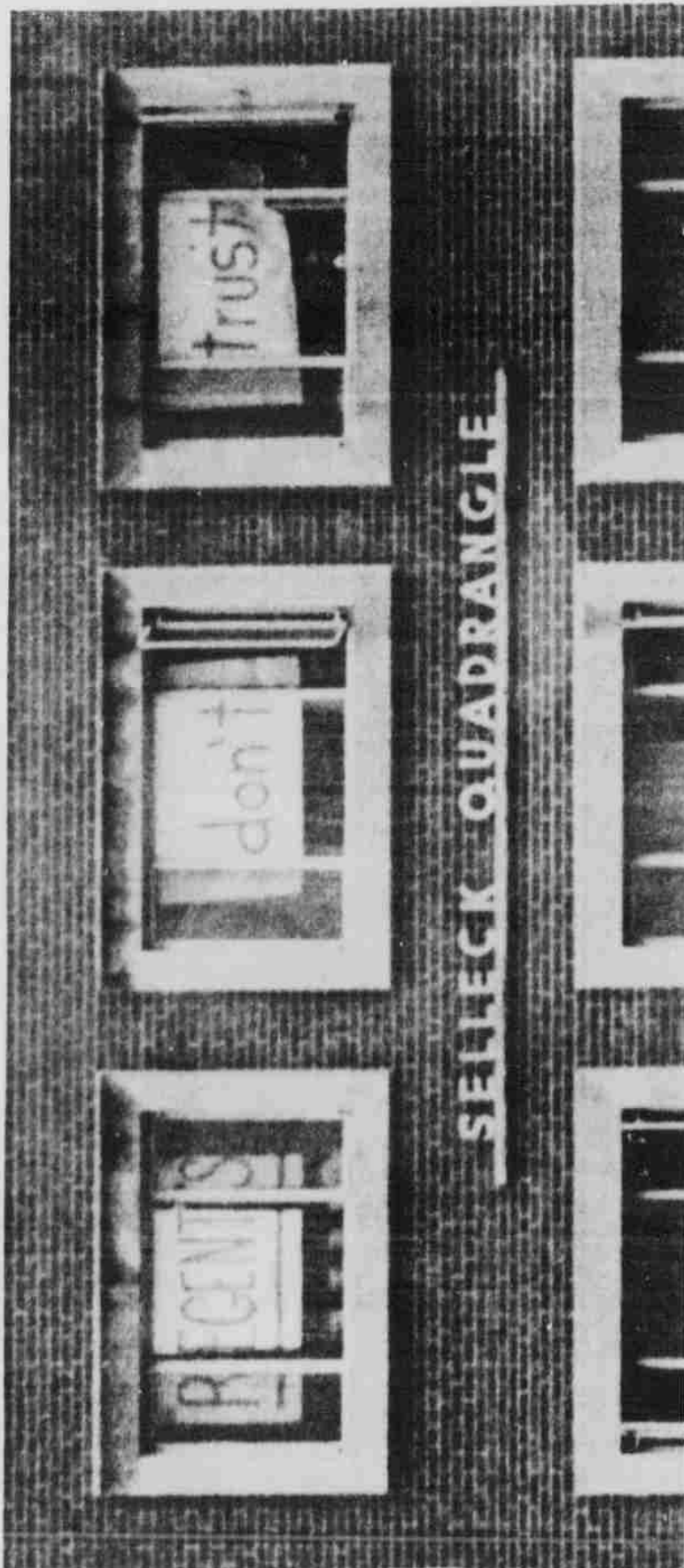
"I can't see why we have this big push for alcohol," he said.

The Lincoln regent said he is willing to discuss the visitation issue with students. Not enough students have expressed an interest in expanding the present visitation policy thus far, Schwartzkopf said.

"Most students living in dorms are not paying their own way," he said. For that reason he thinks parents should be consulted when any changes in visitation are considered.

"Let's ask the parents who are paying the bills. They should have something to say."

Bader, who has publically disagreed with the regents' policy



Signs of the times.

Photo by Rich Steinmetz