

RHA report: visitation suspension 'dictatorial'

Last month's suspension of visitation hours at the Harper-Schramm-Smith (HSS) Residence Halls was "a case of arbitrary, dictatorial authoritarianism," according to a Residence Hall Assoc. (RHA) committee report of the suspension completed last week.

The committee called for development of "preventive measures" and outlined an appeal route for use by students "in the event of a similar situation arising again."

RHA president Carolyn Grice said the RHA Council will begin preparing a resolution this Thursday asking the UNL Housing Office to develop stricter guidelines for visitation suspensions.

The RHA committee said such guidelines would "insure that such injustice shall never have to be incurred by members of the Residence Hall Assoc. of this University again."

The committee was formed to investigate the HSS visitation suspension. Harper Hall residents had requested the investigation Jan. 24.

In its report, the 10-member committee said the visitation suspension represented "a complete lack of due process" and was made with "total disregard for the rights of the students involved."

Marie Hansen, HSS complex program director, said in a telephone interview Monday that her decision to suspend hours "wasn't dictatorial but may have been authoritarian in the sense that I was using all the authority I had."

"The time, place and conditions of suspension were arbitrary, but I tried to pick them fairly," she said. "In a sense it was extremely fair. I could have taken hours away for six months instead of three days."

Hansen suspended visitation hours at Harper Hall for three days beginning Jan. 22.

She had told the Harper Hall Senate one week earlier that hours would be suspended unless there was a marked improvement in compliance with the open door visitation policy.

The policy requires that residents

keep room doors open while entertaining guests of the opposite sex.

Visitation in Schramm and Smith Halls, with the exception of Smith floors, 3, 7 and 9, was suspended for three days beginning Jan. 30.

Hansen said her actions did not violate any due process for suspension because "there was none at the time."

"The policy set by the regents provides for no due process and there wasn't any due process outlined by any of the hall governments at the time," she said.

HSS governments since have set up a procedure for dealing with RHA violations that Hansen said "protects me, the staff and the students."

Under the plan, each floor will establish a Floor Hearing Body to deal with violations on the floor. If found guilty, a violator may be given a warning, lose sponsorship privileges or be referred to the residence director.

The procedure takes effect today.

The committee also charged that enforcement criteria for the open door policy were "suddenly shifted without any attempt at informing the residents."

A poll of HSS residents conducted by the committee indicated that

51.5% of those asked did not know RHA hours were in jeopardy, when Hansen suspended hours.

She denied having changed enforcement criteria and said it was not her responsibility to inform sponsors that the open door policy was going to be enforced.

"It is the hall governments' responsibility to communicate with the sponsors," she said.

"When I told the government that

open door was not being properly enforced, it was up to the hall governments to come up with a new way to see it was done."

The appeal route outlined by the committee called for floors threatened with hours suspension to petition the Housing Office along with a letter explaining the basis for the appeal.

A personal appearance at the Office of "as many individuals as possible" also was encouraged.

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Acceptance of differentiated housing plan could mean 'alternate life styles' by fall

By Mark Hoffman

If recommendations for alternate living styles in UNL residence halls are accepted by the UNL administration and the Board of Regents, those recommendations could be implemented as early as next fall, according to Housing Office Director Richard Armstrong.

Those recommendations, included in a report by the Differentiated Housing Task Force, a subcommittee of the Council on Student Life (CSL) Housing Policy Committee, call for several changes in residence hall living

styles.

Included in those changes are different halls having hours of coed visitation ranging from none to as many as 24 hours daily; allowing alcohol to be kept and consumed by residence hall residents; eliminating open door and individual sponsorship visitation policies and establishing quiet floors and academic floors for students with similar interests.

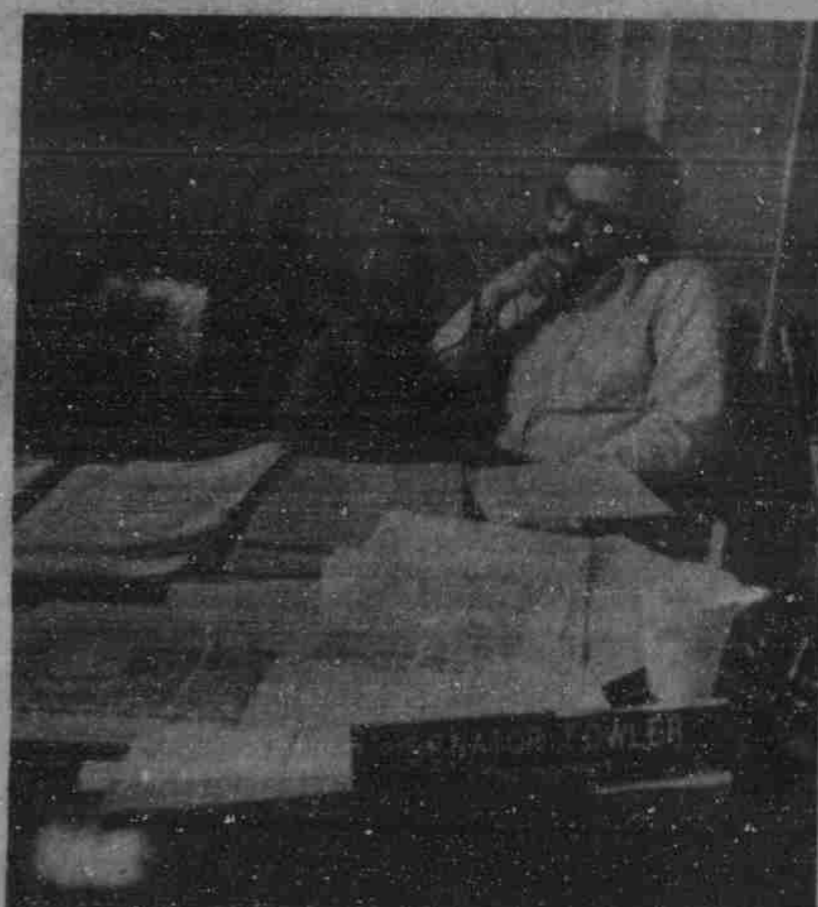
For those changes to be implemented by next fall, "it is crucial that the regents act on it at (their March 16 meeting)," Armstrong

said.

The report must be submitted by Feb. 28 to be placed on the March 16 meeting agenda. The report, in its final form, must go through CSL and the UNL chancellor and be accepted by the regents for discussion.

Kermit Hansen, Board of Regents chairman, said if the lawyers for both sides of the ASUN-Residence Hall Assoc. lawsuit challenging current residence hall rules agree, the regents would discuss the report when it comes before them.

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UNL graduate State Sen. Steve Fowler is now in his second session in the Legislature.

Novice Sen. Fowler now ready for business

By Wes Albers

State Sen. Steve Fowler's first session in the Legislature was spent mostly "learning and getting acquainted." Now he's settled and ready for business.

"I can't tell how effective I'm being yet because most of my bills this session haven't been voted on," Fowler, 25, said. "I'll just have to wait and then compare this session with the last session."

Fowler said he will measure his effectiveness by how many and which of his bills are passed. How much his opinions affect other senators is another consideration, he said.

Fowler, a graduate of UNL and 1971-72 ASUN president, is serving his second year of a 4-year term from the 27th district.

Long an advocate of human rights and education, Fowler campaigned for improved housing, senior citizens programs, property tax reform, mass transit

and prison reform.

He called matters on the legislative floor "boring at times," but said overall he likes his position.

"Dealing with the issues, meeting people and trying to get something accomplished is what really appeals to me," he said. "It's a good education."

During his freshman year as a senator, Fowler introduced 10 bills, the most allowed.

Five of the 10 bills passed. Bills not passing included ones designed to strengthen the State Equal Opportunities Commission, to allow adults free high school education and to allow sale of prophylactics to minors.

Describing his bills as "fairly diverse," Fowler said he believed he has represented all of his constituents rather than just young people.

Fowler said he gauges the opinions of his constituents by "following their concerns in the

papers," maintaining personal contact and occasionally, guessing.

While he admitted he has not accomplished everything he campaigned for, Fowler said he is still working at it.

"Most of the things I'm pushing for are still in the works," he said. "You don't just come in and push those kinds of reforms right through this body."

Fowler has introduced bills this year including ones allowing alcohol on college campuses (LB783), making the Lincoln Housing Authority eligible to receive federal funds (LB271) and setting a minimum wage for state employees (LB872), who he contends are grossly underpaid.

He said he also supports a bill (LB323) introduced by State Sen. Richard Marvel of Hastings to provide for student representation on the NU Board of Regents.