

## Public records law troubles UNL administrators

By Chuck Beck

A public records law which allows college students full access to their personal files is unclear and poses problems for university administrators who must decide how to apply it, Kenneth Bader, vice chancellor for student affairs, said last week.

Bader said three things can be done to clarify the Family Rights and Privacy Act which takes effect today: draw up a set of guidelines, get a legal interpretation or make an amendment to the public records law to clarify the measure.

The Family Rights and Privacy Act allows parents to examine their children's school files. An amendment to the act, proposed by New York Sen. James Buckley, extends the act to college students.

### Termination of aid

Buckley's amendment to the law provides that a student's files will be accessible to him within 45 days after the student makes a request to see his file. If the school fails to comply with the request, its federal aid will be terminated.

Bader said he is waiting for the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) to draw up a set of guidelines to clarify the law before the first 45-day period of the law's enactment is over.

He said he would also support a one-year delay in the implementation of the measure.

While waiting for clarification, Bader will "seek legal assistance and a legal interpretation" of the act, he said.

"We (the university administration) haven't received guidelines from HEW about

how the measure works or its intent," Bader said.

### Amendment unclear

Buckley's amendment is unclear on many matters, he said.

He said notes and letters written about a student may be construed as belonging to the student's file. According to Bader, the amendment to the public records law does not protect people like doctors, parents or persons who write letters of

recommendation.

Bader said he would not allow certain information like doctors' notes or letters of recommendation to be viewed by students until specific guidelines are established.

Bader said third parties, like doctors who have written notes about a diagnosis for a student's illness, must be protected. Doctors have had a tradition of confidentiality for notes made about their patients, and this confidentiality has been upheld in court, he said.

If letters of recommendation were available to students, the letters would probably be watered down, containing nothing negative about the student," Bader said.

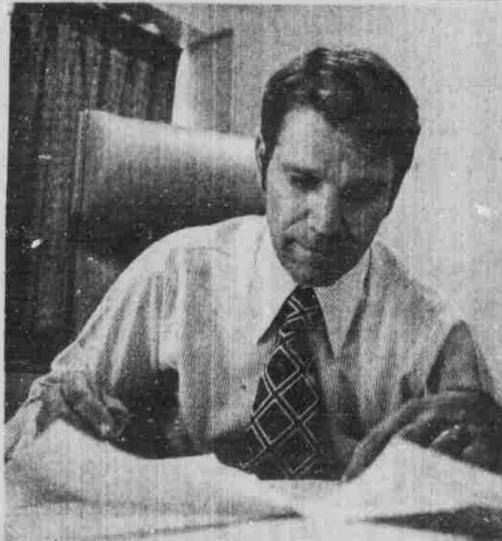
"This doesn't help the student or the person giving the recommendation, because it doesn't present a true picture of the student. The world doesn't operate like that."

### Financial statements

Parents' financial statements would also be open to the student's scrutiny as provided by the measure, Bader said. Many parents do not want their children to see the parents' financial records, he said.

Another ambiguity is that a student may challenge information contained in his files, he said. This may mean that a student could conceivably call a hearing to challenge grades, Bader said.

"The intent of Buckley's amendment was laudatory, but (UNL) files on students have been accessible to them for years," Bader said, adding that Buckley's measure was "poorly thought out."



Ken Bader, vice chancellor for student affairs.

## Grads ponder options

By Randy Gordon

A recent study released for the Unicameral projects that student enrollments in Nebraska colleges and universities will decline 17 per cent in the next six years because of a declining birth rate and a drop in the number of high school graduates continuing their education in the state's postsecondary schools.

Telephone interviews with several Nebraska high school officials show that most have seen such a trend in their respective schools, mainly because of what they call a more realistic appraisal by students of what postsecondary schools can do for them.

Ron Houston, director of college placement at Omaha Westside High School, said the trend of fewer high school seniors continuing their schooling is evident at Westside, although he said the decline has been gradual.

### Decrease in college-goers

Houston said the number of seniors continuing their education has declined about 10 per cent over the last five or six years. But he said about 65 per cent of Westside's seniors continue their schooling after graduation.

"Students are increasingly looking for quicker outlets into the world of work," Houston said. "Students are taking a more realistic view of society and are more aware of the implications of what college can do for them."

Houston said the trend may continue if tuition and board and room costs continue to rise, and the nation's economy proves to be unstable.

"Students are taking a look at the least expensive but best available options for them," he said.

### Draft a cause

Houston said another reason for the projected decline may be that the military draft, which was dropped in favor of a volunteer army, no longer forces students not wanting to be drafted to enter a college or university.

Westside had the largest student enrollment of any high school in the

state last year with 2,454 students, according to the State Department of Education.

Houston said Westside has a total enrollment of about 2,500 students this year, of which 825 are seniors.

Don Darnell, assistant principle in charge of student services at Lincoln Southeast High School, said "kids are more realistic about making choices" now, and this has contributed to a decline in the number continuing postsecondary schooling.

### 17 per cent drop

Darnell said 92 per cent of Southeast's graduates in 1966 chose to continue some form of schooling, the highest figure in the school's history. He said the figure steadily declined to the current figure of 75 per cent for last year's graduating class, a drop of 17 per cent in eight years.

However, Darnell said the number planning to enter full-time work after graduation has risen from 4 per cent in 1966 to 22 per cent last spring.

Likewise, he said the number of graduates attending four-year liberal arts colleges declined 20 per cent over the same period, down to 63 per cent last year.

"Parents and their students are looking at college in a more realistic way than in the past," Darnell said. "It used to be that the kids listened to mom and dad—they had things planned out."

### 'Looking around'

"But now kids are saying that 'well, after all, it's my life and maybe I should take some time and get into something I enjoy doing.' They are looking around more to find what they are interested in before they take off and pursue something at a higher level," Darnell said.

He said there is also an economic factor involved, in that students are reluctant to attend school for four years only to have difficulty in finding a job after receiving their degree.

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## Regent race undecided

Nothing is definite yet but unofficial figures still point to Scottsbluff attorney Robert Simmons and Minden farmer Robert Raun as winners in the NU Board of Regents race.

Unofficial figures have Simmons leading Alliance cattlefeeder John P. Olson by 25,058 to 24,309 in the Sixth District race. In the Seventh District, Raun has a 325 vote lead over North Platte attorney Harold Kay, 24,240 votes to 23,915.

Constitutional Amendment One's (the student regent amendment) defeat is still predicted: According to Secretary of State Allen Beermann's office, the Nov. 7 figures stand at 187,315 in favor of the amendment and 190,123 votes opposing it. No new estimates have been made since that time.

According to election spokesmen, official results will be released Dec. 2. Although absentee ballots have been counted in each county, the abstracts of the votes from each county still must be tabulated by the secretary of state's office, the spokesmen said.

## Educators to discuss Title IX effects

A panel of Lincoln educators will discuss the effects of Title IX of the 1972 education amendments on public school programs Thursday at 8 p.m. at the Unitarian Church, 6300 A St.

The meeting, sponsored by the Lincoln Chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW), will deal with Title IX regulations which, with certain exceptions, prohibit sex discrimination in education programs or activities which receive federal funds.

The panelists are Pearl Goldenstein, Board of Education; Carroll Sawin, assistant superintendent for personnel; Anne Irvine, home economics consultant; Virgil Horne, athletics consultant; and Dean Austin, physical education consultant.

Title IX regulations, issued by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare in June of this year, are now under revision.

## ASUN revision hearing Thursday

The ASUN Constitutional Revision Committee will sponsor an open hearing on revision of the ASUN constitution at 12:30 p.m. Thursday in the Nebraska Union, according to David Howlett, ASUN second vice president.

The purpose of the hearing is to allow students to tell the committee how they would like the constitution to be revised, he said Tuesday.

The room number for the meeting will be posted on the daily events calendar in the Union Thursday.