

Centennial fraternity plans explored

By Rex Seline

Residents of Centennial College may soon become members of a fraternity under a proposal which John Fleck, chairman of this semester's Centennial Town Hall meetings, hopes will unify participants.

The proposal would mean that by participation in the program, a student would become a member of a fraternity or sorority, according to Fleck. The fraternity or sorority would not be affiliated with any existing national organization and as yet has no name.

Some preliminary calculations indicate residents might save money if they paid University room rates and bought separate meal tickets on their own, Fleck said.

"It was originally an idea of quite a few upperclassmen last year, who felt there was more unity in the program," Fleck said. "It's hoped that this structure would lend itself to this type of living/learning environment."

Search conducted

Fleck said the idea originally came up last year when the house currently occupied by Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity was sold. Interest was generated in having upperclassmen and graduates band together and live in that house or another in which could be bought or leased.

"The idea came up again this year,

coalesced, and the upperclassmen and women's floor got turned on by the prospect," Fleck said.

Originally, a search was conducted to find on or off campus housing, but once the underclassmen and women in the program became interested, the proposal changed to renting or leasing Centennial from the University, according to Fleck.

"We hope to keep more upperclassmen in the program (as a fraternity)," Fleck said. "The possibility that we might, more or less, be in control of our living quarters arose as a sidelight that interested us."

Constitutions similar

The constitutions of the fraternity for the men and the sorority for the women would be the same, Fleck said.

"Being a fraternity or sorority wouldn't affect the program at all," according to Fleck.

Nelson Potter, senior fellow for Centennial, also foresaw no change in the program.

"Whatever problems with it would be from the point of view of housing. From the Centennial point of view, I don't see any parts being different with the fraternity structure," Potter said.

Fleck said that the basic difference between the Centennial proposal and a traditional fraternity or sorority would be less emphasis on the social aspect.

"We have no interest in having rush week, pledges or fees of any sort. The social and academic tie would be more important he said.

Clearing house

The proposal also involves the possibility of national expansion through the Ann Arbor, Michigan, conference on experimental educational programs, Fleck reported.

"Experimental colleges have been going under because of a lack of organization. We want to go up to Ann Arbor and talk to other students about this proposal to see if they're interested," Fleck said.

On a national basis, Centennial would act as a clearing house for other experimental programs involved with fraternities and sororities. Fleck believes that chapters could be established at other universities to alleviate the lack of communication.

Recruitment of members for Centennial would be through Centennial's own public relations campaign and would not change under the proposal, according to Fleck.

"We're going to worry about developing our constitution (working with Jayne Wade Anderson, director of fraternities, sororities and co-ops) first, before we consider anything else," Fleck said.

Midweek

Fellows agree Centennial offers an "alternative education"

Since its inception in 1969, the Centennial Education Program (CEP) has hosted "fellows," or CEP professors, from many departments at UNL.

Fellows sponsor and counsel CEP students on projects or areas of study that interest them. Each fellow serves a two or three-year term before returning to his department.

This semester, Centennial has 12 fellows. Nelson Potter, a professor of philosophy, is the senior fellow.

CEP students take 6 hours of Centennial instruction each semester. These hours may apply toward Arts and Sciences group requirements.

Together with the fellows, students define goals and requirements for their program, according to CEP Fellow Sky Houser.

Individualism emphasized

Projects can be done individually or in small groups, he said. But individualism and the learning experience is emphasized, he added.

To enhance individual learning experiences, most CEP students live in Neihardt Residential Center, he said. But the program does have commuter students Houser said.

Houser, a visiting lecturer in history, will be leaving the program this year after what he called "three rewarding years."

But he won't return to the history department. Instead, he is looking for a school with a program similar to CEP, based on a living-learning concept, he said.

Houser said that when the program works

well, "It is the most exciting kind of teaching I've ever done."

More time consuming

"It's really gratifying to see people begin to take hold of their own development and acquire

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Centennial legates attend conference

Centennial Education Program (CEP) members are attending a conference at Ann Arbor, Michigan, partly to find out why Centennial's still around, said Nelson Potter, CEP Senior Fellow.

The three-day conference, which starts next Wednesday, will be attended by representatives from several living-learning centers from major midwestern universities.

Some of these schools are having serious problems and experiencing declining enrollments, according to Potter.

But Centennial is "one of the better programs," Potter said.

"Compared to the others, we're the most solidly founded and based," he said. He hopes to find out what makes CEP different and share it's approach to open education at the conference.

Potter also wants to learn from the experience of the other living-learning centers in order to improve Centennial, he said.

Discussions at the conference will be about problems that communities like CEP are having.

"The conference is very important for us," Potter said.

Three Fellows (Rick March, Sky Houser and Potter) will attend the conference together with three CEP students who haven't been selected yet.



Nelson Potter

Publicity may reverse enrollment declines

Although enrollment in the Centennial Education Program (CEP) has declined since 1970, publicity may reverse the trend, says Nelson Potter, senior fellow of the CEP.

With lack of publicity for the program, fewer students have enrolled in CEP each year after the peak of 243 students was reached in 1970-71, Potter said. This year 160 students are participating in the program.

Potter said the program received much publicity during 1969, the first year of its existence.

"With the inception of the program," Potter said, "there was naturally a great deal of publicity. There hasn't been as much lately, and as a result, student awareness has tapered off."

To counter the lack of publicity, a new brochure was printed this year, Potter said. Copies of the brochure may be obtained at the CEP office in Neihardt Residence Center.

Reasons cited

Other reasons were cited for the declining student enrollment in the program.

Sally Gordon, CEP administrative assistant, said fewer students are enrolling in four-year schools because of financial problems or because potential students travel before attending school.

Potter indicated that students are less willing now to take chances in choosing a major. He added that Centennial does not offer a major.

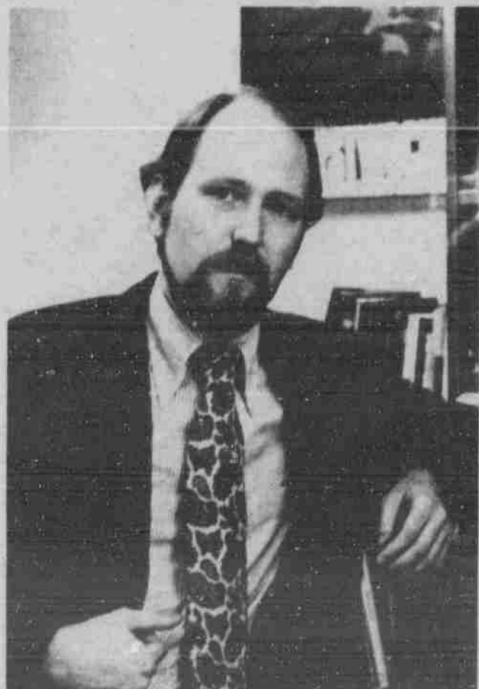
"Many students perceive Centennial as taking a chance," Potter said. "Many people believe that the program doesn't seem to be career oriented."

Another reason Potter cited for the declining student numbers was the lack of an updated brochure about the program. Since copies of the new brochure arrived at the CEP office Friday, however, this problem has been remedied, Potter said.

Students recruited

Potter said students traditionally have enrolled in the program as incoming freshmen. More upper classmen have enrolled in the program the last few years, he said.

"Freshmen came to the University without being aware of the Centennial program," Potter said. "We will be writing letters this semester to prospective Centennial students who are already attending UNL."



CEP fellows Sky Houser



and James Cole