

Men join search for residence hall temporary housing

By Gail Stork

Early this summer women wanting to live in UNL residence halls were told they might not have a room this fall. Now, men have joined them in the waiting line, according to a UNL official.

Since the first week of July, junior and senior men's applications have been held in addition to a women's waiting list which already was begun after June 28, said Richard McKinnon, assistant director of residential education.

Men's housing usually is not a problem because many men cancel their contracts when they join a fraternity and can move right into the house but women don't have this option, he said.

Jayne Wade Anderson, coordinator of fraternities, sororities and cooperatives, said the Greek houses also will be filled to capacity this year. However, she said she would not speculate on whether the housing situation had anything to do with it.

McKinnon said the first 50 men on the waiting list recently have been given the option of temporary housing in view of more anticipated cancellations.

McKinnon said the increased number of freshmen admitted this year and the NU Board of Regent's requirement that the housing office provide space for all freshmen and sophomores less than 20 years old are part of the tight situation. He said much of the increase follows the national trend of the last two or three years to return to the residence halls.

McKinnon's statistics show a yearly increase in students applying for residence hall space, a growing number of them upperclassmen.

He said he has had one upperclassman in his office every day for the past three weeks begging to go into temporary housing.

McKinnon said the increasing cost of living, plus the inconvenience of cooking, washing dishes and transportation problems give the halls an edge over off-campus housing. He also said his office is doing a much better job programming, citing the food service and recreation areas.

"Residence halls are becoming more attractive, while off-campus housing is becoming less (attractive)," he said.

Preparations were made in advance to accommodate more of the overflow than last year, according to McKinnon. He said 44 new women's spaces were provided by making one floor of Abel Hall coeducational while eliminating all single rooms produced 130 new spaces.

He said the housing situation was predicted to be much tighter, but his office has received 170 more cancellations than anticipated.

Richard Armstrong, vice chancellor of student affairs, labeled the housing situation "a problem in a relative sense."

"It's not that the dorms will be any more crowded than last year, the problem is that so many students had to be turned away," he said.

McKinnon said women and foreign students make up most of those turned away, but added there was no way to estimate the number because many weren't even allowed to fill out an application.

McKinnon said these students have been referred to cooperatives, the International Student Office or to families and friends in Lincoln. He said he thinks there are enough spaces available off campus and most students will find one rather than switch schools or not attend at all.

There are no plans for new housing buildings now, McKinnon said, because experts say high schools will have much smaller graduating classes by the early 1980's and college enrollment will be way down. According to the experts, the problem of more temporary housing may be a temporary problem.

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