

Prisoner legal service project ends at law college

By Diane Johns

While UNL students were celebrating during semester break, a four-year-old brainchild of the UNL College of Law died.

The Nebraska Prisoners' Legal Services Project, one of the college's practical experience clinics, ended because of minimal instructional value and lack of funds, according to John Strong, law college dean.

The project, intended to give senior law students practical experience in handling legal problems of inmates, was funded originally by a Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) grant.

However, the grant ran out several years ago, Strong said, and the college had difficulty replacing funds. Since then, the project has operated on little or no budget of its own, he said.

"But our experience was typical of schools all over the nation," he said.

Strong said the college's faculty members and staff were looking for educational benefits that just were not there.

"The students received more counseling experience than legal experience," he said.

Although the range of clinical offerings

may have diminished, Strong said, he does not think the college was hurt by the project's loss.

"We're still very committed to the desirability of clinical experience for law students," he said. "More students probably will be admitted to the civil program."

Susan Jacobs, the Prisoners' Legal Services interim director, said the project provided aid to the prisoners in handling divorces, bankruptcies, custody suits and internal matters at the prison.

"It is important to know that most of the students' time was spent on domestic rather than internal matters," she said. "It's very difficult to keep a marriage together when someone's incarcerated."

Jacobs said one of the suits filed alleged that the prison did not follow procedures stipulated in a Nebraska statute governing prisoner discipline.

"The suit alleges there have been numerous incidents involving discipline since 1975, but I doubt the case will go to court for awhile," she said.

Jacobs said she will handle any suits left since the closing of the program.

The project was a "phenomenal learning experience" for senior students, Jacobs said.

Senior law student Richard Birch, 25, said it was valuable to his education to draw up petitions and take legal steps he expects to encounter after graduation.

Birch said, "theories learned in school are more abstract. The reward comes with

working on a more personal plane."

Birch said he is worried about the effect the project's death will have on the prisoners.

Strong said he expects that the \$30,000-a-year project will be replaced by a clinic which will allow students to work with the public defender's office on misdemeanor cases.

Union to advertise less

The Nebraska Union advertising campaign has run into a wall, according to a Union spokesman.

Gary Gilger, a union program adviser, said although this year's campaign budget has been reduced from last year's \$40,000 to less than \$8,000, the campaign is largely ineffective.

Gilger said he is uncertain whether the campaign should involve more advertising or whether the problem lies in what is offered.

This semester's union advertising will be in the Daily Nebraskan. The past campaign has included advertising on radio, football programs, mailers, coupons in freshman packets and union banners.

The cost of last semester's campaign has not been tallied yet, Gilger said, but he estimated it was less than \$8,000. Last year's \$40,000 campaign, done in conjunction with an advertising agency, was terminated in spring 1977.

Advertising run in the Daily Nebraskan

then was turned over to the UNL advertising class. Students were surveyed in September to determine what type of advertising they wanted, Gilger said. The class was given a \$2,000 budget to work with.

Although the advertising class will not work on this semester's campaign, almost the same programs will be used, according to Suzanne Brown, assistant to the vice chancellor of student affairs. Brown was union assistant director of programs.

Brown said she thought competition from other businesses was a problem.

"The Union is holding its own, but it's difficult to increase clientele," she said.

Don Glover, UNL assistant professor of advertising, said he thought part of the union advertising problem was competition from other businesses close to campus that offer alcoholic beverages.

"Given the present state of facilities, there is not much of an opportunity for the campaign to be greatly effective," Glover said.

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