

daily nebraskan

Policy tries to avoid repeat of campus disturbances

By Val Swinton

Student leaders, police and university officials are emphasizing cooperation in responding to disturbances such as the ones that happened before the Oklahoma-Nebraska football game last November. There is encouragement, but no one can guarantee that they won't happen again.

Representatives from the groups met Wednesday to discuss a policy that has been in effect for about a year and deals with campus disturbances.

According to David DeCoster, dean of students, the meeting was called to "re-affirm and approve the existing policy." The policy established who is in charge of and responsible for handling disturbances on or near the UNL campus.

University Police Director Gail Gade praised the policy, saying "I think it's workable. It shows a definite interest between our department, Lincoln police and the students."

Need for specificity

ASUN President Ken Marienau was not quite so enthusiastic about the policy, noting that it could have been more specific.

"The vagueness of the policy would allow harsh action to be taken such as last fall," Marienau said. He was referring to complaints of police brutality after 17 students were arrested the day before the Oklahoma game.

However, none of the students ever filed charges against the police and most of the formal charges filed against the students were dropped.

Although he criticized the policy, Marienau expressed confidence that such actions by the police would not happen again.

After evaluating the actions, he said, they "were found to be more harmful than good."

The policy states that both university and Lincoln police departments will utilize an "order maintenance" approach.

"We've agreed to try and contain the incident," explained DeCoster. "We're not saying order maintenance is just roping off the street and letting the thing go. If there is a crime being committed, those folks will probably be confronted and apprehended."

Avoid confrontations

DeCoster said policy and university officials hope to avoid confrontations between police and those involved in the disturbance.

The policy also stresses the involvement of student leaders, stating that they, along with all institutional personnel, "are expected to appear on the scene of the disturbance to assist with supervision and early dispersal of participants."

However, both Gade and Marienau said student leaders will not be expected to stop the violence.

"To say that they are going in and quell the disturbance is asking too much," Gade said. Gatherings such as bonfires normally are known a few hours in advance, and it would be the job of the student leaders to circulate and discourage any unlawful activities, he added.

Marienau agreed, "The role of student leaders is to sort of keep things in line, but it's pretty limited as to what we can do."

He added that there were officers from the fraternities involved in the November disturbances "asking people to stay cool and cooperate."

Communication lines

The policy establishes a line of communication for informing officials that a disturbance is taking place, indicating that all such reports should be directed to the UNL police, who will then inform Lincoln police. They will also decide whether campus administrators should be immediately told.

Gade emphasized that his department will not assume full control of the situation. "It's a matter of the two departments working together," he said. "If it happens after six o'clock at night, we'll be lucky if we can furnish three officers."

Gade said if a disturbance should occur in front of the fraternities and sororities on

16th street, it's actually within the jurisdiction of the Lincoln police.

"So consequently, we're really assisting them because it's a city street," he said.

Decision making

DeCoster also cited the advantages of having more than one department assist in decision-making when handling disturbances.

"I would not want major decisions made independently," he said.

DeCoster said the fall incidents helped create the need for last Wednesday's meeting.

"Our concern for those kinds of things was intensified by the fall get-together," he

said. "Those kinds of things are exactly what we were talking about." He said there were a lot of hard feelings following the incident and the meeting was held to "shore up relations."

"The important thing is that not only student leaders, but students, knew our concerns over those types of things. We don't want to appear not to be fun-loving and understanding, but our concern was over personal injury and property damage."

No disciplinary action

No disciplinary action was taken by university officials against the students arrested during the disturbance.

DeCoster said "I reviewed all the arrest

statements and knew of the final determination of the court cases," he said, adding that because the charges against most of the students were dropped no disciplinary action was taken.

DeCoster said, however, that actions involving illegal acts by students during disturbances will not be tolerated by university officials.

This attitude could be bad news for some future university students if Marienau's prediction comes true.

"I'm sure everyone was affected differently," he said. "But I don't think the actions by police (last November) will prevent this sort of thing from happening again."



Photo by Mark Billingsley

Yesterday's warm temperatures were perfect for convertible sports car drivers - especially for those who had to accommodate large and hairy passengers.

RHA, ASUN elections to share polls

By Betsie Ammons
Associate news editor

In an attempt to promote interest in both elections, this year's Residence Hall Association balloting will be held in conjunction with the ASUN election Wednesday, according to RHA President Bill Skoneki.

Three candidates will vie for the RHA presidency, two representing parties and one independent candidate. Jay Curtiss from Sidney is running with the FIRE party (First in Residential Excellence) and Harlan Milder of Omaha is the OSL party (Organization for Student Life) candidate. Omaha Jerrie Muir is running independently.

Skoneki said RHA polling places will be located at all residence halls and the Nebraska East Union and will be open during the lunch and dinner hours.

In Abel-Sandoz and Harper-Schramm-Smith, the balloting will be done with the ASUN elections, but will be independent in the other complexes.

Validine required

A Validine card is required to vote in RHA elections, Skoneki said, but persons who wish to vote for ASUN candidates also must have a UNL student identification card.

Although Skoneki said he thinks this will promote interest in both elections, he added that it may deter people from voting for RHA because the ASUN booths are "more imposing."

Seventeen percent of those who live in residence halls voted in last year's election, he said.

As in past years, campaign issues seemed to center around communication between students and the housing office.

Curtiss, a junior who lives in Neihardt Residence Center, said he thinks this year's issues are those that are "always there."

Curtiss encourages student input into housing rates, and said a rate study will be priority if she is elected.

Election issues

This year, he said, rate study results were released by the UNL Office of Housing right before Christmas break. Curtiss said this did not give many students the opportunity to review them and that he would work to get results released earlier in the school year.

Other issues Curtiss said he would address are the housing search and seizure and right to privacy policy, residence hall food services, improvement and increasing RHA validity.

But the UNL sophomore said his central purpose would be assuring that communi-

cation is present between the student and the housing officials.

"That is 99 percent of the battle," he said.

Curtiss said he has served as the elected Neihardt RHA representative to RHA and helped revise the solicitation policy in the residence halls. He said he also has worked on the residence hall information booklet, "The Good Life" and participated in the RHA protest of UNL stadium expansion.

Major concerns

Other FIRE candidates include Karen Schrader, a Smith resident running for vice president, Nancy Kenyon, a Neihardt resident running for secretary, and Harper resident Glen Thomas, running for treasurer.

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