

NU no-alcohol rule to be studied by committee

By Patty Pryor

While some residence hall directors and student assistants favor a change in NU's no-alcohol policy, at least one UNL administrator is predicting the continuation of a dry campus.

Richard Armstrong, vice chancellor for student affairs, said, "The living units (on campus) are not an appropriate place for alcohol to be present."

If alcohol is allowed in residence halls, he said, the drinking would become more obvious, and those students who don't drink might be offended or uncomfortable.

The proximity of the downtown area, where a number of bars are located, should lessen the need for allowing alcohol on campus, he added.

The official condoning of the presence of alcohol would lead to probable abuse, he said, especially among minors.

"There would be real difficulty in enforcing (the legal drinking age)," he said. "It would become an extra step" for student assistants and residence directors.

Armstrong said he thinks the basis for the regents' policy was the feeling that allowing students to drink is not consistent with the purpose of a university.

Regents opposed

"The Board of Regents is very adamant about this," he said. "I don't know of any item that's more sensitive to them."

Even though NU is one of only a few universities in the Big Eight with a no-alcohol policy, Armstrong said that is almost beside the point when one is dealing with the regents' personal feelings.

Still, the policy's effectiveness is questionable by some. Mike Connery, Harper Hall residence director, said 20 percent of the students in that hall were written up for alcohol possession during the first semester.

"With reasonable certainty, you can say 80 percent (of the residents) drink in the dorms," he said. "A lot of it is done quietly."

Connery said he sees the possibility of serious drinking problems developing among students.

"A good number get caught up in it and become obsessed with it," he said. "A lot of freshmen adopt an alcohol mentality, and drinking becomes a real mindless thing. They're not even thinking about it."

Connery said he believed the no-alcohol policy plays a role in forming this attitude and adds to the problem.

"There's probably a lot of people who drink because they're not allowed to," he said.

"It makes it much more exciting to have to sneak a few cans in under your jacket. The fact that you might get caught adds to the excitement," he said.

Connery said abolishing the policy probably would improve the situation, and couldn't make it any worse.

Problems not foreseen

From previous experience, he said allowing alcohol in residence halls really doesn't present any problems.

"If people are allowed to drink, they're not going to drink as much," he said.

"I'd rather take my chances with letting it allowed. We should deal more responsibly with students, rather than playing cops and robbers with them all the time."

"If you treat someone as a mature individual, they'll respond as a mature individual," he said.

Jim Travis, residence director in Abel Hall, said he has not encountered any serious problem with violators of the current policy.

The alcohol is poured out, he said, and a report is sent to the residence director about the incident. For first offenses, the director sends a letter to the parties involved, and sometimes has a conference to discuss the violation.

While Travis has not had much difficulty in dealing with students who are caught, he said he thinks there is "pretty widespread violation of the policy."

"We're not out looking for anybody," he said. "But when it's so well-known how much violation of the policy there is, just how effective is it?"

On football Saturday's, people come in and get "disgustingly drunk" on university property, especially in parking lots near Harper Hall, Travis said.

Both Travis and Connery agreed that housing staffs make a real effort to enforce consistently the policy, but when the police do not enforce it outside the residence halls, Connery said, it creates a tremendous amount of disrespect for the law among students.

"A lot of credibility is lost," he said, adding this feeling among students reaches into other areas as a result.

"Students have no trust in the state, in the police, or in the school," he said. "I've never seen students who have as much distrust as here."

Football Saturday problems

Armstrong said that after the problem on football Saturdays was brought to his attention, notices were printed reminding campus visitors of the state law. The notices were distributed in parking lots

west of Harper Hall and outside University Police Headquarters.

"It's not accurate to say the police were doing nothing," he added.

Patrolling police cars intercepted the tailgate parties, he said, and asked them to stop. Citations were given only when a confrontation resulted, he said.

A committee of students and staff members is studying the possibility of changing NU's no-alcohol policy.

Bill Flack, a senior physics major who heads the committee, said the group currently is preparing a survey to determine patterns of alcohol use and abuse on campus, but he added that any plans at this stage are only tentative.

"We intend to use the survey as evidence of the ineffectiveness of the cur-

rent policy," he said. "It (the present policy) does nothing to foster responsible drinking."

The Lincoln Council on Alcoholism and Drugs provided nine of the survey questions, Flack said, which deal with the effects of drinking habits in areas like studies, friends and family relationships.

The survey also will inquire about the frequency and amount of drinking by students and the number of minors involved.

The committee is seeking advice from the Sociology Department, he said, to help ensure that results are as accurate as possible. Some changes might be made in the survey if any recommendations are made by the department.

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Photo by Jon Natvig

A Coliseum usher and University police officers Henry Gourdin and Tim Tolle try in vain to get the name of this lost girl at the Missouri-Nebraska basketball game Saturday. The incident ended happily when her mother rescued her back to the stands for the remainder of the game.

State legislators propose salary increase plans

By Patti Gallagher

State senators are once again talking about pay increase for themselves.

The monthly salary for a legislator is \$400. Consider the month of February to determine an hourly wage: \$400 divided by 160 hours (4 weeks at 40 hours each) comes to \$2.50 per hour.

That \$2.50 is further reduced, according to at least two state senators, when you consider most in-session weeks far exceed 40 hours. The estimate of Sen. Vard Johnson of Omaha puts the legislative salary at about 15 cents per hour.

That, Johnson said, can lead to a souvenier legislature.

"If only persons who have done fairly well economically" can afford to run for a seat, "the composition of the legislature doesn't reflect the make-up of the state."

Thus: LB 138, Johnson's bill proposes a constitutional amendment be brought before the voters in the 1982 elections to raise the legislative salary to not more than one-third of the governor's.

If the bill were in effect today, state senators would be paid \$13,333, a third

of Gov. Charles Thone's \$40,000 annual salary.

Johnson said the bill will be passed by the legislature because most senators support a salary increase.

Voter approval needed

The trouble, he said, is getting voter approval. Because the current \$400 salary is part of the Nebraska constitution, it can only be changed by a majority vote in the next election. That is where it has been defeated in the past.

In addition to tilting the composition of the Legislature to more wealthy persons, Johnson said, the salary contributes to the tremendous turnover of senators.

And although the three-year member says he enjoys his position, because of the "gross unfairness in asking state legislators to give a significant amount of their time . . . and still receive \$400 a month," the day may come when he will say, "The heck with this business," and turn to something more financially lucrative.

LB416, sponsored by Sen. Sam Cullan of Hemingford, also proposes a salary increase. Cullan's bill asks for a doubling of the wage, to \$800 per month.

Cullan said he used the Consumer Price Index in preparing his bill.

Salary figure compromise

"If legislative salaries kept up with the Consumer Price Index, we would be making in excess of \$1,000 per month," Cullan said. The \$800 figure was a compromise, he said.

Also included in Cullan's bill is a proposal to restrict bill introduction in the 60-day session to three per senator. There is currently no limit in either the short session or the 90-day session.

LB416 would also increase the membership of the legislature from 50 to 60.

All three parts of LB416 would require voter approval, according to Cullan, because all are currently part of the state constitution.

Sen. Bernice Labeledz is sponsoring a third bill to change the legislative salary. LB531 would amend the constitution to read that the salary not exceed the amount provided by law.

This would allow senators to set their own salaries and to be open to debate during each session.

If passed, Labeledz's amendment would go before the voters in the 1982 general elections.

A fourth bill to change the salary is sponsored by the Constitution Revision and Recreation Committee, LB474 provides that a seven-member Legislative Compensation Commission make salary recommendations at the beginning of each legislative session.

The recommendation could not exceed the median family income in Nebraska under the bill and would be subject to approval by the legislature.

If the recommended salary adjustment were accepted, it would become effective in the following session.

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