

Housing office seeks triple-room policy options

By Ken Merlin

University Housing Director Doug Zatechka is searching for a workable triple-room policy in the UNL residence halls.

Zatechka came from the University of Michigan in 1978 "where they were tripling 6,000 students," he said. At the time, UNL residence halls were just beginning to overflow.

Tripling is assigning three students to a double room temporarily or converting a double room to a permanent triple.

"We'd reached the point where the 'inn' was full," he said. Temporary beds were set up in the TV lounges and Abel basement "bunkroom."

Eighty-two women signed the first triple contracts in the fall of 1978. In the fall of 1979, 285 students, including 96 men, lived in temporary beds, many in TV lounges without windows, desks or closets.

"That's a hell of a way to introduce anybody to their first college experience," Zatechka said. "and I won't do it any more."

Housing has the responsibility to make the best of a bad situation, he said. Because UNL is a state institution, parents are right to expect the university will have a place for students to stay the first year.

"We're going to have to over-assign because it's consistent with the concept of university service."

Last fall the housing office converted the "penthouses" of Harper-Schramm-Smith and Abel-Sandoz complexes, large end rooms formerly reserved for upperclass students, into 282 triples, half of which are reserved temporarily for incoming freshmen.

Zatechka says he sympathizes with the upperclass students returning to the halls who argue, "We stayed with you two years for a chance to move into an end room and now you turn it into a triple."

"It was the single biggest argument when I was pushing triples," he said. "I appreciate what they're saying."

Returning students last fall had the option of choosing one of the six end rooms on each floor converted to triples and pay a lower housing fee if they could find a third roommate. Otherwise, the rooms were assigned to three freshmen or sophomores, according to Dick McKinnon, assistant director of residential housing.

Smith Hall was allowed to experiment with a third option suggested by Mickie Fraizer-Koontz, residence director of the all-female hall, he said.

Fraizer-Koontz found former roommates who were willing to triple with a freshman temporarily to get an end room assignment. A temporary triple converts to a double when the freshman is reassigned.

Breaking down temporary triples can be "a very painful, sometimes tearful process for some of these folks," she said.

This option is more fair to returning students and did not result in the two-against-one situation most feared, she said.

None of the seven triples with upper class-freshman roommates required counseling, she said.

"At their very, very best, triples are very difficult living arrangements. We are forced by (budget) constraints to assign students to triples. It takes a staff very well equipped to cope with them," Fraizer-Koontz said.

"I don't know what the policy will be for assignments and breakdowns," Zatechka said.

Some decision will be made before *The Good Life* (residence hall publication) goes to print next month, he said.

The booklet contains a schedule for housing fees including triples which will increase 9 percent if approved by the NU Board of Regents Feb. 21.

This 9 percent is based on 70 percent of the triples reverting (breaking down) to doubles by the second semester.

The options given to returning students will depend on what strategy the housing staff selects to achieve the breakdown goal.

Zatechka said that while he hasn't reached closure on the triple policy, he "anticipates that there will be an expansion of the Smith experiment."



Photo by Mark Billingsley

The boardwalks of New Jersey came alive in Ames, Iowa when Bruce Springsteen brought his music to town. For a review of the concert, see page 6.



Photo by Jon Natvig

We don't need three groundhogs to tell us we'll be under winter's shadow for another six weeks. Snowy sidewalks and cold temperatures are sign enough.

ASUN senator opposes laboratory fee proposal

By Mary Louise Knapp

A recent proposal to require students to pay laboratory fees is being opposed by ASUN until more information is made available, an ASUN senator said.

A Task Force on Laboratory Fees developed the proposal at the request of the NU Board of Regents.

Dan Wedekind, first vice-presidential candidate of the SURE (Students United for Responsible Education) party, said that the proposal left many vital questions unanswered and did not give students an opportunity to investigate it.

Students need to be involved in the implementation of lab fees, because they will bear the cost, he said.

In the proposal, the task force defined a laboratory as "an organized exposure to the physical tools and activities of a discipline and direct experience with the use of those tools," and a laboratory as "a charge made to students to underwrite, in part, the consumable supplies and services."

The Task Force also presented three models for enforcing lab fees.

Under the first model, one standard laboratory fee would be assessed to all under-

graduate students, regardless of whether they were taking lab classes.

The second model would charge one standard fee to any student taking one or more laboratory classes in a given semester.

Under the third model, specific fees would be established on the basis of cost of materials used and the costs of providing the laboratory. The charge would be assessed to students enrolled in each specific lab course.

The Task Force recommended that the third plan be used, and that the responsibility for setting fees be delegated to the chancellors on each campus.

The proposal recommends that lab fees be assessed at the time of registration.

Wedekind said that the proposal did not fully explain what could be defined as "consumable supplies and services."

He said other unanswered questions include how cost-effective the lab fees are under the various models, what provisions will be made to insure that various departments use similar methods of setting lab fees, what provisions will be made to account for the proper use of lab fees, and what financial effect lab fees will have on students.