

RHA candidate upset by apathy futile efforts

By Patty Pryor

Hoping to generate student interest in residence hall government by producing visible and pronounced changes, senior Bill Flack declared his candidacy for Residence Hall president Friday.

According to its platform, Flack's "X-Party" presents a "realistic program for producing genuine improvements in residence hall conditions and for reversing the trend toward student apathy."

Students don't get involved with RHA because they see the organization efforts as futile, said Flack, a physics major who lives in Harper Hall.

RHA's lack of visible accomplishments cuts down student interest and support, he said, which further hampers RHA efforts.

However, Flack said RHA's efforts are too often "limited excessively to polite requests" of administrators. The requests simply don't work, he said.

Even when RHA asks for more than "token improvements," according to the X-party platform, it invariably fails to take a strong stand. Instead, RHA shows an "unwholesome willingness to compromise away student rights and desires."

Flack said he realizes this willingness to compromise fosters a good working relationship between RHA and administrators, but that it is the only positive result, he said. It doesn't benefit students at all, he said.

The attitude allows the NU Board of Regents and administrators to realize they can reject RHA demands

because they will face little student opposition, the platform states.

Further tactics

Flack said he hopes to change this situation by implementing other tactics after the usual course of action fail to bring results.

These tactics include bringing lawsuits against the university and encouraging massive, repeated disobedience of objectionable policies, he said.

Flack said such measures will be taken only after rational persuasion has failed.

"Civil disobedience is not something we pull every time the regents turn us down," Flack said.

"Persistence alone is a tactic," he continued. "If we badger the regents every month, we'll annoy them enough that they'll take action either way, at least."

Flack said he would like to restructure the committee system within RHA.

Now, he said, a student who has a complaint or an idea on an issue, such as visitation or alcohol policies, must take the idea to his or her hall government. From there, the idea is taken to RHA.

Students out

The student is left out of the process.

Flack said he would like to form committees of one or two RHA members to work with interested hall residents on various topics.

Ideally, he said, this would give students a chance to learn about political processes from the RHA members on the committee and to add their own ideas and suggestions.

With this plan, Flack is including hall representatives on his ticket, rather than waiting to appoint them.

Two candidates from Harper Hall and one each from Abel and Neihardt Halls are running with the X-Party. But Flack is looking for candidates for the other openings.

Steve Rowe, a junior civil engineering major from Harper Hall is the X-Party's vice presidential candidate. The secretary and treasurer positions still are open, Flack said.

The problem with RHA, Flack said, is a combination of "student apathy and regental and administrative condescension."

Concerns with the alcohol and visitation policies are only "superficial manifestations of the problem," he said.

"The regents don't care about RHA, and students don't care about RHA. I think I could do the most to change that."

RHA to contribute to ASUN debate

At their last meeting before election of new members, the Residence Hall Association voted to contribute \$100 toward sponsoring an ASUN presidential candidates debate.

The debate will be Thursday at 7 p.m. in the Raymond television lounge at Neihardt Residence Center. Neihardt residents are co-sponsoring the event. Representatives from all eight parties will be participating.

RHA also voted to change refrigeration rental companies in the residence halls next year. A new contract was awarded to Campus Equipment Co. RHA had been doing business with Campus Products Industries for the past three years.

Members also approved RHA Judicial Board bylaws. After discussion concerning the presence of a residence director on the board and whether that director should have a vote, RHA decided to retain the residence director as a voting board member.

The association gave its support to research on construction of a new UNL recreational center, and is drafting a letter expressing that support to Richard Armstrong, vice chancellor for student affairs.

It was also announced at the meeting that floor health aides are needed for next semester in the residence halls. Anyone interested in applying should see their own health aide or contact the housing office. Applications are available until March 13.

RHA and ASUN elections will be held March 4, and the deadline for anyone filing as a candidate, an executive or a representative position in RHA is March 1. Filing forms are available from the RHA office in Neihardt Residence Center.



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