



photo by Bill Graf

The Cascade Fountain, 21st St. and Capitol Parkway, was donated to Lincoln by the retired Teachers Association. Although the fountain's cool water was tempting on this hot day, Julie Forch, 22, of Lincoln did not know wading was prohibited — the water is not chemically treated.

Students should apply for loans before the rules change, Aripoli

BY LORI MERRYMAN

Students applying for Guaranteed Student loans (GSL) and National Direct Student Loans (NDSL) may have to meet new government requirements — but until Congress establishes its new rules, UN-L's financial aids department is playing by the old ones, said Don Aripoli, director of financial aids.

Students needing a GSL for the fall semester should apply as soon as possible to avoid any changes in eligibility or interest rates to be decided by Congress this summer.

Four thousand UN-L students who applied for GSL's between May 1 and June 30 should receive their loans under current rules, which require the student to be enrolled at UN-L for at least six hours or to be accepted for enrollment and in good standing, Aripoli said. Students pay nine percent interest on GSL's starting six months after finishing school.

The students applying late, after June 30, will risk falling under new guidelines, he said, as both the House and Senate try to reach agreements on a new GSL plan.

Although still on the drawing board, the House is proposing all students be re-

quired to pass a financial need test to be eligible to for a GSL. The House is also proposing a three and a half to five percent initial fee for loans. These guidelines would be effective Oct. 1. The Senate has proposed student eligibility be limited to those students with a family income of \$25,000 per year or less. The Senate plan would also be effective Oct. 1. Aripoli said he hopes applications received by June 30 will be processed and returned to students by July 20. Students would then have two months to get the payment from their banks before the new provisions — a process which could take three to 10 weeks depending on the bank, he said.

For students applying in July, the applications could take over five weeks to process. It could easily be past Oct. 1 before students receive money from their bank, which could mean meeting the new guidelines, Aripoli said. Students' chances on getting a loan under current guidelines decrease every day they wait to apply, he said. Applications turned in after June 30 will be processed chronologically, after the May 1 to June 30 applications are finished.

While Congress decides a new way to

Armatys: program gives alternative to prisons

BY LORI MERRYMAN

The judge had a unique decision to make, a decision judges make in only a handful of United States cities — whether to sentence the man before him, convicted of manslaughter, to 20 years in prison or to release him into a new alternative sentencing program.

The judge and the felon cited above are fictitious, but judges in several cities are now given this same decision.

A prison alternative program started for felons five years ago in Washington D.C. is the only one of its kind — a program to keep felons out of prisons, said Walt Armatys, a UN-L senior who interned for the National Center on Institutions and Alternatives last spring.

The program not only puts convicted felons into communities instead of prisons, but criminologists at the center believe it is the only program in the United States with potential in cutting crime and recidivism rates (number of repeat offenders), Armatys said.

Co-founder of the center, Dr. Jerome Miller, a liberal criminologist responsible for closing all the Massachusetts reform schools in 1972, believes prison and jails only "warehouse criminals," creating an angry, dejected and bitter person who leaves prison as a worse threat to communities than when he entered, Armatys said.

While interning at the center in Washington D.C., Armatys, a 21-year-old criminal justice major from Nebraska City, helped develop Client-Specific Plans for felons — the whole thrust of the institute's alternative program.

Miller has two theories, Armatys said, which are the basis for the Client-Specific Plans: 20-30 percent of people in prisons need to be there for public safety, but the other 70-80 percent constitute needless incarceration; secondly, victimless crime laws result in too many people unnecessarily "warehoused" in prisons.

Client-Specific Plans keep the felon out of prison, yet he pays his debt to society and isn't "warehoused," Armatys said.

Most of his debt is paid through community service work — some cases in-

clude 1,500 to 2,000 hours of community service work per year for three to five years.

The national center believes 1,500 to 2,000 hours per year of community service work is a better way for both society and the felon in paying his debt, Armatys said.

When making Client-Specific Plans, center consultants try to reinforce strengths or interests of the felons, Armatys said. An athletic felon might do community service work helping kids at a YMCA or a musician might teach poor children free guitar lessons, he said.

By releasing felons on Client-Specific Plans, the government also saves \$10,000 to \$12,000 per year in prison costs, he said. Along with eliminating the cost of imprisonment for felons on the plan, Armatys said, the national center, a non-profit organization, is alleviating overcrowded prisons.

Clients are charged on a sliding financial scale. Wealthier clients might pay as much as \$2,500 for a Client-Specific Plan where an indigent client would get services free.

The plans, usually about 26 pages, detail nearly all of the felon's activities. Before presenting the plan to the judge, consultants make provisions for psychological treatment (both in and out-patient); employment or assurance someone is helping them find employment; community service work; a place to live, and other details.

To qualify for a Client-Specific-Plan the person must be convicted of a felony, such as embezzlement, murder or armed robbery. Armatys said the 20 percent Miller refers to as needing to be in prison to protect society are not given Client-Specific Plans.

Once the defendant is convicted, a defense attorney contacts the center. If the center accepts the felon's case then a center consultant presents an alternative sentencing plan to the judge.

To be successful, consultants must be careful of not offending judges when suggesting alternative plans, Armatys said. Judges still like to feel they're in control he said.

As reassurance a felon won't commit another crime once released, Armatys said, the last lines of each plan say that should the felon not comply with ALL components of this plan, the alternative sentence is revoked and the original sentence is issued. As an additional safeguard, when plans are accepted, judges almost always choose a sentence considerably longer. For example, Armatys said, if a judge normally sentences 10 years for armed robbery, and he accepted an alternative plan then he might say "if you mess up you will be imprisoned for 20 years."

As a check on the felons, employers, family and therapists are asked to send a bi-weekly or monthly report to the judge.

Client Specific Plans are surprisingly accepted in 70 percent of the cases presented, Armatys said. Since 1976 about 500 felons have been released on Client-Specific-Plans, Armatys said. Statistics from the national center show of those 500 about two to four percent have broken the provisions and ended up in prison anyway.

One judge in Washington D.C. is so sold on the program, he is referring four to five cases a week as potential alternative plan cases, he said.

The national center is trying to implement the program in other areas of the country, including Lincoln. Centers now exist in South Carolina, Maryland, Ohio, and New York.

Armatys said after working with Miller and center consultants for a semester he also feels Client-Specific Plans are the best way to cut crime and recidivism rates.

"We're putting the pieces together," he said but the puzzle isn't finished yet."