

Hard work and benefits await new S.A. s

By Dionne Searcey
Staff Reporter

Interested in joining the ranks of those students who have the ability to make UNL's residence halls feel like home, sweet home?

Candidate screening has begun for student assistants in the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's residence halls.

Lyn Jakobsen, assistant director of housing for residential education, said any student, sophomore or older, with a 2.5 grade point average can apply for the student assistant program.

Jakobsen said the process of becoming an S.A. is detailed, and students proceed through a series of interviews including standardized questions about subjects such as disciplinary actions.

Open positions in each dorm are determined, she said, and the resident directors select the ap-

proved applicants in whom they are interested.

Each candidate's personality should match the personality of the residence hall that the potential S.A. will be serving, Jakobsen said.

"You need a different person in Selleck than in Abel," Jakobsen explained.

Students not chosen for positions are placed on "alternate status" in the event selected students decide to turn down the offer over the summer, she said.

S.A. s are expected to move into the residence halls in mid-August.

Jakobsen said she prefers a student to stay in a position for at least two years because this allows continuity on their floor, but students can remain an S.A. until they graduate.

Once the S.A. s are settled in, they are encouraged to follow and

emphasize the four sections of the UNL Residential Education Mission Statement, she said.

The document states that residential officials should encourage students to develop a sense of belonging, acquire knowledge, choose attitudes and assume responsibility.

Jakobsen said the students should strive to follow the mission statement in all aspects of their career as a student assistant.

The S.A. should help the residents set up a floor government and to make community agreements on quiet hours, the noise level in the hall and cleaning duties.

Besides monitoring students' emotional well-being, S.A. s also handle a variety of physical duties — checking for vandalism, unlocking room doors and handling other emergencies as they arise, she said.

S.A. s also handle alcohol and visitation violations and encourage activities in intramural sports.

And while the S.A. s keep tabs on students from their floor, there's always someone checking up on the student assistants.

Each S.A. must meet one-on-one with a residence hall director every other week. They also must attend a staff meeting weekly.

In the meetings, the S.A. s "discuss the state of the floor," she said. The residence hall director will ask the S.A. s how well they know students on their floor.

Student assistants are responsible for the individual needs of each resident of their hall.

"They have people coming to them for advice (on topics) from how to read a syllabus to extreme depression," Jakobsen said. "They're exposed to every aspect of a student's life."

S.A. s must get beyond the superficial level with each resident, she said, and develop a sense of trust.

Student assistants also must attend a three-credit course dealing with the developmental theory of student growth processes.

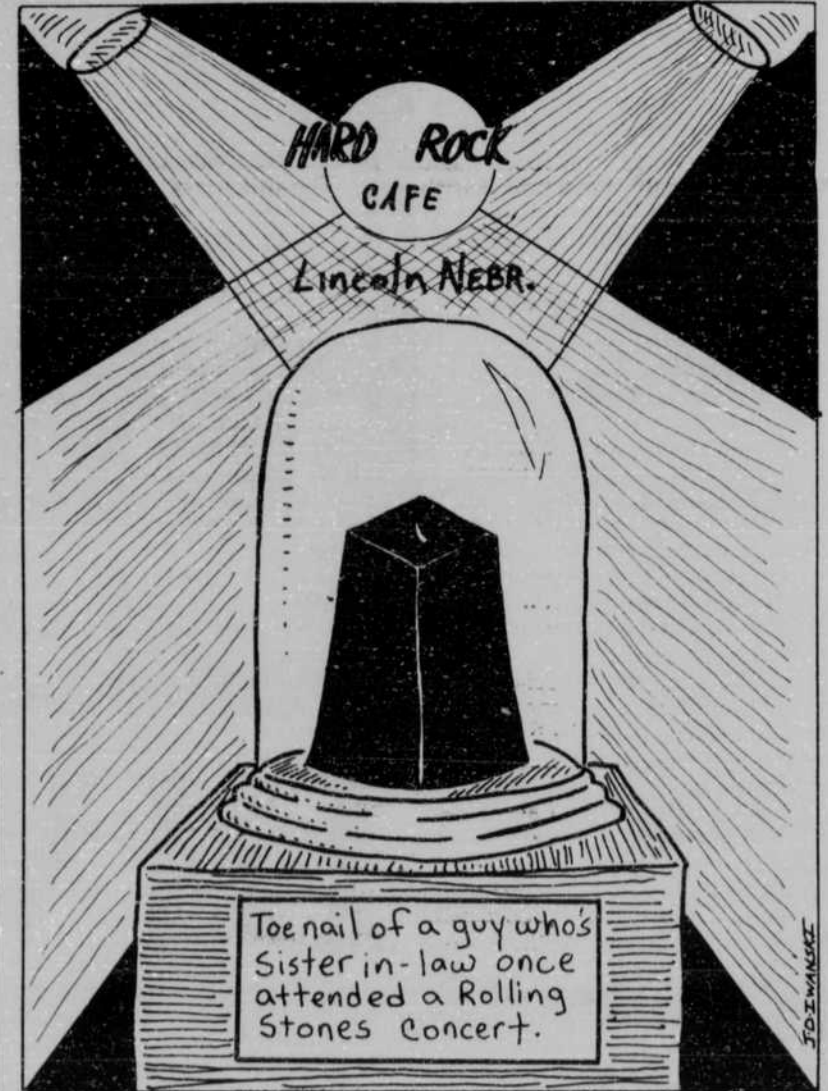
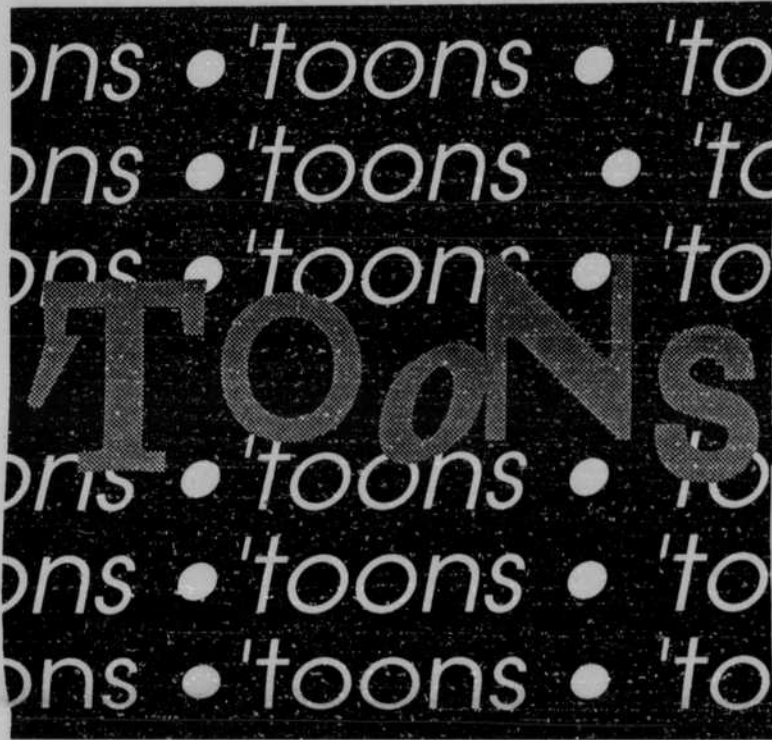
The class discusses special problem areas ranging from incest victims, substance abuse and homophobia to confrontation and listening skills.

Each student assistant also is responsible for conducting at least three programs a semester on their floor.

Jakobsen said S.A. s can hold discussion topics on subjects like stress management or call in experts to speak on more complicated subjects such as AIDS.

Overall, life as an S.A. isn't easy,

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