

# Students face increased freedom, responsibilities

■ Charles Greene, UNL's director of judicial affairs, adheres to rules of strict enforcement.

By TOM FOSTER  
Staff Reporter

Every year, many new students come to college with visions in their heads of alcohol-soaked parties, dancing and scantily clad young men and women living life like an MTV beach episode.

But every year, many new students learn that this image is not quite right.

At UNL, a document called "Student Rights and Responsibilities" helps ensure the college experience does not get lost in a drunken, smoky haze. Several university offices, including UNL Police, Residence Hall Association and Student Judicial Affairs, enforce the rules.

Charles Greene, director of judicial affairs, said the biggest shock new students face is the onslaught of responsibility that comes from being a "full-fledged adult."

"It's called facing the mirror," he said. "For everything you do, responsibility comes from facing the mirror. If you didn't pay your bills, you are responsible; if you missed class, you are responsible; if you drink alcohol on campus, you are responsible."

The list goes on. Greene, who came to UNL in July 1997 after 20 years in the U.S. Army, said new students could be sure the rules would be enforced.

"It's nothing personal," he said, "but I follow the code strictly."

In addition to university rules, students are responsible for city, state and federal laws, UNL Police Sgt. Mylo Bushing said. Those laws are enforced by 25 commissioned officers and 12 civilian community service officers.

Because the commissioned officers are state deputy sheriffs, their jurisdiction actually reaches beyond campus, he said.

"If we see something, we'll stop and give a ticket," he said, "even if it's off campus."

The most common problem, Bushing said, is theft. Many students do not lock their rooms or cars, and thieves take advantage of the situation.

Greene said the most common violations he deals with involve alcohol — "the demon syrup," in his words — and marijuana. Both substances are not allowed on campus, so most incidents result in disciplinary action.

Of course there are some exceptions, he said, and common sense takes over where necessary.

Greene offered an example from spring 1998. A student

entered a dormitory room while a student assistant walked by. The SA caught a glimpse of other people in the room drinking, summoned the residence director and cited everybody for alcohol violations.

Greene dropped the charges on the student who had just entered.

Other students are not so lucky, however.

There are certain indicators that alert the authorities of illegal

behavior. Loud music usually means alcohol use, Greene said. And the pungent smell of incense usually indicates marijuana use.

Bushing agreed, saying students are not fooling anybody when they try to mask their activities. Placing towels under doors, burning incense, blowing fans out the window and other tricks, are merely evidence of marijuana use, he said.

Of course, taking no precau-

tions also leads to trouble.

"Sometimes (students) open the door, and we just see a bong there on the table," Bushing said.

In those cases, officers ask to search the room. Students have the right to deny the search, but officers can then seal the room and return with a warrant.

Any student arrested in such a case is then subject to university discipline as well as an appearance in county court.

Greene said the best advice for incoming students was to know the "Student Rights and Responsibilities." Every new student gets a copy, he said, but only about 5 percent bother to read it.

Most students needn't worry too much, though. Greene said UNL's policies go no further than those of the general society.

"We're trying to keep students in school," he said, "not kick them out."



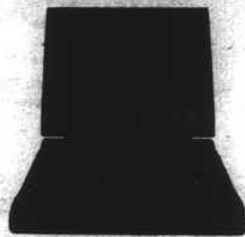
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