

# ASUN votes against assembly

■ The 25-member group would have represented students based on their places of residence.

BY IEVA AUGSTUMS  
Staff writer

An assembly intended to more widely represent students was shot down Wednesday by ASUN senators who think representing students should be their job.

The Association of Students of the University of Nebraska voted against legislation to create a 25-member assembly based on students' place of residence.

ASUN President Sara Russell said she was disappointed her legislation did not pass. But Russell said she is appreciative of the senate and its constructive ideas and discussion.

"I'm glad to see that people have minds of their own to kill a bill," Russell said. "It shows people really do care and have concerns over student representation."

Russell said she proposed the assembly as a way to equal representation in student government.

"Since I was a freshman equal representation and parking concerns have been the number one issue among students," Russell said.

The bill would have brought more representation to students, she said.

## ASUN

"There would be more eyes and ears of students," Russell said. "It would have benefited the whole student body."

Strong opposition of the bill came from senators' concerns over whether greek students would still dominate student government.

Senator Jeff Woodford said greek students do live in residence halls and off campus, as well in their fraternity and sorority houses.

"If you elect by place of residence, you still could get greek domination," Woodford said.

Russell nodded her head with hesitation and agreed.

"In theory," Russell said, "Yes, greek students could dominate the new assembly."

Marlene Beyke, ASUN director of development, said that when students are appointed to positions based on place of residence, ASUN goes by the university policy of using a student's university address.

"It's simpler this way," she said. "We cannot control if they are greek or not."

Kara Slaughter, academic committee chairwomen, said appointing and electing students based on their place of residence would bring only awareness to university concerns.

"Where you live is a better determinant of how you view university issues than what college you are from," Slaughter said. "We are trying to get at

the issues which affect how we live and how we learn."

Strong discussion arose over the senate's capability of representing its colleges and constituents. Russell said she is concerned senators are not talking to their respective college constituents about ASUN matters.

Senator Paul Schreier said senators need to ask themselves whether they are doing their elected jobs correctly if they think they need an additional assembly.

"Passing this would be a change in student government policy," Schreier said. "Yes, it's another organization for student interaction and representation. But isn't that ASUN's job?"

Senator Andy Schuerman disagreed.

"We would be doing our job if we pass this," Schuerman said. "This is a very tangible step to show those alienated students we are actually working for them."

The bill died 18-10 with two senators absent.

Russell said she still plans to look into writing a constitutional amendment to create an assembly. It would be responsible for researching and bringing forth assembly bills to ASUN.

Beyke said if a constitutional amendment is proposed and passed it would go on the March ASUN election ballot. If the student body passes the amendment, students would be appointed to the assembly and elected to assembly positions the following election.

"I'll give it a try," Russell said. "If the senate doesn't like it, at least I tried."

# Alumni face end of defunct chapter

## Traditionally Jewish house closed doors in 1990

BY JOSH FUNK  
Senior staff writer

Fifty years after the Sigma Alpha Mu Fraternity house was built, UNL announced plans to demolish it, signaling the end of the chapter.

Since its founding in 1926, the Sigma Alpha Mu Fraternity played an important role on campus in housing Jewish students when no other fraternity would.

Then diminishing membership and an uncertain house identity prompted alumni to close the house in 1990.

After several unsuccessful attempts to revive the chapter in the 1990s, there are no immediate plans to at UNL.

"There are a lot of people with a lot of good memories," said State Auditor John Breslow, former fraternity president from the early 1970s.

"But time goes on and some things pass. (Sigma Alpha Mu) is one of them."

As part of its 12-year plan to shape City and East campuses, UNL announced Thursday it wants to tear down the houses of Sigma Alpha Mu Fraternity and Alpha Chi Omega Sorority, which occupy the southeast and southwest corners of 16<sup>th</sup> and Vine streets.

The houses would give way to Memorial Mall, a green space extending from 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> streets.

The Sigma Alpha Mu house has been empty since 1990, but Alpha Chi Omega, an active sorority, will have to be relocated to 16<sup>th</sup> and R streets where a new house is to be built.

When the Daily Nebraskan first contacted Sigma Alpha Mu alumni Wednesday, the alumni had not heard of the plans to demolish the house.

A common first reaction to the news among chapter alumni was that the university should buy the property before they plan to demolish it.

The property has been for sale for several years, but the university has not made an offer satisfactory to the alumni, SAM Foundation President Lee Polikov said.

The SAM Foundation is the alumni association that owns the house.

Polikov, Sarpy County Sheriff's Chief Deputy and former house president, said the university made an offer

“*Either Jewish kids joined our fraternity or they didn't join any fraternity.*”

LEE POLIKOV  
SAM Foundation president

on the house last year that was so low the foundation did not even respond.

"I have an obligation to the membership to maximize the property value," Polikov said. "If that means changing the zoning and putting in a doughnut shop, so be it."

University officials said they will try to negotiate a fair price for the house.

"We will try to work with them to acquire the house because it is in our plans," Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs James Griesen said.

But most SAM alumni feel that the sadness of the situation passed when they could not maintain the chapter.

Now they just want what is best for their property, Polikov said.

"(The university's) plan may be different from our plan," Polikov said.

The fraternity was founded in 1926 by a group of Jewish students who could not get into other fraternities.

For many years the house chose its members from a smaller group of students than no other house would accept.

SAM gave Jewish students a place to belong to on campus, Polikov said.

When Polikov rushed the fraternity in 1966 there were still two rush weeks at UNL, one for most students and then one just for Jewish students.

"Either Jewish kids joined our fraternity or they didn't join any fraternity," Polikov said.

Though the national organization made a change in the 1950s to include students of any faith, Polikov said it was not until the early 1980s that the UNL chapter accepted its first non-Jewish student.

In its early decades, the separate rush week and a stronger religious identity helped the SAM house identify potential members, Polikov said.

But when it was forced to compete for members in a formal rush week, the SAM house was ill-prepared and mem-

bership diminished, he said.

After its long Jewish tradition, the house was forced to find a new identity, which hurt membership, said Steven Sommer, chapter adviser from 1990 to 1996 and an associate management professor.

"The natural market was not there anymore," Sommer said, "and the house never came together."

As an alumnus of the Berkeley, Calif., SAM chapter, Sommer had always heard good things about the UNL chapter.

"Nebraska was always the crown jewel in the national organization," Sommer said. "It is sad to see it go."

After their final attempt to revive the chapter dissolved last year, alumni must face the realization that their house is no more.

For some that realization came when they removed their "wall of priors" that commemorated former fraternity presidents from the house two years ago, Polikov said.

"It's a break in history."

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