Improved dorm life sought Amy O'Neal

Staff Writer

Change comes to everything, and UNC politics had its share of changes this year. Among the switches was that of the Residence College Federation (RCF) to the Residence Hall Association (RHA).

"There were a number of problems with RCF the way it was," 1971-1973 RCF Chairman Steve Saunders said. "RCF had no real connection with those dorms outside residence colleges. With RHA's new constitution, we can present a united force in requests for undergraduate dorm improvements and policies."

RCF was formed five years ago in order to provide some unity for on-campus students. Coeducational dorms had come to UNC, as well as the idea of residence colleges, and some sort of organization was needed to pull the concepts together.

Under the leadership of Steve Saunders, the organization worked this year to have a voice in room rent increases, provide faster repair to dorms, revise the academic calendar to include a break between January and spring break and abolish the sophomore housing requirement.

Student opinion now has been included in the administration's opinion-gathering. Added staff in the Department of Residence Life has provided more time for study of services to dorms and some improvements. Some promise has been made for a few free days in February next year, and RHA will probably again propose abolishing sophomore housing. Kate Whittington, RCF assistant, continued to head the very successful Women's Escort Service to guard against female assault. The resident counseling teams that were established in dorms to help with student problems revamped some of their services to provide more effective help. To of the longest policies in the making were lounge-use and room painting. Lounge-use became an issue last year when problems arose with off-campus groups using dorm facilites. Concrete rules have now been established. Saunders' two year term will probably be remembered most for the colorful controversy over a room painting policy. After two delay-filled years, Dean of Student Affairs Donald Boulton smoothed over the controversies and students can now paint their dorm rooms.

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With RHA approved by the student body in the February elections, Janet Stephens succeeded Saunders with the title RHA Chairperson.

Stephens ran on a platform of full-scale dorm visitation and establishment of a new living-learning center, plus dorm courses where desired elsewhere on campus. RHA played a part in the formation of the Henderson Residence College living-learning center for next year.

Attempts are continuing to provide student input into budget allocations. A request by Stephens to set up a decision-making board of directors to sit with Boulton in policy making was denied on April 19.

Stephens plans a year of changes, changes that the students want. With the appointment of a new director of Residence Life, the way will hopefully be cleared for more open communication between students and administration.

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