

Interview with Dr. Norman Hefke interviewed by Amy Henderson,  
April 7, 1995

AH: Let me began by asking how long you've been at Northern and what position do you hold now?

NH: I came in August 1968. This is my twenty seventh year at NMU. I'm currently director of teacher education services.

AH: And what do you do in that department?

NH: I am responsible for all the admissions of students in teacher program's that elementary and ? program at the under graduated level. Monitor and make sure students are progressing at their programs at a satisfactory level. When students get behind or have to repeat classes it's my job to make sure that they improve their GPA if their behind in their GPA or if they repeat classes they have to repeat it's important and make sure they meet graduation requirements.

AH: When you first came to Northern what was the position that you held?

NH: I was assistant dean of students.

AH: What was the ? when you started their what functions did it cover?

NH: The dean of students office? That office was responsible for students activities, the judicial system, student organizations, student government, discipline was probably the major responsibility at that time so we were responsible for handing out all the hearings and taking disciplinary actions and at that time for example the first year I was here our office suspended twenty eight students.

AH: Is that like a high for Northern?

NH: Yeah I think that was a high. It wasn't very much fun work.

AH: ? dean of students What was it like for him?

NH: One was the associate dean of students and Ed Neimi was the dean of students.

AH: O.k, what was it like working for both of them.

NH: We had a very good relationship. I had worked with ? at Michigan State before I came up here and he was at admissions down there and then he oh I'm sorry he was residence hall work and I was in student activities, so we were in different offices but we had a lot of contact so when we got up here he kind of recruited me. We worked very well together.

AH: What about Mr. Neimi

NH: Dr. Neimi was also very good to work with he left us pretty much develop programs as we saw fit and I think one of his tricks was to recruit people who knew their jobs well and could do them well and he pretty much left us do our jobs. He didn't get involved directly more than necessary.

AH: You were assistant dean in '68 and associate dean in '69-79 right?

NH: Check my record here. That's correct.

AH: o.k. What were some of your responsibilities at that time in each of those positions?

NH: The first year I was here a lot of the time I spent was handling discipline cases. That was one of my major responsibilities. But as I moved up to associate dean by the first four years a major part of my responsibility in addition to handling discipline cases was developing policy because there were two policies written at that point and time and since I enjoyed doing that and it was a need for them that's what I did so I developed the student code, the student ordinances, university ordinances, the judicial system that we pretty much still have that the student code directs, the regulations as well as the judicial process and the judiciary that exist. We wrote a number of other policies like the one I ah the student rights document. I worked on a committee of faculty, staff and students that group alone that group of policies took three years from start to finish to where we actually had it approved and ? so a lot of my time was doing that kind of thing. Some of the other distributions or sale student publications ?? materials was one I worked on. Speakers policy, policy relating entry residents having problems and updating that. That was a major policy at that point and time because we had no policy regarding entry ? and the use of alcohol in resident halls that was prohibited when I first came here so as conditions changed we changed the policy. The first ? on campus that was one I ripped all apart so it was that kind of things.

AH: So how do you feel about the new students here now is it going in the right direction is it basically the same format with just you know new ideas?

NH: I think it's been updated to meet current legal requirements and university things have loosened up quite alot so I think it's a fine document has changed according to ??

AH: Ok, when you became dean of students in '79 were there any other programs that you implemented as dean that you didn't do before?

NH: Well when I moved up to dean I became responsible for some



additional areas of responsibilities. I can't exactly say what additional responsibilities I had other than cause we changed just because we moved up doesn't mean that things didn't change with in the whole student affairs so I can't exactly recall what was added when I became dean of students I'd have to go back and look at the record.

AH: Going back to when you started the new judicial system and anything like that. Where did that stimulus come from did you yourself get the need or was it the whole campus community you know going towards this area?

NH: Well it came from Michigan State where I advised the student judiciary and where as a doctorate student I was learning about the students rights movement and also the legal aspects of discipline so when I came here I could see that Northern needed to be upgraded in terms of policy and procedures. Because I had that background and people I was working with felt free to allow me to develop in that area I just went ahead and worked with those people I was working with and the students in updating the policies.

AH: And everyone was very acceptive?

NH: Very much so. Cause essentially what we were doing is creating more freedom for students.

AH: Back in the early years like when Don Bottom, ????, it seems they took on more of a parental accept of the students you know guiding them more as parents than as administrators how did you find yourself in that capacity in dealing with students?

NH: Well I think we were trying to get away from ?? and bringing up students rights so they have more freedom but at the same time we felt the need in order for us to have a really sound base of operations we have to make sure regulations state test of the courts and then our procedures would stand tested being taken to court in a way we were tightening in some areas although moving away from ?? and that's hard to describe but that's what we were doing.

AH: So you didn't feel you felt like an administrator rather than a student community office.

NH: Yes, yes.

AH: And that's the way you treated them. Are there any funny or unusual stories that you can recall about any disciplinary actions taken or things that where out of the norm?

NH: Once I had to a student complain to me, came in after a hearing he was a judiciary decided that he be dismissed from college and it was my job to always give the message to the student so he was a student ??. He was about 6'2, two-hundred



pounds. He came in and he sat down and I gave him the message and he stood up grabbed me by the tie and I went limp. Of course I wasn't going to get into a fight with him so he started throwing my furniture around the room, including at the window and finally ran out of the door and ??? the secretary's window, off the desk and I called the police, but he got out of the building and went off downtown so we thought we better be ready for him to come back to the hall at night because we expected some trouble, and there was. He brought a bar back, a steel bar back that he picked up on a railroad track and smashed the room all up that night. So he ended up not only out of school but in jail. So that is when ????

AH: What a confrontation huh?

NH: Yeah.

AH: How do you think the students saw the dean's of students office? How did they regard it?

NH: It varied. There were a lot of students that I think saw us as providing much needed services but there were also students, for example those living in residence halls that didn't want to be there that we had ??? making sure they stayed in residence halls if they were at that point we required all students who were undergraduates to live in residence halls unless they were married or living at home. And so we had to enforce that policy. So those students certainly didn't look at us as providing them any service. So there are all kinds depending on what their perspective was in terms of whether they needed our help or whether they preferred that our help wasn't available.

AH: Are any areas of the dean of students office that you know of today that you think could be expanded upon or just made to run a little more smoothly?

NH: Not, I don't have any that I can mention without thinking about it for sometime?

AH: OK is there anything else that you can remember or that you would like to add? Anything about the Dean of Students office?

NH: I am happy that they are continuing what we started building back I think when Dr. ??? came and started building that service and he came two years before I did and ? Karen Reiss? was working with me all the years that I worked there she was working there and Dave Bonsall has been working there a long time and I think Carl ?Bondal? continuing to work there. We did way back, in a lot of ways the quality is still there, they are doing a great job.

AH: I feel the same way, I have worked there for two years now and it has been a very valuable experience to be able to work with administrators in that capacity to see how it really works.

NH: The leadership program is new, we were talking about it when I left nine years ago and it has come a long way since then.

AH: So did that start out in the dean of students office, that was one of their ideas?

NH: Yes. I remember a retreat that we had where we talked about it and it was just about a year later that it was regarded, its developed way beyond the potential of what I thought it would be. So it is a great program.

AH: Good. Anything else?

NH: No, I am glad we don't have to require students to live in residence halls for four years anymore.

AH: Yeah I am too. Well I thank you very much for your time and for all your help with this.