Obligation of University Is To Link Science, Humanities

By JEAN KITCHELL

In a spirited discussion of "The University and Its Work," at Autry House Wednesday night, Dean William H. Masterson outlined some of the problems and some of the dreams of the field of humanities at Rice.

DEAN MASTERSO N opened his remarks by stating as a truism that the basic problem of the world today is the problem of power and the relation of the individual to power.

Dr. Masterson indicated that it is the task of the University to bridge the communication gap between science and humanities for ours is a society with the basic belief that "the humanities have value beyond that of mere past-time," that such fields as history, literature, philosophy, and the arts are of deep and significant meaning.

"We do not," he said, "believe that the machine has overwhelmed man."

DR. MASTERSO N then addressed himself to the obvious question of how the humanist, of whom so much is expected in the solution of this problem, can best be aided educationally.

There are, he pointed out, the traditional means: lectures, seminar discussions, language and social science labs. "But," he stated, "no university can train humanists without directive or operational activities. Beyond the traditional academic studies, the student must tackle bigger, interdisciplinary problems, requiring much more action on his part."

To facilitate this approach Dr. Masterson suggested that Rice might found certain "schools" or institutes in such fields as public affairs and jurisprudence. He explained that such a school of public affairs could actively study these great problems of technology and power and their environmental effects on society.

A SCHOOL of jurisprudence could examine the history and philosophy of the laws of our society far beyond their theoretical implications. This approach would be a means of combining scholarly participation with directed concern for the world itself—a division of "lab and text" in the humanities as in the scientific fields.

The vitality of such an approach might help overcome still another problem within the humanities disciplines. As Dean Masterson put it, "we must have something which will give the student the realization of the difficulties in the humanities and which will give him the drive to pursue these difficulties which keeps the chemistry or engineering student working in his lab all night to solve a problem."

Standing in the way of the resolution of this problem common to all humanities faculties are the physical problems existing in all universities. Dr. Masterson explained that these may seem more critical at Rice than elsewhere for we have taken on an educational task in three fields at both graduate and undergraduate levels which is unparalleled by any school of our size.

WHILE THE demands for first rate faculty have been rising rapidly, the number being trained and made available is dwindling. Those available demand increased library facilities, and the amount of scholarly writing available today is phenomenal.

Dr. Masterson said that the hiring of a top-flight humanities professor would cost a university one-hundred thousand dollars in salary, removal fees, and—most importantly—library facilities.

DEAN W. H. MASTERSO N