Orientation Continues To Improve, Features Information, Stimulation

By JIM ZUMWALT

Rice orientations are better than ever, or at least less painful. In the 1969 matriculation address freshmen were told that "Ten per cent of you will be in the lower ten per cent of your class." A change in attitude is obvious in President Pitzer's letter of greeting to last year's freshmen: "You are all at one point or another along the road toward a broad command of the intellectual experience accumulated by the human race over many generations."

This year incoming Baker freshmen are assured that "Mentors are good for all kinds of things: we can lend you money, or cars, and if the moon is in the right quarter freshmen can even be able to get you a date out of the mystic Master out of the Mystic Master."

Change Emphasis

Behind this superficial collection of quotations lies an important and significant change in the Rice philosophy of orientation. For years freshmen could anticipate only a rigorous "math refresh-er" course in algebra or trigonomentry during their first week at Rice.

The mathematics course often afforded students with homework burdens of 100 problems each night. The summer was spent in mathematical preparations, freshmen were assigned a novel, which one 1969 freshman said was chosen more for its length than its literary quality.

Celebrate With Math

No parties or mixers of any type were scheduled until Saturday afternoon when the freshman picnic annually followed the morning's entertainment: a math exam and an English theme.

The Class of 1964 with the backing of the Student Senate initiated the proposal for re-orienting orientation week. The Senate established a committee in 1960-61 to analyze the old method of introducing freshmen to the campus and the committee concluded that "freshmen were led to feel that Rice is a cold, impersonal place with little concern for its students."

The old Freshman Week, it was felt, made the adjustment to college life difficult by instilling the feelings of confusion and discouragement in the students.

Freshman Scuttled

By May 1961 the University agreed to scuttle the math refresher program, and the Class of 1965 was greeted with an orientation program similar to the present one.

The only truly taxing lessons to be endured by this year's freshmen are the instructions on waiting tables. All other activities can be classified as painless ceremonies, presentations of useful information, intellectual stimulation, or unadulterated fun.

During the four midweek mornings the freshmen will hear and then discuss lectures by Dr. Alan Grob of the English department; Dr. Paul Paslay, Professor of Mechanical Engineering; Dr. Clark Head of the Biology department; and Mr. Jasper Rose, visiting professor in fine arts.

Jones Mixers

In addition to mixers with Jones, each man's college has planned recreational events. Baker frosh will watch the Colts and Phillips play. Hanszen is going to the theater to see the Music Man. Weiss has planned a mixer with Belaire High School girls and Will Rice freshmen get a beach party.

Although there are no drastic changes from last year's orientation schedule, each college is trying to improve its program. Baker prepared a college handbook for the freshmen.

Will Rice divided its incoming freshmen into groups rooming in the same part of the dorm. The leaders of each of these groups made autonomous decisions in choosing reading material for discussion.

Tours Omitted

In general the trend in Rice orientation is to spend less time lecturing the student yet to help him discover the campus, its challenges, and its activities on his own. In this vein some of the colleges have omitted the customary tours of the campus and city.