School To Launch
New Space Science
By Firing Rockets
By ED BLOCHER

The newly-instituted scientific discipline represented by the Rice Department of Space Science makes its world debut this week.

Dr. A. J. Dessler, the chairman of the department, is joined by Professors John Adams, Donald Clayton, Brian J. O'Brien, F. Curtis Michel, and Curtis Laughlin, who heads the Satellite Techniques Laboratory. Ramon Trachta will be the satellite design engineer and W. S. Carey will be the communications engineer.

THE FIRST PROJECT for the Space Science Laboratory is the firing of a series of sounding rockets which will establish the Department scientifically and gather information necessary for the satellite program. These rockets will be of the Nike-Apache solid-fuel type and will be capable of carrying a payload of about eighty pounds.

The first of this series should be fired this December at a NASA installation in Virginia. The last three will be launched at Ft. Churchill, Canada, the site for future satellite launching.

ACCORDING TO Dr. Dessler, the purpose for these rocket flights is to study the properties of certain astronomical phenomena, such as night airglow and the Aurora. The scientists hope thereby to understand the relationships between these phenomena and possibly connect them in some way with the earth's radiation belts discovered by Dr. James Van Allen.

Also in the planning stage is a sounding observatory which will have much the same purpose as the sounding rockets. The satellite program itself has not as yet been initiated. However, because of the Techniques Laboratory, the project will be able to move quickly and be ready for a satellite launching in a year's time.

BEING DEVELOPED in connection with the satellite program is a complete telemetry and command station in the laboratory building. It will be able to control satellites 60,000 miles from the earth and analyze data from the experiments.

The Space Science Department itself is also engaged in teaching three fourth year and graduate level courses. The course arrangement allows for a bachelor's degree in Space Science, but the department has programs for the master's and doctorate degrees.