JUST ONE-FIFTH FLUNK

Brown, O’Neil ‘Debunk’ The Myth

By HUGH RICE KELLY

The recurring rumor that Mathematics 100 flunks veritable hordes of freshmen was debunked Monday by Professors Arlen Brown and Richard O’Neil, instructors of the course.

In an interview, the two Math 100 instructors touched on a broad range of topics of general interest, and revealed the true compilations, which largely put to rest the grosser fears of the freshmen (See box at right.)

A ten-year average compiled several years ago, Dr. Brown pointed out, showed a usual aggregate failure rate of 22-25%. Though he declined to agree with those who would class this as “absurdly” high, he did concede that the level was “unpleasantly high.”

The Rice Mathematics 100 course, Dr. Brown said, “is very similar to the elementary mathematics courses at M.I.T. and a number of other outstanding schools.”

Math 100 is a “very difficult and demanding course,” and he suggested that this alone is a major factor in poor performance of many students.

He noted that part of the difficulty is the result of the “generally weak high school preparation” of most of the students, adding that “great numbers of them are abysmally ignorant of even high school mathematics.”