the problem: building an educated community

By CHUCK KING
Wiess College President

As outlined in the 1965 report of the Committee on Student Housing, which served as the basis of the final creation of the residential college system at Rice, the minimum goal of the colleges was to have been the promotion and preservation of the more humanitarian and gentlemanly values which can characterize communal living.

The primary aim of this committee was to establish a college system based on corporate living and dining, faculty residence, and strong student government.

It has been our experience at Wiess that the colleges have reached this minimum goal in the first seven years of their existence, and that the aims of communal living, faculty participation, and responsible student government have been attained.

The colleges have successfully survived the transition from dormitory to college. No longer can anyone seriously argue that a college is nothing but a glorified dormitory.

Yet it strikes us at Wiess that the colleges now face an even more basic challenge; the construction of an environment in which an intellectual and scholarly community may grow and flourish.

It strikes us that such a community must be based on shared experiences, common customs and habits, and the feeling that one can both benefit from and contribute to the process of education; that is college life.

Building or Spirit?

The question that immediately comes to mind at this point is how to achieve this ideal. How does one transform some 250 desperate souls into a genuine community, into a college that is no longer merely a building but a spirit?

Frankly, I, as president of Wiess College, do not know. Consequently I would like to see the year at Wiess spent in discussing and investigating the direction in which the college should go next.

In the past two years Wiess has resolved its problem in physical facilities. Our new wing now contains a game room, music room, television room, and an excellent college library. We have a patio and a new private dining room.

Rules Drawn

Last spring Wiess drew up a code of rules under which the college members would, for the first time, genuinely rule themselves. In this rules proposal we have attempted to deal with such problems as the liquor on campus question and open house policy.

With the passage of these rules, (which we hope will occur this year), Wiess will take a large step towards realizing its ideal as a community.

Wiess will also endeavor to present such diverse programs as classical theatre, art exhibits, and a series of motion pictures. In presenting such programs, we hope to provide our members with a sense of identification with the college.

Identification Basic

We feel this sense of identification is basic to our goal of a college as community.

Finally, we hope to go into new areas in college life. These new areas hopefully will include off-campus facilities and offices and classrooms for faculty within the college itself.

But regardless of specific plans or goals, I for one would be sincerely gratified to see a spirit come to Wiess College, a spirit that will help transform our college members into discerning, independent-minded and cultured, educated men.

Fleming and Football

To quote from the Wiess College Plan and Perspective, "Educated men read Ian Fleming as well as argue politics; but when the educated man reads Fleming, plays touch football, or when he argues politics or reads Milton, there is a difference."

The attainment of this difference should be the goal of the college system, and it is with this difference in mind that we eat, work, play, and dream at Wiess College.