College Development Traced Through Eventful Years

BY DOUG HARLAN

The college system at Rice began as the vision of Dr. Edgar Odell Lovett, the Institute's first president; but it was not until 1957, the year of Dr. Lovett's death, that the program was finally realized.

Planning for a college system began as part of Rice's large-scale building program after World War II.

The initial committee of students and faculty in 1953 recommended the formation of a freshman dormitory and several residential colleges with students living in the colleges from the second year on. The colleges as such were planned much as they exist today; they were to be guided by the Master with the assistance of resident and non-resident associates.

Each college was to be autonomous with its own officers and selective membership with provisions for all students to live in one of the colleges. Colleges were to compete for desirable freshmen as well as competing in scholastic, athletic, and extra-curricular areas. All faculty members were to become associates of the colleges.

EDUCATIONALLY the colleges were to have no definite responsibility with the exception of advising and tutoring by the Master and associates. The committee felt that such a system would be of "immeasurable benefit to the students of the Institute."

The main disadvantage of the old dormitory system, as the committee reported, was a lack of "social concern" on the part of Rice graduates and the disinterest of the graduates toward intellectual processes. The College System, they felt, would help solve both of these problems in addition to creating a much improved campus life.

The actual architectural mechanics of the physical plant were investigated extensively in 1954 and 1955, and the present plan was decided upon with the noticeable lack of a freshman dormitory.

BY MARCH of 1957 actual construction was completed, a model constitution was drafted, plans for provisional governments approved and elections held, assignments made, and doors opened for occupancy.

By February of 1958 the initial excitement had abated enough to give rise to the first controversy, stimulated by the Campanile announcement that pictures would be arranged by colleges instead of by classes. Campus-wide interest and a referendum ensued, and the Campanile was allowed to follow its own policy by a slender margin. The issue was considered a significant victory for the developing colleges.

The college governments have been autonomous from the beginning, but at first there was an Inter-College Council which was a sub-committee of the old Student Council. By March of 1958 the first conflict between these groups arose, and by 1959 the friction erupted into a violent explosion. A new constitution (the present one) was proposed to the student body creating the Student Senate as it exists today, composed of executive officers, two representatives from each college, the college presidents' and the Freshman Class president.

In a bitterly-fought campaign, the new constitution and the new government prevailed. This was considered to be a victory for the colleges since it removed them from Student Council jurisdiction, and established a new Senate composed in the large by college representation. Class representation on the Senate was eliminated, with the Freshman Class president being the only trace of the old system.

Another aspect of the advent of the colleges was the need for a new Guidance Program. A University-wide program became impracticable, and guidance was turned over to each individual college. One of the most noticeable changes at first was the replacement of the un...

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(Continued from Page 5) start, with each college producing championship teams in some sport from year to year. College competition in Rondelet, involving the Song Fest and the Beer-Bike Race is one of the year's highlights; Will Rice College has dominated this competition since its inception.

The responsibility of the colleges in judicial matters concerning discipline and other matters remained undisputed until the “great scandals” of January, 1962. Open House hours, among the most liberal in the United States, were removed entirely from college jurisdiction as a result of gross violations in three of the men's colleges.

THIS YEAR most of the colleges are operating under revised judicial systems; the formation of the Inter-College Court to handle disputes between individuals of various colleges, between colleges and individual members of other colleges, and between the various colleges themselves combined with the new college judicial codes, provides the mechanisms necessary for college retention of judicial authority.

The colleges have been increasingly active in presenting programs featuring faculty members and national figures to college members for open question and answer sessions and for informal discussions. Most colleges are currently attempting to involve faculty associates more intimately in college activities.

Food has been a source of continuous displeasure in the various colleges. Each college, although eating in its own commons, partakes of the same menu and receive its food from the same source, the main kitchen. One college has investigated the possibility of private catering but has not taken definite action.

Food Crisis Committees have arisen with increasing regularity and have generally had the same result: nothing. The most important news in the food department is the new rule allowing iceboxes, with no restrictions except that alcoholic beverages are prohibited. Seated meals in the evening are traditional in all colleges now, with freshmen serving as waiters.

THE SOCIAL activities of the colleges have increased through the years; most activities are given for college members and dates only; however, some parties are school-wide. The colleges are taking hesitating but important steps in the direction of providing more social orientation. One college has instituted a traditional show which is produced each year at homecoming. More activities such as this seem to be forthcoming.

Most of the college governments have made plans for physical improvements. Game rooms, t.v. rooms, and study rooms have been added through the years with plans for more in the making. Acquisition of airconditioning facilities is foremost among the hopes of many college residents.