At first glance, the colleges represent a certain type of institution, small in size with associated physical and social activities. All of the colleges fit this description. But there is a second aspect of these colleges which is much less obvious, partially because no college at Rice really fits into it and partially because it cannot be explained in material terms.

A college in this second category would be called a true academic community. "Academic" implies an emphasis on the learning process through exchange of ideas on both a student-student and a faculty-student level. When one examines this university, it becomes clear that there simply isn't enough time to permit free individualistic thought in the classroom.

IF ANYTHING other than blind acceptance and/or memorization is to come of the knowledge disseminated in the lecture periods, it must come through reflection and discussion in an academic atmosphere, a "community" of learning such as the colleges could provide.

Now the attainment of such a community is directly related to the vehicles available for making it possible. These vehicles are simply the various activities and programs a college chooses to associate itself with. Clearly, then, a college in the second category is also in the first.

IF THE COLLEGE IS to have any deep-seated and lasting value in the education of students at Rice, it must fall into the second category. For indeed, if a college is satisfied with merely remaining tied to certain activities for their own sake, without any regard to the learning process when the value of the college to its members is probably trivial. Certainly such a college is not unique, for any club or fraternity could sponsor activities of equal value.

Very simply, this is why Will Rice College has, in the past few years, turned more and more away from tradition for tradition's own sake. Seeking to make our college an academic community, we theoretically question everything, putting it before the examining board of real value to the educational process. The programs and activities which "pass" are retained or initiated; the others come under sharp criticism.

THE WHOLE question of whether or not a college can become an academic community is one of responsibility and maturity of attitude. It has been my experience that the administration of Rice University is willing to grant as much freedom of development to the college as the colleges themselves demonstrate they are capable of handling.

We do not face a stubborn group of people in Lovett Hall who fight us every step of the way, as certain individuals and ad hoc committees would have us believe. Rather, there is actually an eagerness on the administrative level to see the colleges grow in maturity and, concurrently, take on new responsibilities.

Thus the burden of achieve-