Problems In Education Discussed At Hanszen

By HARVEY POLLARD

"I never go anywhere just to talk - but to discuss problems of mutual interest," said David Riesman at a recent fall symposium. "The undergraduate and Freshman Seminar Program, were the subjects of Riesman's prepared talk.

"BUILDERS AND SHAPERS like Woodrow Wilson and Hutchins of Chicago seem to have vanished, said Riesman. "The faculty is the new leader in the academic community." Riesman stressed that "faculty government was not a highroad to innovation and imagination."

"The University is the cathedral of our secular life," concluded Riesman. He suggested that the faculty suffered from a "pedagogical entrenchment" similar to the clergy in the medieval cathedrals of Chartres and Amiens.

"A RESULT OF THE TASK of American educators is a "reification of what already exists."
The old academics "are crusaders, but the current academics are entrenched and fossilized," said Riesman. "It is in the border areas, like biophysics and psycholinguistics, which demand the most creativity."

"The undergraduate should not major in what he wants to do in later life," said Riesman, "but the assumption of control of education by the faculty has "forced the student to specialize early."

RIESMAN TIED THIS TO the fact that universities were harrying their values set by national, professional associations or guild. "There guilds," suggested Riesman, "are not primarily interested in education on the undergraduate level."

Riesman quoted a sociologist friend as saying, "I don't want to teach them (students) in graduate school, ... I want to put them to work on my projects."

R I E S M A N Distinguished between the approaches of Rice and Harvard to problems of undergraduate education, especially in the freshman year. The Harvard Riesman were able to form "college systems," or "house systems," because of adequate finances. "Because of affluence," said Reisman, "the chemists don't notice how much the library costs."

A FRESHMAN Seminar Program, ratifying the concept of the leader," is the system that Harvard has found works best.

The program is operated on a non-graded basis, and it takes the place of one of the four courses of a Harvard freshman. It allows a professor to teach a pet subject that would not be offered otherwise. About 350 freshmen are admitted into the program.

ACCORDING TO Riesman the big problems solved by the seminar program are large lecture classes, graduate teaching assistant-ants, and a frightening Harvard "boredom" that becomes apparent to every Harvard Freshman.

Riesman's discussion of the program was based on his experiences with his own seminar.

RI E S M A N DESCRIBED two syndromes that afflict students. One is the "Rickerover syndrome," in which students came to school "wearing with the urge to work all the time, ... doing nothing that might distract them from their script or national defense."

The other is the "Exeter-Anover" syndrome. These people had the feeling that, "they were made to have it all and wanted to get out of the general educational drivel of freshman year. People usually came in as sophomores."

IN THE RICKOVER PEOPLE, Riesman said, there is a group of students.

(Continued on Page 13)

DAVID RIESMANN With Students At Hanszen
Harvard’s House Orientations Use Seminars In Place Of ‘Platoons’

(Continued from Page 9)

who could “eat, but not taste their food.” “Society abstracts from our own tastes and likes,” said Riesman, “leaving us to just go through the motions. They are so concerned with doing well that they can never see where they want to go.”

“Competition and pressure . . . were removed from the group. The result was that the students were introduced to a style— or psychological approach — that would characterize their life work.

“THE STYLE THAT these students were introduced to,” said Riesman, “was both cosmopolitan and committed.”

His own seminar was oriented towards making students play from their weaknesses, said Riesman. He made them take difficult courses completely out of their fields. The results illustrated that most people pay little regard to the “cold underside of the intellectual iceberg,” most not even realizing that it existed.

“Frustrated sophomores and professors without any time were by-products of the experiment,” said Riesman, “but the result was an education-oriented undergraduate program.”

IN A CONCLUDING answer to a question on “open house” traditions following his speech, Riesman stated that, “The questions of how a girl should be educated and at the same time have her reputation protected seem mutually exclusive.” This was in conjunction with the revelation that Harvard Houses have a perpetual open house.

To a questioner who protested that educational institutions were becoming commercialized, Riesman stated that “G. E. does more for the humanistic education of its executives than do leading universities for their undergraduates . . .”