Freshmen College Boards Slump, Merit Scholars Set New Record

By RICHARD DARILEK
Editorial Assistant

With a record breaking increase in National Merit Scholarships and a decrease in average College Board scores, an increase in class size and a decrease in applicants, the 1965 Freshman Class makes its statistical debut at Rice.

A profile of the entering class released by the University Admissions Office shows that 56 Freshmen are National Merit Scholars—a record number for Rice, the national leader percentage-wise two years ago with 55.

There were 38 such awards in the group last year.

**CEEB’s Down**

The figures also show a class average of 677 in College Board scores. One year ago, the average for incoming Freshmen was 688.

From a total of 1850 applicants, 650 less than applied for Rice’s last tuition-free class in 1964-65, over 490 — about 40 more than the previous group—were accepted.

This is in keeping with the University’s policy, announced last year, of progressively increasing enrollment.

More than 69% of the Freshmen ranked in the upper 5% of their high school graduating classes, an increase of 5% over the 1964 entrants. Seventy-nine graduated as valedictorian and 30 as salutatorian—not as many as last year’s all-time high of 93 first ranked and 31 second ranked graduates.

**Presidential Scholars**

Six members of the incoming class were Presidential Scholars.

"Of admitted students who took the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test," the Office of Admissions reported, "93% made selection scores above 130, 67% made above 140, and 20% made above 150."

Enrollment in the Academic division of studies increased to 39% of the entering class, while the Science-Engineering section dropped to 55%, with Architecture holding steady at 6%.

Men out-averaged the women in College Board Scores in all three divisions.

Of the more than 490 Freshmen, 32% are women and 68% are men, a difference from 1964 of 3% more women, less men respectively.

According to Director of Admissions, James B. Giles, the same number of women were accepted this year as in the past. The increase of those actually entering Rice is due to the University’s recent ability, with the opening of Brown College this year, to provide adequate campus living facilities.

**Outlanders**

Out of state students scored somewhat higher on their College Boards than the others, Giles revealed. The reason for this, he said, was that competition among them for admission was greater.

Under present University policy, admission of non-Texans, this year just under 50% of those applying, is restricted to 30% of the class.

Five Negro students completed their application to Rice, said Giles. All five were admitted. Three did not come here because of scholarship offers (Continued on Page 8)
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elsewhere—he mentioned Tulane and Cornell.

Speaking of the drop in the College Board average this year, Giles related it to the increased size of the class and the drop in applicants. “Some slight reduction (in the average) is due to this alone,” he said.

Early Decisions

“One out of four new students, however, were early decision applicants,” he added, referring to Rice’s plan — first used by the present Freshman Class — for accepting students in the first semester of their senior year in high school.

“Many of these applicants’ scores,” he continued, “were from their junior year in high school, perhaps 30-40 points below their possible senior year scores. Nevertheless, the new class is the statistical equivalent of the present senior class.”

The uncertainty of many about the nature of the scholarships Rice would offer, Giles thought, caused the marked downswing in applicants.

In the future, he feels, when the knowledge that the University will grant scholarships commensurate with need becomes general, applications will increase.