RAYZOR JOINS DEBATE

Split Panel Stalemates Myth

By HUGH RICE KELLY

Before an overflow crowd Monday evening, which included students, faculty members, and trustees J. Newton Rayzor and George R. Brown, the Wiess-Forum committee panel discussed the topic “The Rice Myth—A Myth?”

The affair, held in the Physics Amphitheater, was moderated by Louis Galambos. The panel was composed of Donald C. Mackenzie, J. Cl. DeBremaecker, and Gerald O’Grady.

ON THE QUESTION of the “myth” itself, the panel was divided. Dr. Mackenzie felt that Rice has a constructively modest view of itself. Dr. O’Grady demurred, holding that Rice “must define itself.” He asserted that the University bills itself as having such trappings of excellence as a low student-teacher ratio, where in fact it does not have them. He also noted the lack of an “intellectual community which one would expect at a place having Rice’s reputation.”

Concerning grades and academic excellence, Dr. Mackenzie asserted that “Rice grades are unusually low and severe,” noting from a report prepared for President Pitzer that such policies at Princeton and Cal Tech are less rigid and tend to regard such things as failure as an “abnormal condition” calling for special measures and attention.

DR. GALAMBOS noted that some of Rice’s ills derive from its tradition of “running things from the top down.” As an example, Dr. Galambos observed that when he first came to Rice, students “were somewhat taken aback” if he offered them special attention. Other examples of the top-heavy tradition were cited among the faculty and elsewhere.

In a surprise appearance at the end of the meeting, Trustee Rayzor had a few outspoken comments to make. In regard to the question at hand, Mr. Rayzor said that “to really appreciate this little University you must see how far it has come since its inception.”

He emphasized the fact that people in the South and Southeast “have been dragging their feet for fifty years,” but held out the promise that “insignificant though the Board is, we do have some influence on these things.”