Masterson Discusses Problems, Plans Concerning Humanities and University

By DENIS ASHTON

Wednesday night, Dr. William H. Masterson, Dean of Humanities, spoke before 130 members of Will Rice College for an hour and a half on the general topic, "What is a University?" The program was part of a regular after-dinner series at Will Rice and consisted primarily of questions from College members.

Dean Masterson began his remarks by explaining that a university meant to him a school of advanced learning that offers a wide selection of courses and has a graduate school. The university's function, he said, in addition to furthering knowledge research, is to offer whatever its students need in order to fulfills their purposes, be it vocational training, preparation for graduate school, or becoming a well-rounded person, "Whatever that is."

THE QUESTION and answer period began with a discussion of some changes which Dean Masterson thought might come about in the near future. Curriculum changes might include expansion of the Russian faculty and the behavioral sciences—sociology, political science, and anthropology. A change in approach to teaching languages would "guarantee that Rice graduates would be able to speak a foreign language."

Changes that have been suggested in the freshman program would provide a greater choice of courses for freshmen, smaller classes, and improved freshman week, and eventual re-orientation of science and math courses for academic students. Dean Masterson emphasized, however, that he would favor offering special science and math survey courses rather than eliminating them.

A MODIFICATION of Rice's probation and expulsion policy, which would permit a student to withdraw for a year while remaining in good standing in order to improve his chances of entering another university has been suggested by one faculty member because "most of you people just have too much competence to have your whole university career spoiled."

Dean Masterson also discussed the possibilities of changing Rice's charter in the foreseeable future in such areas as tuition; perhaps later integration — "if Congress removes the tax exemptions from segregated universities"; and geographical restrictions placed on applicants.

Lack of money is apparently (Continued on Page 8)
an important reason for the pace of Rice's expansion, particularly in the humanities and fine arts. Northern foundations are hesitant about giving money to Texas universities because of Texas' legendary wealth and because of a number of Texas foundations which give money only to Texas universities.

DEAN MASTERSON ended the program by discussing the high frequency of hour examinations and its possible effect on the drop-out rate. The masters of the colleges and other faculty are quite concerned about the many students who leave the University without graduating. The possibility of more interviewing of those who drop out is being considered in order to determine more precisely the reasons responsible for such cases.

In a similar discussion before about seventy students at Hanszen College the night before, Dr. Masterson observed that no two people will agree on just what the university's purpose is. Only general goals can be set down—after that, "our purpose is to create something broad enough so that each student can have a purpose. We are not here to agree on our purpose: we are here to make it possible for each to find the purpose he is looking for."

HE EMPHASIZED that the future additions and revisions in the humanities program do not represent sweeping changes in Rice's direction, but instead a "change of focus" and expansion of the University. The whole point, he said, is to bring "college life" and class life closer together. Future advancement of Rice's status as a real university must be in "working to unite college goals and the goals in the university. Everything else—curriculum, guidance, freshman week—is part of this big picture."