Rice Student May Be First On Moon — Dessler At Wiess

By KEN DESSAIN

Radiating optimism and enthusiasm for the new Space Sciences Department which he will head, Dr. A. J. Dessler spoke to a Wiess College Night audience last Friday and pointed to the tremendous opportunities in this field as "a whole universe to explore."

Dr. Dessler, who holds degrees from Cal Tech and Duke in physics, said that the main objective of the department will be "to study the functioning of the cosmos, and produce students broadly informed in the disciplines connected with outer space."

IN SPEAKING of long-range plans, he said that "in eight years we expect to have fifty graduate students, and turn out ten PhD's a year." Explaining that "nothing is definite or official as yet," he named the three major areas of focus in the department to be "particles and fields, planet atmosphere, and planets and their satellites."

Emphasizing that "we are indeed fortunate to be located near the manned spacecraft center," Dr. Dessler outlined the plans of the new department in connection with the N.A.S.A.

"In addition to the benefits gained from our proximity to an area of concentrated scientific knowledge and facilities," he said, "there may be significant opportunities for cooperation on major undertakings, specifically, Project Apollo."

ON THIS POINT he explained that one member of the expedition will probably be a trained scientist-astronaut, and there is a good chance he would receive his education in Rice's new department.

DR. A. J. DESSLER
Space Chairman

When questioned about the proposed space institute to work with N.A.S.A. at Clear Creek, Dr. Dessler replied, "we hope to be that institute." He said that there are at other institutes areas of space science instruction and research, but which are hampered (Continued on Page 6)
by "committee direction." "Rice will have the only full fledged department in this field, and hopes to make outstanding progress with this basis."

SPEAKING MORE specifically about the courses of study in the department, Dr. Dessler said it would be concerned with graduate work "in the forseeable future," although there might be an introductory course offered on the senior level.

As for areas of interest, he emphasized the study of "unexplained structures," and the search for clues as to the nature of the universe.

In the particles and fields area, he mentioned the study of geomagnetism, solar flare radiation, and the Van Allen radiation belt, whereas evolution of the solar system, energy sources, and comparative atmospheres would dominate the study of planet atmospheres. In the field of planets and satellites, he pointed out the immense value of the planned moon shot in aiding research.

"BECAUSE MAN is a helpless observer in the study of space," Dr. Dessler added, "a wide and proficient background is desirable." He stressed, as undergraduate preparation necessary for work in the department, the importance of math-science, with special emphasis on mathematics, physics, and perhaps geology.

Dr. Dessler acknowledged that competition among industrial firms for the ten-to-twelve faculty members in the department will be great, but he maintained that the University offers other things besides money.

"They can have much more fun here," he concluded.