Administrators Continue Forum Series On Rice's Future

By BILL SCHNITT
Threshold Reporter

In ten years Rice will be a "school of maintained excellence, but a school deliberately small," said Chancellor Carey Croneis in the second of a series of open forums concerned with "Rice's Future as a University." The forum was held Tuesday night in the Physics Amphitheater.

The discussion, sponsored by the Student Association and the Forum Committee, featured a panel of four men who are closely associated with the University: Mr. Herbert Allen, Trustee on the Board of Governors; Carey Croneis, Chancellor; Michael V. McEnany, Dean of Undergraduate Affairs; and William H. Masterson, Professor of History and Master of Hanszen College.

Noting the proposed growth of Rice's graduate division, moderator Bill Broyles asked if undergraduates will suffer "because of the "chasm" which separates the goals of undergraduates from those of graduates, who are primarily interested in "specialization."

On this matter, Dean McEnany feared that we might "talk ourselves" into believing that the two programs cannot be reconciled with the highest academic standards. "We must remember," he said, "that strong graduate and undergraduate programs are compatible with excellence."

Chancellor Croneis was also forced to "take issue on this score." He recognized no "sharp difference" between undergraduate and graduate students, observing that many gifted undergraduates are doing graduate-level work.

University's Reputation

The final measure of Rice's "success" at the undergraduate level, according to Chancellor Croneis, is the University's reputation among students. He noted statistics from the National Merit Scholarship Board which ranked third in the nation, in terms of the college preference of high school students. Dr. Masterson, who is President-elect of the University of Chattanooga, recognized that Rice is faced with "complicated choices" regarding the "sophisticated problem" of education. "The time have come right now—not in ten years—for Rice to make some decisions about the curriculum... which will determine the nature of the University," he said.

Other Institutions

He also felt that it is misleading to compare Rice with other institutions, since Rice has developed in its own unique fashion, and seeks goals quite different from Cal Tech or MIT—which "aren't universities."

"Rice cannot be compared to Princeton," he said, "because the ratio of science to humanities students isn't the same."

Dean McEnany noted that more must be done to help students, especially first semester freshmen, to adjust to University life.

On this point, Dr. Masterson observed that "proper orientation" requires many people devoting considerable time. He felt that part of the counseling could be handled by the individual college, and that the success of such programs would depend upon the relation of the faculty to the college.

Course Reduction

Broyles noted the goal of the Ten Year Plan—to provide a curriculum which "reconciles discipline with creativity." He felt that Rice had "achieved discipline," but at the expense of creativity. A reduction of the student's course load, he said, would remove many of the restraints which are hindering the individual's personality development.

Chancellor Croneis agreed that it would be desirable for freshmen to study "three or four courses in depth. They would have more love for the University and a better education," he added.

Athletics Question

One student wished to know "how the Administration can reconcile continued participation in Southwest Conference athletics with serious attempts to have a good University."

Mr. Allen replied that "a place like Rice... needs to be satisfying to the whole individual. There is no satisfaction in saying that Rice is a sterile academic place... where people struggle upward."

Dean McEnany concurred: "It is wrong to assume that you can't have a good University with good sports teams."

Same Process

"The Administration uses the same selective admissions process with athletes as with regular students. Athletes are chosen from the top ten per..."
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(Continued from Page 1) cent of their own group,” he added.

A question from the floor prompted the panel to consider the “role of Rice in the community, the state, and the nation.”

Dean McEnany felt that the University could provide “stimulation and inspiration” through the workings of the college system as well as through the traditional academic disciplines.