Masters provide few new insights to problems facing college system

By DARRELL HANCOCK

"One of the aspirations of the college is to bring the academic atmosphere more into the college," said Dr. Ronald L. Sass, Master of Hanszen College, last Sunday on the Rice TV series.

But none of the three college masters on the panel discussed any of the major problems of the system, nor did they provide any radically new insights about its future.

James S. Fulton, Master of Will Rice College, and Trenton W. Wann, Master of Jones College, were the other panelists on the program, the third in the series "Rice University—In Service and Truth," presented weekly by the University on time donated by KTRK-TV.

Info

The aim of the program, James A. Castaneda, the host, said later, was simply to provide general information about the unique Rice institutions.

Sass responded to a question about the "aspirations of the masters for the residential colleges" with a brief and unlabelled description of the "Hanszen Plan" to increase college involvement in the curriculum. He suggested that courses could be given in the colleges, that students in the courses could live together and become more closely associated with faculty members.

Dr. Wann noted that student activity in the past few years has shifted from "governing social life" to creating an academic orientation for the colleges. "This is what students want and this is what we want. Now the problem is exactly how to do it."

"It looks as if the students really are following the master plan" Dr. Castaneda, referring to Rice's plan to double enrollment by 1975.

The program included a filmed tour of some of the more attractive parts of the colleges and some discussion of the planned expansion to ten colleges.

General World

The colleges were founded, said Fulton at the beginning of the program, to improve the conditions of student life by providing social preparation for "the general world," by offering experience in self-government, and by allowing informal association between students and faculty members.

Wann defined a college as "a collection of people banded together for a common purpose" and suggested that it was more like a college in the ancient sense of the word than a dormitory.

The faculty associates, said Sass, presently have no formal academic role in the college, but serve as orientation counselors, potential sources of advice in college programs, and participants in informal discussions.

Distinctive Reputations?

The masters agreed that the colleges have generally acquired distinctive reputations, despite the impartial method of assigning college members. They also agreed that the current assignment policy is generally better than any alternative that would completely specialize the colleges.

The colleges were described as self-governing bodies; particularly stressed were the physical improvements which have been planned and carried through by college governments.

We Do Nothing

The masters themselves, said Dr. Sass, generally avoid intervening in student programs and serve instead as consultants.

Castaneda ended the program by naming all six college masters and concluding that "the University must evidently take a great deal of interest in the colleges" as is evidenced "by the type of men the University puts in as masters." They are, he said, "very much to the credit of the University in every way."