College must create own system

By CHRIS KELLER
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Since Dr. Class announced his resignation last Monday night, Jones College has been seething with activity. For the first time in my experience at Rice, the college membership has acted unanimously and effectively in support of a vital issue. In other words, for the first time we have really been a college.

I commend all the college members for their degree of concern, the maturity and personal commitment they have displayed, and their continued interest and support of college action. Also for the first time in my experience the faculty associates have been actively drawn into college affairs to the everlasting benefit of Jones.

Loss Tragic

The loss of Dr. Class to Jones College is in itself tragic to me. Yet it is not insurmountable. It cannot be if our college is to continue its development as part of the educational system which the University offers to the entering student.

While wrestling with the problem of what Jones' proper course of action should be from here, however, I have encountered a lack of communication and therefore a lack of understanding among all of the parties actively concerned, namely the students, the faculty associates, and representatives of the administration.

Communication Gap

The fault lies with no single one of these groups, but with all of them. Hopefully, and I think, realistically, the first hurdle, that of recognizing a failure in communication, has now been overcome. This is the first step if anything constructive is to be achieved from the present situation.

Now the question becomes what can the college do to turn a disturbing course of events into a realistic and beneficial course of action? The answer is many-faceted. First of all, the college members must sustain an ambitious attempt to formulate their idea of the direction which college development on the Rice campus should take. Secondly, it is imperative that we all realize that a college at Rice can never be a carbon copy of any college at any other university.

Rejects Imitation

More importantly, we must realize that to become a carbon copy would be the least desirable alternative imaginable. Let's attempt to create our own system, not reproduce another. We are a unique group of imaginative, responsible, intellectually curious young women with an unparalleled opportunity before us.

In order to capitalize fully on this opportunity, however, we must accept one basic component of the college. I have already alluded to it—the college's educational function. Education goes far beyond the purely academic (although this thesis doesn't appear to me to be universally accepted at Rice.)

Man's World

Perhaps for the woman student, even more than the man, this aspect of the college is vital. The college provides a sanction for her intellectual, cultural, and social endeavors which women in a man's world (and Rice as well as the larger community is presently a man's world) need.

What specifically are we doing and can we do? We can evaluate Jones' position—past, present, and future—on this campus. The mechanics for this have already been set in motion. We can attempt at all levels of our planning to be in full and constant communication with the administration. We can draw constantly and continually on our faculty associates for direction, support, and personal involvement.

Both of these areas will be developed, I feel sure. But most importantly, we can suggest and pursue those things which we feel most effectively develop the educational possibilities of the college. For me these include absolute administrative, legislative, and judicial student self-government in collaboration with the college master and the faculty associates; university financial support on a "no strings attached" basis so that the college's physical plant and programs can be developed under student guidance to achieve the maximum in opportunity for each college member to pursue her individual interests; and an attitude on the part of the University that failures and mistakes can be a valuable part of the educational experience too. So let us make our own mistakes and learn.

Look To Future

Finally, it is obvious that any such program cannot be achieved overnight, next week, or even next year. But let's be far-sighted enough to realize what such a program might mean to the University ten, twenty years from now. Let's start now to build a tradition of individual assertion and pride in personal achievement which in future years will benefit both the individual student within the University, the colleges as integral parts of the University, and thus Rice itself.