OPTIMISM FOR THE FUTURE

Masters Discuss Their Role

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With JAN GORDON

What is the role of the college master? The Thresher this week interviewed the masters on this and other topics.

One college master readily admits that he has taken little active role in the shaping of his college. One of the methods by which tradition is made, he argues, is for the college members to make and then correct their own mistakes.

Another master sees his principal role as a liaison between the policy makers of the university and the college members who must implement their decisions. The main purpose of the college, he claims, is to further the main purpose of the University, which is an educational venture.

FOR ONE college head, the master “represents the continuity of the college.” He is there when the freshmen come and stays after they leave as seniors. He thus serves as a unifying factor which ties the college experience together.

Questioned about selective college membership, the masters indicated general disapproval, citing the advantages of integrating students with a wide variety of interests in the same college community.

ONE MASTER, however, was willing to leave the question of selection open, realizing that it might well be a possibility at some future date. He saw the decision of the overcrowded colleges to allocate rooms on a merit basis as an important step toward selection.

Qualifying his support of the proposal, he indicated his fear that some colleges might end up with a preponderance of less interested members.

To the suggestion that such a selective system would build a unique tradition for each college, one master replied, “When one attempts to create tradition, he ends up with a college full of bearded men.”

COMMENTING ON the general question of tradition, one master credited inter-college competition for the presence of a college spirit which was not in conflict with loyalty to the university as a whole.

Another master saw a failure in tradition, largely a result of the “corrupting influence” of the upperclassmen. The upperclassmen, he argued, should take a dominant role in maintaining college customs. In effect, the seniors should tell the freshmen, “you wear a coat and tie or you’re out of place.”

Commenting favorably on the role of the upperclassmen, still another master pointed out that the colleges have taken an indirect part in legislating taste. As an example, he cited the fact that students are no longer ashamed to be seen at symphony performances since the governments, by selling tickets, have encouraged this activity.

One master was particularly proud of the responsibility shouldered voluntarily by the students in the college’s counseling program.

Asked about changes in the near future, one master suggested more recognition of freshman academic achievements.

A further suggestion was that faculty members might have offices in the colleges would necessitate expansion of the college’s physical facilities, a suggestion made by another master. The colleges have no dining rooms to entertain guests, he commented, and the cabinets are forced to meet in noisy commons or lounge areas.