Masterson, Griffis Named Deans

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Thresher Columnist

Two new administrative positions have been inaugurated at the Rice Institute to further accommodate growing Rice graduate programs and to make more effective the Institute undergraduate departments.

In May, Dr. William Houston announced the appointment of Dr. William Masterson, professor of History, as Dean of Humanities. In July, Dr. Levan Griffis, formerly of Borg-Warner Corporation of Chicago, was appointed Dean of Engineering.

Dr. Masterson has been at Rice since 1949. He received his BA at Rice, and earned his M.A. and Ph.D. at Pennsylvania. He has served Rice as assistant to the President, and is Master of Hanszen College, where he lives with his wife and

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MAKING PLANS—Dr. LeVan Griffis, left, and Dr. W. H. Masterson discuss the coming year and their new positions as deans at Rice.
Deans...

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two daughters.

Dr. Griffis received his BS and doctorate from the California Institute of Technology. He has taught at Cal Tech and at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago where he became chairman of the department of mechanics. Associated for three years with the American Machine and Foundry Company, Dr. Griffis became manager-director of the Borg-Warner Corporation research center in 1956. He will live in Houston with his wife and six children.

In separate interviews, the two new deans emphasized that their programs and responsibilities would be evolving ones, but pointed out that “unity” and a capability to “think across departmental lines” is essential to the humanities and engineering divisions of a changing and progressing Institute.

“The purpose of a Dean of Humanities is two fold:” stated Dr. Masterson. “To work with the humanities department heads to improve the undergraduate and graduate curricula, and to represent to the President the feelings of the departments in the formulation of Institute policy.”

The growing importance of the graduate divisions and the constant necessity for purposeful relationship of departments were major factors in the creation of this division, Dr. Masterson pointed out. Divisionally developed plans and policies will emerge gradually as the departments first take stock of themselves and then suggest changes and improvements in the humanities and in their interrelationships at Rice.

Dr. Griffis viewed the creation of his position as a “small step in the general evolution here at Rice.” The creation of an engineering division satisfies several needs, he suggested. The need for “uniformity in timing and planning” within the engineering field; the necessity for general perspective in the “prediction of the needs of the curricula to meet expanding technological demands; “and the importance of a “closer liaison with the customers of engineering” are now major responsibilities of the new division.

Dr. Griffis feels that these needs are not through modification and additional direction in the engineering programs, more and more highly qualified students will be attracted to Rice. With this growing interest in mind, he hopes to see made possible more admissions of well qualified students from diverse geographical backgrounds. Dr. Griffis also sees “expanded participation in professional engineering societies — especially the national organizations” as a means to further augment the Rice student’s “exposure to the latest technical developments . . . through the traditional channels of professional communication.”

The Dean of the Institute, Dr. G. H. Richter, summarized the objectives of the two new positions: The divisions will enable us to give more individual attention to our growing programs here at Rice. Problems will be reflected upon more accurately, divisions will be kept in their proper relationship, and a closer watch of the future will be made possible.