As a sign of the times, a new weekly seminar has been added to the list of regular academic activities. The establishment of the Space Science Research Conference is a direct result of the interest on the part of both faculty and students in this new and expensive research activity. It is also an indication of the ever-closer association between the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and the Institute. As far as we know, this is the first organized seminar of its type at any American academic institution.

Until the influence of the IGY programs, and with the exception of some upper atmosphere rocket research work, the bulk of American rocketry has been shielded from the public view by military secrecy. Even the contacts between the Caltech campus and JPL have been restricted in recent years by the military nature of much of the work at the Lab. But since JPL’s participation in the launching and instrumenting of the Explorer satellites — and particularly since JPL was transferred to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration — the work at the Lab has been approaching that of scientific and supporting research.

It seems logical that, along with the Laboratory’s proven ability as a maker of rocket and satellite vehicles, many of the fundamental experiments in space research should be carried out by JPL personnel working in conjunction with scientists and engineers on the Caltech campus. A space science division has recently been formed at JPL, to work with interested persons on campus and elsewhere in the carrying out of space, planetary and lunar exploration.

It seemed that one method of strengthening the contact between those at JPL and the campus would be the establishment of a regular weekly research conference in which both groups could participate and exchange ideas. A committee was appointed to plan and oversee the Space Science Research Conference, consisting of Albert R. Hibbs (Chairman) and Henry L. Richter, Jr., from JPL; and R. B. Leighton and Harrison S. Brown, representing the campus.

A series of lectures has been scheduled for the first ten meetings; these are aimed toward two goals. One is the dissemination and discussion of the results obtained from scientific experiments carried aboard spacecraft. The second is to expose people who have been sheltered from the limitations and constraints imposed on spaceborne instruments to the factors that must be considered when planning, designing or constructing instruments for space research; or when interpreting scientific data received from instruments carried in such vehicles. Every effort is going to be made to avoid describing our glorious plans for the future.

The first seminar consisted of a discussion of the purposes of the Space Science Research Conference, and a summary of the scientific spacecraft launched to date, along with the instruments known to be aboard each. Subsequent and future seminars for the first quarter include:

November 13  Rolf Dyce  Radiation Around the Earth  Stanford University
October 20  Eberhardt Reichtin  Space Communications  JPL
October 27  Harrison S. Brown  Meteorites and Their Properties (I)  Caltech
November 3  Harrison S. Brown  Meteorites and Their Properties (II)  University of California, Berkeley
November 10  L. G. Jacchia  Solar Radiation and the Atmospheric Drag of Artificial Satellites  Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory
November 17  H. C. Urey  Problems of Lunar Structure  University of California, La Jolla
November 18  H. C. Urey  Some Chemical and Physical Properties of the Meteorites  University of California, Berkeley
November 19  H. C. Urey  Some Observations on the Origin of the Solar System  University of California, Berkeley
November 24  G. Kuiper  Moon Geodesy  Yerkes Observatory
December 1  Open  Satellite Geodesy  Griffith Observatory
December 8  R. Richardson  Mars