Hafter cites three functions of student government

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Student government has three functions. The most obvious is the bureaucratic operation of student services. The second is exercising student influence on University policy.

Third, and most significant, student governments should be the forum for discussion of the quality of University education and for the activation of campus opinion. The Student Senate, as the legislative organ of the Rice Student Association, functions in each of these areas.

The Student Association will continue to offer a number of student services in 1966-67. The boards and committees of the Student Association will be responsible for the operation of the Memorial Center program, the Rice Forum, Student flight to Europe, and an expanded curriculum study.

A special committee is now preparing a Student Discount Service which will include all Houston colleges and thereby bring new merchants under the system.

The international student program has been expanded this fall. More foreign students, particularly graduate students, will be exposed to undergraduate life and to the residential college system.

A student traffic appeals board for parking violations will be activated. The board will consist of on-campus, off-campus, and graduate students.

Academic Affairs

Bureaucratic services are the most tangible part of student government activities. But the S.A. and the colleges should not spend a disproportionate amount of time in providing services at the expense of more significant involvement in academic affairs.

Student appointments to University committees have been made by President Pitzer on the recommendation of the Student Association. Committees on which students will serve include Undergraduate Curriculum, Student Health, Campus Safety, and Religious Affairs.

Appointments to these committees, however, are no panacea. The quality of decisions which are made is far more important than who makes them. While participation has great potential, we must continue to examine the needs of the University through these and other channels.

Calendar Revisions

The calendar of the academic year demands revision. Extended reading periods before examinations will be proposed to the faculty council.

On a long range basis, a number of alternatives to the present system should be examined. The tri-semester system, for example, is particularly relevant to Rice since this plan enables students preparing for graduate and professional schools to receive a bachelor degree in less than three years.

Tuition and scholarship policy will be scrutinized. The university has committed itself to guarantee that financial need will not affect any student's ability to attend Rice. This policy must be interpreted broadly and fairly in all cases. A continuing evaluation will be undertaken in regard to repeated increases in tuition.

Curriculum Changes

University curriculum demands intensive study and recommendation. Rice has many good students, perhaps more than its academic quality justifies. Is the university challenging these students or is it stifling their capacities?

A complete revamping of curriculum is unnecessary, or at least it is an unrealistic goal for student action. But distinct improvements should be made in language and graduation requirements, and more unorthodox courses should occasionally be offered.

Three major innovations should be considered within the present academic system. One is a four course plan, either for two or four years, centered upon more comprehensive survey courses. This plan would introduce at Rice general education courses similar to those at Harvard and MIT.

A pass-fail grading system in courses taken outside a student's major field would alleviate the major reason that few Rice students are willing to experiment with their electives.

Community Commitments

The Student Association will increase its concern for community involvement. Rice students should be more involved in every level of community life, from social work to politics to cultural affairs.

The Student Association has initiated a Houston Council of Colleges, composed of Rice, University of Houston, Texas Southern University, University of St. Thomas, and Sacred Heart Dominican College. Joint speaker programs, student exchanges, social work projects, and social activities are planned, in addition to open meetings between student governments.

Rice has been elected to the regional directorship of the Texas Intercollegiate Student Association. Within TISA Rice has the image of an open academic society. To further the objectives of TISA a conference on Higher Education will be held in Houston in the spring.

Sister School

The Rice charity drive for 1966-67 will benefit the World University Service. We have a responsibility, however, for more than charity. We should investigate a sister university program with the student body of a foreign university.

From the forum of the Student Body we should examine the philosophy of the university. As demonstrated in the first two of a series of discussions last spring, there is an appalling lack of thought being given to the motivation of this university, to its role in the larger community, and to its priorities in undergraduate education.

Know Goals

What sort of experiments in education should we be undertaking? Do we know our goals as a university and are our decisions consistently directed to these goals?

Since the college system is one of the most important fixtures of undergraduate life at Rice, the first topic of discussion this year may be the college and its place in the university. What are its goals and is it achieving them? Are the colleges becoming the center of undergraduate education at Rice?

These are the areas in which the student body will be challenged this year. The Student Senate is far from an ideal place in which to deal with such matters, but it may be the place where they will be confronted most openly and effectively.