STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

Academic Freedom Endorsed

By BILL WHEATLEY

The idea of student involvement in university life was the subject for discussion at the Texas Intercollegiate Student Association Conference on Higher Education hosted by Baylor University at Waco February 10-12.

The assertion that students should be involved was not challenged, but the degree to which students should concern themselves with the workings of the university, and the manner in which this column should be expressed, were issues much discussed at the conference.

As one of three delegates from Rice, I saw two major accomplishments of the conference: first, two resolutions were adopted in the final plenary session; and second, the exchange of ideas in the discussion sessions served to test student opinion in preparation for the TISA Annual Conference to be held in Houston in March.

The first resolution, submitted by Baylor, supported “the integration of students into the policy-making processes of the university.” This could be interpreted to mean either that students have some sort of control over university policy or that students merely have a voice in the formation of policy.

The resolution is important in that it recognizes that students have a real interest in the workings of the university, and that an authentic student-faculty-administration relationship demands that student interests be heard and respected by the university administration. It is significant that this resolution was unanimously adopted by the delegates.

Academic Freedom

The Rice delegation initiated the second resolution, which endorsed the “statement on the Academic Freedom of Students” of the American Association of University Professors and recommended the adoption of its provisions in all member schools of the TISA.

While this resolution did not receive a unanimous vote of approval, no school voted against it. Those who abstained said that while they approved of the statement in principle, they could not go on record in favor of the AAUP statement because of political difficulties at their schools.

Not Policy

Resolutions adopted at this conference cannot be interpreted as official TISA policy because of constitutional restrictions placed on the conference.

TISA President Jim Jones of Trinity University expressed hope, however, that Baylor and Rice will resubmit the resolutions at the annual convention. If adopted by the convention, the resolutions would express official TISA policy.