BAKER PRESIDENT

On Senate ‘Prestige’

By FRANK JONES

The main topic of concern of various student leaders recently has been the Student Senate.

Gary Thom, President of Will Rice College, has maintained that the Senate’s primary responsibility should be the Homecoming Dance. He feels that the rest of the activities of this organization are just so much “busy-work.”

BOB CLARKE, Student Association President, seems to disagree with Thom on the value of the Student Senate. He feels that this body performs a very useful function and that the term “busy-work” is not applicable.

Dave Tilson, President of Hansen, in his discussion of Types A and B last week seemed to agree with both Thom and Clarke, while Griffin Smith, Editor of the Thresher, seems to be against everyone who disagrees with him.

I think that Thom has a valid point. Anyone who has ever attended the Wednesday night Senate meetings can easily understand his feelings. I disagree with him on one point, however, in that I feel the Senate can perform a number of very useful functions.

THUS FAR, no one has made any constructive suggestions for rectifying the disagreement that exists on the importance and functions of the Senate. I would like to try to fill that gap with the following proposals.

1) The college presidents should be removed from the Senate. Clarke disagrees with me on this in that he feels that this move will destroy much of the Senate’s prestige. This argument seems rather ridiculous since the college presidents offer some of the most vocal criticisms of the Senate and its functions.

Too, the college presidents oftentimes find themselves fairly well burdened with college functions, and the presidents are unable to attend. I often wonder too, how much prestige we college presidents really have to bring to the Senate.

AND FINALLY, at the moment, I question whether or not the Senate itself has any real prestige. A typical response from one of our college members when an activity of the Student Senate was being discussed, “Well, if the Senate’s handing it, it must be messed up!” How can an organization have less prestige than this?

2) The size of the Student Senate should be decreased. At present, there are three representatives from each college plus five “executive officers” who hold membership in the Senate.

WITH a body this large, it is often very hard to accomplish anything since each person feels he should have a say on every issue. I think that two persons from each college could ade-

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quate represent their various colleges.

3) And finally, I think that the Student Association President should take more effective control of the Senate. I have nothing personal against Clarke, however I think that he could do a lot to make the Senate a more effective organization.

IF HE SHOULD really take charge at the meetings, I think much of the busywork and repetitious discussion could be eliminated.

A good example of time wasted at a Senate meeting is the discussion of whether or not to change the meeting night of the Senate. After a few minutes of arguing, it was apparent that any meeting night other than Wednesday would offer a number of conflicts.

Yet, we spent another thirty minutes hassling this out. Clarke could easily have cut out much of this needless discussion and brought the measure to a vote. If items such as this were quickly dispatched, then the Senate would have more time to devote to other issues.

I FEEL that if any or all of these proposals are enacted the Senate can take a giant stride toward becoming an efficient, effective organization. Then, the Senate, as the official representative of the Rice Student body, can expand its activities into a number of those different fields suggested by Editor Smith in last week's Thresher.

As the Senate comes to effectively represent student opinion in these areas, it will be able to regain much of its lost prestige.