Student Senate Considers Abolition of Class Officers

By BILL LIEBLICH

The Rice Student Senate is currently studying a proposal to hold a constitutional referendum to discontinue the formal organization of classes at Rice University. This proposal, which includes the abolition of class officers and government, was brought up by Jim Bob Doty, president of Wiess College, at the Student Senate meeting last Wednesday, October 18.

AT THE SAME meeting, the Senate decided not to include the referendum on the November 1 election ballot, and decided to table the proposal to allow time for discussion of the question by the college cabinets. Doty, in an interview, stated that he believed the classes were no longer performing a unique or important function. Most of their activities are social, he said, and the colleges can more ably provide the University’s all-school social functions.

THE COLLEGES, Doty said, have a stronger feeling of pride than do the classes,” and the spirit of competition among the colleges will guarantee the high quality of all-school social functions.” He cited a few examples of class functions which could be performed by other means. The Junior class parent orientation program could be done quite competently by the Fellow-Mentor-Advisor groups in the various colleges; the handling of Senior class rings could be handled by a committee; and a Freshman representative to the Senate could be elected to serve the role currently filled by the Freshman Class president.

NOT ONLY are the classes unnecessary, Doty said, but they also have a negative effect. They can provide harmful competition to the colleges and use up valuable manpower, time, and money.

Doty mentioned as significant the fact that the past presidents of the class of 1962 (Charles Giraud, Barry Moore, and Jim Rhodes) are all in favor of his proposal. Their feelings are evidenced by the fact that all are very active in college government and that Giraud was chairman of a Senate committee which last spring made the same proposal Doty is now making.

THERE ARE questions concerning the abolition of class government which will be discussed by the cabinets and by the Senate. The questions include the possible destruction of class unity during undergraduate and alumni years, and the problems of developing an effective means of keeping off-campus students active and of filling their social needs.

Doty said it was probable that the Senate would approve the holding of a constitutional referendum and would schedule it far enough in advance to allow full consideration of the facts by the Rice student body.