Experience At Scona VII

‘Informative, Worthwhile’

By DOUG HARLAN

Take 200 college students—all loaded with information and vital interest in national affairs—bring them together—add a dash of speakers—spice with discussion groups—and the result is SCONA VII—the Student Conference on National Affairs held last weekend at Texas A&M for students from Southern colleges and universities.

Bob Clarke, Hanszen College, and Malcolm Butler, Baker College, both from the class of ’63, were the official representatives from Rice. Clarke and Butler were in company with 200 other leaders from 52 colleges and universities from the South, Southwest, Canada, and Mexico.

CLARKE AND Butler praised SCONA in the highest possible manner. Clarke reported, “Because of the variety of interests represented and the open-mindedness of the delegates, high quality of the speakers and discussion group leaders, it proved to be the most informative and worthwhile experience I have ever had.”

Butler remarked that the “spirit of discussion was give-and-take learning rather than narrow-minded debate. Political views are worthless if not somewhat malleable and subject to evolution. The delegates sought to inform themselves rather than attack the tenets of contrasting views.” He added, with a smile, “It was delightfully liberal in general, too.”

CLARKE LIKED the serious attitude of the delegates and remarked that the convention involved a lot of work—in fact from 8:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. He felt SCONA was important because of the wide group of people from all over the U. S. and foreign countries who consistently reflected the viewpoint of their area. Clarke said, “It was interesting to see the foreign reaction to our ideas.”

“I found through discussion that the general flow of ideas at Rice is relatively free as compared to other campuses, but the academic pressure here exerts much more force than elsewhere and thus somewhat restricts political expression,” stated Butler. He also remarked that it was interesting to note how politics may be reduced to questions of expediency.

Both Rice delegates enjoyed the speakers (ranging from U. S. F.L. lobbyist Showalter), the delegates, Hubert Humphrey to A. Bates, and discussions. They were impressed by the overall awareness of the delegates at SCONA, and were most pleased with the results of their “roundtables” in which 20 to 30 delegates discussed national problems with the various dignitaries at SCONA.