Freshmen’s Reactions Mixed After First Round Of Tests

By SANDY COYNER

Rice freshmen remain optimistic and undaunted after their first round of tests. Comments ranged from “rough” or “sneaky” to “soporific,” but in general the tests were “not unreasonable” or “not as hard as expected.” Although most expect bad grades, freshmen blame their own study habits rather than impossible tests.

A SOMETHAT facetious comment of one freshman girl: “Since I failed both, I do not think they were accurate tests of my knowledge.”

General criticisms of tests concerned primarily length. Courses and exams are both comprehensive. The tests are thought to be too long, requiring more time than allotted. Another criticism is that on some tests no thinking is required, only the necessity to “scope out the prof.” Freshmen decry the ridiculous amounts of “studying” that are cutting out sleep.

THE BIOLOGY exam received most vicious criticisms. In this test “you can’t think or you’ll fail.” “You march in, regurgitate facts memorized from jock sheets, and turn in the test unfinished.” The test is too long; “you have to study the old tests to understand the questions.” Because the test requires no original thought, it has been termed asinine. It is too long, not hard, but “tough for good students who write slowly.”

History 110 is another test that required fast writing. The absence of “problems” to solve by using more knowledge caused some comment about “better history tests in high school.” The test required no thinking, but a “memorized outline.” The question was the “obvious” one, “logical, excellent.”

THE QUESTION was generally considered, however, too large to cover completely; hitting the proper points required organization. (There was also some concern that the lectures were not as organized as they seemed.) Comment varied, but many students recognize that the test “was not a regurg; it demanded organization.” Although no thinking could be done during the test (no time), it required much thought beforehand in trying to figure out the question.

Physics and Math 100 were considered by many students “Mickey Mouse.” Some SE’s considered physics a trivial test and a trivial course. Criticism alternated between a “fair” test, and one where “you could get a good grade without a real grasp of the material.” The test required students to think through processes.

THE MATH 100 was not as hard as expected. It was “sneaky,” because the type of question asked had never been discussed in class; consequently, students with a background in calculus were distinctly favored. Most students had been looking toward math with terror, grounded in spotty understanding of epsilon and delta.

History 100 was a “good test that required thinking.” It was hard and creative. “The fairest I’ve had.” It was a broad question; “I could answer it;” it allowed latitude. The test was “not as demanding as the review.”

BOTH HUMANITIES tests were “fair; good,” though not simple. Math 200 was “good, I liked it.”

Some freshmen were unnerved, by the fact that the tests all came within a short period of time; some, however, thought the timing was good. “I liked having it before the Texas game—it leaves the weekend free.” Many appreciated tests soon after the beginning of classes. It helped “slap us into line;” “now we know how to study.”