

RICE UNIVERSITY VOTER GUIDE

*****NOTE TO PARTICIPANTS: THIS VOTER GUIDE HAS BEEN COMPILED SOLELY FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES AND IS NOT INTENDED TO REFLECT THE VIEWS OF RICE UNIVERSITY OR OF THE RESEARCHERS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS STUDY. IT ALSO IS NOT INTENDED TO DEPICT REAL PEOPLE. *****

Candidates for Hardest Double-major at Rice

Questions:

- **What kind of coursework is done?**
- **How rigid are the curricular requirements?**
- **What kind of skills are required or developed?**

Mechanical Engineering (Statistics)

- Coursework largely entails problem sets that contain a set of problems or questions that must be completed. Problem sets are generally assigned on a regular basis. There are also regularly scheduled tests and exams that largely consist of free-response problems and multiple-choice

style questions. The coursework also requires computer programming and presentations both orally and written in higher-level courses.

- The curriculum is largely dictated by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) and consists of a large number required courses that must be taken in a sequence as classes build off of pre-requisites. There is only a limited amount of time for exploring subjects outside of the required coursework.
- Students are required to develop programming, problem solving, and presentation skills as required by ABET.

Math

(Physics)

- Coursework is made up of extensive problem sets and exams. In assignments, students are expected to use a methodical approach to move from the initial statement and assumptions through a logical process to arrive at an answer. Use of software packages is required for some coursework but the coursework largely consists of paper and pencil. Labs are also required.
- Outside of a basic and very rigid sequence of classes, students are free to choose from a wide selection of upper-level courses and generally have time in their schedule to pursue other interests. There are some constraints on such pursuits due to regularly scheduled labs.
- Students are required to develop extensive problem solving and deductive reasoning skills.

English

(Philosophy)

- Coursework is made up of an extensive amount of reading and writing. Long articles and books provide the material for critical analysis and the writing of essays. Essays take the form of both more creative writing and in the form of analysis papers. Extensive discussions are required and presentations are expected in many of the courses
- After a few introductory courses and with the exception of a senior capstone, there is a fair amount of flexibility. Block requirements whereby students are required to take a few courses from a careful selection of courses provide some additional structure. Largely, students are free to design and shape their coursework by taking the classes that most appeal to them.
- Students are expected to develop excellent reading, writing, analysis, discussion, and speaking skills through their coursework.

Candidates for Easiest course distribution classification

Questions:

- **What is the breadth of the offerings?**

- **What kind of work do the classes generally require?**
- **How difficult is it to get into the classes?**

I (Humanities)

- Offerings span from the foreign languages to English to History and even to skill-based subjects in the Visual and Dramatic Arts. This provides a variety of offerings as depending on what kind of coursework the student prefers.
- The classes require a variety of coursework from extensive reading and writing in English and in History while others require such as the foreign languages require more memorization of discrete chunks of information. The Visual and Dramatic Arts provide some variety as the focus is on presentations, performances, and the production of projects.
- Specific classes can be very difficult to get into based on the small class sizes that most maintain. Overall, it is easy for students to find some course that fits with their schedule as there are a large number of distribution-satisfying courses that are offered at a wide variety of times.

II (Social Sciences)

- Offerings span the various arenas of human interaction and thus the focus can have a more mathematical approach as in Economics, a more biological look as in the cognitive offerings in Psychology, or a more qualitative look as is done in all of the domains. There are also offerings that take a descriptive approach as well as those that take a normative approach, describing how humans should given a set of assumptions.
- Classes generally require a heavy load of memorization, especially at the lower levels where most of the distribution classes are. This is a product of the way each domain has developed their own extensive and very specific vocabulary. In conjunction with this, tests and exams play a large role in most of the courses. Some courses, especially within Economics, require the application of math to social interactions and thus problem sets may be required.
- Most of the introductory classes are large and in lecture halls. These introductory classes are usually required for higher-level work and it can be difficult to get into them due to high-demand and a relatively sparse number of sections of the introductory courses being offered.

III (Natural Sciences and Engineering)

- Offerings span very widely from the biological sciences to mathematics to computer science and various forms of applied mathematics. Courses generally focus on understanding and manipulating the surrounding world from the atomic scale all the way up to the galactic scale.
- The coursework is highly varied, as some courses require extensive memorization while others are very project based. Long problem sets are the norm for many of the courses and comprehensive tests are usually major components of the courses. There are few papers or presentations at the lower-levels where most of the distribution-qualifying courses are.

- The largest classes are Rice are found in this distribution class and thus there is usually room in the classrooms for all interested students. These large classes are usually for those seeking to continue their studies in the natural sciences and engineering. There are also smaller courses that seek to cater to those students whose primary focus is not in this distribution although those classes tend to be filled quickly.

Candidates for most impactful campus organization

Questions:

- **What is the breadth of the offerings?**
- **How accessible is the programming?**
- **What is the flagship program or event?**
- **What is the relationship to other campus organizations and student clubs?**

Leadership Rice

- Leadership Rice provides classes focused primarily on the theory of leadership and effective communication along with summer-long experiences and funding for selected student ideas and projects. The organization also strives to bring in speakers that can speak to the student body. There has been a recent push to provide more programming, specifically during adviser training and orientation week.
- The summer-long experience known as the Summer Mentorship Experience (SME) is highly competitive and selective as is the Envision Grant that provides funding for student projects. The classes are not selective but there is a limited selection and demand usually exceeds supply. Any and all interested students usually can attend the speaker events.
- The flagship program is the Summer Mentorship Experience which matches selected students with organizations and Leadership Rice ensures that each participant is given meaningful responsibility in the organization with which they work and that they have a mentor in the upper echelons of the organization. Students are given a stipend in excess of the costs of living.
- Leadership Rice works with some campus organizations to provide support or guidance but largely they focus on their own programming. They do not have especially deep connections with student organizations and clubs.

Community Involvement Center

- The Community Involvement Center provides both long and short-term experiences during the academic year and during the summer. It also provides a volunteer opportunity fair and a career fair along with awards for individuals nominated for exceptional service. It is also the overarching organization for all student service clubs.
- Most students can become involved in some way in CIC programming given their oversight role over all student service clubs. Other programming, including the Alternative Spring Break

program and their summer programs are far more competitive and demand usually exceeds supply.

- The flagship program is often seen as the Alternative Spring Break program that has student trip leaders design service trips and select a team to travel over spring break to volunteer. Trip opportunities span the spectrum of social issues. There is a heavy focus on fundraising to reduce the cost paid by each participant and there is a large focus on developing strong group dynamics and on reflecting upon the service rendered.
- The CIC has an extensive relationship with many organizations and student clubs on campus. As mentioned, they serve as the overarching organization for all student service clubs and their community service grants provide a significant portion of the annual funding for service clubs. The CIC leadership also meets regularly with service club leadership to provide feedback, direction, and guidance. They also work with various departments on campus that are seeking to address social issues.

Candidates for most effective number of advisors per o-week group

Questions:

- **What is the rationale behind that number of advisors?**
- **Which college(s) utilizes that number of advisors?**
- **What are the secondary effects associated with the number?**

2 Advisors

- Having only two advisors allows for a closer connection between the advisors and gives more responsibility to them. Having only two also streamlines the sharing of responsibility as tasks are divided between only two people. The most important aspect is that having only two advisors is supposed to encourage a closer connection between the new students and each advisor.
- Wiess is the only college that utilizes only two advisors, which they call fellows. One of the fellows is from Wiess and the other is from another college. The Wiess fellow chooses their co-fellow.
- With this system, the administrative and financial burden is reduced. Wiess is able to pay for the housing of their advisors in part due to the fact that they have twelve fewer advisors than most other colleges. All of the other variable costs like common reading books and food are reduced as well. The coordinators are also able to do more with the whole advising team due to the relatively low number of people.

3 Advisors

- The primary rationale is that this provides a balance between providing a diverse set of resources and sources of support for the new students while not inundating them with advisors.

One advisor can often be either recovering or focusing on some other task while the other two are with the group. Having three also allows there to be more personalization of the experience as O-week groups can break into smaller sub-groups.

- All the colleges with the exception of Wiess and Sid Richardson utilize a system of three advisors. Two of the advisors are from the college and one is from another college.
- The larger number of advisors per group makes some parts of O-week much faster, including move-in. Also, the coordinators are able to temporarily remove an advisor from a group to help them with some task without a significant negative impact. Unfortunately, the additional personnel also result in additional costs being accrued.

4 Advisors

- The primary objective of four advisors is to provide as diverse and as many resources for the new students as possible. This also allows for a significant amount of sharing of responsibility and it is possible to break into two smaller groups with two advisors each very easily. Each group can also accomplish a lot more in the way of making or doing things for the new students.
- Sid Richardson is the only college that utilizes this system.
- The O-week groups can be bigger but it is administratively burdensome, as four individuals have to be on the same page.

Candidates for servery most in need of a new head chef

Questions:

- **How much of the student population is served?**
- **What is the servery currently known for?**
- **What is the current perception of the quality of food offered?**

East Servery

- East Servery serves as the primary servery for Will Rice and Lovett with plans for it to serve as the primary servery for Sid Richardson in the near to mid-term future. It also serves as the primary servery for Baker, Sid Richardson, Hanszen, and Wiess on Saturdays and during holidays.
- East Servery is known for its regular offering of crepes and efficient omelet line.
- The current perception is that East provides a good selection of food during the week but provides a very poor selection on the weekends when the servery becomes the primary servery for other colleges. Its focus is on the entrees and grill station while retaining a very poor offering of fruit and limited sandwich-making capabilities.

West Servery

- West serves as the primary servery for Duncan and McMurtry and often gets a fair bit of extra traffic during the week due to its proximity to the academic quad, specifically Duncan Hall.
- The servery is well known for its pizza offerings that are prepared in special ovens.
- West Servery is seen as a quality servery, vying for the best multi-college servery on campus. It has a wide variety of options and they tend to be more positively received than negatively. Their standing options in the way of sandwiches, fruit, and salad are not quite as good as other serveries but West still provides a wealth of options.

Candidates for most effective inter-college bonding event

Questions:

- **With what frequency and when do such events happen?**
- **What do you the events largely consist of?**

Public Parties

- Public parties occur on a regular frequency with about half of the Saturdays each semester having one such event. The events almost always take place at the same time, starting at 10pm on Saturday and ending at 2am on Sunday. Select events occur with a slightly different time frame and/or begin on Friday.
- Public parties usually involve a DJ and a dance floor area in the commons of the hosting college. There is also a theme that provides the inspiration for the decorations and for some of the attire that people wear. There is also a bar serving alcoholic beverages and then there is a selection of food, usually pizza and small snacks, and non-alcoholic beverages like soda.

Intercollegiate picnics

- There are usually a couple of these events per semester. They usually occur during dinnertime, approximately 5pm to 7pm on a weekday night.
- The intercollegiate picnics usually have some special offering of food either at Founder's Court or on the IM fields. To encourage people to come out, the serveries are closed during such events. At some of the picnics, t-shirts or other items will be given away and the Student Association usually has some presence in order to promote some other event or initiative.

Candidates for type of apparel rice should provide more of

Questions:

- **What are the issues surrounding the piece of merchandise?**

T-shirts

- T-shirts are a staple of every college student's wardrobe and thus it is not a piece of apparel that is specific to any one group. There is also a lot of real estate on t-shirts thus allowing for more elaborate designs. They are also very cheap when compared to other types of apparel.

Hats

- Hats are a type of apparel that is not typically given to Rice students. An adjustable strap allows for only one or two sizes to fit almost every student's head size. It is also an accessory item that students can add to what they are normally wearing and that they can easily remove if they desire.

Candidates for artist to perform at rice**Questions:**

- **What type of music do they typically play and what are some examples?**

Rascal Flatts

- Rascal Flatts is a country band with a more modern-pop sound. Some of their most well known singles include "Bless the Broken Road", "What Hurts the Most", and "My Wish".

Kesha

- Kesha is an American pop singer who incorporates many modern technological advances in music into her songs. Her most well known songs are "Tik Tok" and "We R Who We R".

Candidates for best operating system**Questions:**

- **What are the main benefits associated with the operating system?**

Mac OS X

- Mac OS X is Apple's flagship desktop and laptop operating system. It incorporates support for touch-based gestures. It also has historically few problems with viruses or malware. It is known for being very stable, highly usable, and fast due in part to the fact that the hardware that OS X

runs on is made by Apple as well.

Windows 7

- Windows 7 is Microsoft's desktop and laptop operating system. Microsoft operating systems have the largest market share and there are benefits associated with that. A lot of software, especially high-end technical packages and games can only run on Windows. It is also highly customizable and modifiable.

Candidates for best rice public party

Questions:

- **When and where is the party hosted?**
- **What is the party known for?**

NOD

- NOD (Night of Decadence) is held over the final weekend in October. This means it roughly coincides with Halloween. The party is hosted by Wiess College.
- The party is known for being the most well-attended public party on campus, the only one that charges admission, and the one with the least attire. Partygoers typically wear very little clothing. It is also the most expensive party on campus and is the only party that inspires alternative events in NODgeball and NOI (Night of Innocence).

80s

- The party is typically during the middle to early part of the fall semester although this is very dependent upon various scheduling concerns. The party is hosted by Sid Richardson College.
- The party is well known for its consistent theme and the presence of a live-band that plays well-known songs from the 1980s. It is the only public party that hires a live-band to perform.

Candidates for college you would most want to be a member of

Questions:

- **What makes the college unique?**
- **What does the college provide for the student body?**
- **What are the living arrangements?**

Wiess

- Wiess is known for being different from the other colleges. Wiess traditionally does not have themes, for O-week or for Beer Bike. It also has a different O-week. There are only two advisors, called fellows, per group and two coordinators, called head fellows. The college government is also relatively unique as the executive and legislative authority is centralized into one body and the Chief Justice is not elected by direct election.
- Wiess hosts the largest and most well known public party, the Night of Decadence (NOD). It also hosts cultural events, namely Salsa Night in the fall and Jazz Night in the spring. Also, in the spring Wiess hosts Jamfest. Finally, endowments overseen and directed by the Wiess Masters provide opportunities for student project funding through the Dr. Bill Grant and for extended summer travel through the Parish Fellowship.
- Wiess has a building constructed in 2001 that features outdoor balconies and the rooms are largely 4-person suites. There are a large number of specialty rooms incorporated into the college, including the dance room and recording studio, beyond the traditional features of every college. The entire college encloses a central quad known as the Acabowl.

Brown

- Brown is well known for the features of their college that encourage a close-knit community. Most notably, this includes a very strong floor culture. This floor culture and associated representatives forms the foundation of the legislative body of the college. Finally, Brown O-week is known for an event known as Grubel that involves the advisors waking up the new students very early in the morning and putting them through a series of challenges.
- Brown hosts one of the largest public parties every spring, Bacchanalia. Brown also has hosted Margaritaville in the fall although that it is not as steady of tradition as Bacchanalia. Brown also puts a focus on conducting bonding events with other colleges.
- Brown has a diverse offering of living arrangements due in part to the fact that the various wings of the college were constructed at different times. The old wing has doubles and singles that are attached to interior hallways with community bathrooms. The new wing, constructed in 2003, contains 4-person suites that open onto balconies.

Candidates for best fast-food restaurant

Questions:

- **What kind of food is offered?**
- **How accessible is the restaurant for Rice students?**
- **How affordable are the options?**

Subway

- The food offerings largely consist of hand-made sandwiches made the time of purchase.

Customers have a large number of options and are able to personalize their sandwich to a large extent. Most sandwiches have one or more of the traditional assortment of deli meats.

- There is a franchise right inside the Medical Center and is a five-minute walk from Entrance 5. This means that it is within walking distance for all students.
- Sandwiches range from roughly \$3 for a six-inch sub on up to \$7 for a foot-long. There is also a selection of \$5 foot-long sandwiches. Adding a drink and a side adds \$2 to the cost of the meal

Chick-fil-A

- The food largely consists of chicken products, usually fried. They offer chicken sandwiches, fingers, and nuggets. They are also well known for their fries, iced tea, and lemonade. In addition, they offer wraps and salads.
- There are numerous locations in Houston but all locations require a drive. They are close enough to campus that the drive is short.
- Some individual sandwiches cost just under \$3 while other orders run from \$5 to \$6. Adding a drink and fries adds about \$2 to the cost.

Candidates for residential college most in need of renovations

Questions:

- **What is the current age of the housing?**
- **What are the current problems and perception of the housing?**

Hanszen College

- Old Section was some of the first on-campus housing available as it was called West Hall and thus it pre-dates the residential colleges. New Section was built in the late 50s as the residential colleges were just beginning.
- Old Section is commonly seen as the higher quality housing available at Hanszen as the bulk of the issues are with New Section. New Section has had issues with rats, as covered by the Thresher, and most recently, with mold. Students in New Section often have to deal with issues and challenges that those at other colleges and even those in Old Section do not have to face.

Lovett College

- Lovett College still resides in the original building that was built in 1968. They also now have additional housing in a former section of Baker that was transferred to Lovett.
- The most striking feature of Lovett housing is the relatively unaesthetic exterior that is often

compared to a toaster. The additional housing that use to be a part of Baker faces away from the rest of the college. The college also runs into issues typically associated with older buildings including plumbing issues.

Candidates for movie to be shown in the rmc

Questions:

- **What is the subject matter of the movie?**
- **What lessons are in the movie?**
- **What was the critical reception of the movie?**

The Lion King

- The Lion King's story centers around the coming of age of a lion prince who is betrayed by those close to him. The movie is animated and is purely fictional. It involves anthropomorphizing as the characters are all animals but are given human speech and emotions.
- The Lion King's principal lessons surround the importance of the journey and on the importance of self-awareness. It shows how problems and despair should not be seen as issues that must be avoided or ignored but rather as issues that should be overcome and combatted. The movie also provides a lesson on the importance of friendship and how it can and should cut across traditional divides and differences.
- The movie was very well received by critics and is as seen as a central film in the Disney Renaissance. It is one of the most highly regarded and popular animated films that Disney has produced.

Candidates for best non-traditional study space

Questions:

- **What is the primary function of the space?**
- **How available and accessible is the space?**
- **What kinds of seating options are available?**

Brochstein Pavilion

- The Pavilion is primarily a small coffee and snack shop. Some people, especially professors, will choose to grab lunch from here as well. The space is designed for people drinking their coffee and for people to have meetings.
- The Pavilion is centrally located next to Fondren Library and is thus accessible for most students. There is a large quantity of available seating although the interior is locked when the coffee shop closes which means it is only open part of the time. The exterior seating is subject

to the elements and becomes unusable in the rain.

- There are a large number of small tables designed for one to four people both inside and outside that provide the bulk of the seating. There are also lower coffee tables designed for people reading or drinking coffee.

Residential College Commons

- The commons of each college is designed primarily for meals. The commons provide a place for members of the community to congregate and socialize. They are also often used for events, including public parties and college-specific events.
- College commons are open all the time although all commons are locked at nights and on weekends. Select colleges lock their commons at all times although they remain accessible to members of the college with their college key. Members of other colleges are usually forced to go to a specific entrance to use their ID card.
- The seating varies slightly but almost always consists of standard dining height tables designed to seat roughly eight people. Some colleges have other type of seating in their commons including couches and padded chairs.

Candidates for number of lpaps that should be required

Questions:

- **What is the rationale for that number?**

0 LPAPs

- Rice students are both already in good physical shape on average and have very busy schedules. The LPAP (Lifetime Physical Activity Program) requirement places a burden on students while failing to improve the physical well being of students. LPAPs often conflict with academic and other extracurricular ambitions due to the time in class they require and thus they run in opposition to the goals of the university and of students.

1 or more LPAPs

- Rice has a mission to develop its students holistically and LPAPs are an integral part of encouraging and supporting every student's physical well being. Through the courses, students get exposure to a supportive environment for maintaining health and wellness while undertaking activities that are not necessarily mainstream in the United States.

Candidates for number of bikers per race for beer bike

Questions:

- **What is the rationale for that number?**

5-7 Bikers

- Having only five to seven racers per college per race would allow for faster racers and limit the races to more experienced riders. Some colleges have difficulty finding qualified riders and this deficiency results in inexperienced riders being placed into a potentially dangerous situation. The races would also take less time and thus encourage more students to stick around and watch all of the races.

8-10 Bikers

- This range allows for a fairly large pool of people from each college to ride. It allows more people to participate and experience the races. It also makes the race more tactical as colleges have to order their roster just right to remain in a good position throughout the race. This is also the more traditional number of bikers.

Candidates for rpc event that should receive greater funding**Questions:**

- **When does the event typically occur?**
- **How accessible is the event?**
- **What does the event typically consist of?**

Esperanza

- Esperanza is the traditional homecoming dance and thus typically occurs during homecoming week in the fall. The event is from 10pm to 2am the next morning.
- Traditionally, the space for Esperanza has been able to hold between 600 and 1000 people. In some years the supply of space has not met the demand of students and thus people have been unable to attend. Also, although the venue is usually not within walking distance, it is either possible to get there via the metro and/or by provided busing. Tickets usually cost \$10-\$20.
- The event is typically a dance complete with a DJ, a dance-floor, and light snack and beverage options. In recent years, the push has been to have the dance at an interesting or non-traditional venue such as Minute Maid Park.

Willy Week

- Willy Week occurs over one week in the spring, usually some time in March. Events occur

throughout the week although the most well known events are the Beer Debates, International Beer Night, and Beer Bike on the culminating Saturday.

- All students are able to participate in the events and most of the student body attends, or in some way partakes in, the marquee event, Beer Bike. It is all on campus and the only charge is for college-specific Beer Bike shirts that are required to participate in the campus-wide water balloon fight.
- As noted above, there are the Beer Debates and International Beer Night during the week but most of the focus is on Beer Bike. Beer Bike activities vary slightly by college although most wake up early to have a college celebration that is followed by a campus-wide water balloon fight. The namesake of the event then occurs in the early afternoon as colleges cheer on their bike and chug teams at the bike track.

Candidates for varsity sport to be added to rice

Questions:

- **What kind of facilities does the sport require?**
- **What are the basics of the sport?**

Lacrosse

- Lacrosse is played on any standard soccer-sized field
- Ten person teams use metal sticks with a net attached to the end to pass a rubber ball through the air and score by throwing the ball into a net.

Field Hockey

- Field Hockey can be played on any standard soccer-sized field.
- Eleven person teams attempt to score by using a stick to push or hit a ball along the ground and into a net.

Candidates for homecoming performer

Questions:

- **What are the main features of a performance put on by the type of performer?**

Magician

- Magicians that perform for adult crowds are different from the ones that perform for child parties. Their performances often contain stunts and tricks that appear very dangerous and/or

involve elaborate technical systems.

Comedian

- Comedians that are hired by universities are typically stand-up comedians who rely on little more than a microphone. Some comedians incorporate props while others incorporate a lot of audience participation while others focus more on giving a string of jokes.

Candidates for best student-run business

Questions:

- **What does the business sell?**
- **How accessible is the business?**
- **Who does the business cater to?**

The Hoot

- The Hoot sells pizza from Papa John's along with a wide assortment of candy and chips. It also sells Chick-fil-A sandwiches and nuggets everyday except for Sunday when honey butter chicken biscuits from Whataburger are sold instead.
- The Hoot has two locations, one in West Served and one in South Served. This means that the Hoot is within a five-minute walk of every on-campus student. It is open from 10pm to 2am every night except for Saturday.
- The business provides late-night food and thus it caters almost exclusively to on-campus undergraduate students.

Coffeehouse

- Coffeehouse is most well known for their coffee although they also sell tea, Italian soda, a variety of specialty and blended drinks, along with a selection of snack and breakfast options.
- Coffeehouse is centrally located in the Student Center that makes it very accessible for anyone who happens to be in the academic portion of campus. It is also only a short five to ten-minute walk from the colleges. Their hours change but they usually open in the morning and stay open until the evening or late at night.
- Coffeehouse is designed to serve the entire Rice community. Professors and students frequent the business. It is also a common spot for visitors to stop at during their stay on campus.

Proposition 1

Shall the Esther Waitlist System become a mandatory feature of all classes at Rice?

Explanation

The Office of the Registrar instituted a system for a small select number of classes for fall 2011 registration that allowed students who were not able to get into the course because of the enrollment cap to place themselves on a waitlist. Then as students dropped, the next person on the waitlist would be offered the chance to enroll. If they chose not to or waited more than 24 hours to respond, the offer was extended to the next person on the waitlist. For spring 2012 registration, every teacher had the option to add the waitlist to his or her course. The one caveat, the instructor cannot circumvent the waitlist with a special registration form.

ARGUMENTS FOR

- Prevents students from “cheating” the system by getting students with a high number of hours to reserve spots for them.
- Makes it such that students do not have to continually check to see whether a spot has opened up.
- Overall, it levels the playing field.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST

- Removes the ability for students to plead their case to the professor and therefore demonstrate their interest.
- The process can take a long time as students can take a full twenty-four hours to respond. This can leave students with no time before the add deadline.

Proposition 2

Shall the gsa continue to be included in residential college sports competitions and thus remain eligible to win the president’s cup?

Explanation

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) currently competes against the residential colleges in sports competitions. They are a member of the leagues and thus can win points towards getting the President’s Cup which recognizes the student group, college or GSA, that had the most success at sports the previous year.

ARGUMENTS FOR

- Sports help to bring graduate students into the culture and life of the campus.
- The GSA represents a large portion of the student body and thus a competition among the student body would not be complete without them.
- They do not have enough interest to have a sports league of their own.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST

- The GSA has an unfair advantage because of their substantially larger pool of students and because they are usually older and are able to field former Division I athletes.
- The GSA is not a college and therefore it is counter-intuitive for them to take part in residential college.

Proposition 3

Shall Rice support a proposed educational exemption of the drinking age?

Explanation

Recently, there has been a push by some across the country to establish an educational exemption to the current legal drinking age of 21. This exemption would allow individuals enrolled in an institution of higher learning to consume alcohol at designated events and places on the campus of the institution that they attend.

ARGUMENTS FOR

- The current situation forces institutions to walk a line between protecting their students and enforcing the law given the prevalence of under-age drinking on campus.
- Currently, some students do not seek help when they need it for fear of prosecution.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST

- This would create a very complicated system, as institutions of higher learning would become safe havens for otherwise illicit activity.
- The law is the law and universities should have to follow it.

Proposition 4

Shall there be an amendment to the rice alcohol policy that institutes a permanent ban on hard alcohol (defined as 40 proof and above) on Rice campus?

Explanation

In the fall of 2010 and the spring of 2011, there was a significant rise in the severity and number of incidents with alcohol. In response, a probation was put in place on hard liquor as it was identified as a contributing factor in many of the most egregious incidents. Specific rules varied by residential college but most colleges in some way banned anything 40 proof and above. The probation has since been lifted.

ARGUMENTS FOR

- Hard alcohol is incredibly dangerous and it has been shown to be a driving force behind very serious alcohol incidents on campus. The health of the study body depends on removing hard alcohol.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST

- For students to learn how to deal with freedom they need freedoms with which to experiment.
- It is not the substance that is the issue but rather the risky and reckless drinking culture. This should be addressed instead of trying to remove the substance.

Proposition 5

Shall there be a twelfth residential college built to allow for increased student enrollment?

Explanation

There has been a push by some stakeholders at Rice including students, alumni, and members of the Board of Trustees who believe it is in Rice's best interest to increase in size which would entail building a twelfth residential college.

ARGUMENTS FOR

- For Rice to have more of an impact it needs to produce more graduates and thus it needs to be able to support higher enrollment.
- More students would allow for more diversity and more opportunity for students to find others who can support them in their ambitions and interests.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST

- At the present level of enrollment, the facilities and services of the university are already stretched to their limit and have arguably broken. Some students are unable to get into classes that they need and professors have to limit enrollment in their courses due to the lack of availability of larger rooms. Student services are similarly over-extended.
- The larger the student body, the less there is a sense of community and the more each student becomes a face in the crowd.

Proposition 6

Shall the first floor of the library be re-modeled to make it into more of a social studying space?

Explanation

Many universities have remodeled the first floor of their libraries into a more social studying location with televisions, couches, and more comfortable chairs. The Rice remodel would be similar and it would remove the books from the first floor and replace them with the aforementioned items. The first floor would also no longer be a designated quiet space.

ARGUMENTS FOR

- A more social studying space in the library would better address the needs and desires of the students and help to foster more community.
- The resources that students use more often, namely computers, would become more of the focal point.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST

- There are already more than enough social studying places on campus, principally at the individual colleges and thus this is unnecessary.
- The purpose of a library is for the pursuit of knowledge and this should remain as the focus.