

BAKER HOUSE DINING REPORT 2007

THE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BAKER HOUSE DINING COMMITTEE ON
THE BAKER HOUSE DINING SYSTEM AND MIT RESIDENTIAL DINING

To Baker House, the MIT Dining Office, the MIT Division of Student Life, and the MIT Community

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INTRODUCTION:

The Baker House Dining Committee (BHDC) has completed its review of the effectiveness of the current dining system and the value of the Preferred Dining Membership (PDM) program for Baker Residents. The BHDC began this evaluation after the fall semester, the first in which all classes in Baker were required to participate in the PDM program. The Committee gathered information from student input in the form of a dorm-wide survey and from the raw ticket data provided by the Office of Campus Dining (OCD). Presented here is the committee’s evaluation of the current MIT Dining System, the committee’s evaluation of the proposed plan from the MIT Dining Office, and the committee’s dining recommendations for Baker House, and a broad set of recommendations for residential dining at MIT.

GOALS OF THE REPORT:

- Evaluate the Preferred Dining Membership program
- Evaluate the 75 Meal Plan program proposed by the OCD
- Present the results of the dorm-wide dining survey
- Evaluate the current usage of Baker Dining by Baker House residents
- Make recommendations for changes to the dining system in Baker

HISTORY OF DINING:

The MIT Residential Dining Program has been inconsistent over the last two decades. Undergoing several changes ranging from the closing of dining halls to the creation of mandatory meal plans, little has remained constant except for the system’s unprofitability. A Tech article from 2001 (Tech1) summarizes the evolution of campus dining. The OCD tried to create a mandatory meal plan system until 1993, but the negative response from students forced the administration to stop the program. Following the cancellation of a mandatory meal

plan, the sole vendor at the time, Aramark, suggested closing Baker Dining due to its unprofitability. The BHDC at that time (1993) conducted a student-run program to increase use of the dining hall, which kept Baker Dining in operation (TECH2) by increasing the dining hall's solvency. Around 2002, (Tech3) MIT dissolved the Aramark monopoly and contracted residential dining to Bon Appétit and Sodexo for 5 years with potential 3 year extensions. The Preferred Dining Membership (PDM) program was initiated in fall 2002.

Financially, MIT Residential Dining has been unprofitable for the last two decades. A tech article in 2001(Tech4) states that the MIT OCD suffered losses of \$2 Million in the 2001 fiscal year. In 2007, the OCD has claimed losses of \$500,000 (Tech5). The contractual agreement between MIT and Bon Appétit has not been published and so its terms have largely remained unknown to the MIT community. The only contractual agreement that is known to the BHDC is that MIT covers all of Bon Appétit's losses and provides an additional percentage to keep Bon Appétit's business "sustainable." In spite of continued dining hall losses, the administration has opened new dining halls on campus. The two most recent openings are McCormick and Pritchett, which are less profitable than other residential dining locations and account for a large percentage of the department's losses.

The MIT OCD, led by Richard Berlin, has championed the use of competition and variety in campus dining. Introducing competition into the market has been an effective tool in improving the dining options on campus, as evidenced by the success of recent additions in the Student Center. However, the competitive methodology has not been incorporated into the residential dining hall system. Rather than replace the unprofitable and non-competitive residential programs with variety and competitive vendorship, the new vendors in these residential spaces are similarly non-competitive.

Berlin has also tried to install mandatory meal plans in order to make MIT more attractive to outside vendors (TECH6). However, student resistance has forced Berlin unable to carry out a full mandatory plan, and he claims that the OCD will not attempt to institute such a plan on campus (TECH7). The OCD has also tried to broadly incorporate student input into the decision making process for on-campus dining. This was most clearly evident in student surveys

that resulted in the addition of Anna's Taqueria and Dunkin Donuts to the Student Center. However, the same approach has not been taken towards the residential dining hall system. Decisions, specifically involving the Preferred Dining Membership (PDM), were made by the Campus Dining Advisory Board which consisted of 4 students, 11 administrators, and a Housemaster from a dorm without a dining hall (CDAB). This board appears to have been active only from 2003-2004. Although Berlin has flatly denied any intention to slowly set the stage for mandatory dining, the dining experiment proposed to Baker House (**DININGEXP**) actually included a mandatory dining plan extension. Secrecy and the lack of meaningful, broad student input have led to skepticism surrounding the recent residential dining activity.

HISTORY OF PREFERRED DINING MEMBERSHIP (PDM) AT BAKER HOUSE:

Baker was first approached about the PDM program in the Spring of 2003. The Baker House Executive Committee brought the matter to a house vote during a house meeting on 5/5/2003. After extensive discussion the house voted *against* implementing the preferred dining program. After failing to pass, a student proposed that a provisional program, limited to a single semester, be put to a second vote. This provisional program was then approved. The program, as approved, would be optional for upperclassmen and mandatory for all incoming freshmen (**MEETINGMIN**). This created a situation where those making the decision were never financially affected by it. All subsequent Baker freshmen, and upperclassmen that chose to participate, paid \$200 at the start of the term and then received all their dinner purchases at half price. When initially enacted, students participating in the program broke even after 50 meals. Since its inception the cost of the program has increased by \$25 per year for a 50% increase in price over 4 years, greatly outpacing inflation. At the current price, the PDM program costs \$300 per semester and has a breakeven point of 74 meals (the number of meals at which students have fully used the value that they previously paid into the system). It is important to note that at this break-even point, students have paid full price for those 74 meals. The PDM program, its cost effectiveness for students, and its impact on Baker have never been reviewed or put to a house vote to make it permanent.

CURRENT DINING SYSTEM:

The MIT Residential Dining System consists of 5 residential dining halls: Baker House, Simmons Hall, Next House, McCormick Hall, and Pritchett Dining. All four of the west campus facilities are operated by Bon Appétit, while Pritchett is operated by Sodexo. Each vendor is not charged for its space utilization and is subsidized for any monetary losses, as evidenced by the contractual agreements with MIT. The entire residential dining system suffered a loss of \$500,000 in the Fall 2005 – Spring 2006 period (Tech5).

CURRENT BAKER DINING SYSTEM

At present, the vendor serving in the Baker Dining facility is Bon Appétit, a California-based "custom restaurant company" that provides catering at about 40 corporations, universities, and special venues in the United States, including Yahoo!, the Target Corporation, Northwestern University, Oberlin College, The Getty Center, and the Seattle Art Museum. They describe themselves as specializing in food with an emphasis on natural, organic, and high quality ingredients, and promoting sustainable and socially responsible food and business practices.

Bon Appétit's current manager at MIT, Marietta Lamarre-Buck, has stated that Baker Dining's facility has a total of seven employees, of whom five or six work on any given evening. Dinner is served at Baker from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm each night during the academic term, including weekends, with the exception of some holidays and breaks. In the Fall 2006 semester, the facility was open 102 nights, with about 230-250 meals served per night. The exact per-night capacity of the facility has not been rigorously determined, but it seems that Baker Dining cannot, as it currently operates, accommodate more students than it presently serves. This is evidenced by the unacceptably high wait times and general congestion in the serving area, as well as discussions with Lamarre-Buck about alleviating these issues where she has stated that the facility is "at capacity". However, while Baker Dining is by far the most financially successful Bon Appétit dining facility at MIT, it is still not profitable, and the vendor is subsidized by the MIT OCD to make up the shortfall.

It might seem surprising that Bon Appétit is not profitable at Baker Dining or anywhere else on MIT's campus, given that it operates at very close to capacity and does not pay rent for its spaces in Baker House or the other dormitories where it serves dinner. There are several possible reasons for the lack of profitability that suggest themselves to the BHDC. First, poor setup and inefficient serving techniques lead to long wait times, as mentioned, and this decreases the potential capacity levels and satisfaction of students. Second, it seems that Bon Appétit buys more expensive ingredients and pays higher wages to their employees than a typical university campus vendor. In general, it seems that a business that has as many customers as it can accommodate and fewer costs than a conventional restaurant is not being operated effectively if it cannot be profitable.

ANALYSIS OF PDM:

The Preferred Dining Membership (PDM) is a program that allows students to purchase meals at MIT dining halls with a 50% discount after paying for the membership. The membership must be renewed every semester. All students living in a dorm with a dining hall are required to subscribe to the PDM plan. PDM members can use their discount in the Fall and Spring terms, but not during IAP. PDM began in Fall 2002 at a cost of \$200 a term, but as of Spring 2007 PDM now costs \$300 a term. In Fall 2007, the cost of the program will rise to \$325 per term.

VALUE PROPOSITION:

The initial PDM plan offered a value proposition for both the dining hall vendors and the students. PDM helps guarantee the vendors a certain amount of business from students and costs the vendors nothing, as the OCD oversees the program. For students, it created incentives for a more social dining experience, and gave students the ability to potentially save money if they ate at the dining facilities frequently.

From 2002-2007 the average ticket price in a dining hall has remained at a relatively constant \$8.10 (Appendix: Baker Dining Data). In 2002, with the PDM cost of \$200/term, the average student would need to purchase 50 meals to break even. Since the dining halls were

open only 5 days a week during that period, for a 16 week term there were 80 possible meals which meant that a student would have to eat around 62.5% of his/her meals in a dining hall for the entire semester, around 3 days/week. Compared to the current situation in 2007, where PDM costs \$300, the average student must eat about 74 meals a semester to break even. Baker House is the only dining hall that is open 7 days a week for a total of 104 meals a semester. This means that a Baker House resident must eat 71% of the available dining hall meals, which equates to 5 days/week. A student who dines at a different dining hall would have to eat over 90% of the available meals at their preferred dining hall.

PDM provides an incentive for students to eat at their local dining hall, which can help promote community building and social interaction. At its inception, PDM also represented a value proposition for students. As it stands now, though, PDM is no longer a value proposition to students. During a UA Senate meeting, the director of the OCD acknowledged that the average student does not break even in PDM). In fact, it can be seen from the ticket data that the average Baker student eats only 42 meals a semester (See: Analysis of Baker Dining Data), which is significantly different from the break even target. Furthermore, the pricing structure of PDM is deceptive. Students think their meal costs \$4 when it in fact has cost them \$8. Additionally, the average meal price has remained constant over the last 4 years at \$8.10, whereas the cost of PDM has increased 50% over the last 4 years. The OCD claims this is due to rises in union labor costs, etc., but inflation has grown less than 4% (INFLATION). The largest problem with PDM is that students unequally bear the cost of the system's unprofitability.

While Baker is the most successful dining hall, every student pays the same PDM price. A Baker student who eats 5 days/week must still pay the full \$300 to cover the larger facility losses from McCormick, next door, or even worse, Pritchett, a benefit to East Campus students who are not required to buy in to PDM. Furthermore, students at other dining hall dorms have a much lower chance of breaking even, since their dining halls are only open 5 days/week, which already have a lower utilization rate. In summary, the current PDM plan offers little to no value proposition and unfairly forces students to bear the unequal costs of the dining system's unprofitability.

ANALYSIS OF 75 MEAL PLAN:

The 75 Meal Program represents a move towards a traditional meal plan system. Students must purchase 75 meals at the start of the term for a price of \$650. The meals would be All You Care to Eat (AYCTE) and students would be able to redeem the meals at any of the dining locations. Meals would not carry over at the end of the term and all residents of dorms with dining halls would be required to participate.

VALUE PROPOSITION:

The 75 Meal Plan Program does not represent a value proposition in that it exposes the student to a risk of paying for meals that are not consumed without any financial benefit. The average Baker resident consumes 42 meals per term (See: Analysis of Baker Dining Data) meaning the average student would miss 33 meals. The average price per meal when the cost of the missed meals is taken into account would \$15.48. The program represents a poor value not only because it requires the purchase of more meals than the majority of students eat, but because, in the best case where a participant consumes all 75 meals, he simply pays the price a student not participating would pay.

EVALUATION:

It is not clear, at this time, how increasing the “penalty” for missed meals would affect students’ tendency to eat in the dining hall. Current data seems to suggest that further increasing the meal program buy-in cost has little effect on the number of meals students eat in the dining halls. The 75 Meal plan would require the closure of the only public kitchen in Baker during dining hours, as well as the closure of a large amount of community space that is regularly used by Baker residents. **The closure of the public kitchen and community space during dinner hours is simply unacceptable to the Baker community.**

A recent survey of Baker residents shows that 75% of Baker residents oppose the AYCTE-style dining that would be a part of the 75 Meal Plan. Also, the 75 Meal Plan program is

similar to other proposals that have been rejected by MIT students in the past. Mr. Berlin is quoted in the Tech (Tech7) as saying that his office was not planning a move towards this type of system and fondly remembers student petitions against it. It is unclear, therefore, why a meal plan system which has been rejected in the past and which Mr. Berlin directly denied promoting in July 2006 was included in the document to Baker House.

ANALYSIS OF A LA CARTE VS. ALL-YOU-CARE-TO-EAT

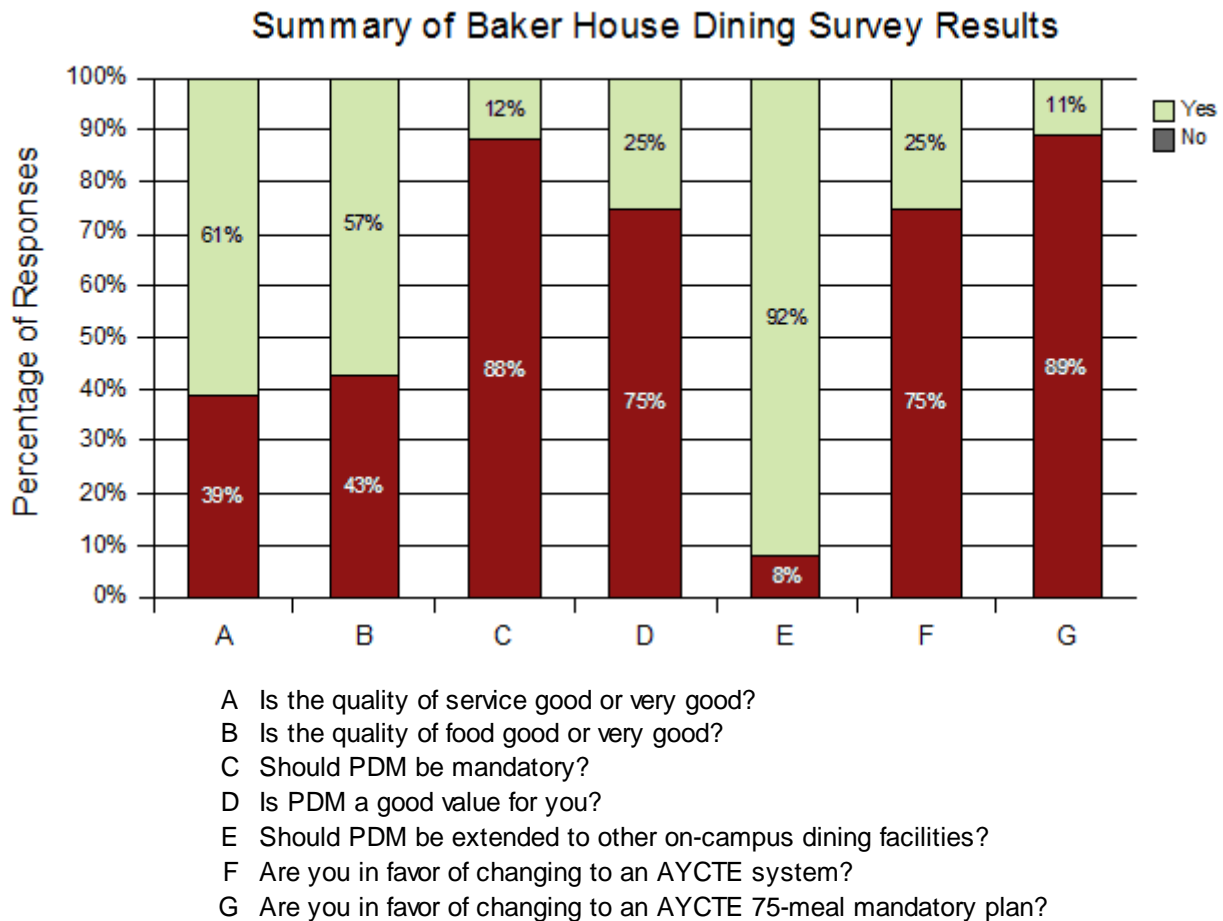
There are several benefits to the current A La Carte system. Students are charged based on what they order. This is the optimal option for students who eat a small to moderate amount of food. The food quality is high and there is a wide selection. The "to go" option is available, allowing students to eat in moderation in the dining hall and/or to buy food to be eaten later. The students also have the freedom to take their food to their room to study or eat with other students outside of the dining hall. Also, with the A La Carte system, the Baker Dining space is open for students to socialize and study even if they are not purchasing food. Students also have access to the country kitchen during dining hours, when they would likely be cooking their dinner.

The All You Care to Eat system also has its benefits. Students would pay a flat fee and be able to eat as much as they would like. A larger variety of food would be offered. The flat fee would be \$8.50, only slightly higher than the average price of food sold per person in the A La Carte system. Since the quantity of food provided is significantly more than the slight increase in the price of the food, whether the food quality will remain on par with the A La Carte system seems debatable. We believe food quality will actually suffer.

ANALYSIS OF SURVEY RESULTS

As part of the efforts to evaluate the proposed AYCTE trial, the BHDC conducted a survey of Baker residents to gauge student opinions about the current dining system in Baker and a few potential changes (Survey). Of the 332 students living in Baker, 163 completed the 11-question,

multiple-choice survey, which was announced via dorm email lists and accessible online through a third-party survey website. Through email address and IP address verification, the BHDC took appropriate measures to ensure that only responses from Baker residents were counted, and that no more than one survey per student was submitted. The complete results of the survey are included in the appendix of this report, with the most important points summarized in the following graph:



The BHDC considers these results to suggest that while students are generally satisfied with the quality of the food and service in Baker Dining, as reflected by questions A and B, they are dissatisfied with the PDM program, as reflected by questions C, D, and E. Students strongly disagree that the program should be mandatory, and a significant majority consider it to not be a good value. Furthermore, almost all students think that the program should be extended to

other on-campus dining facilities. These results suggest that the PDM program at Baker does not meet resident needs successfully and should be adjusted if student satisfaction is desired. Finally, the survey results reveal that students strongly oppose a change to an All-You-Care-to-Eat system, both in the form of a pay-as-you-go system and as a mandatory meal plan. The BHDC therefore interprets this data to show that the AYCTE trial would not be well received by residents and should therefore probably be rejected.

ANALYSIS OF BAKER DINING DATA:

The BHDC has evaluated the ticket data provided by the OCD for the Fall 2006 term. The data contains sales records from registration day through December 7, 2006; the remaining data was not included by the OCD for analysis. The ticket data provided includes transaction date, transaction time, sale amount, student year, student address, and customer number. This transaction data was used to extrapolate Baker resident usage data. This was done by finding the average number of Baker residents eating in Baker Dining per day for the days available, and then multiplying that average by the number days that Baker Dining was open.

During the Fall 2006 term Baker residents ate approximately 14,000 meals over the 104 days that Baker Dining was open. This translates to the average Baker resident eating 42 meals over the term at the dining hall. The average cost per meal, with the preferred dining discount, for Baker residents was \$4.17, meaning the price without preferred dining was \$8.34. This means that the average Baker resident was forced to spend \$300 to participate in the PDM program and saved \$175.14 for a **net loss of \$124.86**. When asked in a survey how many meals per week students believed they ate at Baker Dining, the average respondent ate 4.17 meals per week which translates to 63 meals per term. This represents a significant mismatch of perception versus actual usage. The average number of meals actually consumed by Baker residents may be slightly higher; on occasion students may eat at other residential dining facilities or pay in cash, but both of these events appear to be rare from the dining records.

OFFICIAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BHDC:

The BHDC recommends improvements to the following four areas to produce a more efficient and successful dining system for both students and administrators:

TRANSPARENCY

Students have little knowledge about the dining system as a whole. The MIT OCD has done an inadequate job of communicating its intentions and future plans to students. Decisions about system changes are often made during academic breaks, causing students to be surprised by the changes. While an effort has been made to inform students about the large cost overruns, little has been mentioned about the specifics such as which dining facilities are more or less solvent and where the largest shortfalls are. The Committee believes that dining data should be available to students upon request and archived so that trends can be analyzed.

Furthermore, since students are subsidizing the system, the dining contracts made between vendors and MIT should be publicly observable, as is consistent with the open, transparent research culture of the institute. There should be little impedance if a student would like to gather such data.

Student input is rarely taken into consideration for many of the office's actions. The Campus Dining Advisory Board (CDAB) seems to be the only formal mechanism for student input. It became clear during the committee's interview of former student CDAB members, that CDAB was overwhelmed by a large administrative presence, which easily overruled student opinion. The CDAB website has not been updated since 2004, so it is unclear if CDAB is still active. Furthermore, there is already an active committee of students in the UA that is constructively dedicated to improving residential and campus dining, the UA Dining Committee. The BHDC believes that the UA Dining Committee represents the best representative group of students to include in the decision making process. While this addresses student input at a high level, individual student input is also important. More of an emphasis should be placed on surveys with public results. Some percentage of these surveys should be conducted in person at dining halls during dining hours.

Additionally, there currently is no mechanism for students to comment or suggest changes to the residential dining facilities through the OCD. The BHDC believes that a web page to accept suggestions and criticism through the OCD is the best way to ensure that MIT becomes aware of, and can correct, problems that appear at the residential dining halls. The only system in place for feedback to Bon Appétit is through a 'Suggestion Board' where students are expected to post their concerns on a corkboard with a tack; none of this feedback necessarily reaches the MIT OCD, as it is monitored by Bon Appétit.

FINANCIAL

The current dining system faces obvious financial hardships. While PDM alleviates some of the hardship, it does little to correct the underlying causes. We believe that embracing free market ideals is a viable route towards sustained profitability. Market competition encourages critical thinking about cost control and meeting customer needs. For example, a decision to reopen a previously failed dining hall, such as McCormick, would have to be accompanied by a change in the business model that allows for profitability. The Committee feels that there are many changes that can be made to improve the financial stability of the system as a whole and Baker, specifically. The current approach of raising student dining fees simply patches a broken system. The OCD is abusing its questionable bursar power over students to balance its budget instead of addressing the problem directly.

At a campus-wide level, it makes little sense to have two dining halls across the street from one other (i.e. McCormick and Baker). Pritchett represents a large portion of the system's losses. The Committee feels that an outside vendor would better be able to utilize the space. The ideal candidate would be an established vendor with a strong delivery business (i.e. many companies on www.campusfood.com). Using a company with a large delivery business, MIT would gain a vendor that is able to sustain the volume necessary to be profitable. In exchange for providing an eat-in service, the vendors would receive the free rent benefit that Sodexo is currently receiving, and would be subject to general OCD campus vendor regulations.

Additionally, the real average cost per meal should be a reasonable amount. Using the most current data, we calculated that 1247 students from the required 4 dining halls eat with a conservative estimate of 50% of their 74 meals to break even. If on average each dining hall serves 160 meals a day, then the total number of meals served per year is about 100,000. With the total residential dining system loss of \$500,000, MIT subsidizes \$5 per meal, yielding the real average cost per meal equal to \$13. The BHDC feels that this cost per meal is unreasonable and too expensive to the average student. By lowering the real average cost per meal, the OCD could cut its losses and provide students with a better value.

The Committee believes that Baker Dining is currently at capacity in terms of number of students served. The wait time for food is approaching and may already be crossing the limit which negatively affects business. To this end, most of the changes suggested aim to decrease serve time and increase capacity. One option might be to provide pre-made food, such as sandwiches, which can be sold without a server. Opening the grill before the entire hall is opened can help spread out the service and would only require a couple of staff members. In the long run, capital investment is required to reorganize and expand the serving area to accommodate larger volumes of students and improve serving efficiency.

The BHDC feels the dining committees of other dorms could easily produce a list of suggestions to address the issues they feel most negatively affect their dining hall. Therefore, the OCD should solicit this valuable input.

STUDENT VALUE AND MISSION

At present, the PDM program does not offer a value proposition to students. There are many problems with PDM from a student value perspective. The largest problem is that PDM subsidizes a broken system without addressing its problems. When initially enacted, the PDM program was meant to provide value to both students and MIT. The Office of Campus Dining's lack of accountability has led to price increases that greatly outpace inflation and eliminated the value to students. The current system also fails to take into account the varied dining utilization of students from different dorms and different class years.

The Committee offers the following suggestions in accordance with the previous suggestions to increase the value for both students and MIT:

1. RETURN TO PDM AS A VALUE PROPOSITION BY DECREASING THE BUY IN.

The buy-in price should be set at or below the price at which the average student would break even (from our data, this price would be a maximum of \$175 per term.)

Benefit: This would create a similarly strong financial incentive for the average student to use the residential dining halls. This would also ensure that the average student does not pay *above* the posted full retail price of the meals.

2. INCREASES TO THE PDM TERM PRICE THAT ARE GREATER THAN INFLATION (3-4%) MUST BE APPROVED BY BAKER HOUSE

Increases to the PDM term price have been out of control (range has been from 12.5% to 8% which is still at least *double* the real inflation rate). By matching inflation, the system would encourage vendors to set prices accurately instead of artificially price fixing (the average price of a meal has been relatively constant in lieu of increasing with inflation).

3. DISCONTINUE ADVERTISING THE DISCOUNTED PRICE OF MEALS

This would stop Bon Appétit from setting prices that take advantage of the PDM discount. For example, a \$5 desert would normally be out of the question for most students. By advertising only the full price, students have a better idea of what the meals are actually costing them.

4. EXTEND PDM TO OTHER ON CAMPUS FACILITIES

PDM discounts should be available at other campus dining locations (such as the Student Center dining options) during dining hours and potentially up to an hour after.

BENEFITS:

Increases the value proposition of PDM by allowing students to eat without leaving campus, and the discount could possibly be extended for after hours dining, allowing dining halls that

are providing athlete and late-night service to close if more fiscally sound. Such a change would also encourage greater pricing, service, and quality competition among the residential dining vendors.

5. CHANGE PDM TO MANDATORY DINING DOLLARS PLAN WITH A LOW COST, AND A CLASS YEAR PHASE-OUT

Instead of discounts, students contribute a set amount of money into a debit system that can only be used for food at campus dining locations. There would be a minimum buy in price that could be determined by class year, such that an average student in that class would have some incentive to use the residential dining facilities, but would still be likely to not lose cash value.

BENEFITS:

This eliminates deceptive pricing, encourages the system to offer a strong value proposition to students, and allows students track how much they are actually spending on dining.

6. CLOSE THE PRITCHETT AND MCCORMICK DINING HALLS

Pritchett should be closed since it serves an East Campus community that is not required to buy in to the program, and it is unfair to force the West Campus participants to subsidize a low volume establishment. Pritchett can be reopened with a vendor that combines both delivery and sit-down meals.

McCormick should be closed because it is unwise to have a competing dining hall in close proximity of another.

BENEFITS:

By closing these unprofitable locations, the system can reduce up to \$250,000 in losses and reduce the subsidy incurred by students.

7. CHANGE OF VENDOR

If the current vendor is operating at capacity and is still unable to turn a profit, the BHDC suggests that a more suitable vendor be found.

BENEFITS:

Having a vendor capable of sustaining itself would greatly reduce the costs the system, allowing PDM to be purely a social incentive rather than a subsidy.

OFFICE OF CAMPUS DINING

The Committee has determined that many of the problems present in the current system can be attributed to the mindset of the Office of Campus Dining. The Committee has the following recommendations:

SUCCESS METRICS

The Office of Campus Dining should have clear success criteria, which should include not only financial stability, but also student satisfaction. Furthermore, the current office view that profitability is impossible is detrimental. It is infeasible to manage a system that is deemed a failure and prevents critical thinking about how to change the situation.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Currently, there is no mechanism for students to hold the office accountable for its actions. The office is already audited financially, but insufficient attention is devoted to student satisfaction and value, and alterations in PDM pricing and plans.

STUDENT REPRESENTATION

The office currently believes it is acceptable to make decisions without broad student input. This attitude is most recently evidenced by the recent changes to Pritchett, but has been standard operating procedure in the past.

VIEW OF STUDENTS

The OCD views students as a hindrance to their plans, rather than the consumer of their service. In a UA Senate meeting, Richard Berlin stated that "students have the wrong psychology" when looking for a value in dining. This attitude is condescending and unacceptable from the head of an organization whose purpose is to serve students. It dismisses real feedback and prevents the office from meeting student needs. MIT should hold all OCD employees, including the Director, to the highest standards of honest, cordial and fair interactions with students.

TRUST

Perhaps the largest barrier to productive interaction between students and the OCD is the student's lack of trust in the OCD. The Office has a history of misleading students and making decisions behind closed doors. The lack of student insight into the decision making process and the future plans of the OCD leads to distrust and surprise when changes are made. PDM was sold to students as a value proposition, but once students agreed to it, the office began increasing prices and abandoning the value proposition. Short institutional memory from students (from a four year turnover) has allowed the OCD to exploit agreements over time. The recent activity at Pritchett and the unopened Subway present more examples that lead to distrust.

LACK OF INNOVATION

The OCD does not think critically about how to solve systematic problems and instead reuses failed past ideas. The office continues to use comparisons with other colleges as justification for the performance of the system and as an excuse not to improve performance.

APPENDIX:

TECH ARTICLES:

[TECH1] [HTTP://WWW-TECH.MIT.EDU/V121/N56/56DINING.56N.HTML](http://www-tech.mit.edu/v121/n56/56dining.56n.html)

[TECH2] [HTTP://WWW-TECH.MIT.EDU/V116/N25/HSU.25O.HTML](http://www-tech.mit.edu/v116/n25/hsu.25o.html)

[TECH3] [HTTP://WWW-TECH.MIT.EDU/V122/N27/27DINING.27N.HTML](http://www-tech.mit.edu/v122/n27/27dining.27n.html)

[TECH4] [HTTP://WWW-TECH.MIT.EDU/V121/N62/62DINING.62N.HTML](http://www-tech.mit.edu/v121/n62/62dining.62n.html)

[TECH5] [HTTP://WWW-TECH.MIT.EDU/V127/N16/LETTERS.HTML](http://www-tech.mit.edu/v127/n16/letters.html)

[TECH6] [HTTP://WWW-TECH.MIT.EDU/V121/N46/46FOOD.46N.HTML](http://www-tech.mit.edu/v121/n46/46food.46n.html)

[TECH7] [HTTP://WWW-TECH.MIT.EDU/V126/N29/29DININGDOLLARS.HTML](http://www-tech.mit.edu/v126/n29/29diningdollars.html)

INFLATION DATA

[INFLATION]

[HTTP://INFLATIONDATA.COM/INFLATION/INFLATION_RATE/HISTORICALINFLATION.ASPX](http://inflationdata.com/inflation/inflation_rate/historicalinflation.aspx)

CDAB WEBSITE

[CDAB] [HTTP://WEB.MIT.EDU/DINING/FEEDBACK/CDBOARD.HTML](http://web.mit.edu/dining/feedback/cdboard.html)

DINING EXPERIMENT (PROPOSED TO BAKER HOUSE)

[DININGEXP] [HTTP://BAKER.MIT.EDU/DINING EXPERIMENT PROPOSAL.PDF](http://baker.mit.edu/dining_experiment_proposal.pdf)

MEETING MINUTES

[MEETINGMIN] [HTTP://BAKER.MIT.EDU/MEETINGMINUTES5-5-2003.TXT](http://baker.mit.edu/meetingminutes5-5-2003.txt)

SURVEY RESULTS

[SURVEY] [HTTP://BAKER.MIT.EDU/BAKERPREFERREDINING.PDF](http://baker.mit.edu/bakerpreferredinining.pdf)