Boycott dining halls at dinner tomorrow

The Committee on Campus Dining has extended to the administration the administration that beginning with the Class of 1984, all residents of Baker, East Campus, MacGregor, and McCormick were required to purchase a 12 or 19-meal plan. From all institutions, the administration will approve this proposal by the end of this semester. Despite the overwhelming opposition to the plan by the students — especially the students in affected dormitories — the administration believes student opposition isn’t really very strong and thus the plan can be implemented.

To show the administration once and for all that student opposition is indeed strong and significant, we are calling on all students — those who are on a meal plan and those who eat 12 a day — to boycott the dining halls at dinner tomorrow.

We are also including a test-out letter on this page so that all students — including those who do not eat in the dining halls and thus cannot voice their opposition through a boycott — can let Chancellor Paul Gray know the true extent of opposition to compulsory commons.

We encourage faculty and staff to support the students’ plight by also mailing in the letter.

There are many reasons why the compulsory commons proposal should be opposed. Here are the major reasons, some of which we discussed in our first editorial last May:

1) Compulsory commons will unnecessarily restrict students’ freedom of choice. No longer will students be able to enjoy the unique character of Baker, East Campus, MacGregor, and McCormick without being forced to purchase a meal plan. In the particular case of McCormick, the plan will force all women who want single-sex on-campus housing to purchase a meal plan even though those women have historically deferred not to use the dining halls. (Last year, over 80 percent of the residents of McCormick were not on any meal plan.) Also, freshmen who want to live in a cooking house may not be able to get their choice in the housing lottery and would thus be forced to reside in a common house.

2) Compulsory commons will reduce the attractiveness of the commons houses. When a student living in a common house may not be able to get their choice in the housing lottery and would thus be forced to reside in a common house.

3) Compulsory commons could severely damage the residence system. Compulsory commons would almost certainly increase the movement of students between dorms. Whenever a likely student to leave a common house decides to leave commons, that person must move out of the house. Since students have in the past tended to leave commons as they become upperclassmen, a commons by the proposal’s grandfather clause, but this is not what it was intended to do. Think of the conditions students would be living under: no willing student could be able to take opposed measures to move up the date and impose grade deflation.

The boycott will be very effective if the flow of students through the dining halls is cut off. Luckily, the administration can no longer claim that the students are doing nothing. Actually represent the views of the student body. Finally, an administration that has made it very difficult for Paul Gray to proceed with the beginning of compulsory commons has no right to expect action since his selection as the next President of MIT.

Gordon Hunter

Scanlan’s decision damages drama

Since Kreege was closed back in September, a myriad of problems has been created. Somewhere among these problems is a dispute that has developed between Dramashop and the Musical Theatre Guild (MTG) over production dates at Harvard’s Loeb Drama Center. The outcome of this dispute may have serious consequences for both drama at MIT and the whole concept of IAP.

Scanlan, a primarily student activity searching for a place for its postponed fall production of “Anything Goes,” and Dramashop, a primarily academic program searching for a theater for its unnamed IAP production, contacted the Loeb about using the theater in January. Harvard decided to offer the Loeb to MIT for three weeks in January, perhaps to mollify, let MIT decide how to split the time between the two groups.

Assistant Professor Robert Scanlan, who runs Dramashop, then announced that the time period was too little and thus too small a period of time. MIT officials told Scanlan that this split unfurled since it would get the least favorable half of the time. Thus, Scanlan would have six or seven performances that would be made to work, many of which are right side (in fairness, I should mention that I am a member of MTG’s Managing Board. Since this is the first time I have worked on Dramashop, I do not know whether Dramashop is not planning to perform for two weekends. Scanlan decided that Dramashop needs the extra time for it to perform and rehearsals.

IAP is supposed to help Dramashop with set construction and lighting, an offer of over 15 skilled workers during IAP, if MTG could have the theater until the second Friday or Saturday. Many members of the administration, many Humanities Departments faculty members, and even many students in Dramashop sympathetic to MTG’s proposal and tried to persuade Scanlan to change his mind, but all efforts failed.

No one on the administration or on the faculty who was sympathetic to MTG’s view was both able and willing to override Scanlan, who said that loss of any Drama program would damage the academic program. Thus because Dramashop is an academic program, Scanlan got his way.

Scanlan’s decision has badly hurt relations between the two drama programs, relations which had been improving in the last few years as some students became involved with both groups. Also some of the Dramashop students have been alienated because they feel Scanlan’s decision was unjustified. Such a decision that affects the drama program at MIT, both for the academics and the activities.

The most disturbing precedent, however, is that an academic program has taken precedence over an activity during IAP. This could become an academic program. The original concept of IAP was for an activity during which students could take courses in courses without worrying about academics. When the decision was made to allow credit for certain activities during IAP, some opposed the move as possibly endangering the spirit of IAP. Their fears now appear to have been well-founded.

I sincerely urge that the IAP Committee revisit the purpose and goals of IAP to avoid further problems. If academics are allowed to take over music activities during IAP, IAP will turned into a music term ruining the original intent of having the inter-term period. I also urge Professor Scanlan to consider more carefully the ramifications of his decisions on the overall state of drama at MIT.

Letter to send to Paul Gray

I oppose the Committee on Campus Dining’s proposal for compulsory commons in Baker, East Campus, MacGregor, and McCormick.

Name

[Address]

[Room 3-208]

Paul Gray