Commons requirements drop

By Jay Class and Laurence Salettel

Minimum meal plan requirements for freshmen have been reduced by $10 points in a decision made Friday at 10am and announced in a memorandum later that day.

Based on point usage compiled on the 78th "feeding day" of a 102-day period, only one-third of freshmen had met their consumption requirements. The memorandum was jointly issued by Robert Sherwood, Associate Dean for Student Affairs and H.E. Brammer, Director of Housing and Food Services.

According to Brammer, original levels were "based on our best idea of the time." When asked if these levels rested on a valid basis, he replied "we won't know until after the fact."

The reduction in point requirements should enable 85 percent of the freshmen to fulfill their responsibilities. The changes will apply to spring term as well. There will be no change in meal plan prices for the spring term. When asked if there might be further adjustments in minimum point plans, Brammer replied "we have 75 percent of last term's experience behind us — those are not enough data points."

The decision to reduce point requirements was made after consultation with the "Dining Advisory Board, Faculty Representatives, the Graduate Resident Tutors, Commons Committees, and individual students."

Brammer commented, "One of the things that bothers me is that students think we were doing nothing."

Commons prefers T on tracks

For most of the week, the Senate had been insisting that the state pay the entire cost of funding the system after November 18, the day the T exhausted its $350 million budget. The house had wanted the cost to be split 50-50.

The bill also mandated cutbacks in many T routes. For example, eight of the daily runs on the Massachusetts Avenue route connecting Harvard and Dudley Squares will be cancelled. As a result, after 10pm, buses will run every half-hour, as opposed to the previous 15-minute intervals.

Similar cuts have been made in other routes across the board.

The major breakthrough in the legislative process came when the House and Senate agreed that the state will pick up 75 percent of the deficit, while the MBTA district cities and towns will pick up the other 25 percent.

The key point of the GA meeting was the discussion with members of the MIT Corporation's Executive Committee. Speaking for the Corporation, president Howard Johnson said that they had approved of having an outside speaker at commencement "as an experiment" for this June's commencement. Senior Class President Mitchell Brook '81, who had been working for a speaker, said he considered the corporation's decision to be a "minor victory."

The new medical center was also discussed. Johnson pointed out that new center combines all medical facilities — both research and health care — in one facility and is the only one of its type in the country.

Some GA members expressed concern that the new health center could not be located in a more central location. The desired location was the real estate on Ames Street currently owned by the TRW Carr Division, but MIT was unable to obtain the property. The committee also pointed out that, given the direction of the Institute's expansion, the location was not unreasonable.

The committee also discussed with the GA the emphasis on writing at MIT and whether more emphasis should be placed on teaching students how to write. As one student claimed, "to graduate from MIT you don't have to be able to write, but you do have to be able to swim."

By Richard Salz

Editor's note: parts of this article are based on reporting done by Richard Epstein.

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Boston College

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