ARA wins new contract
Accepts profit-loss system, beats out Marriott

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were “never really in the running,” according to one source, due to flaws in their plans for service and “unrealistic figures.”

The RFP sent out by the committee stipulated that for the first year, the four dining halls that were open for dinner only, with some limited meal plans for house residents set at $500 per semester. In addition, service at Lobdell Court and Walker Memorial Dining Hall had to be maintained.

According to one student on the committee, Michael S. Gull ’92, ARA was the only company willing to “take the risk” and accept the profit-and-loss plan in its entirety.

ARA has proposed to turn Networks Restaurant into Hacker’s Haven, designed as a place for students to “hang out,” watch television and play board games, which would be available in the restaurant. The restaurant would feature diner-style food, and the walls would display pictures of famous MIT hands.

Committee members differed on what they believed ARA’s plans are for the house dining halls and Pritchett Lounge beyond next year. Some members claimed that ARA’s projections of future profit depend on closing the house facilities and Pritchett after next year. Others said that assumed dining halls would be open for dinner only. ARA also plans to continue the somewhat successful Domino’s pizza delivery service. The company hopes to expand to other delivery services, including buffalo wings and Chinese food.

Lawrence E. Maguire, director of housing and food services and chair of the search committee, said ARA had offered housing as unique as MIT.

“Now they’ve got to please you. It shows that ARA is not genuinely responsive to the needs of the community. But is that what MIT students really want?”

Kassel also questioned the company’s incentive under the new plan. “ARA can make more money if they close the house dining halls. They have no incentive to make them work.”

Kassel, a graduate resident tutor at MacGregor House, argued that it would be good for the company’s advantage to run the house dining halls poorly next year, so that there would be less objection to closing them down. “MIT is very bottom-line oriented. It’s far easier to close unprofitable facilities than to find approaches which make sense in the long run.”

Gull, the only committee member currently on a required meal plan, said that he was “disappointed, overall, with the quality of the proposals. ARA was the best of the mediocre.”

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