The MIT community has limited expectations of its food services, yet ARA and its liaison services at MIT have managed to fail short of those needs. Even in its attempts to improve the much flawed campus dining system, ARA does not adequately seek student opinion, continues to charge high prices, and generally serves food of poor quality.

Editorial

ARA has also created new problems in its reforms; in particular, the new schedule for dining halls is mind-bogglingly bad. Meal dining halls operate assuming that all MIT students eat lunch at noon, cut dinner at 6 p.m., and go to bed before 9 p.m. On Sunday night at Lodobet, a student can only choose from the Wokery, Burger King, Cafe Features, or the salad bar before 8 p.m. On weekdays, even the Wokery is closed for dinner. Networks, Walker's Moos Hall, and the dorm dining halls are closed on weekends. And Networks offers a shabbily limited lunch menu. There is only the slightest glimmer of hope: The Next House snack bar is open in the evening.

Faced with declining student willingness to purchase ARA food, service's answer was to close unprofitable dining halls without augmenting the service in remaining cafeterias. Last year, some students were forced to take meal plan packages they did not want. This year the mandatory meal plans are gone, along with much of the food service. Changes to the dining system, when conducted at all, begin without student input or advice. If enough students complain about a change has been made, however, things can sometimes be changed.

Many students are of the opinion that ARA charges extraordinarily high prices for bad food. If ARA is losing money, then it does not have the money to fall short of those needs. Even in its attempts to improve the much flawed campus dining system, ARA does not adequately seek student opinion, continues to charge high prices, and generally serves food of poor quality.

Opinion Policy

Editorials, printed in a distinctive format, are the official opinion of The Tech. They are written by members of the editorial board, who consists of the chairs, editor in chief, managing editor, executive editor, news editors, and opinion editors.

Letters to the editor, printed in a distinctive format, are the opinions of the signed members of the editorial board choosing to publish their disagreement with the editorial.

With the exception of opinion editors, correspondence is written by individuals and represent the opinion of the author, not necessarily that of the newspaper.

Letters to the editor are welcome. They must be typed, double-spaced and addressed to The Tech, P.O. Box 29, MIT Bank, Cambridge, Mass. 02139, or by interdepartmental mail to Room W20-483. Electronic submissions in plain text format may be mailed to letters@the-tech.mit.edu. All submissions are due by 4 p.m. two days before the date of publication.

Letters and cartoons must bear the author's signatures, addresses, and phone numbers. Unsigned letters will not be accepted. No letter or cartoon will be printed anonymously without the express prior approval of The Tech. The Tech reserves the right to edit or condense letters; shorter letters will be given higher priority. Once published, all letters become property of The Tech, and will not be returned. We regret we cannot publish all of the letters we receive.

Commentary

Over the past few years, MIT has invested millions of dollars in an effort to improve its food service. While some improvements have been made, overall the service remains unsatisfactory. ARA, the food service provider, has failed to address the needs of the student body.

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On Friday, the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that ARA, food service's answer was to close unprofitable dining halls without augmenting the service in remaining cafeterias. Last year, some students were forced to take meal plan packages they did not want. This year the mandatory meal plans are gone, along with much of the food service. Changes to the dining system, when conducted at all, begin without student input or advice. If enough students complain about a change has been made, however, things can sometimes be changed.

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