

Final Report on the 2010 House Dining Review

Campus Dining
MIT Division of Student Life
August 31, 2010

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Introduction from the Dean for Student Life

August 31, 2010

To the MIT community:

This spring, I convened the House Dining Advisory Group (HDAG), consisting of the student presidents, student dining chairs, and faculty Housemasters from Baker, Next, McCormick, Simmons, and the Phoenix Group. I asked this group to review our dining operations in these houses and to recommend a new direction for House Dining.

At the end of May, the HDAG made its final recommendation. In the coming year, Campus Dining will develop and implement a new meal plan for House Dining based upon this framework. As we embark on this effort, we recognize we are indebted to the records and reports of previous committees that addressed issues of dining and student life at MIT. The HDAG's work and the public discussion of House Dining was supported and improved by the public availability of documents compiled from the past 50 years of Institute dining.

In that spirit, this report is meant to preserve the HDAG's final recommendation alongside the information that contributed to the House Dining review process, including the materials prepared by Campus Dining to support the case for change; a selection of data reviewed for the HDAG; and a selection of the comments and opinions gathered online, at public forums, and through other channels over the past several months. While nearly all of this information has already been made public over the past semester and the past several years, there is great value in collecting it together here for any future groups that will undertake a study of the same topic.

On behalf of the MIT community, I want to extend my appreciation to the student and faculty representatives of the HDAG. In cooperation with Campus Dining, they took an approach that was transparent, respectful, thorough, and fair. Their work should serve as a model for considering complicated issues at the Institute in the future.

Sincerely,

Chris Colombo
Dean for Student Life

Charge to the House Dining Advisory Group

In March 2010, the Dean for Student Life convened the House Dining Advisory Group made up of students and faculty, primarily from the five communities in the House Dining system. This charge formed the basis for their work over the semester.

March 1, 2010

The House Dining Advisory Group (HDAG) will work with the Dean for Student Life, the Senior Associate Dean for Residential Life, and the Director of Campus Dining to advise on the formation and implementation of a comprehensive plan to address longstanding issues with House Dining at MIT.

The group shall operate with respect to four fundamental priorities for House Dining:

- Integrating a superior House Dining program as another option for student dining alongside the strong cook-for-yourself and FSILG board systems.
- Implementing improvements in service, quality, nutrition, and variety that fulfill both community and Institute wishes for House Dining.
- Leveraging the powerful role House Dining can play in the educational experience, especially in enhancing student development and building community.
- Eliminating the current subsidy required to cover operations by instituting a House Dining system that is financially stable and sustainable.

Specifically, in support of these goals, the HDAG will:

- Serve as a sounding board for policy, operational, financial and other changes to the House Dining system.
- Act as a conduit for student and faculty perspective on House Dining.
- Advise on the process for soliciting feedback from the MIT community, especially the four residences with House Dining.
- Advise on the process for communicating proposed changes regarding House Dining to the MIT community, especially the four residences with House Dining.
- Advise on the implementation of a new plan for House Dining at MIT.

The Committee will report to the Dean for Student Life. The group shall comprise the Housemasters from the Phoenix Group and Baker, McCormick, Next, and Simmons; and the Dining Chair and House President from the Phoenix Group and each of the four residences with House Dining.

The Senior Association Dean for Residential Life, the Director of Campus Dining, and the Dining Chair of the Undergraduate Association (UA) will serve as ex-officio members.

Letter to all undergraduates, April 6, 2010

The Dean for Student Life sent the following email to all undergraduate students on April 6, 2010. This message announced the beginning of the final House Dining Review, the formation of the House Dining Advisory Group, and the various ways for students and other members of the community to learn more and make their voices heard.

Dear Undergraduate Students:

I'm writing to ask for your input on a subject that, over the course of two decades, has repeatedly generated great frustration and little progress for the MIT community: dining. Fortunately, developments over the last few years now put us in a position to make real, lasting progress on this thorny but important topic, and I hope you will take the time to understand the issues and have your say. A little background:

In 2007, to assess and redress core systemic problems, my predecessor established a Blue Ribbon Committee on Dining, composed of students, faculty and staff. In a parallel development, in late 2008, as the severity of the global financial crisis became clear, the Provost, Chancellor, and Executive Vice President & Treasurer informed the MIT community that the General Institute Budget would need to be cut by \$100-\$150 million over two to three years, and that they would launch an Institute-Wide Planning Task Force to review and analyze all MIT operations, including dining.

In 2009, both groups issued their reports. Both called for a new plan for "House Dining," meaning the system that operates in the four houses with dining halls, Baker, McCormick, Next, and Simmons. The work of the Blue Ribbon Committee exposed deep dissatisfaction with crucial aspects of the House Dining program, which neither offers the breadth and depth of options our students want, nor fulfills longstanding Institute goals for residential life. At the same time, the Task Force charged the Division of Student Life to eliminate the House Dining system's operating subsidy, now topping \$600,000 a year.

Plainly, it is time to set a new direction for House Dining. Drawing on the extensive data, surveys, and reports produced on this subject over the past few years, the Campus Dining office has framed several scenarios for a new meal plan for House Dining. These scenarios eliminate the annual deficit while also considering the addition of breakfast, an all-you-care-to-eat option, full-week service, and other features the community has asked for. Once implemented, the new plan would not affect all students, but only those who chose to live in Baker, McCormick, Next, and Simmons, and any students living elsewhere who voluntarily opted to enroll in it.

To build out these scenarios into a specific plan, we need your help. Over the next month and a half, students are invited to weigh in on its final shape.

How can you become informed and participate?

1. No matter where you live, we encourage you to visit the House Dining Review website, <<http://studentlife.mit.edu/house-dining-review>> which contains the Campus Dining office's case for change, a summary of the plan scenarios, and an archive <<http://studentlife.mit.edu/house-dining-review/documents>> of dining-related documents dating back to 1956.

2. To gather ideas from the residents of the four houses with dining halls, we will hold forums to discuss the plan at Baker, McCormick, Next, and Simmons. Students who live in these communities

should check with their house presidents, house dining chairs, and Housemasters for more information.

3. We encourage all members of the MIT community to visit the Idea Bank <<http://ideabank-housedining.mit.edu/>>. The Campus Dining office has opened a new "account" dedicated to House Dining where you can submit ideas, respond to our questions to you, and comment upon the ideas of others. We pledge at the end of the process to issue a response to the themes and ideas that emerge from the community.

To provide sufficient time for comment, we are extending the period of discussion proposed in earlier communications. We will schedule forums, meet with students, and keep the Idea Bank open through the month of April. Then, Campus Dining will review, summarize, and respond promptly to the feedback. Based upon a recommendation from the Campus Dining office, informed by the community input gathered this spring, I will announce the final plan profile in mid-May. The plan will be implemented in Fall 2011.

During the next academic year, the Campus Dining office will select a vendor to operate our House Dining system. We will also take stock of our dining hall facilities and perform any construction and maintenance necessary to support the new plan. As important, members of the Class of 2012 and 2013—the two classes currently at MIT that will be directly affected by changes to House Dining—will have a year to consider whether to move to another residence based upon their dining preference.

Finally, I want to emphasize that the process of study and assessment will not end in May. The House Dining program that emerges will undoubtedly have aspects that are new to MIT or that have not been part of the system for decades. We must regularly assess whether the new plan is meeting our goals--and to that end, students will continue to be a critical voice. Each year Campus Dining will issue a report to students, ask for feedback on the House Dining program, and work with students to adapt the plan accordingly.

Dining has been a difficult topic at MIT for a long time, but this semester we have the opportunity to develop a plan that breaks the cycle of dissatisfaction, and that offers MIT students the comfort, community and nutrition that a first-rate meal plan can provide. If we work together, in the best tradition of MIT, I am certain we can find a solution that fulfills the promise of House Dining. I encourage you to lend your voice.

Sincerely,

Chris Colombo
Dean for Student Life

Roster of the House Dining Advisory Group

The House Dining Advisory Group (HDAG) was comprised of the student presidents, the student dining chairs, and the faculty Housemasters and Associate Housemasters of the four residences with dining halls, plus the Phoenix Group. The HDAG met as a group on a frequent basis, as well as attended forums and meetings in their own communities. The Dean for Student Life is grateful for their hard work and dedication.

Baker House

Cameron McAlpine '13
Andy Wu '11
Dava Newman
Gui Trotti

McCormick Hall

Sara Comis '13
Hannah Rice '11
Kathryn Hess
Charles Stewart

Next House

Anne Juan '12
Ellen McIsaac '12
Bette Colombo
Marc Lo

Phoenix Group

Rashida Callender '11
Carolina Roque '13
Jack Carroll
Suzanne Flynn

Simmons Hall

Sarah Bindman '13
Christina Johnson '12
Sarah Laskey '11
Ellen Essigmann
John Essigmann
Steven Hall

Text of the final recommendation of the House Dining Advisory Group

In May 2010, the House Dining Advisory Group issued its final recommendation based on the preceding months of study, public discussion, and deliberation of the difficult realities that have challenged House Dining for many years. The recommendation includes a discussion of the group's rationale, the specific elements that will define the new meal plan, additional considerations for Campus Dining, and a call for continued student and Housemaster participation.

May 18, 2010

Dear Dean Colombo:

This semester you appointed a House Dining Advisory Group and charged us with recommending to you the basic structure of dining plans that would be implemented in the four Houses with dining halls (Baker, McCormick, Next, and Simmons) beginning with the 2011–2012 school year. This memo constitutes that recommendation.

House Dining at MIT has frustrated the Institute community for decades. The recent work of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Dining and your charge to our group are an indication that the community desires serious and transformative change for the House Dining program. Therefore, our proposed meal plan is premised on the assumption that having a traditional dining hall system as one of the dining options in the residence halls will provide a strategic benefit to MIT and will settle longstanding dissatisfaction with the House Dining program. Based upon our conversations with students this semester, we also believe this plan will offer options and services in House Dining that many MIT students desire.

The proposal also reflects our understanding that the current House Dining program is financially unsustainable. Responding to the financial problems by closing the dining halls, as has been suggested by some members of the MIT community, would be unacceptable for many reasons, especially since the four House communities want to keep their dining halls. Merely tweaking the current plan to eliminate the financial subsidy would also be unacceptable in two ways: first, because it would not address other core issues that have led to broad dissatisfaction with House Dining; second, because MIT would then forego the opportunity to provide an *excellent* dining option for the four residences in question.

Our primary goal, therefore, is to shape a sustainable dining program in our four Houses that is as distinctive and excellent as the rest of MIT. The points below are intended to help guide the drafting of a Request for Proposal (RFP) to be sent out later this year. Because we do not wish to micro-manage the drafting of the RFP, most of the points that follow are stated as general principles.

While we also understand that we are not responsible for drafting or approving the actual RFP, we strongly urge Campus Dining to have the RFP reviewed by the HDAG—or, at least by those members who are available over the summer—before it is posted for bids.

Recommendations for a new meal plan

The House Dining Advisory Group recommends that Campus Dining implement a new meal plan for the House Dining system. All residents of the dormitories with dining halls—Baker, McCormick, Next, and Simmons—would participate in this plan. Students who live in other residences would have

the option to participate if they choose, dependent upon the capacity of the House Dining system to meet opt-in demand.

The dining plan should offer food that is nutritious, attractive, tasty, and responsive to the tastes of a highly diverse, international student body. The plan should also be tailored to the educational mission of MIT and sensitive to the distinctive culture and practices of both MIT and the individual Houses. Our recommendation is for a 30-week plan, or two 15-week semester periods, offering breakfast and dinner. This plan does not address lunch and does not include IAP.

We understand that the plan we propose will require the “full plan” (i.e., 7 dinners and 7 breakfasts per week) to be priced at approximately \$3,800 for the year, according to projections from Campus Dining for 2011 costs. We also understand that, coupled with reasonable allowances for lunch, the cost for meals for a representative MIT undergraduate will be within the board allowance assumed by MIT’s financial aid package. A critical aspect of implementing this plan will be to assure that the board allowance is consistent with meal plan pricing.

We recommend a meal plan with this fundamental structure:

Dinner

- 7 days per weeks in all four houses
- All-you-care-to-eat service
- Three-hour dinner periods, with at least one House open late enough to accommodate athletes and other students who return to their Houses after 8 p.m.
- Campus Dining works with the Houses to set specific hours for dinner service

Breakfast

- 7 days per week in all four houses
- All-you-care-to-eat service
- Weekdays: two-hour breakfast period, with both full hot breakfast and grab-and-go options
- Weekends: three-hour period, full brunch service
- Willingness to treat the weekday breakfast service as experimental, with the possibility of reducing the level of “full service,” in favor of other features of the plan as greater experience is gained
- Campus Dining works with the Houses to set specific hours

Participation

- All House residents will participate in the dining plans
- Plan members may eat in any of the four dining halls
- First-year students will participate at 14 meals/week (7 breakfasts and 7 dinners, or “7/7”)
- Sophomores may participate at either the 6/6 or 7/7 levels
- Juniors and seniors may participate at the 5/5, 6/6, or 7/7 levels
- Prices will differ for 5/5, 6/6, and 7/7 plans
- Students who live outside the four houses allowed to buy opt-in plans on terms that are not more advantageous than those for residents

Food quality, variety, and nutrition

- Food cooked on-site at each House
- Food prepared using fresh ingredients
- Choice of food quality (meat, produce, etc.) at the high end of college dining plans
- Healthy alternatives (low-fat, etc.) at each meal
- In-house options for students with religious dietary preferences as well as allergies and medically certified dietary restrictions; students with special needs must not be second-class citizens
- Varied and attractive vegetarian and vegan options offered at all locations, with vegetarian/vegan items prepared on separate surfaces, using separate oils, etc.
- All menu items clearly labeled. Nutritional information, including ingredients, posted or otherwise available to patrons on-site in each House

Service operations

- Sustainable dining program that minimizes waste, promotes recycling/composting, etc.
- Emphasize the local sourcing of food
- Explicit provision for boxed/take-out options to accommodate students whose schedules, due to laboratories, classes, athletics, etc., make it difficult to eat during the normal hours
- Requirement that the vendor work continuously and closely with the Housemasters and dining committees from each House
- Requirement that the vendor present specific plans for continuous improvement

Other considerations

- Any student, whether on a plan or not, may purchase an individual meal at any time depending on system capacity, with prices not more advantageous than those for residents
- Offer “special meals” in each house each month; parameters may vary across the houses and Campus Dining will work with Housemasters and house governments to design these meals
- Commissary for housemasters and house governments, providing items for special dormitory events, such as study breaks, at minimal mark-up over cost
- Aggressive marketing plan to important constituents (first-year students, upper-class students, non-residents of dining Houses, parents, graduate students, etc.), so as to maximize business in the dining halls as allowed by capacity
- Campus Dining, Housing, and Facilities will undertake any necessary construction in or renovation to the dining halls, in consultation with the Housemasters and House student leadership, necessary to accommodate operations for the new meal plan

Additional recommendations

The House Dining Advisory Group heard and considered several options for the House Dining system that are not specifically addressed above. Although these options do not appear in our recommendation for the meal plan, we strongly urge the Dean for Student Life and Campus Dining to explore them in the coming year:

Late night hours

Many students asked about—and were excited by the prospect of—creating a late-night dining option. Based on surveys, we know that some students eat a full meal after 10 p.m., while others at our forum said they would patronize a convenient location that offered healthy meals and/or snacks after the dining halls closed.

Simmons Hall has a successful late-night café, which is open to 1 a.m. six days a week. We believe that a similar operation located somewhere along Amherst Alley would be a popular and beneficial addition to Campus Dining operations. Since similar experiments have been unsuccessful in the past, we ask the Dean for Student Life and Campus Dining to continue to work with students and Housemasters to explore new and innovative ways to implement a late-night option for the other three House Dining residences.

Quality

Our recommendation includes a call for all-you-care-to-eat service because its benefits include a cost that is marginally lower than a la carte service, an ability to promote better eating habits, and significant popularity among many students, especially student-athletes. During our review, however, many students expressed concern that food quality would be diminished in an all-you-care-to-eat system. Therefore, we believe it is critical for Campus Dining to craft the RFP in a way that meets or exceeds current standards of service relating to food quality and preparation.

IAP & Lunch

This meal plan recommendation does not include IAP or lunch. There are practical reasons for defining the meal plan in this way—attendance during IAP is not required for nearly all MIT students; lunch in the residences is not a convenient or feasible option for MIT students—but it does raise issues that we believe require further discussion. Therefore, we strongly urge the Dean for Student Life to use the year between now and the implementation of the meal plan to study the balance between meal plan costs, the period covered by the meal plan, and the board allowance set by MIT for financial aid.

Continued review and discussion

The recommended meal plan represents a significant change for the House Dining system. In all likelihood, the system will adapt and evolve over several years. Therefore, we request that the Dean for Student Life convene a panel similar to the House Dining Advisory Group, perhaps with a small number of members, to work with Campus Dining to ensure that the new meal plan and the vendor who operates it are meeting the needs of the residential community.

We urge the Dean to formulate plans for a regular annual review of the House Dining system, plus any other steps he deems necessary, to monitor the success of the meal plan. (This review would be in parallel with any of the usual and continual interactions between Campus Dining, the vendor, Housemasters, and House dining chairs.) As with the House Dining review that we conducted this semester, students and faculty Housemasters should have an advisory role at the center of any assessment and improvement of the meal plan. Their guidance and oversight will be crucial to the long-term success of the new system.

A new plan for House Dining

As per the HDAG final recommendation, all residents of Baker, McCormick, Next, and Simmons will be required to enroll in a meal plan with these broad characteristics:

- All four dining halls open seven days per week
- Breakfast offered in all four houses seven days per week
- Dinner offered in all four houses seven days per week
- All-you-care-to-eat meals for all service periods
- “Continental plus” breakfast on weekdays, full brunch on weekends
- Meal plan participation ranging from 10 to 14 meals per week, as per below

Participants may choose between a 14-, 12-, and 10-meal-per-week plan based upon their year. The range of options is:

- First-year students: 14-meal plan
- Sophomores: 14- or 12-meal plan
- Juniors and seniors: 14-, 12-, or 10-meal plan

Using cost assumptions based on industry standards and validated against current budgets, Campus Dining has projected the costs of the meal plans for the academic year 2011-2012. The estimated plan prices are:

14-meals per week	12-meals per week	10-meals per week
7 breakfast, 7 dinner	6 breakfast, 6 dinner	5 breakfast, 5 dinner
Open to freshman, sophomores, juniors, seniors	Open to sophomores, juniors, seniors	Open to juniors, seniors
Projected price: \$3,800	Projected price: \$3,400	Projected price: \$2,900

Weekday Breakfast Service

Weekday breakfast service has not been offered in MIT’s dining halls for decades. The HDAG final recommendation called for “continental plus” breakfast service in the four halls. What would this service look like?

Campus Dining proposes a “continental plus” all-you-care-to-eat (AYCE) breakfast. Students who dine in may also take one piece of hand fruit or unfinished bakery item from the dining room. Alternately, students who wish to take-out may use a single-serve container available from the door checker. Each diner uses one breakfast meal swipe for either the dine-in or take-out option. Offerings could include:

Hot buffet:

- Scrambled eggs or breakfast frittata
- French toast or pancakes
- Rotation of sausage, ham or bacon
- Vegetarian breakfast links
- Hash brown potatoes (vegan / no butter)
- Hot maple syrup (blended, not 100% maple syrup)
- Hot oatmeal
- Raisins
- Brown sugar
- Make your own waffle station (vegan non-dairy batter mix)

Bakery:

- Assorted muffins and breads (blueberry, bran, banana, corn, and so forth; minimum three types)
- Assorted bagels (minimum three types)
- English muffins
- Sliced bread / toast
- Pastries and danishes (minimum three types)
- Condiments:
- Assorted jams (e.g. grape, strawberry, orange marmalade, raspberry)
- Cream cheese
- Butter and margarine
- Peanut butter

Bulk yogurt:

- Plain and vanilla flavor
- Fruit
- Granola

Fresh Fruit:

- Oranges
- Grapefruit
- Cantelope, melon or fresh mixed fruit cocktail (assortment based on seasonal availability)
- Apples (assortment based on seasonal availability)
- Occasional seasonal and/or attractive market opportunities: mango, kiwi, berries, pineapple, etc.

Bulk cold cereal

- Minimum of 5 varieties
- Oriented toward healthier cereals / lower in sugar
- Oat, wheat and corn-based varieties

Beverages:

- Whole milk
- 1% milk or skim
- Bulk juice dispenser
- 100% orange juice from concentrate
- 100% apple juice from concentrate
- Cranberry juice cocktail
- rotating variety of fruit punch drinks
- Coffee, regular and decaf
- Hot breakfast blend tea in urn / dispenser (not tea bags)
- Condiments (sugar, cream, Sweet and Low, Splenda, lemon wedge, etc.)

Next steps

Over the coming year, Campus Dining will work to develop and implement a new House Dining system based upon the HDAG final recommendation. The first step is to develop a Request for Proposal (RFP), a document that provides comprehensive details of MIT's needs, goals, and requirements for the dining program to facilitate informed bids from interested vendors. The goal of the RFP process is to select and enter into a contract with an outside company to operate House Dining at MIT.

The scope of this RFP will include the four residences with currently operating dining halls—Baker, McCormick, Next, and Simmons—as well as W1. When construction is completed, W1 will have a dining hall that is part of the House Dining system. It is prudent, therefore, to ensure that the vendor who operates the system is prepared to incorporate this facility.

There are standard protocols for conducting an RFP process, and to make a timely decision, Campus Dining will follow an established RFP structure. This structure always integrates community participation, including students, faculty, and other administrative offices at MIT such as the Office of the General Counsel and MIT Procurement. The steps typically include:

1. Invite the HDAG or a subset of its members, including student representatives, to serve as part of a recommendation committee. This group, which will also include MIT administrative staff, will help formulate the RFP, review vendor bids and presentations, and make a recommendation to the Dean for Student Life. The Dean will make the final decision on selecting a vendor for House Dining.
2. The Director of Campus Dining will create an initial draft of the RFP, in collaboration with MIT Procurement, based on the HDAG final recommendation. The RFP encompasses staffing, service hours, service standards, food quality, and other parameters a bidding vendor will need to understand. The document must be carefully constructed to avoid any ambiguity or confusion for both MIT and the bidding companies regarding the bidding process or how the contract will be managed.
3. Campus Dining will share the RFP draft with the recommendation committee to ensure that it emphasizes the goals articulated in the HDAG final report. Of particular interest will likely be sections on community engagement, assessment of services, and stipulations for quality assurance and accountability.
4. The final RFP document will be approved by the HDAG, the recommendation committee, the Office of General Counsel, MIT Procurement, the Office of the Vice President for Finance, the Director of Campus Dining, and the Dean for Student Life.
5. The Director of Campus Dining and MIT Procurement will identify a prospective vendor list for inclusion in the RFP process. These vendors will be invited to review the RFP and enter the process.
6. The recommendation committee will review submitted proposals on a qualitative and quantitative basis. The committee may visit other college and university dining systems being operated by vendors to review their capabilities in action. Each company will also make a presentation of their proposal to the committee.
7. The recommendation committee will make a final evaluation assimilating the written proposal, site visits, and the company presentations.
8. The recommendation committee will submit its selection to the Director of Campus Dining, who will present the vendor's proposal to the Dean for Student Life for approval.

9. Campus Dining will work with the chosen vendor to implement the new House Dining system for Fall 2011. This will include a review of facilities and any necessary renovation and construction.

Other considerations

The Dean for Student Life will work with the Committee on Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid (CUAFA), the Office of Financial Services, the Chancellor, the Provost, and other Institute offices to ensure that the plan price is consistent with the board allowance assumed by MIT's financial aid package. This will include consideration of the costs associated with spending for lunch and during IAP, periods that are not covered in the HDAG recommendation.

Mechanisms for continued community involvement

The HDAG closed its final recommendation with a call for continued community participation. The term of the contract for the new vendor is likely to be five years, and there will be opportunities to shape and improve the program as it moves forward. To ensure that the new system is successful, student and Housemaster input, especially from the communities with dining halls, will be vital.

Campus Dining and the Dean for Student Life will ensure that community voices will be heard by:

- Including students and Housemasters from the HDAG on the RFP recommendation committee
- Inviting the full HDAG (if a subset serves on the recommendation committee) to review the RFP
- Communicating continuously and effectively with the campus community as the new plan is put into place
- Ensuring that the RFP specify an annual review, with student and Housemaster participation, of the new dining system to analyze where the program is excelling, where it needs improvement, and where modifications can be made

It is important to note that these steps are in addition to the current and ongoing opportunities for students to be heard on dining. The Students may always enlist the aid of their residence's student president, student dining chair, or Housemasters if there is a question or issue with House Dining, regardless of the status of the RFP or the implementation of the new plan. Campus Dining and the current vendor are always open to constructive criticism, suggestions, or comments.

A note on transparency

During the Blue Ribbon Committee's period of study, after the release of its report in Spring 2009, and throughout the work of the House Dining Advisory Group (HDAG), there have been public calls for openness and transparency in the dining reform process. Yet, student participation and input has been critical throughout the various efforts, and will continue to be so. Therefore, this appendix will summarize the ways in which information has been shared and student voices on dining have been both solicited and heard in the past several years.

The House Dining Advisory Group and the House Dining Review

The HDAG included the student president and dining chair(s) from each of the four residences with dining halls, plus the Phoenix Group. Students therefore represented half of the committee's membership. In addition, the UA Dining Chair participated as an ex-officio member of the committee.

To assist in the process, two websites were set up for the MIT community, especially students. Building on the success of the Institute-Wide Planning Task Force, Campus Dining opened a new account, dedicated to House Dining, in the MIT Idea Bank. This site was open for students, faculty, and other community members to post their ideas and proposals for consideration.

The House Dining Review website contained Campus Dining's case for change and an archive of dining related documents dating back to 1956. This archive included all the reports and survey data from the Blue Ribbon Committee and the UA from the past two years. Over the review period, this site was updated to include meal plan scenarios and their costs, summary minutes from the House Dining Advisory Group, and responses to comments, suggestions, and questions posted to the dining Idea Bank.

The HDAG, with support from staff, organized forums in each of the four houses with dining halls. These forums were open to all students. The UA sponsored an additional forum for any concerned student in the lobby of the Stratton Student Center. Each session was led by the students and Housemasters from the Houses, with Campus Dining and Student Life staff on hand to answer questions. Additional meetings were held as necessary, such as a meeting to solicit input from the Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) and another meeting open to all student athletic captains.

The Blue Ribbon Committee (BRC)

The BRC was established in 2007 with the charge to review MIT's current residential dining service, explore past dining history and programs, to enlist the expertise of a highly regarded dining consulting company to provide information related to national dining trends, and to conduct peer institution research and benchmarking. In support of the committees' goal of transparency, the committee included representatives from all of the student government groups, including:

- Dormitory Council (DormCon)
- Undergraduate Association (UA)
- Graduate Student Council (GSC)

- Interfraternity Council (IFC)
- Panhellenic Association
- Living Group Council

All students were full members and active participants in both researching and developing the BRC final recommendations. Faculty housemasters and DSL staff joined them as partners from within the MIT community.

The consulting company, Envision Strategies, conducted focus groups and interviews with various campus constituencies to engage students in discussions around dining. Nearly 4,000 students and faculty took part in a web-based survey conducted in Spring 2008; more than 90 percent of respondents were undergraduate and graduate students. The BRC also held forums at several dorms specifically to address student feedback in response to the draft recommendations, and members attended a UA meeting to field student questions and concerns.

Envision Strategies compiled survey responses and other data in several reports. All of this data was shared with the MIT community this past spring during the House Dining Review process. The BRC publically posted its report and final recommendations on the Campus Dining site. The BRC also posted its meeting minutes.

Dining Proposal Committee (DPC)

The UA Senate formed its own group, the UA Dining Proposal Committee (UA-DPC), in March 2009 to examine the current dining system, to review data on student habits and preferences, and to make recommendations for dining. The BRC shared all of its data with the UA-DPC to assist the student leaders with their analysis. Campus Dining paid to format the data for the UA.

Residential Dining Committees

In each dormitory with a dining hall, a student dining committee holds regular meetings with representatives of the dining provider and Campus Dining. These meetings, which often include Housemasters, are held to solicit student input on topics such as menu choices, hours of operations, and special food requests. Services are refined and modified regularly through these committees.

Meeting with students and student leaders

The Chancellor and the three student deans—the Dean of Graduate Education, the Dean of Undergraduate Education, and the Dean for Student Life—hosted a series of evening meetings with a randomly selected set of undergraduates several times each semester this year. Called “Cookies and Conversation,” these face-to-face interactions proved to be very popular opportunities to discuss issues of importance to students, including dining.

Throughout the year, the Dean for Student Life also met on a weekly basis with the President and Vice President of the UA Senate. The Dean also met regularly with the UA Dining Chair, representatives of DormCon, leaders from the Graduate Student Council, and other student leaders. These meetings provided many opportunities for the Dean to answer questions and to update students on topical issues including dining.

Appendix A: “Fulfilling the Promise of House Dining”

To inform and frame the community discussion in spring 2010, Campus Dining created a website that described the case for change to the House Dining system, posted announcements and updates, and hosted an archive of dining-related documents dating back to 1956, including all the reports, data, and surveys from the 2009 Blue Ribbon Committee on Dining.

This appendix contains the content of this site.



MIT DIVISION OF STUDENT LIFE Home | For Faculty & Staff | Contact DSL | Logout SEARCH GO

HOUSE DINING REVIEW

Home | Call to Action | 1. Choice | 2. Nutrition | 3. Community | 4. Stability | Dining Archive | Final Recommendation

House Dining Review

[View](#) [Edit](#)

Welcome to the House Dining Review online resource.

For updates regarding scheduled events and for weekly responses to ideas, comments, and questions, [please visit the Update page](#).

At MIT, Campus Dining comprises catering, retail operations, House Dining for the undergraduate residences with dining halls, and cook-for-yourself for those undergraduate residences with student kitchens. This website has been prepared by Campus Dining to describe the principles for a new meal plan for one of these areas, House Dining, and to offer important historical context for making the decisions at hand.

This month, Campus Dining will be soliciting ideas, comments, questions, and other feedback from the campus community to determine the ultimate shape of a new meal plan for House Dining. [Read a letter to undergraduate students from Chris Colombo, Dean for Student Life, about this process.](#)

Read the pages on this site to learn how improvements to House Dining can make the dining system stronger for MIT. Please also visit the [Dining Archive](#) page, where you can view an extensive range of MIT historical documents ranging from half a century ago to last year's Blue Ribbon Committee report. And be sure to visit the [Idea Bank](#) to see ideas, comments, and questions posted in April 2010 from the Institute community.

- What is Campus Dining? What is House Dining?
- Why is Campus Dining creating a new meal plan for House Dining now?
- What are the main principles for House Dining?
- What is the timeline for a decision? When will a new plan be implemented?
- What are the considerations for the new plan?
- Who is being consulted in the process? How can I participate?
- Who is affected? Will any proposed changes affect cook-for-yourself students?
- What is the Idea Bank?
- What is the Dining Archive?

About the process

At MIT, Campus Dining comprises catering, retail operations, House Dining for the undergraduate residences with dining halls, and cook-for-yourself for those undergraduate residences with student kitchens. This paper has been prepared by Campus Dining to describe the principles for a new meal plan for one of these areas, House Dining, and to offer important historical context for making the decisions at hand.

This semester, Campus Dining and the Dean for Student Life will engage with students, Housemasters, and staff in an open, transparent process to define the programmatic aspects of the new plan. Recently, the Dean assembled a House Dining Advisory Group composed of students and Housemasters from the five residential communities with dining plans: Baker House, McCormick Hall, Next House, Simmons Hall, and the Phoenix Group at Ashdown. With help from this group, Campus Dining will consult closely with the broader community of residents in the five dorms, to align the new plan as closely as possible with their needs and wishes.

The process will be informed by the wide range of data, surveys, and commentaries generated by the 2009 Blue Ribbon Committee, the Undergraduate Association, and other sources. Members of the five residences will have extensive opportunities to ask questions and offer their thoughts. To enable participation from the rest of the MIT community, Campus Dining will also open a special dining section in the online “MIT Idea Bank.” At the end of the semester, Campus Dining will announce the new plan for implementation in Fall 2011.

A Call to Action: Fulfilling the promise of House Dining

At its founding, MIT did not offer dining, but it did not take very long for the Institute to realize that the community could not do without it. By 1889, the Institute had opened a lunchroom so that students, faculty, and staff could come together over a meal. At the start of the next century, when MIT moved across the river from Boston to Cambridge, dining naturally came along, too. Walker Memorial opened in 1917 with a library, meeting rooms, and a dining hall, all set at the intersection of academic and social life.

Since that time, the Institute has affirmed and reaffirmed the powerful ways that shared meals can build community and shape the lives and minds of young men and women. But since the late 1960s, the Institute has built and dismantled House Dining several times over. The system has oscillated between in-house management and external contractors; compulsory meal plans and laissez faire approaches; and the opening and closing of dining halls. Sadly, the most consistent features of the past 40 years of MIT dining may be community dissatisfaction, financial instability, and repeated calls for change.

There is widespread agreement on the principles for dining at the Institute: a commitment to student choice; an obligation to offer nutritious, healthy meals; a conviction that dining is central to community; and the need—increasingly urgent—for financial stability. MIT has both deep consensus on what dining should be and broad dissatisfaction with what dining is—and yet instead of progress, there is stasis, frustrating to all concerned.

The problem does not stem from a lack of understanding or conversation about dining issues. Over the past two decades, the Institute has assembled major committees every five years—in 1992, 1997, 2002, and 2007—to study dining from every angle. What has the community garnered from this effort? An unfortunate cycle. Groups are convened, reports are issued, the same set of circumstances is re-shuffled without real resolution, and the process starts all over again.

With the recent budget crisis, a situation that was always undesirable is now untenable. In past debates, the principle of student choice overshadowed all other considerations, compromising important values such as community and financial stability—and, thereby, ironically compromising student choice itself. The time has come to break the impasse and to fulfill the promise of dining at MIT. A sensible, sustainable House Dining program implemented alongside the robust cook-for-yourself communities will resolve core problems that have hobbled campus dining for too long.

Establishing Balance: Four Shared Principles

Campus Dining proposes to implement a new House Dining plan built around four principles:

- 1. Student Choice:** Choice will be preserved in the dining system at the top level, meaning that students can choose whether or not to live in a residence with dining. However, students who elect to live in a residence with a dining hall will continue to participate in a meal plan.
- 2. Health and Nutrition:** The Institute has an obligation to ensure that through House Dining students have access to nutritious meals and to encourage healthy eating habits.
- 3. Community & Student Development:** Meals present powerful opportunities to foster community and enhance student development.
- 4. Financial Stability:** The House Dining system must be financially self-sustaining.

Principle 1: Preserving Student Choice

Student choice is a cherished value at MIT. Unfortunately, decades of experience now show that if the system must provide all students with every option at all times and at every point in the dining system, it quickly ceases to be financially sustainable. Nevertheless, in past dining reviews, student choice has been a charged subject; when touched upon, it has paralyzed the conversation.

Yet, ironically, a focus on absolute flexibility has actually diminished student dining choice in important ways, because a House Dining system with weak or unstable financial support cannot offer the range of options that students say they want. In various surveys, for instance, students express a desire for expanded features and services, such as all-you-care-to-eat dining; hot or grab-and-go breakfast; late-night dining; and more menu choices for those with special dietary considerations, such as medical conditions, religious restrictions, or vegetarian preferences. Campus Dining and Housemasters also want the ability to offer more programming and events that build community and enhance student development.

Some on campus believe that House Dining can supply these things without a meal plan. Campus Dining believes that it is time to experiment with a new concept for House Dining, one in which Campus Dining works with the students in the relevant houses to create a robust and sustainable plan.

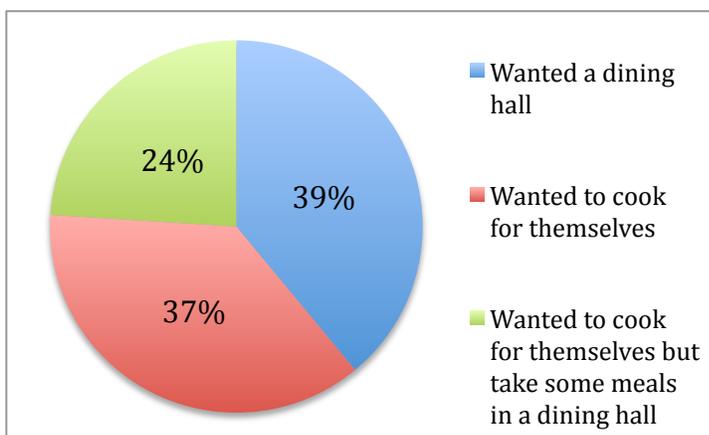
Choice within Campus Dining

Campus Dining will preserve choice at the system level. As is currently the case, students will retain their ability to select a residence that matches their stated dining preferences:

- *FSILG board plans*: A student may select a fraternity, sorority, or independent living group (FSILG); nearly all of these groups have an inclusive meal plan for their residents.
- *Cook-for-yourself*: A student may select a residence with kitchens to prepare meals.
- *House Dining*: A student may select one of the five residences with a dining hall and participate in an inclusive meal plan (Baker, McCormick, Next, Simmons, Phoenix Group).

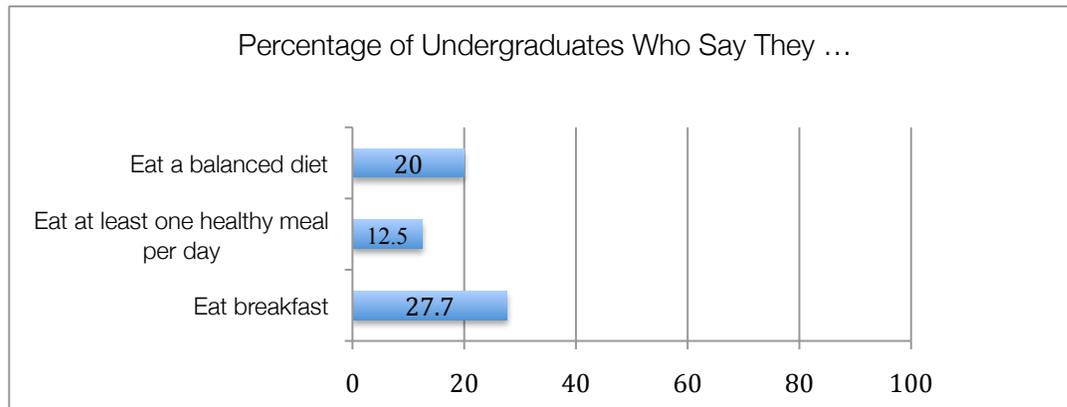
According to the Blue Ribbon Committee's final report, nearly 60 percent of surveyed undergraduates indicated that dining played a role in their housing selection. The breakdown of their preferences is shown in the chart below. Campus Dining will continue to provide the range of dining choices that reflects the preferences expressed by the student body.

Student preferences regarding dining and residences



Source: Blue Ribbon Committee on Dining Principle 2: Offering Healthy, Nutritious Dining

MIT students self-report that they do not eat nutritious meals on a regular basis. Consider the following data from the Blue Ribbon Committee surveys:



Source: Blue Ribbon Committee on Dining

Through its House Dining, the Institute must reaffirm its obligation to ensure that students have convenient access to healthy, nutritious meals. Many studies demonstrate a link between nutrition—especially a healthy breakfast—and cognitive performance in students. Campus Dining firmly believes that a quality dining program also helps pave the way for sensible eating patterns in life after college.

Moreover, the steps that Campus Dining wishes to take in support of good nutrition and eating habits align with what students say they want from House Dining. A new plan could:

Improve quality and variety:

Undergraduates are generally pleased with the quality of House Dining. In a recent UA survey, 72 percent thought the food was good or very good, and 77 percent thought the service was good or very good. A new House Dining program could make improvements to variety and quality, such as stronger offerings for vegans, vegetarians, and religious groups with dietary restrictions. Dining could also work with students to determine how to include organic or locally produced foods and other sustainable practices.

Offer breakfast:

Students indicate a strong preference for breakfast, but it is not offered in the dining halls now. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 indicating strong agreement about its importance, the Blue Ribbon Committee’s meal plan study showed that House Dining students rate a hot traditional breakfast at 4.16 and grab-and-go breakfast at 3.66.

Offer All-You-Care-to-Eat (AYCE):

Approximately 75 percent of undergraduates want MIT to offer some dining plan configuration with AYCE meals. Certain students, such as athletes, may find this option especially appealing. And, according to surveys, undergraduates would eat a broader variety of foods if AYCE were available.

A brief AYCE pilot study in Simmons Hall bears out this assertion. During the pilot, Simmons residents drank five times more milk and twice as much juice and ate considerably more fruits and vegetables than they did with a la carte service. Better still, AYCE creates a demand for a more

balanced variety of foods without significantly increasing costs.

Support freshmen:

Campus Dining believes freshmen will especially benefit from a meal plan that encourages good eating habits as they adjust to life at college.

Explore other options:

A new plan could provide Campus Dining with the resources to work with students to integrate late-night dining offerings and nutritional education programming within the House Dining system.

Principle 3: Building Community

In 1998, the Task Force on Student Life and Learning noted, “The dining system is another setting in which community is created ... In terms of bringing diverse groups of people together, however, the dining system remains a largely underutilized resource.” Recent surveys conducted for the Blue Ribbon Committee show that students and faculty still broadly agree that (1) the dining program should help build community around meals and (2) that meals are an important part of residential life. (On a 1-5 scale, on-campus undergraduates rated the first assertion at 3.47, and House Dining members rated the second at 3.92.)

The percentage of house residents eating in the dining halls, however, tends to be lower at MIT than on other campuses, last year averaging 63 percent versus 80-90 percent at peer dining services. Indeed, Campus Dining observes that many House Dining residents purchase takeout meals to eat in their rooms. Because 2/3 of housing stock is single rooms, House Dining may be even more important for ensuring students are not isolated within the residences.

Enhancing Student Development

Dining also offers opportunities to complement the academic experience and to enhance student development. The Institute has asserted this for much of its history. “The committee believes that gracious, pleasant, and relaxed dining in a house dining room can be a significant part of the educational experience. Very few other occasions can so profitably be utilized for the interchange of ideas and information between students and between students and elders,” stated the 1956 Report on the Committee on Housing, which laid the foundation for much of MIT’s residential system.

More than half a century later, no one could argue that our current system fulfills this appealing vision. The new dining plan, however, represents an important positive step closer, with immediate benefits across the community. On a basic level, shared dining fosters students’ social, intellectual, and personal development, while giving them a relaxed way to explore ideas and even cultures different from their own. In addition, House Dining can help students build relationships with faculty, complement the academic experience, and support the Housemasters and the residential community in at least three direct ways:

Faculty as guests:

To encourage more interaction between students and their professors, the new plan could include “guest meals” that permit faculty to dine with students several times per semester at no cost. Nearly half (46.1 percent) of faculty surveyed for the Blue Ribbon Committee expressed an interest in joining students for a meal in a residential dining room. Of those, approximately one-third (30.2 to 37.5 percent) would be interested in doing so one or more times per month. These guest passes could

also be used for family or friends.

Residential Programming:

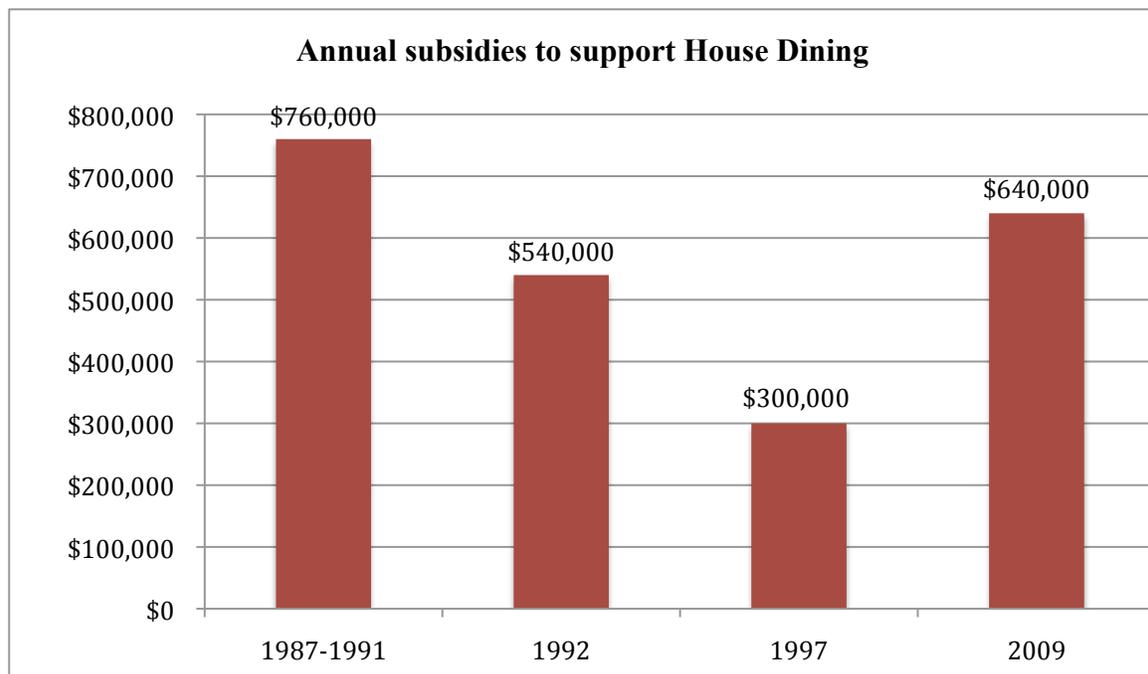
The new plan will support Housemasters and residential programming in multiple ways. Residents will have the flexibility to direct some student meal plan funds to support events centered around meals. With assured student participation, Housemasters will have more natural opportunities to build community through dining without having to expend house funds on food—common in the current system. Discussions with Housemasters indicate strong support for this feature.

Campus Dining:

In a strengthened system, Campus Dining could do more to work in concert with Housemasters and students on programming such as guest chefs, nutritional education, theme nights, social events, and cultural programming built around meals. Such events would be complementary to and integrated with Housemaster and student efforts.

Principle 4: Financial Stability

For 20 years, House Dining has faced annual deficits that have swung from \$300,000 to as high as \$750,000. This year, Campus Dining will subsidize House Dining by more than \$600,000. For the host of reasons outlined above, Campus Dining would recommend a new plan even if the system were financially stable, but as MIT strives to adjust to the new financial reality, House Dining must be self-sustaining.



SOURCE: Campus Dining. Note that the figure in column 1 is the average for the preceding five years.

Two thirds of House Dining residents chose their dorm because it had a dining hall, while 20 percent of students who live in other dorms want the option to eat some of their meals in residential dining. Moreover, when undergraduates are surveyed, they ask for a House Dining system that resembles

offerings at MIT's peer institutions—with breakfast during the week, brunch on weekends, an all-you-care-to-eat option, and other services. For the 2009-2010 academic year, the Office of Financial Aid calculated a board rate of \$4,560 for all students, yet House Dining receives only \$600 in guaranteed support per year from residents. This support is simply not sufficient to sustain a system that satisfies community needs.

The subsidy now equals fully one-third of the House Dining budget. A second consequence of the annual subsidy is a progressive weakening of Campus Dining and Residential Life in ways that may not be obvious to the community but that have significant repercussions:

It limits maintenance and renovation:

Campus Dining spans the Institute and includes catering, retail operations, House Dining, and the cook-for-yourself communities. With the heavy subsidy it demands, however, House Dining places a debilitating drag on the rest of the system. Revenue from MIT's retail operations must go to cover House Dining operations, for instance, rather than being reinvested in campus facilities and improvements to the Campus Dining as a whole. Over the past seven years, Campus Dining has subsidized operational costs for House Dining by a total of \$3.6 million—funds that could have been used, for example, to renovate the Next House kitchens, a project with an estimated cost of \$2.8 million.

The House Dining subsidy affects maintenance and renovation in two ways. First, the dining system lacks a reserve fund for the capital expenditures related to infrastructure. Best practices for the industry suggest that, at a minimum, 5 percent of annual net revenue be set aside for reinvestment in facilities, and Campus Dining is unable to meet even that low standard.

Second, the Campus Dining annual budget allocates \$100,000 for equipment and repairs—and this amount is barely adequate. Currently, the true annual maintenance costs for House Dining have been covered only through growth in the entire dining system. Because maintenance and renovation are occurring at minimal levels, the House Dining facilities are at risk of significant degradation.

It constrains improvement:

Apart from limiting Campus Dining's ability simply to maintain what is currently in place, the operational subsidy constrains efforts to make additions and improvements. A new plan would give Campus Dining the ability to work with residents to enhance dining halls, experiment with new services and offerings, and otherwise upgrade the system.

Dining Archive

The House Dining Review website posted a chronological list of documents related to dining and Residential Life at MIT. House Dining is not a new issue for the Institute. When MIT built up its residential system in the 1950s and 1960s, House Dining was a central concept. Indeed, the goals and principles for House Dining have been remarkably consistent for more than half a century.

Since 1992, the Institute has assembled major committees to study House Dining every five years—in 1992, 1997, 2002, and 2007. The most recent effort by the Blue Ribbon Committee included extensive analysis and surveys of community opinion and preference. The House Dining Review website invited interested students and other members of the MIT community to review these documents, plus others from Institute history. The archive included:

1956

Report of the Committee on Student Housing

1979

Report of the Committee on Campus Dining

1981

MIT Food Services Survey

Meal Plans at MIT from 1980 to 2001

1992

Report of the House Dining Committee

1997

Institute Dining Review Final Report

1998

Principles for the MIT Residential System

Task Force on Student Life and Learning

1999

Unified Proposal for an MIT Residence System

2002

Review of Campus Dining Board presentation

Summary of 2002 changes to Dining System

2007

Baker House Dining Report

2008

Envision Strategies Dining Studies

- Findings

- Implications

2009

Meal Plan Study Financial Assumptions

Meal Plan Study Revised Market Research Report Part I

Meal Plan Study Final Report

Final Report of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Dining

Undergraduate Association Dining Proposal Committee Final Report

2010

Chancellor's Response to the Institute-wide Planning Task Force Preliminary Report

Undergraduate Association Survey on Breakfast in Dining Halls Summary

House Dining Membership, Spring 2010, with voluntary participation tally

Other Documents

Moments in MIT Food Service History

Dining Brochures 1980 – 2002

Dining Calendar: 1988-1989

Residence Dining: 1985-1986

Appendix B: Response to the 2010 House Dining Idea Bank

In conjunction with the House Dining Review website, which presented information to the community, Campus Dining established the House Dining Idea Bank to gather questions, comments, and suggestions from the community.

The site was modeled after the success of the Idea Bank established to support the 2008 Institute Wide Planning Task Force. On the site, anyone in the community could post a comment, question, or criticism. There was also a section with questions from Campus Dining for the community to consider.

This appendix highlights community posts from the site and present responses, clarifications, and additional information from Campus Dining.

MIT Idea Bank: House Dining



All Idea Banks:

- House Dining Bank
- Task Force Bank



Welcome to the House Dining Idea Bank

House Dining Review

Campus Dining has been working with students and faculty to develop the fundamental structure of a new plan for House Dining. Campus Dining has now developed several initial scenarios that need input from the community, especially undergraduate students, on several vital questions.

It's up to you to help make a better plan.

You can read Campus Dining's case for change and scenario summaries [on the House Dining Review website](#). For the month of April, this draft will be a living, breathing document. The meal plan will not be finalized by the Dean for Student Life until mid-May, after community feedback has been collected, considered, and acted upon.

Once logged in you will be able to:

- Deposit your ideas
- Comment on ideas
- Read House Dining goals and reports
- Answer our questions to you

Idea and comment entries are closed.

Faculty, Staff, and Students

Log in with your MIT certificate

MIT Alumni

Log in with your Infinite Connection account.

Username: *

Password: *

Log in

[Register for an Infinite Connection account.](#)

[Retrieve your Infinite Connection password.](#)

**Participation should be voluntary for all students,
including those who live in a residence with a dining hall**

Comment:

“Students have the flexibility to live where they want to live and eat what they want to eat. The two should not be coupled together.”

Response:

We believe that decades of experience now show that if the Campus Dining system must provide all students with every option at all times and at every point in the dining system, it quickly ceases to be financially sustainable. It is simply not possible to retreat from asking students in House Dining residences to make a commitment to support their program.

**Campus Dining needs to improve its service
and options for students with allergies and dietary restrictions**

Comment:

“It would be helpful if the servers in the dining halls were made more aware of key allergy information relating to the specials that are served in the dining halls each night.”

Response:

Improving service for students with allergy or dietary concerns was raised during the public forums, as well as through the Idea Bank. Therefore, the House Dining Advisory Group made a special note to make this an aspect of any request for proposal that goes out to vendors when Campus Dining is negotiating to select a new operator. The goal will be to have very clearly spelled our terms and expectations for accommodating as much as possible students with these kinds of issues who eat in the dining halls.

Moreover, Campus Dining encourages any student with a concern about dietary needs or other issues with the dining halls to speak to their House dining chairperson and/or the chef manager of your facility. Many students with gluten allergies, for example, have worked successfully with their House leadership and the kitchen staff to manage their condition.

Consolidate or close the dining halls

Comments:

“The largest cost to a dining hall is employees, so consolidating people who want dining into a few places is the only way I see to make dining viable at a reasonable price ...”

“The best idea would be to close all the dining halls and provide more options in the Student Center.”

Response:

At MIT, this type of dining experience is, in fact, already consolidated into four of the undergraduate dining halls. Importantly, the residents of these communities do not want their dining halls to close. During the review process this semester, most students also said they preferred to eat in their own residence rather than travel to another dorm or the Student Center.

Quality

Comment:

“The point of a dining system is not to make money. The entire purpose of having a dining system at all is to provide reasonably affordable, nutritious food to students who otherwise would not get it. Creating a system which ... actively disincentivizes quality and availability for the sake of the bottom line demonstrates a fundamental misplacement of priorities.”

Response:

This comment is correct about the purpose of the system. That why the fundamental financial priority for House Dining is not to “make money” but to have sufficient resources to provide the services demanded by students and the Institute on an ongoing basis. Financial sustainability and realizing a profit (i.e., “making money) are two different objectives. MIT’s new system is intended to fully cost recover the operating expenses of a House Dining program, not to make a profit. Full cost recovery includes paying the food service provider a negotiated percentage of revenues for their services as well as the cost of administering the contractor’s activity, and providing resources to save for renovation and restoration of the House Dining facilities.

However, there are many methods for incenting a contractor’s performance that encourage, not compromise, quality. MIT’s current approach is to set a level of service standards and then to negotiate a breakeven cost of operation based standards. In addition, MIT negotiates a reasonable profit percentage tied to revenue, sometimes referred to as a management fee. Through this management fee, the contractor has the incentive to attract and satisfy more customers.

When customers are on required meal plans, other incentives can be employed, such as setting targets for customer satisfaction and attendance. Since MIT’s food service contracts specify service hours and the calendar of operating days, as well as food purchasing standards, staffing, menus, and the different food station platforms required for those menus, the contractor is not free to compromise these stipulations to benefit their bottom line. Also, every contractor’s reputation and ultimately their prospects for obtaining new clients is based on the opinion of their current accounts. Bid processes for MIT and other universities always involve reference checking with other clients and/or site visits to other contractor accounts. If a vendor wants a good recommendation from MIT to obtain more clients elsewhere, they must perform well on our campus.

Contractors are required to meet with advisory committees of MIT’s choosing and to respond to their concerns and issues. These meetings also present an opportunity for MIT to demand that these savings are reinvested to enhance the program’s value to students. A capable operator is one who can respond to the community’s wishes and in the process reduce their costs without reducing customer satisfaction, nutritional soundness, and/or other qualitative aspects of their service.

Lastly, all MIT contracts have a termination clause that allows MIT to dismiss a vendor for any reason within 3–6 months without any compensation to the contractor. This is obviously the final step should a vendor fail to perform up to MIT’s expectation, which include the committee expectations described above.

Move to self-operation

Comments:

“Reclaim control of the dining system from third party vendors...”

“Most of MIT's peer institutions run their own dining programs (Harvard, Yale, Princeton, CalTech, etc.). Though there are many important difference between our culture and the culture of these other schools, this is an important option to research.”

Response:

Although self-operation has certain advantages—including the ability to exercise direct control over food services—it also presents several potential drawbacks. For instance, Campus Dining would become the employer of numerous additional employees, which could increase costs and lower flexibility in the long term.

In addition, a move to self-operation would not necessarily result in lower costs. A survey of peer schools that have self-operated dining systems shows that all of them require more students to participate and charge higher prices for comparable plans than Campus Dining currently projects for its new meal plan.

Take-out option

Comment:

“If AYCE is implemented, this plan must support take out some how.”

Response:

The House Dining Advisory Group has discussed balancing the advantages of AYCE with the occasional need for a student to grab a meal and take it out of the dining hall. One concern, as this commenter suggests, is establishing rational limits on the amount of food a student can take. The final recommendation calls for the new meal plan to contain an explicit provision for boxed/take-out options to accommodate students whose schedules, due to laboratories, classes, athletics, and other commitments make it difficult to eat during the normal hours.

Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

Comment:

“Fresh fruits and vegetables are very scarce on campus ... We need a place on campus that sells FRESH fruits and vegetables everyday.”

Response:

The HDAG final recommendation calls for all-you-care-to-eat service in all dining halls. According to Campus Dining, students in an AYCE system tend to consume more fruits and vegetables than in an a la carte system. This observation is supported by data from the Simmons AYCE pilot last year, in which consumption of fruits and vegetables rose significantly during the trial.

In addition, the final recommendation explicitly calls for the system to ensure high quality produce, stating: “We believe it is critical for Campus Dining to craft the RFP in a way that meets or exceeds current standards of service relating to food quality and preparation.”

Cost is too high

Comment:

“Basically having it cost students \$2,000 a year and only offering dinner is unacceptable. The cost should be less than \$1,500 per year as a maximum cap.”

Response:

The Institute-Wide Planning Task Force charged the Division of Student Life with eliminating an annual subsidy of more than \$600,000 for House Dining. Financial modeling by Campus Dining showed that a meal plan that maintains the current level of service (dinner five nights per week in three houses, and seven nights per week in one house) and eliminates the subsidy would cost approximately \$2,000.

Lunch

Comment:

“If needed, MIT should charge more for a dinner-only meal plan/maybe even include a takeout breakfast, but please do not create more losses by making students pay for a lunch that they will not eat.”

Response:

Many undergraduates let the committee know that students would find it very inconvenient to return to the dining halls for lunch. Moreover, the committee noted that all students have the option to create a declining balance dining dollars account to purchase lunch in any retail location around campus. As a result, the final recommendation does not include lunch as an aspect of the meal plan.

Financial aid will not be reduced for the 2011-2012 academic year

Comment:

“I propose two options. 1) In consultation with CUAFA [Committee on Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid], eliminate the planned \$1460 aid reductions for students not opting into the meal plan. 2) Allow students from cook-for-yourself communities and non-dining dorms direct representation on HDAG, since they will be effectively forced to purchase a meal plan if the aid reductions are approved.”

Response:

There will not be a two-tiered system for financial aid in 2010-2011. All students who are awarded financial aid will receive the same allowance for meals, regardless of where they live or whether they are on a meal plan.

The Institute-Wide Planning Task Force did ask that this issue be examined, but according to Elizabeth Hicks, the Executive Director of Student Financial Services, “there are no plans to use different allowances for board when determining financial aid eligibility next year.”

The 2010-2011 Student Financial Services (SFS) publication “Financing Your MIT Education,” which was mailed to the prospective members of the Class of 2014, states “We use an annual meal allowance of \$4,350 for financial aid eligibility.” Under the budget section, it indicates that the award takes into consideration that costs will depend on a number of factors, including your housing and

dining options, as well as other lifestyle choices. And, out of fairness, SFS does not change a student's budget based on lifestyle preferences. "Whether you end up spending more or less than our allowances," said Hicks, "your financial aid award stays the same."

Late-night eating

Comment:

"Most MIT students don't prescribe to the "normal" meal times, and a dining hall with options only as late as 8 p.m. doesn't fit our community. We need places that can provide us with fast, convenient, nutritious food at late hours when we're working on psets and studying for exams."

Response:

The final recommendation specifically addresses this point, stating: "Many students asked about—and were excited by the prospect of—creating a late-night dining option. Based on surveys, we know that some students eat a full meal after 10 p.m., while others at our forum said they would patronize a convenient location that offered healthy meals and/or snacks after the dining halls closed.

"Simmons Hall has a successful late-night café, which is open to 1 a.m. six days a week. We believe that a similar operation located somewhere along Amherst Alley would be a popular and beneficial addition to Campus Dining operations. Since similar experiments have been unsuccessful in the past, we ask the Dean for Student Life and Campus Dining to continue to work with students and Housemasters to explore new and innovative ways to implement a late-night option for the other three House Dining residences."

Guaranteed profits

Comment:

"The reason MIT Dining is experiencing a \$600,000 deficit is because our contracts with Bon Appetit guarantee a certain profit to the company, independent of number of meals served and quality. There is no incentive for Bon Appetit (or any private company) to improve service if MIT will pay them the same amount of money over a 5-year contract period."

Response:

Rich Berlin, the Director of Campus Dining, reports that MIT does not guarantee profits for the vendor. In fact, there is a financial incentive to attract more customers.

The contract works through two basic financial terms. The first is a negotiated budget that covers the breakeven cost for the vendor based on the standards of service MIT requires, such as food quality, hours of service, number of different stations, and so forth.

The second component—and where the contractor gets an incentive to do a good job—is the "management fee." This fee is a percentage of sales that the contractor earns. The more sales the contractor has the more they earn through the management fee. In other words, attracting more customers increases the gross revenue and thus has the potential to increase their profits. Conversely, if the contractor performs poorly and attendance drops as a result, the negotiated breakeven budget for that year will not cover their expenses and they will lose money on the basic operation of the service in addition to lowering their management fee.

Missed Meal factor

Comment:

“I would be happy to pay extra per meal to support the operation of the dining hall as long as I didn't have to pay for meals I am not buying.”

Response:

Campus Dining recognizes that every student may not be able to make every meal. In fact, nearly every University dining program takes this into consideration—it's called the “missed meal factor” in the industry—and structures dining plans to accommodate it. Typically, the meal plan price reflects the missed-meal factor so that students are not paying full price for all meals. But the degree of flexibility is limited because the dining halls have to remain open and must bear all the expenses of remaining open each day of scheduled service, whether you choose to eat there or not.

If Campus Dining were to increase student flexibility—i.e., a lower total meal commitment—the likely result would be somewhat higher per meal costs. The projected prices for the new House Dining meal plan balances the need to cover operating costs with a sincere desire to build some flexibility into the plan.

Students shouldn't choose dorms by dining

Comment:

“Choosing a dorm should not be about choosing your meal plan—it should be about choosing the people and culture of the dorm that works best for you!”

“Forcing prioritization of dining before dorms ... hinders the current value of dorm culture.”

Response:

Students already choose dorms for a variety of reasons, including the dining option. Consider the following data from the Blue Ribbon Committee on Dining surveys:

- Nearly two thirds of students in House Dining residences chose their dorm because it has a dining hall.
- Approximately 90 percent of East Campus residents, and nearly 80 percent of other non-House Dining residents, chose their dorm because they wanted to cook.

Although there may be some adjustment, the new meal plan does not depart from the current model for MIT's residential system. Students who wish to have a meal plan and who are attracted by the variety and service offered in the new system will choose to live in a House Dining community. Students who want to cook for themselves exclusively will select other communities. And other students who want to cook sometimes and eat in a dining hall sometimes may choose to live outside of House Dining and voluntarily enroll in a partial meal plan.

Combine all you care to eat and a la carte service

Comment:

“One solution is to have an a-la-carte menu for all the center of the plate items (hamburger, chicken breast, lasagna slice, etc.) but have an all-you-care-to-eat buffet of salads, steamed vegetables, rice,

fruit, etc. This "sides bar" can either be included in the up-front price, or it can be one of the choices in the a-la-carte menu.”

“It might be tricky to implement both AYCE and a la carte in the same location, but it's not impossible.”

Response:

This idea suggests that a dual al la carte and all-you-care-to-eat approach would save money for the student, but we do not believe this would be the result. The additional cost of operations and service logistics of such an approach would ultimately be reflected in the cost of the entrees sold on an a la carte basis. There would be no savings to the student, and, in fact, such a system would probably be more expensive than either approach alone. For example, a dual system would require a door checker at the dining room entrance and one or two cashiers to charge for entrées on an a la carte basis leaving the service area. Across all meal periods and all locations, this would add several full time positions to the program and increase costs accordingly.

There are also several service drawbacks. Student would have to wait in line to pay for their entrée whereas under the all-you-care-to-eat service, once they are checked in at the entrance to the dining room, they are free to browse the food options available without interruption. This is faster and more convenient for students and allows them to eat their food while its hot. It also permits students to discard items that they don't like and to replace them with other foods without additional expense.

Faculty dining in the dining halls

Comment:

“Lastly I think that the faculty free dine day is a great idea. The college where my high school actually did this once a week and it served as a great opportunity to get to know professors as people.”

“One of the keys to Harvard's dining system is the chance to meet professors informally in the dining setting; and it is a frequent criticism at MIT that the professors and students do not interact as much as either population would prefer.”

Response:

There is broad support for facilitating faculty and student interaction over meals, and we anticipate working with students and Housemasters to explore this possibility. We anticipate a program that would encourage faculty to dine with students both on a formally scheduled basis as well as in an ad hoc manner that encourages more casual conversations and academic discourse.

A structured approach could include a reservation system for setting aside a table or tables at a particular meal for faculty to dine with students. A simple first-come, first-serve or an RSVP web enrollment tool might be all that is required of the student to join such a gathering. For example, a physics professor might simply post on the Dining web site that she will be at Baker Dining on a particular night to talk about string theory; students could check the site for these postings and inquire with the dining staff to be directed to the table reserved for this discussion.

We may also learn from other university programs, such as Cornell University's Faculty Fellows dining program, which encourages junior faculty to interact with students over meals, to learn how to accomplish this important goal.

Choice within the plan

Comment:

“MIT has a diverse group of students with different schedules. It would be nice to have meal plan options which aren't just meals everyday of the week. Everyone won't eat breakfast and everyone won't eat dinner in a dining hall every night, so give people the option of picking a plan which best suits their lifestyle.”

Response:

The HDAG final recommendation does call for a range of meal plans. First-year students will be required to participate at 14 meals per week. Sophomores may choose between 14- or 12-meal plans. Juniors and seniors may choose among 14-, 12-, or 10-meal plans.

Breakfast

Comment:

“Breakfast is important, but serving hot breakfast in dorm dining halls during the week is not cost-effective or fair.”

“There's no guarantee that people will all of a sudden start eating breakfast or that students will KEEP eating breakfast from the dining halls.”

“Weekend brunch would most likely receive a more consistent demand.”

Response:

A very small percentage of MIT students report that they eat breakfast on a regular basis, but there is a clear link between cognitive performance and eating healthy, nutritious meals, especially breakfast. The Institute has an obligation to ensure that breakfast is available in part of the Residential Life system to encourage better eating habits and to provide this important meal for those students who want it.

And, when surveyed, students actually express a strong desire for breakfast service, especially weekend brunch. Therefore, the HDAG recommendation calls for “continental plus” service during the week and full brunch on weekends. The weekday service will include a wide range of options to eat-in or simpler items to grab-and-go. According to financial projections, this level of service costs the same or less than a completely take-out breakfast operation.

Open dining halls to the public

Comment:

“The house dining halls should be advertised as open to members of the public. What better way to increase use, than to draw on more customers.”

Response:

There are many technical and programmatic reasons why MIT cannot make the dining halls open to the public:

- Public access presents serious security issues for the residences with dining halls.

- MIT provides food service in the dining halls in support of the academic mission only. Therefore, House Dining is regarded as a non-profit operation subject to the tax laws of a non-profit organization. If we were open to the general public and advertised as such, the food service would be considered a for-profit business and the property subject to property taxes.
- By being open to the public, MIT would be required to obtain a common victualer's license and would be bound by additional controls and review by the City of Cambridge. For example, if the dining operation was open until 9 p.m., the residence hall could not limit access to the building until the closing time of the dining operation to the general public.
- There is little foot traffic past MIT residences, except for MIT students, staff and faculty. It is not likely that public patronage would increase revenues enough to offset costs such as new taxes, advertising, additional licensing and insurance liability costs, and so forth. The result would likely be greater losses.

Subsidy

Comment:

“Has anyone ever thought where the \$600,000 [annual subsidy] comes from and who's paying for it?”

Response:

Campus Dining must balance its annual operating budget and therefore must consider carefully how to cover the \$600,000 subsidy in House Dining each year. The general strategy to cover this amount is to take commissions (a percentage of sales that each retail vendor and/or caterer pays MIT to operate a business on campus) and pay a portion of them to the House Dining contractor in the form of a subsidy. The subsidy is the amount that the cost of providing the services as stipulated by MIT exceeds the sales to students for meals in House Dining.

The implications for this strategy over the long run are problematic. Every business must reinvest at least a portion of its resources back into the business or its infrastructure will deteriorate to the point that it no longer can sustain operations. Likewise, the retail operations at MIT must reinvest a portion of their resources back into their business or risk a deteriorated infrastructure that no longer can support itself or generate sufficient commissions for Campus Dining needed to support House Dining. In this way, the House Dining subsidy affects the sustainability of the entire Campus Dining system.

If students were paying more for a sandwich at Subway, or more for a burrito at Anna's Taqueria than at their other stores, which by contract they are not permitted to do, it could be argued that students are paying for the subsidy indirectly. But since the subsidy is an expense to the retail vendor that they cannot pass along to the student, this is not the case. Further, many departments and outside companies purchase catering services on campus. These events are also provided at a competitive rate versus other commercial alternatives, meaning the commission cost to the caterer is not an additional burden to the customer to cover House Dining.

Make HDAG members subscribe to the plan

Comment:

“Housemasters should have to participate in any dining plan mandated for their dorm. If they are pushing it, then they should have to eat it.”

Response:

In fact, Housemasters frequently eat in their dining halls. As members of the House Dining Advisory Group, they were very concerned with issues such as food and service quality.

Advertise to grad students

Comment:

“A lot of graduate students aren't even aware that they can eat in the dining halls...”

Response:

We will promote the House Dining program to graduate students more aggressively. Greater participation from graduates students could have a positive effect from financial and programmatic standpoints.

It is not clear, however, that awareness of availability is the reason that graduate students do not patronize House Dining in higher numbers. The Ashdown graduate residence opened with a meal plan targeted at graduate students. This program, which was actively promoted to grad student with advertising and housemaster supported events, offered an excellent value at \$8.00 for an all-you-care-to-eat buffet service. After the dinner drew less than 100 patrons a night from a population of some 1,500 graduate students in the Northwest area of campus, it was discontinued.

Nonetheless, we will continue to promote House Dining so that more graduate students can take advantage of this opportunity to eat well at an affordable price on campus.

AYCE not fair to those who eat less

Comment:

“AYCE doesn't make sense on a very fundamental level: it charges everyone the same price. The simple fact is that not everyone eats the same amount of food---athletes eat more than non-athletes, tall people tend to eat more than short people, men usually eat more than women etc. Any plan that doesn't account for these differences does not distribute cost fairly.”

Response:

This comments suggests that quantity of food is the only measure of fairness or value. In fact AYCE offers several advantages for all diners:

- Students eat a broader, more balanced variety of food under AYCE than a la carte because the incremental cost of adding a soup, salad, or dessert to their meal is zero. During the Simmons Dining AYCE experiment in 2008, milk consumption, for example, increased almost 5-fold and fruit and vegetable consumption was up significantly according to the food service contractor.
- There is greater opportunity to try new foods and culinary experiences because there is no risk of buying something that you may not like and having to pay more to go back and buy something else instead. If you don't like something in an AYCE program, you can always get something else at no additional cost.
- On an al a carte basis, salads and other fresh fruit and vegetable ingredients, usually sold by the ounce, can get very expensive. Under an AYCE program, regardless of size or mix of higher cost ingredients, the price is the same.

- There is less waste with AYCE because although portions are unlimited, they are smaller for each serving. Diners tend to focus less on the main protein/meat and more on building a balanced meal from a variety of foods.
- AYCE is a faster service model. Once in the door, there is no cashier to stand in line to pay. Beverages can be placed conveniently in or near the dining room since they are unlimited, also providing significant savings over a la carte.
- And, yes, it is a great program for large percentage of MIT students who have specific dietary needs because they participate in varsity or club athletics.

Appendix C: Data on student eating habits

The House Dining Advisory Group reviewed data selected from the work of the Blue Ribbon Committee and other sources during its deliberations. This appendix contains data regarding student dining habits and preferences.

About the survey

Envision Strategies (Blue Ribbon)

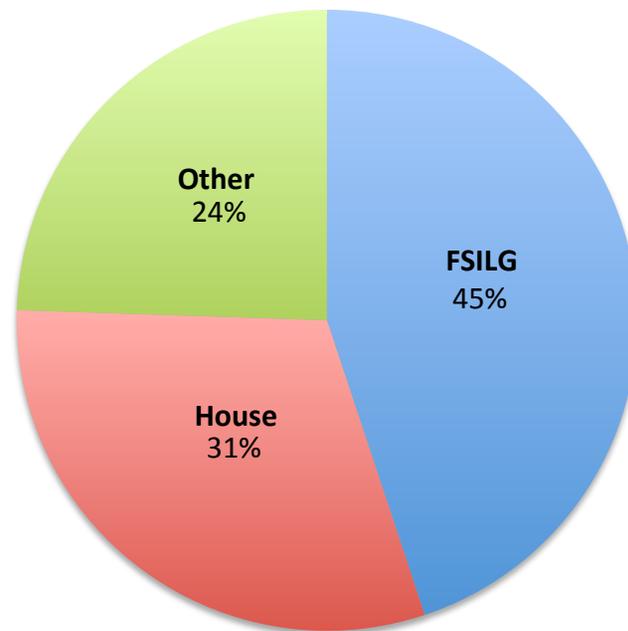
Market Research Survey

- 3,921 respondents:
 - 1,779 undergraduates
 - 1,745 graduate students
 - 328 faculty
- Confidence interval 1.6%

Where students live

4,232 2009-2010 enrollment

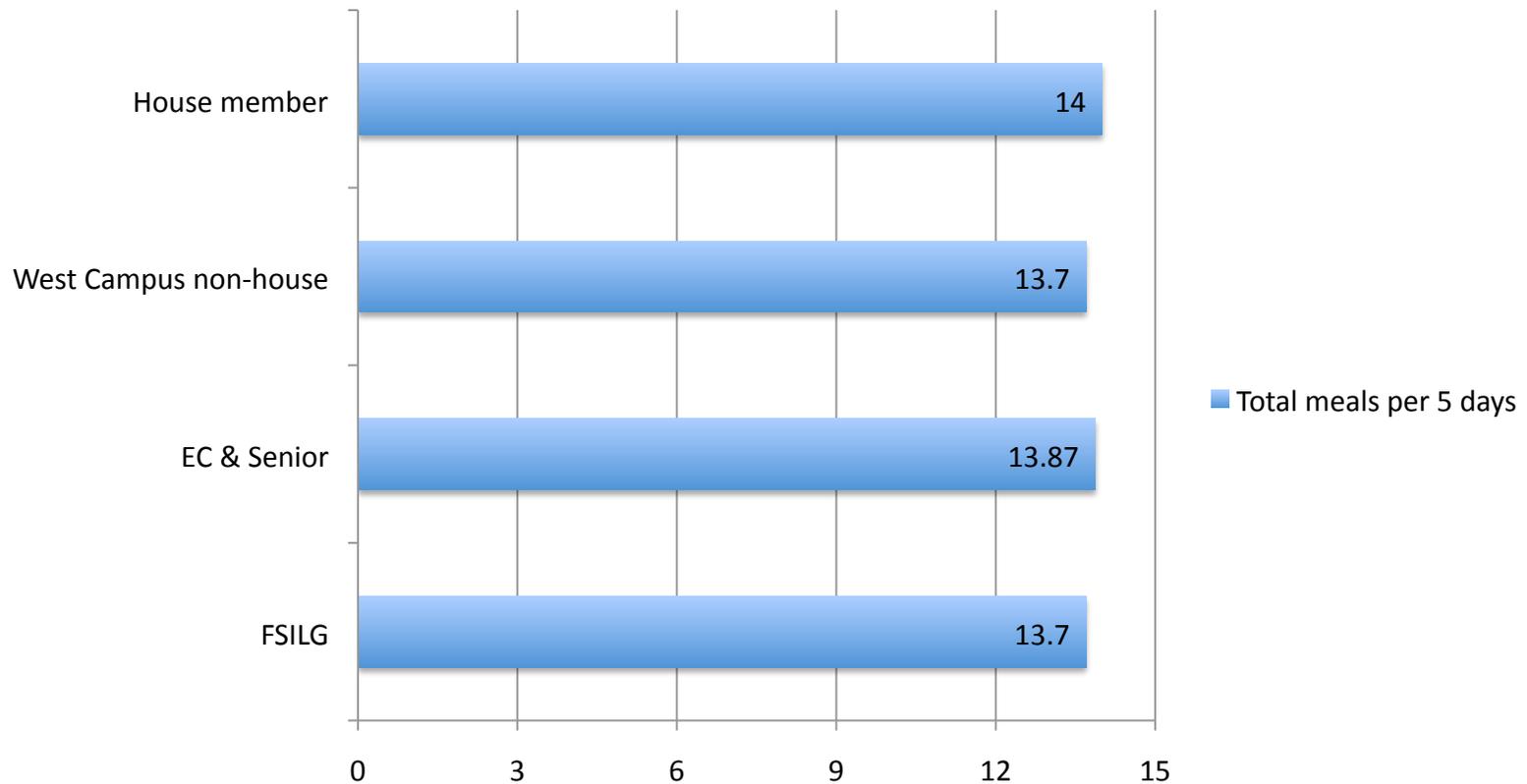
1900 FSILG (approx)
1296 House Membership
1036 Other (approx)



■ FSILG (~1900)
■ House Membership (1296)
■ Other (~1036)

Source: MIT website, DSL

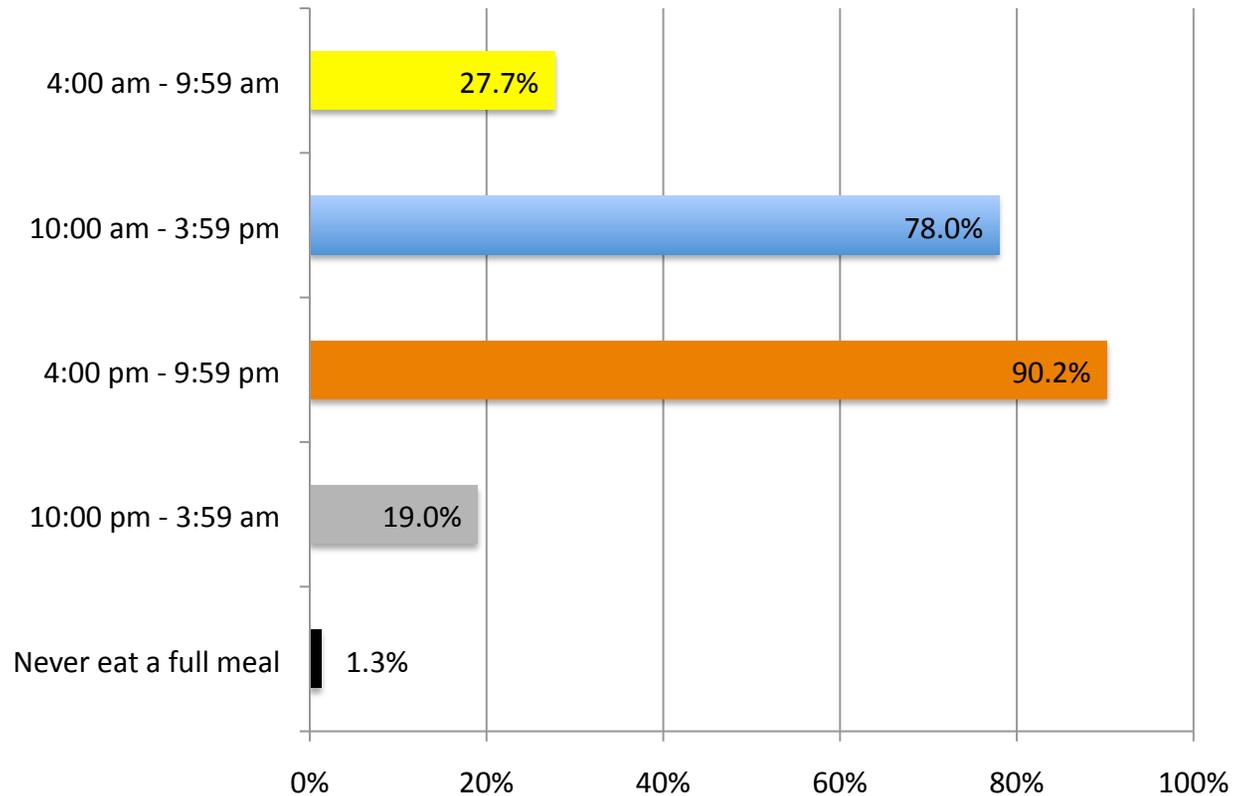
Average meal frequency



Average number of meals in five days, by residential choice

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

When on-campus students eat full meals

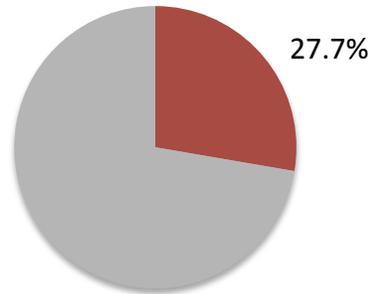


In which time periods do you usually eat a full meal during your academic day (check all that apply)

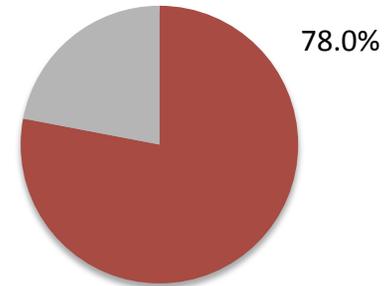
Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

When on-campus students eat full meals

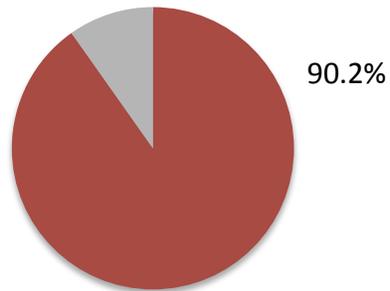
4 a.m. – 9:59 a.m.



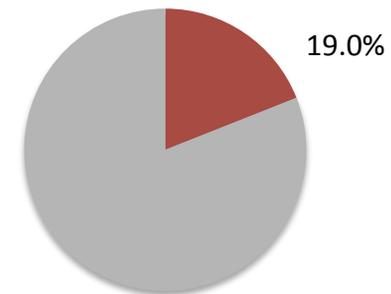
10 a.m. – 3:59 p.m.



4 p.m. – 9:59 p.m.



10 p.m. – 3:59 a.m.

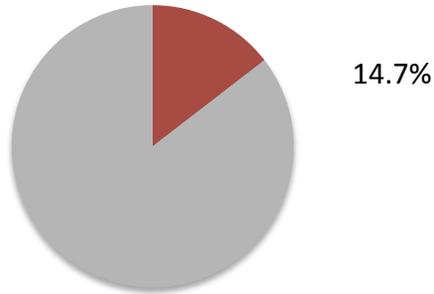


In which time periods do you usually eat a full meal during your academic day (check all that apply)

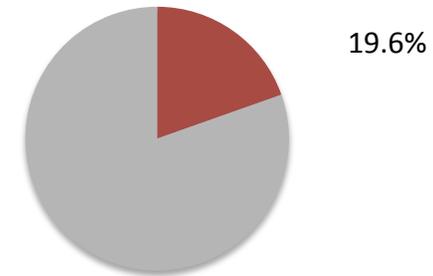
Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

On-campus students and nutrition

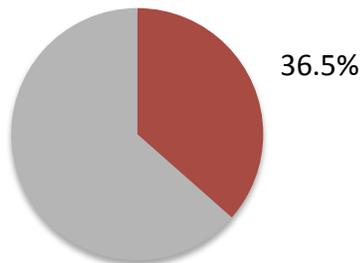
Eat one healthy meal per day



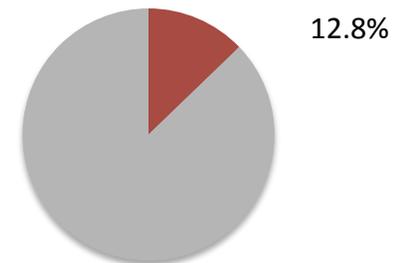
Eat a balanced diet



Good intentions, poor actions



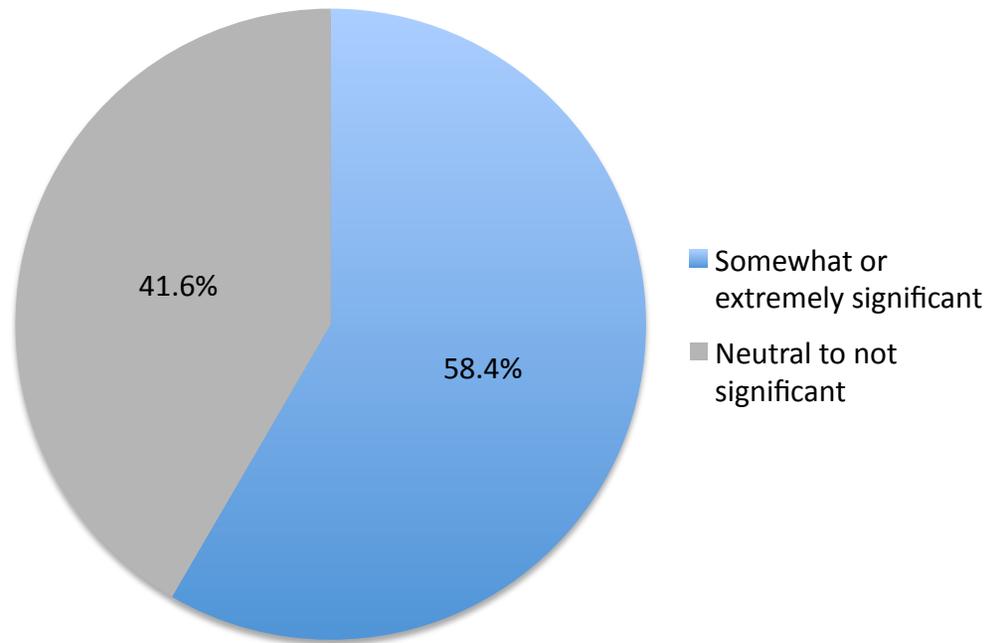
Don't think about nutrition



Please select one statement that best describes how nutrition affects your dining patterns

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

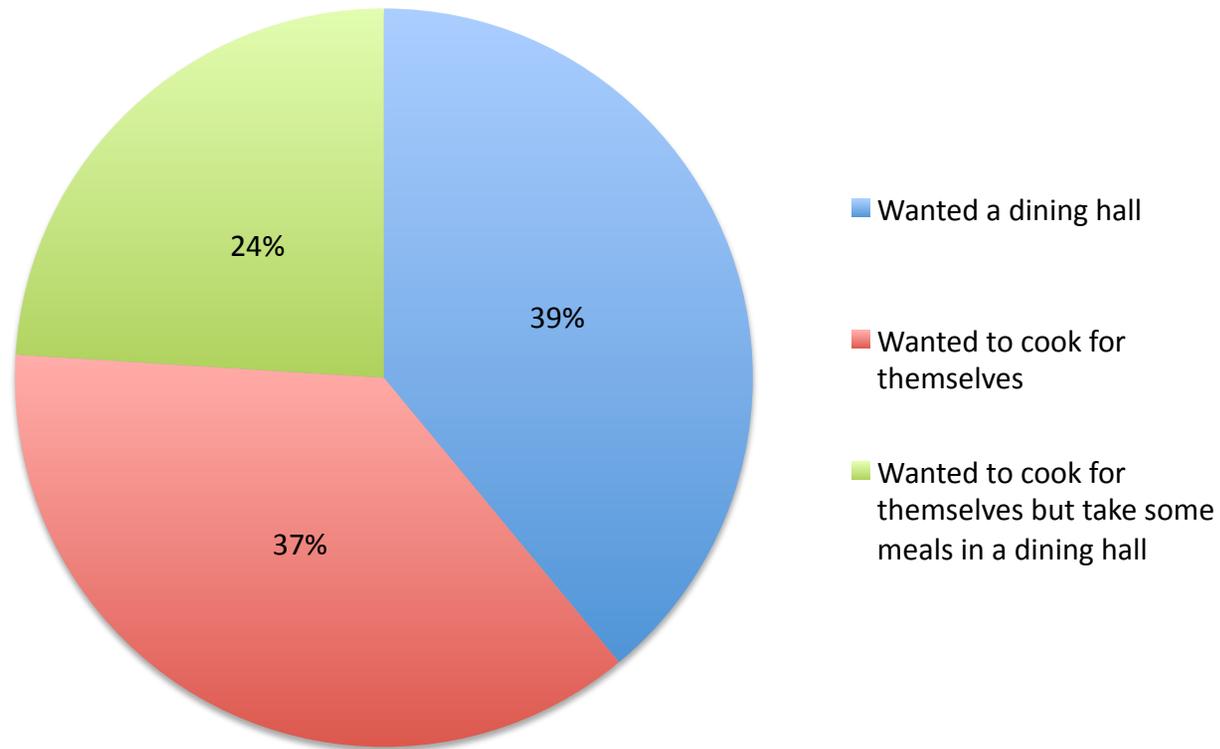
Significance of dining on residential choice



On Campus Students - In choosing your on-campus residence, how significantly did the dining options affiliated with that house or hall affect your choice?

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

Student preferences regarding dining & residence



Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

Student preferences regarding dining & residence

House Dining membership

Other undergraduates

All 4 houses

Baker House

East Campus

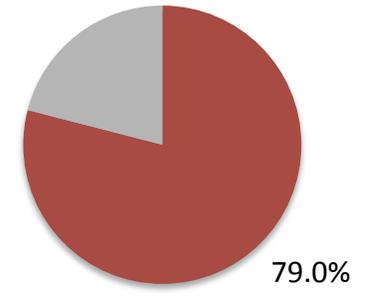
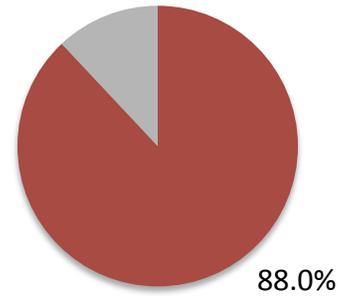
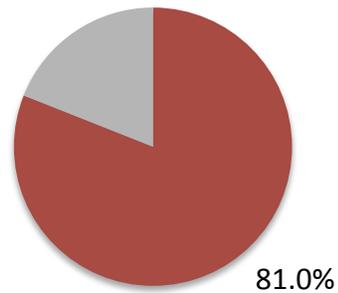
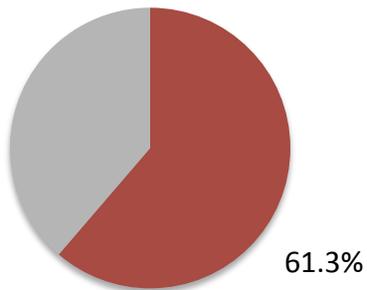
Other on-campus

Percentage of residents who selected house because it had a dining hall

Percentage of residents who selected house because it had a dining hall

Percentage of residents who selected house because of a desire to cook

Percentage of residents who selected house because of a desire to cook

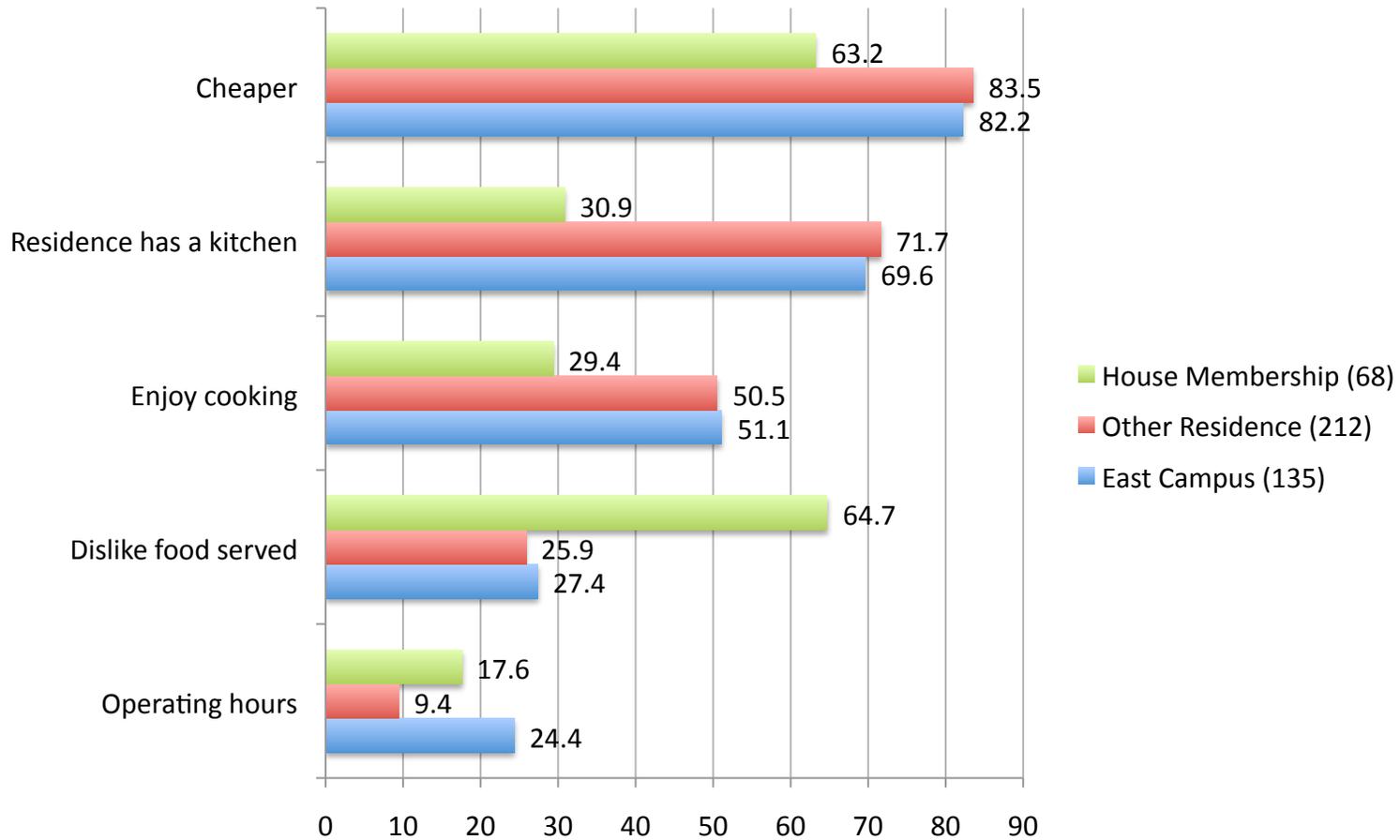


Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

Dining options do influence housing selection

- **Desire to cook on a regular basis**
 - 90.0% of Bexley respondents
 - 71.1% of Burton-Conner respondents
 - 64.7% of Random respondents
 - 60.0% of East Campus respondents
 - 57.1% of Macgregor respondents
 - 33.3% of Senior House respondents
- **There is an active cooking community**
 - 47.4% of New House respondents
 - 33.3% of Senior House respondents

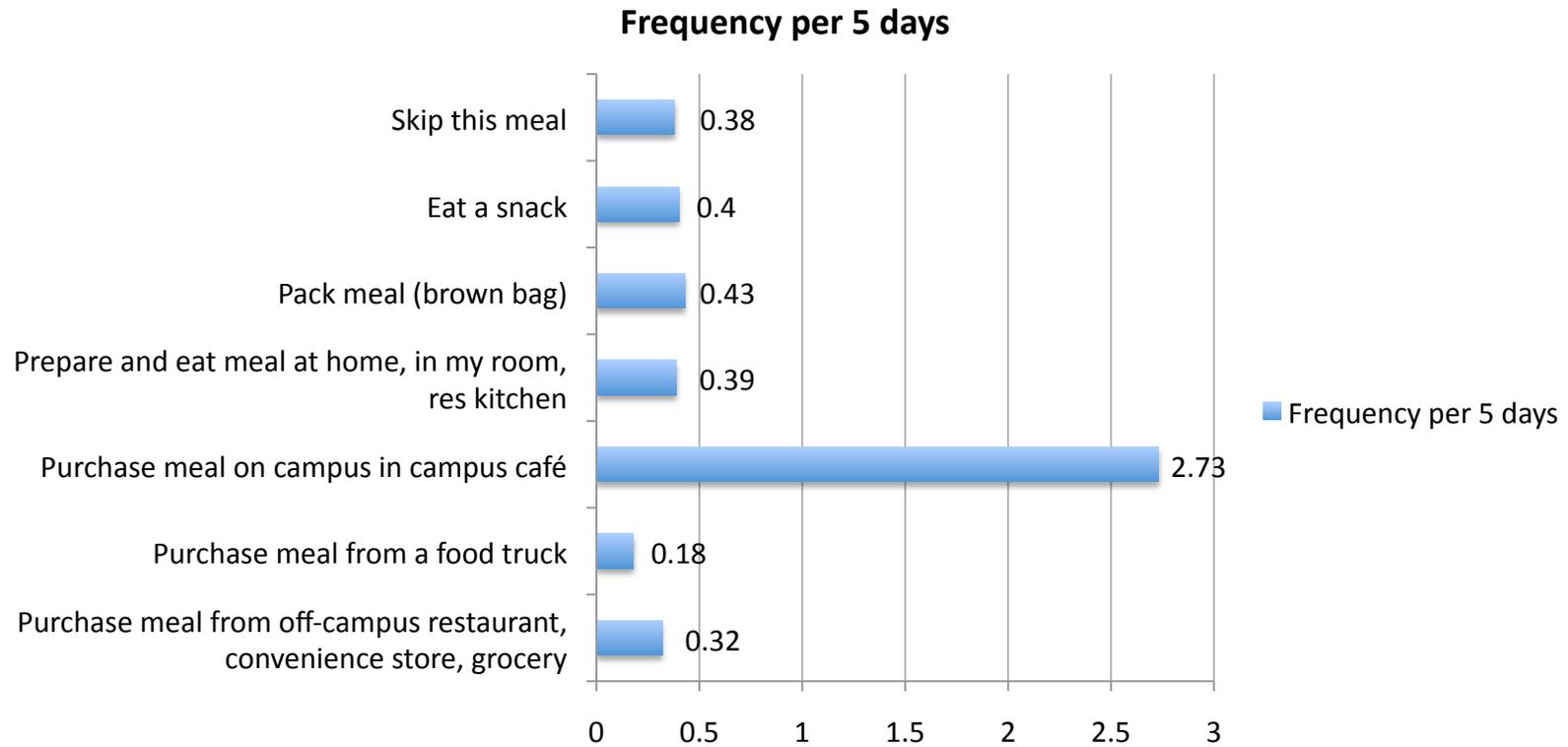
Why students prepare their own dinner



Why undergraduates prepare their own breakfast

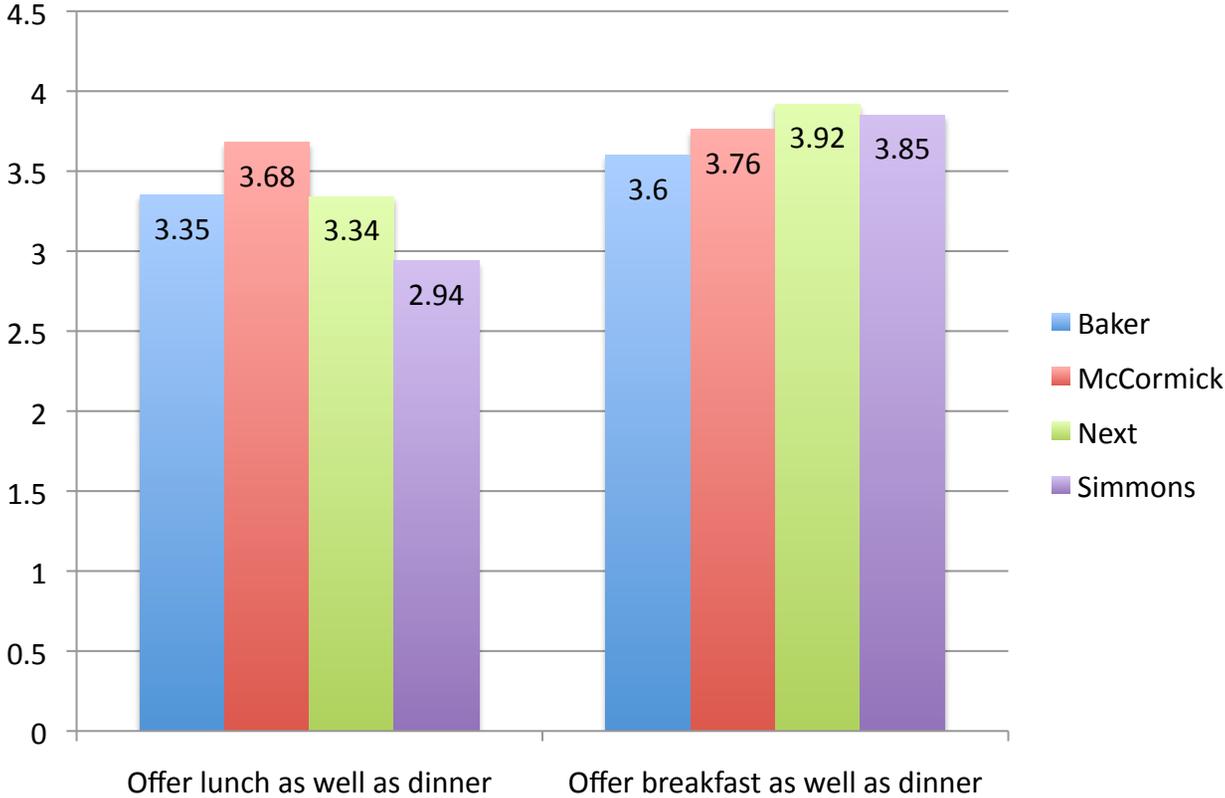
Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

Mon–Fri lunch dining habits summary response



Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

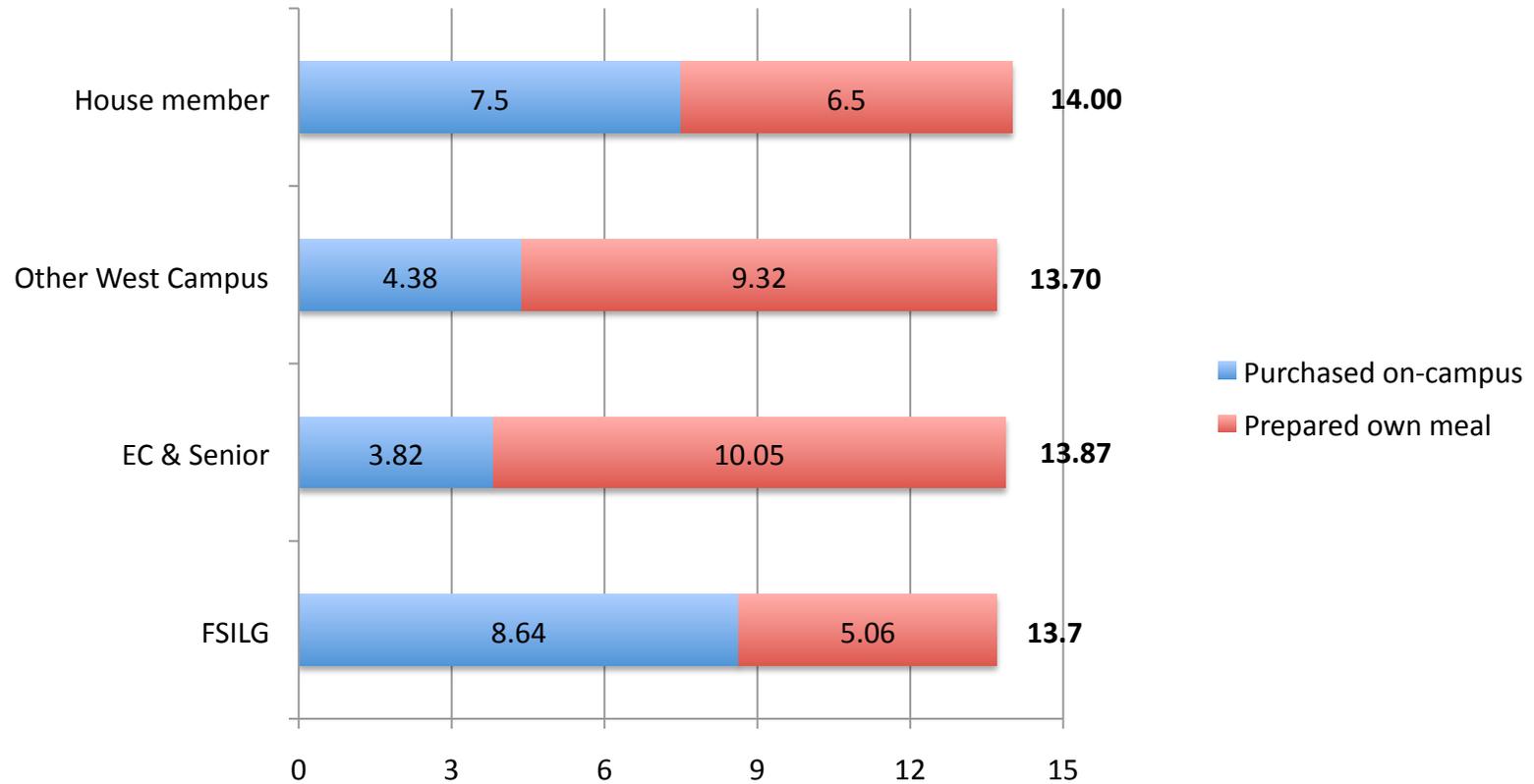
Lunch and Breakfast Statements



5 = strong agreement

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

Average meal frequency per 5 days



Average meal frequency by residence

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

Dinner habits in a 10-day period

House Members

Dinner meals in House Dining per 10 days: 5.5 – 6 times

East Campus/Senior House

Prepare dinner in their residence per 10 days: 4 – 5 times

Other non-House members

Prepare dinner in their residence per 10 days: 2.5 - 4.8 times

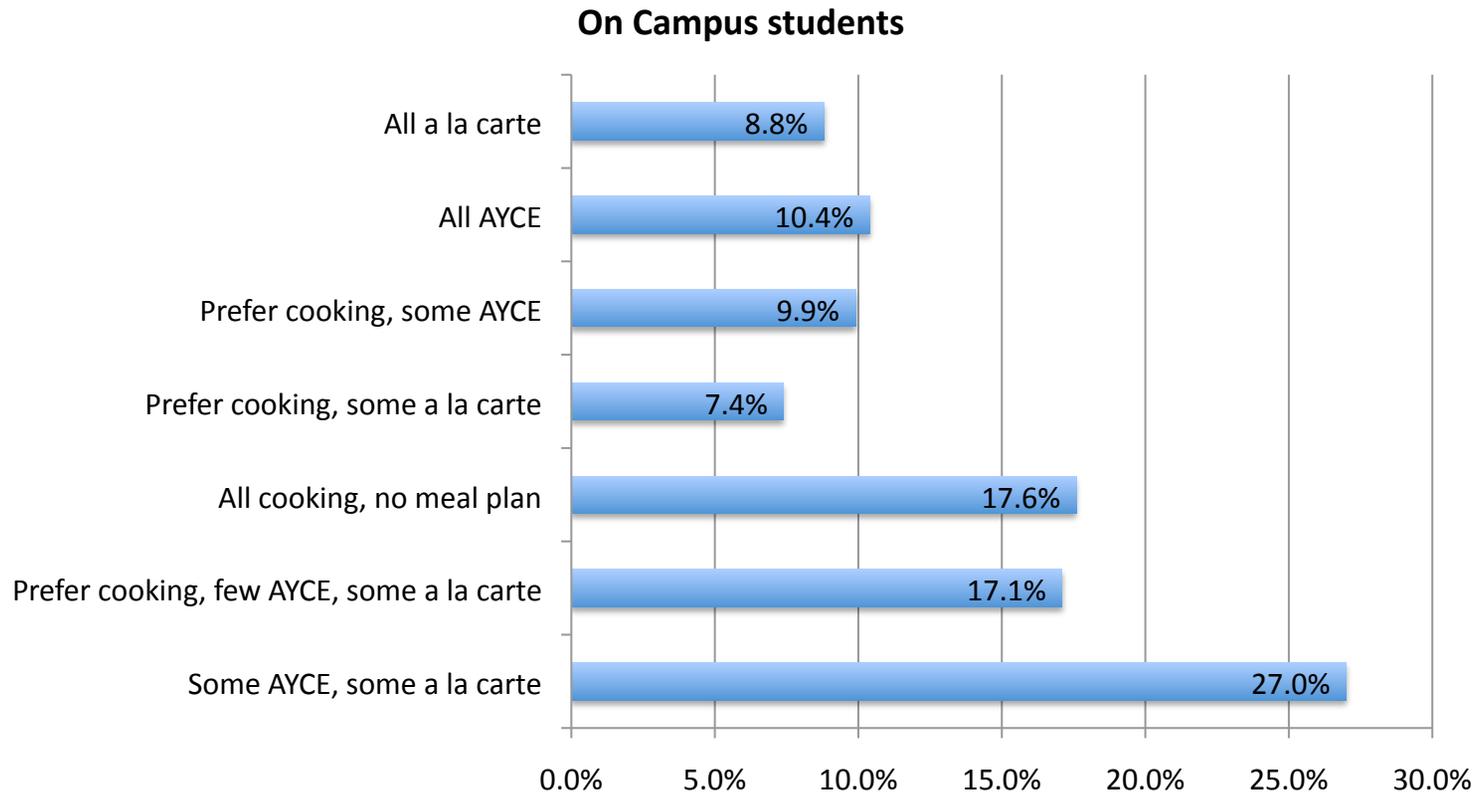
Percentage of student who skip dinner

Undergraduates living on campus: 4.6 %

5 = strong agreement

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

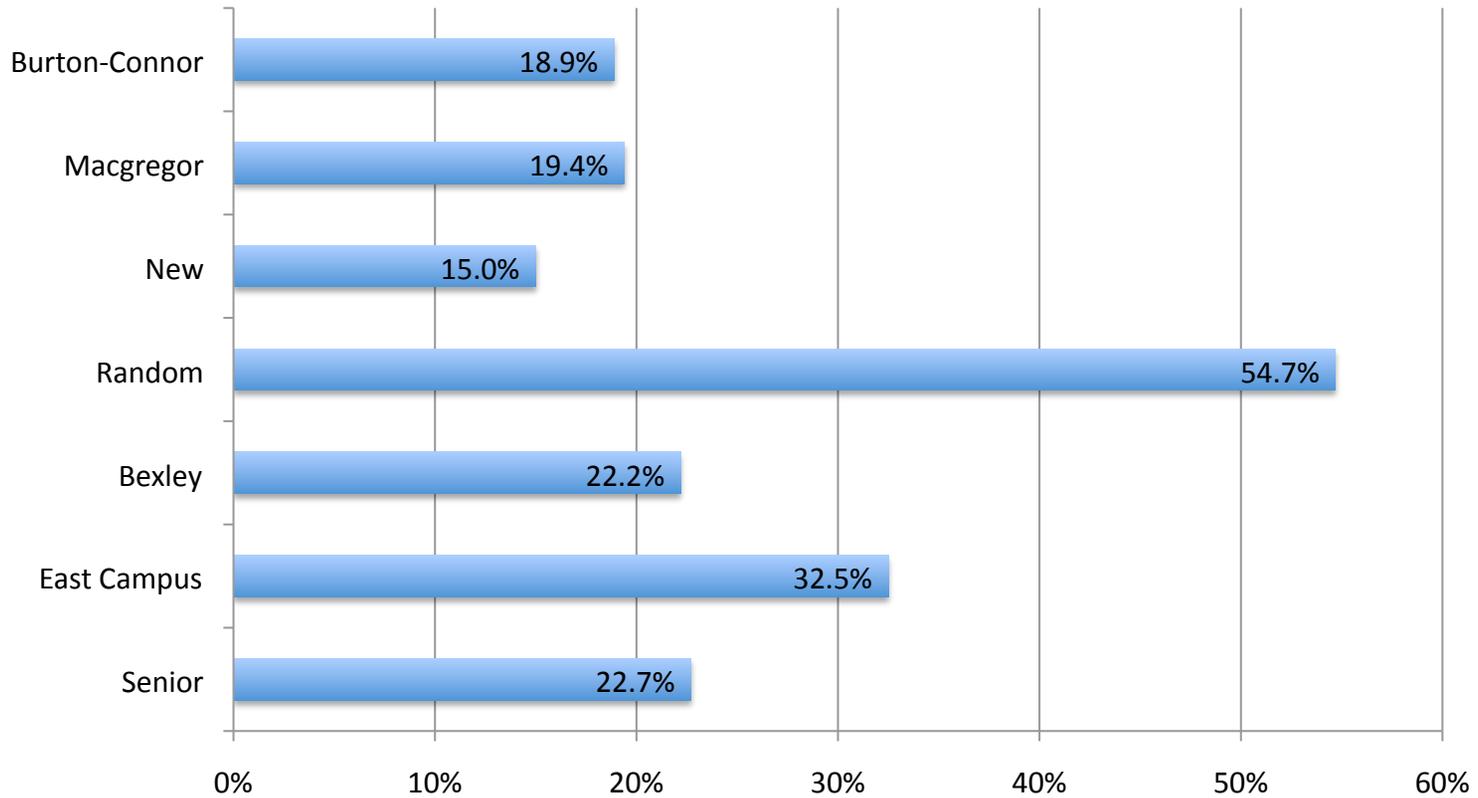
Student preference: dining pattern



Please select the one (1) statement that best describes your ideal dining pattern

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

Student habits: non-House, late night



Percentage of non-House residents eating a full meal during late night (10 pm – 3:59 a.m.)

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

Student habits: dinner or late-night spending



For respondents who purchased dinner and/or late-night at an off campus location two or more times per week: how much do you spend for meals off campus?

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

Appendix D: Other priorities

The House Dining Advisory Group reviewed data selected from the work of the Blue Ribbon Committee and other sources during its deliberations. The group's charge was to consider four equal priorities for the House Dining system, among them the Institute's obligation to provide healthy, nutritious dining and the opportunities presented by dining to build community. This appendix contains data reviewed by the committee regarding dining with faculty, the important of dining to community, and other factors.

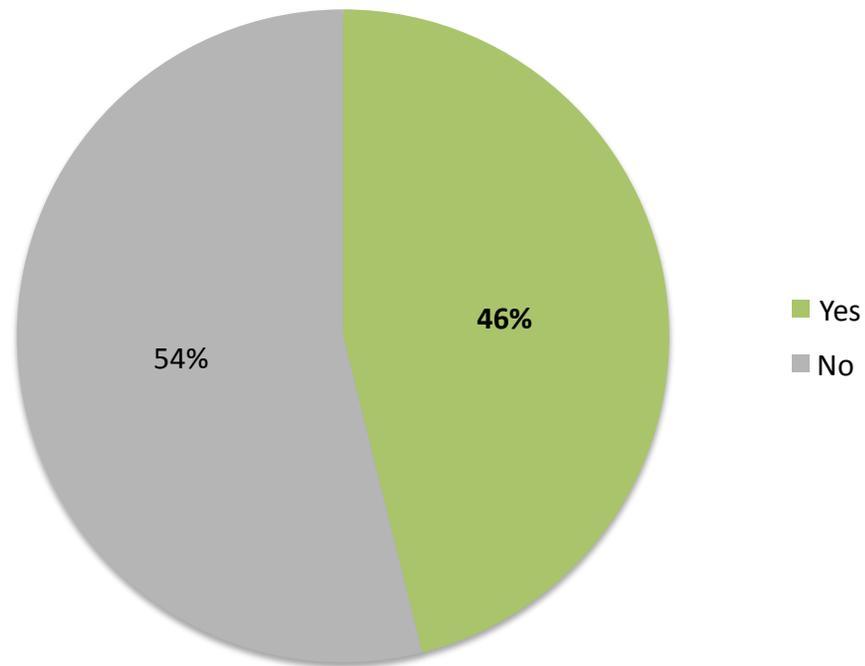
About the surveys

Envision Strategies (Blue Ribbon)

Market Research Survey

- 3,921 respondents:
 - 1,779 undergraduates
 - 1,745 graduate students
 - 328 faculty
- Confidence interval 1.6%

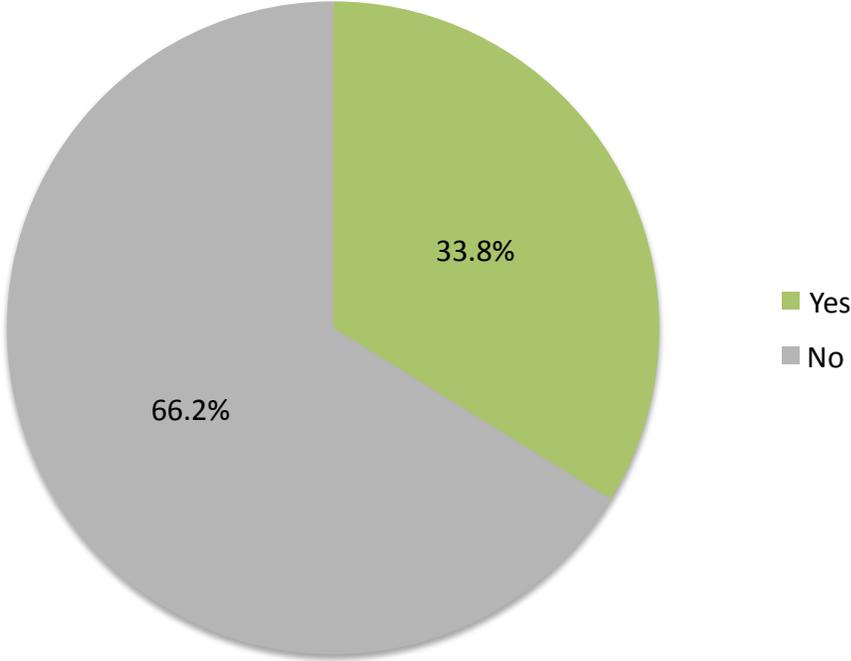
Faculty dining with students (A)



Faculty: Would you be interested in eating a meal in a residential dining room to interact with students?

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

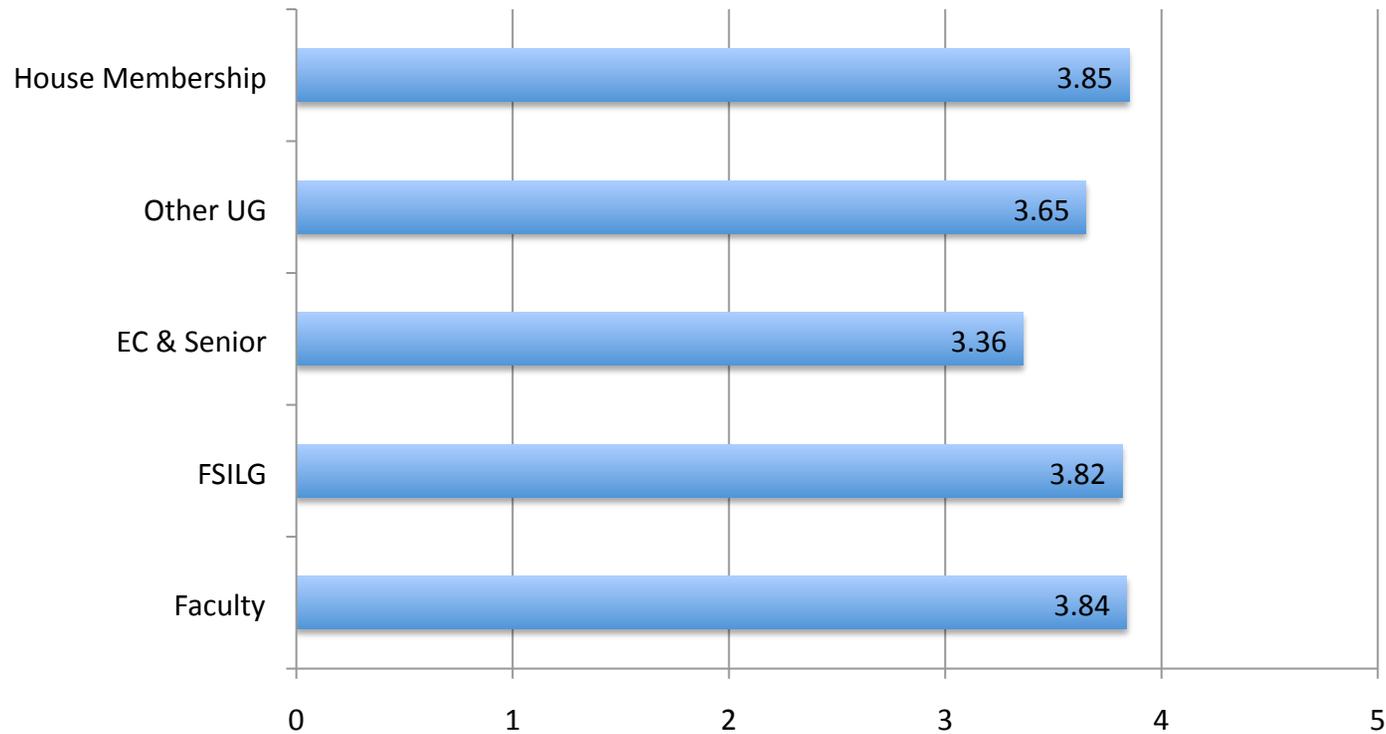
Faculty dining with students (B)



Of faculty who expressed an interest in dining with students in the residential dining halls, percentage who would be interested one or more times per month

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

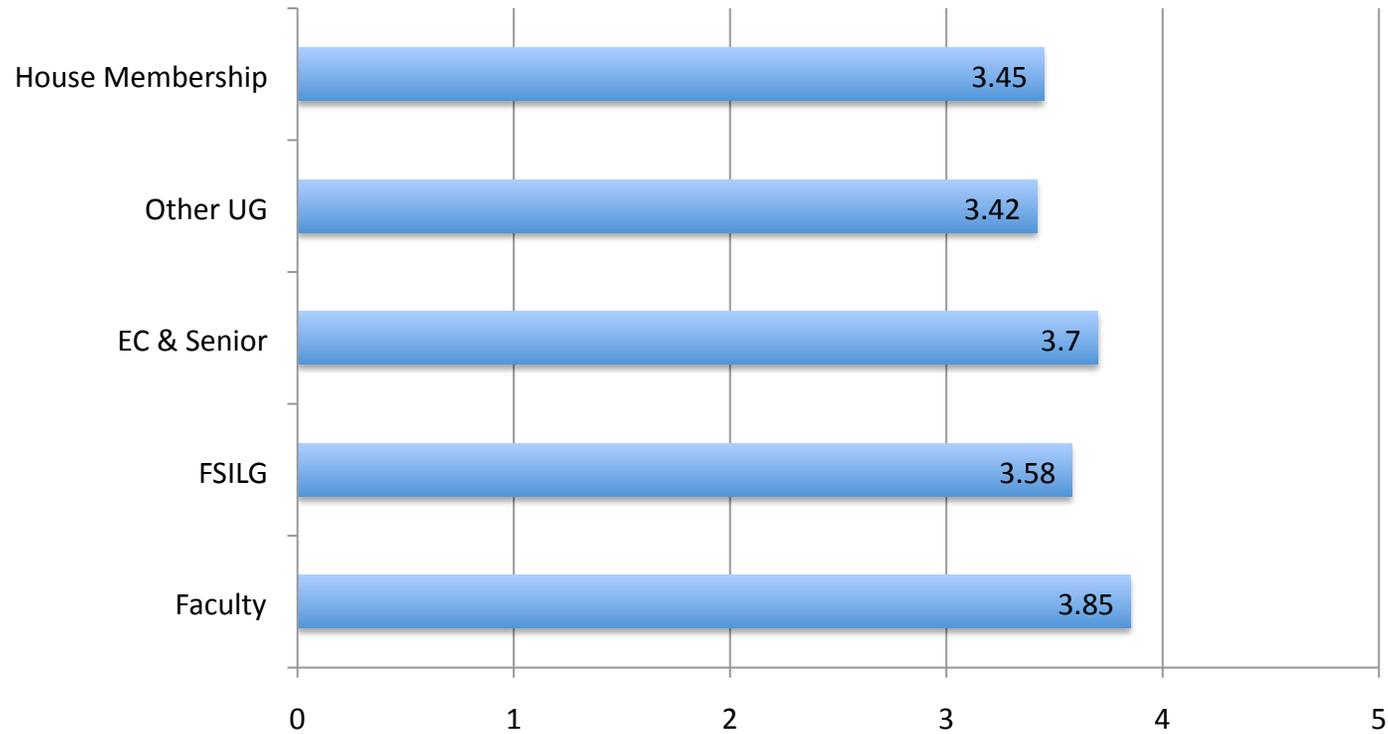
Community: global meal plan?



**MIT should have a global meal plan that strives to build community campus-wide
(5 = strong agreement)**

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

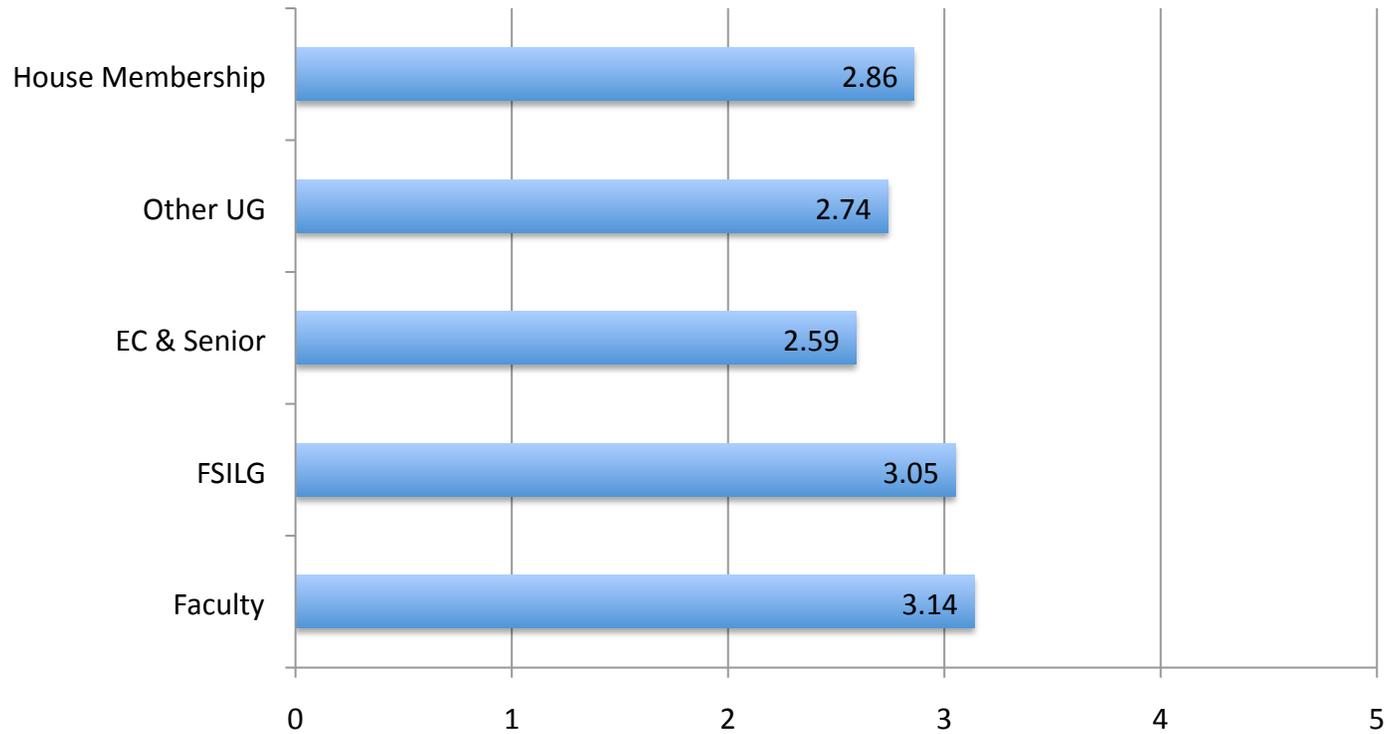
Community: group-specific plans?



**MIT should have meal plans that are tailored to specific living groups
(5 = strong agreement)**

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

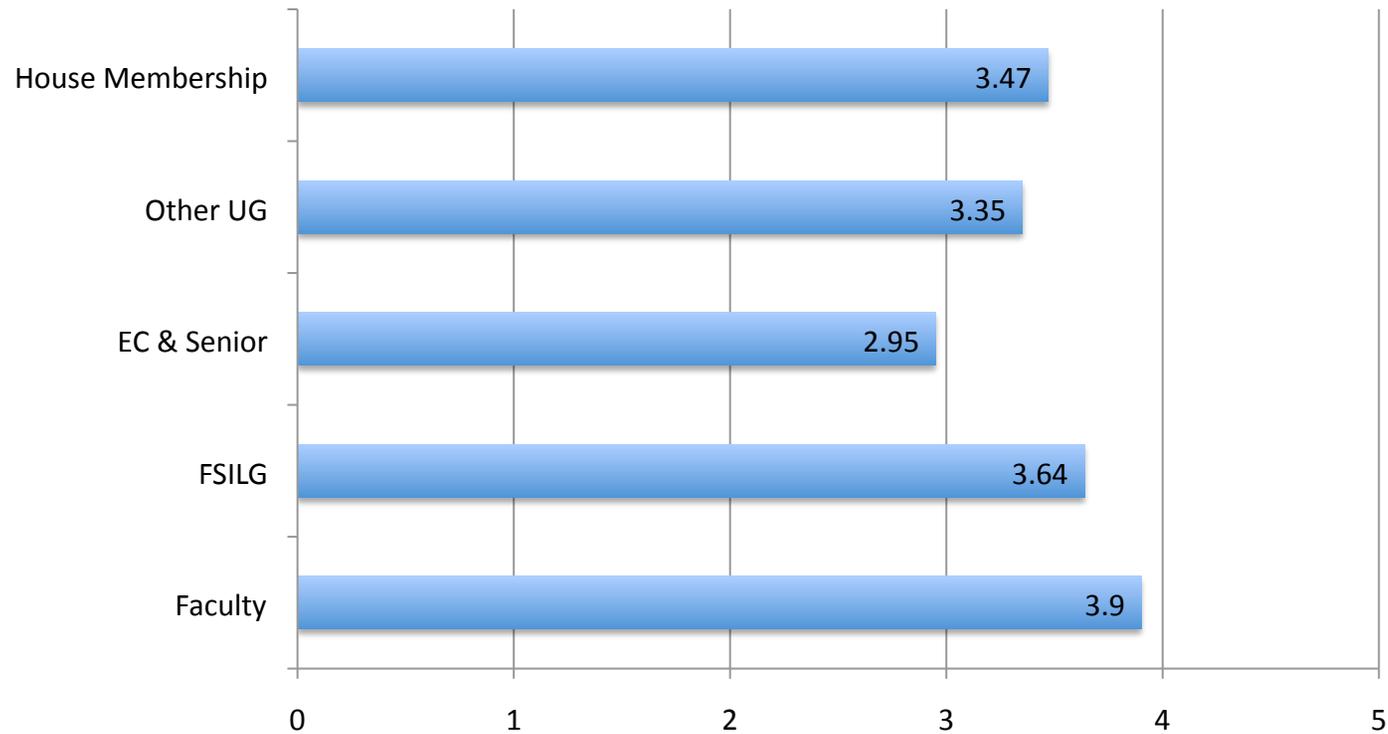
Community: commitment by class year?



**Meal commitments should vary depending on class year
(5 = strong agreement)**

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

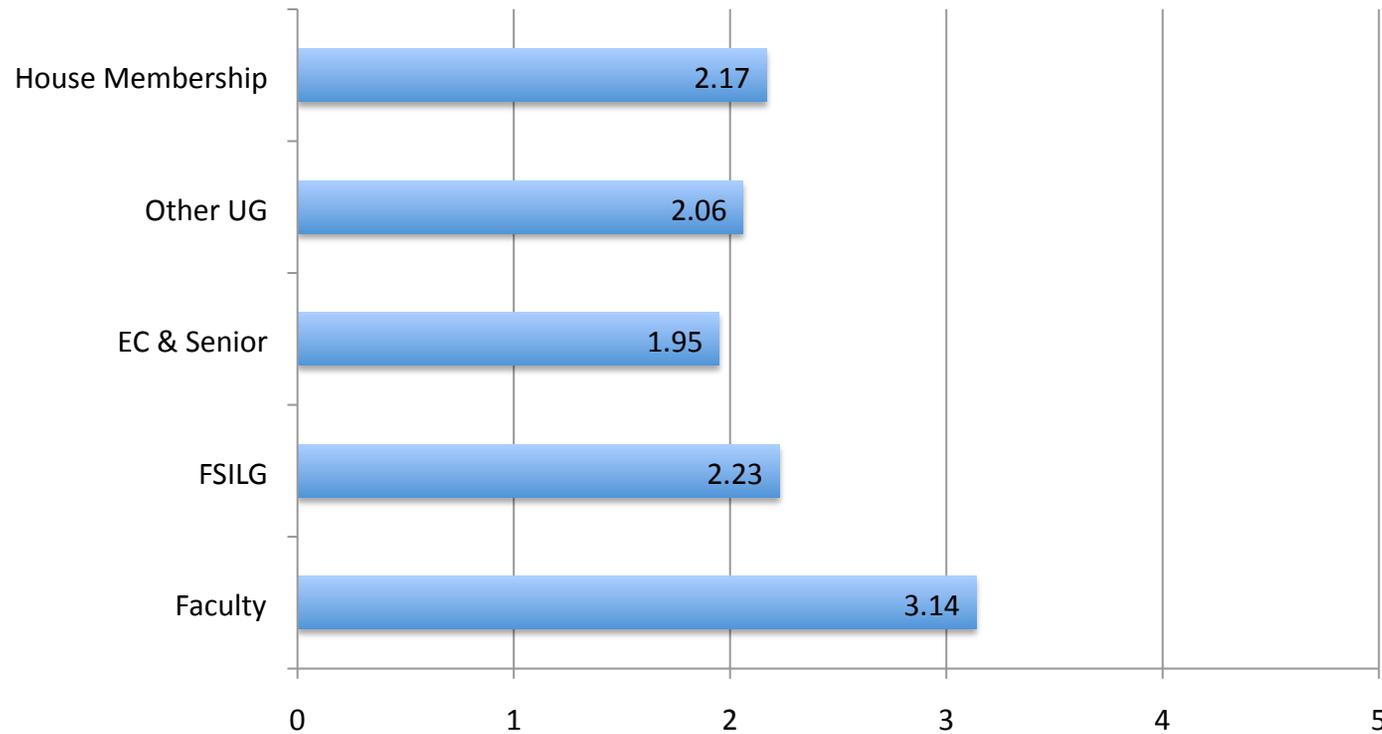
Community: building community?



**It is important for the dining program to help build community around meals
(5 = strong agreement)**

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

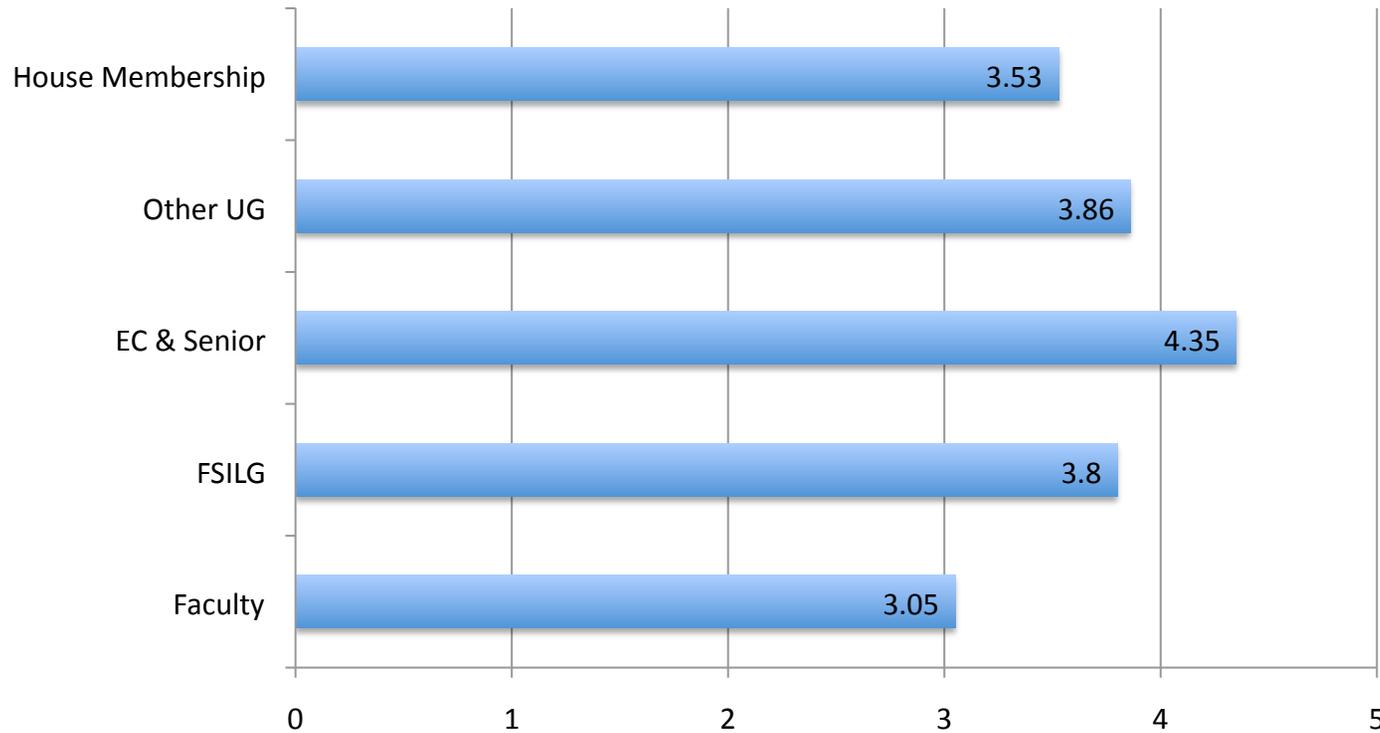
Commitment: required for House Dining?



**Students living in a house with a dining hall should be required to have a meal plan commitment
(5 = strong agreement)**

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

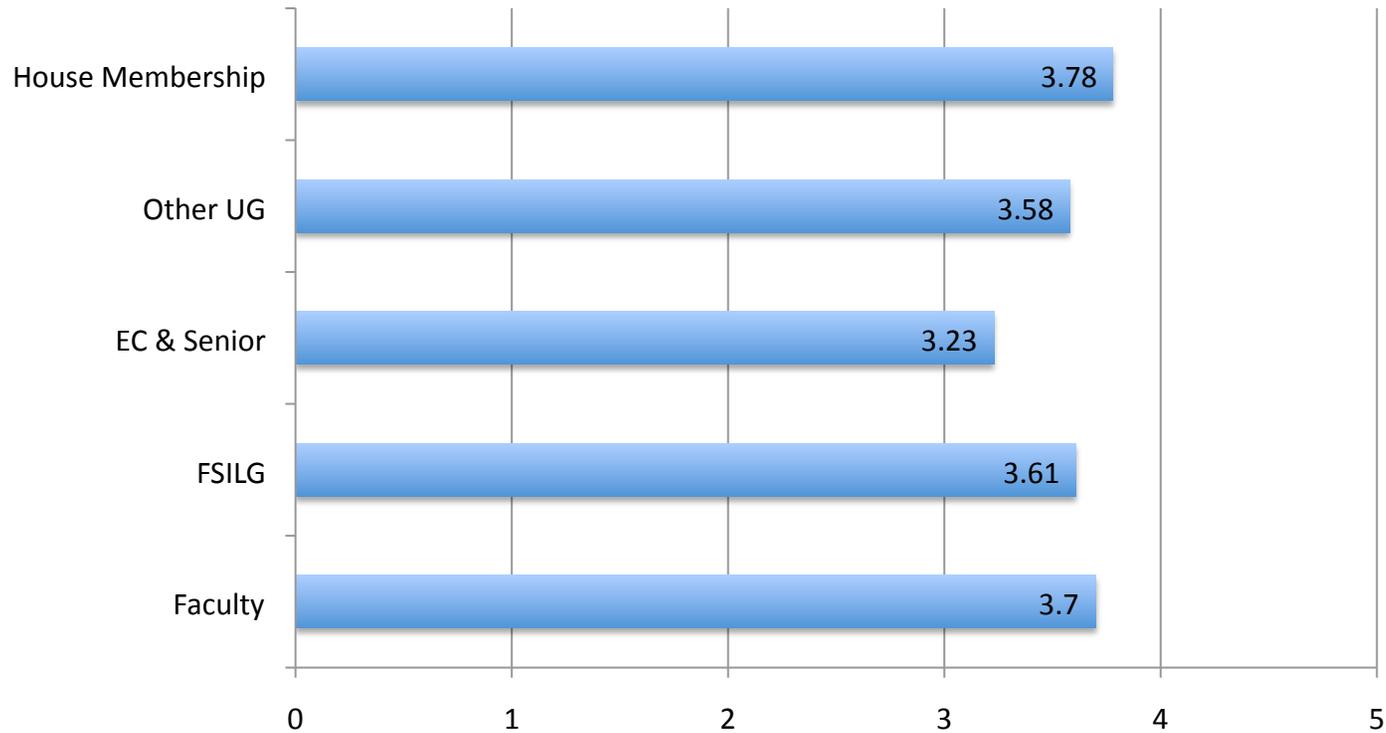
Commitment: bearing the cost?



**The cost for a house dining program should only be supported by those who choose to participate in its meal plan program and not by the whole campus community
(5 = strong agreement)**

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

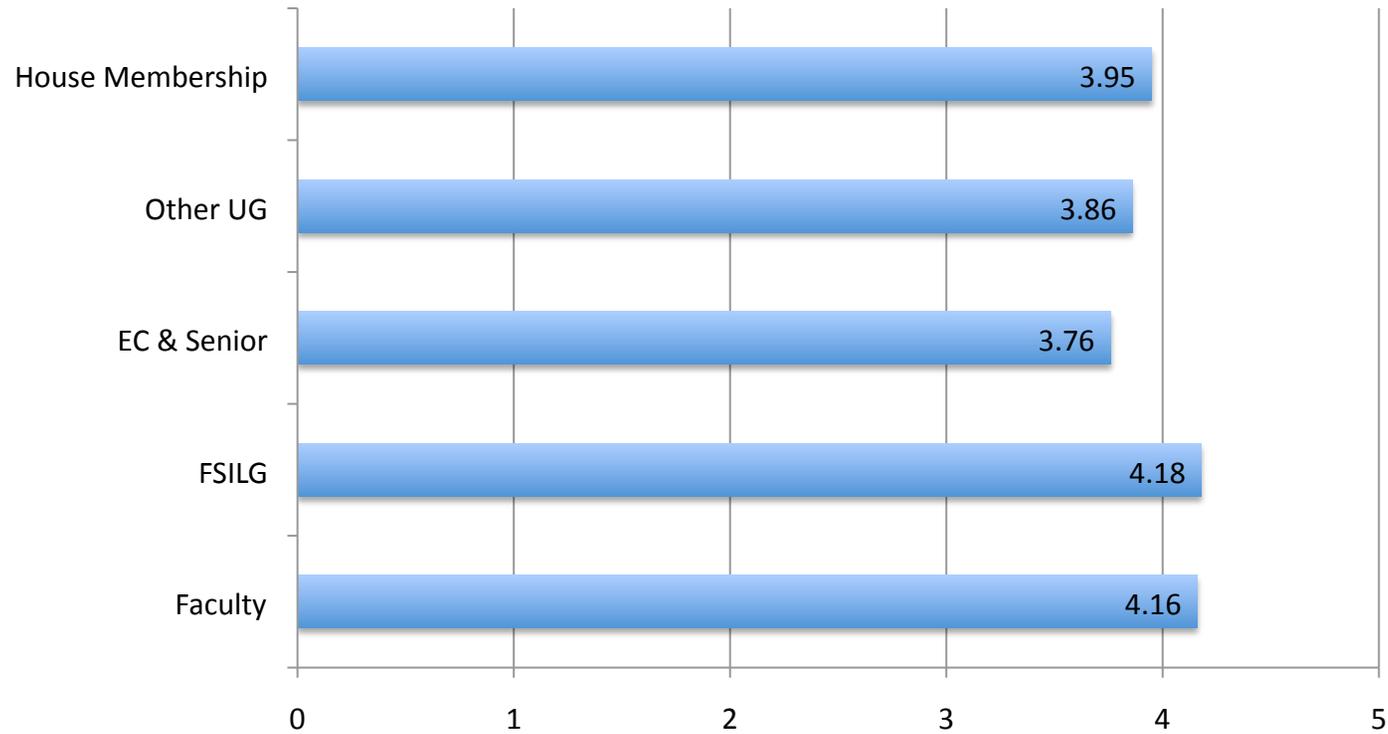
Commitment: justifying commitment?



Broader commitments to dining services are justified if it results in lower average costs and better access to services for all students (5 = strong agreement)

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

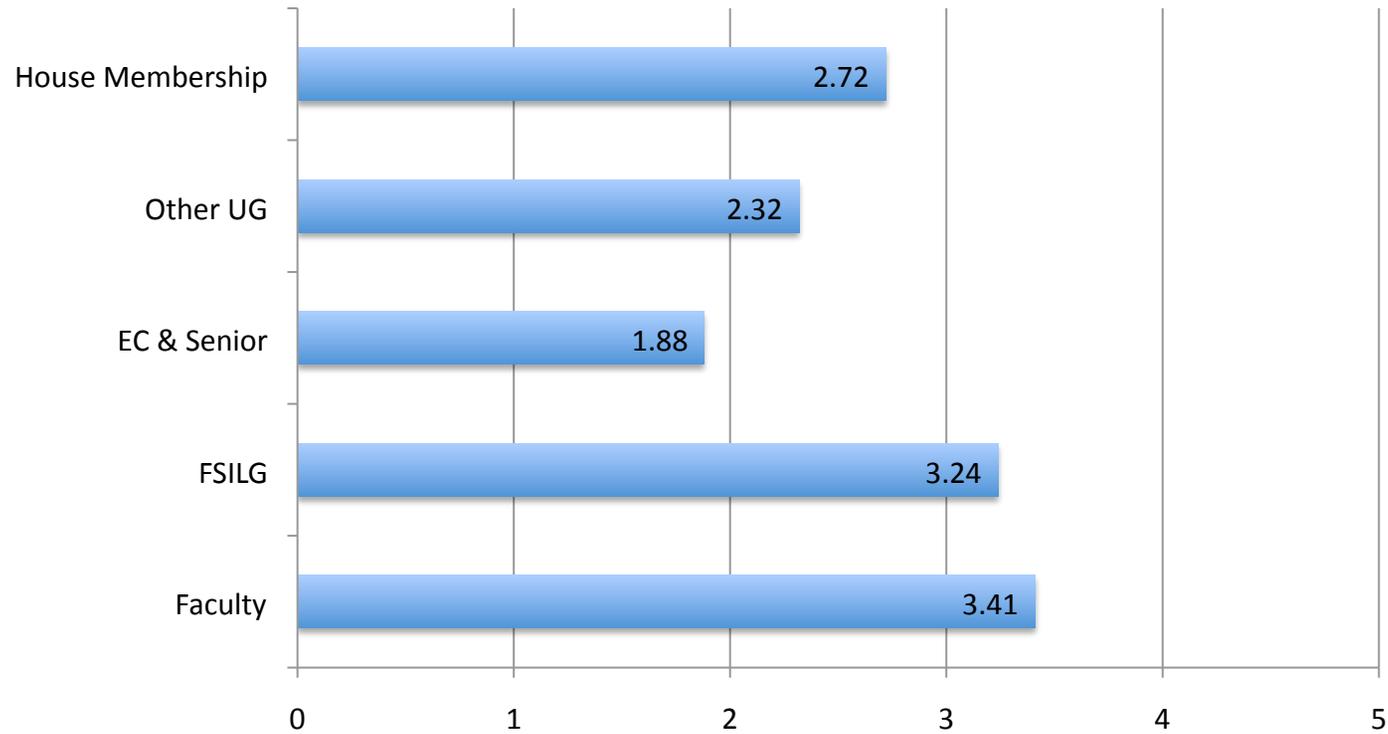
Community: importance of meals?



**Meals are an important part of the residential experience
(5 = strong agreement)**

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

Community: dining together?



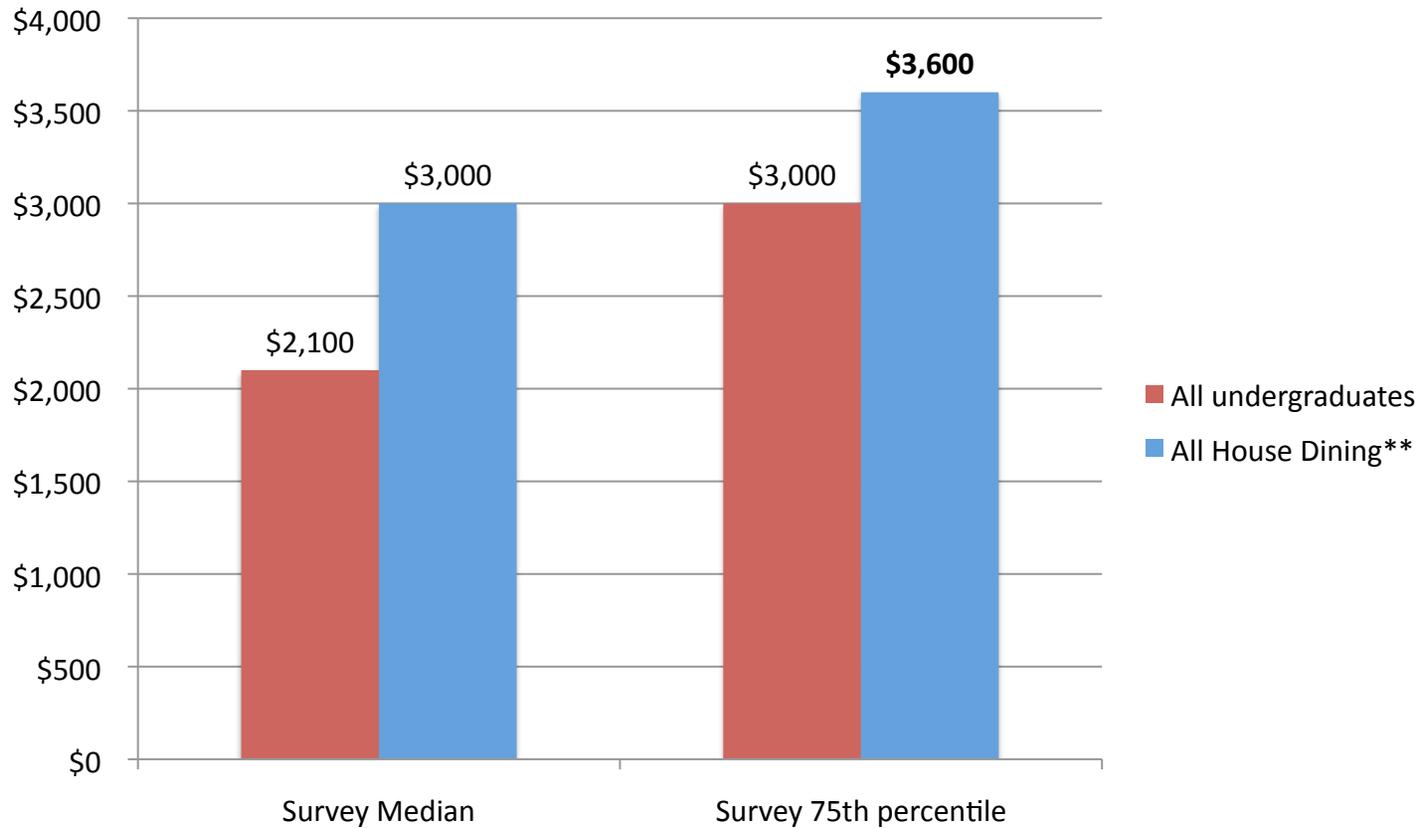
**It is important to commit to dining together
(5 = strong agreement)**

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

Appendix E: Student spending and peer plans

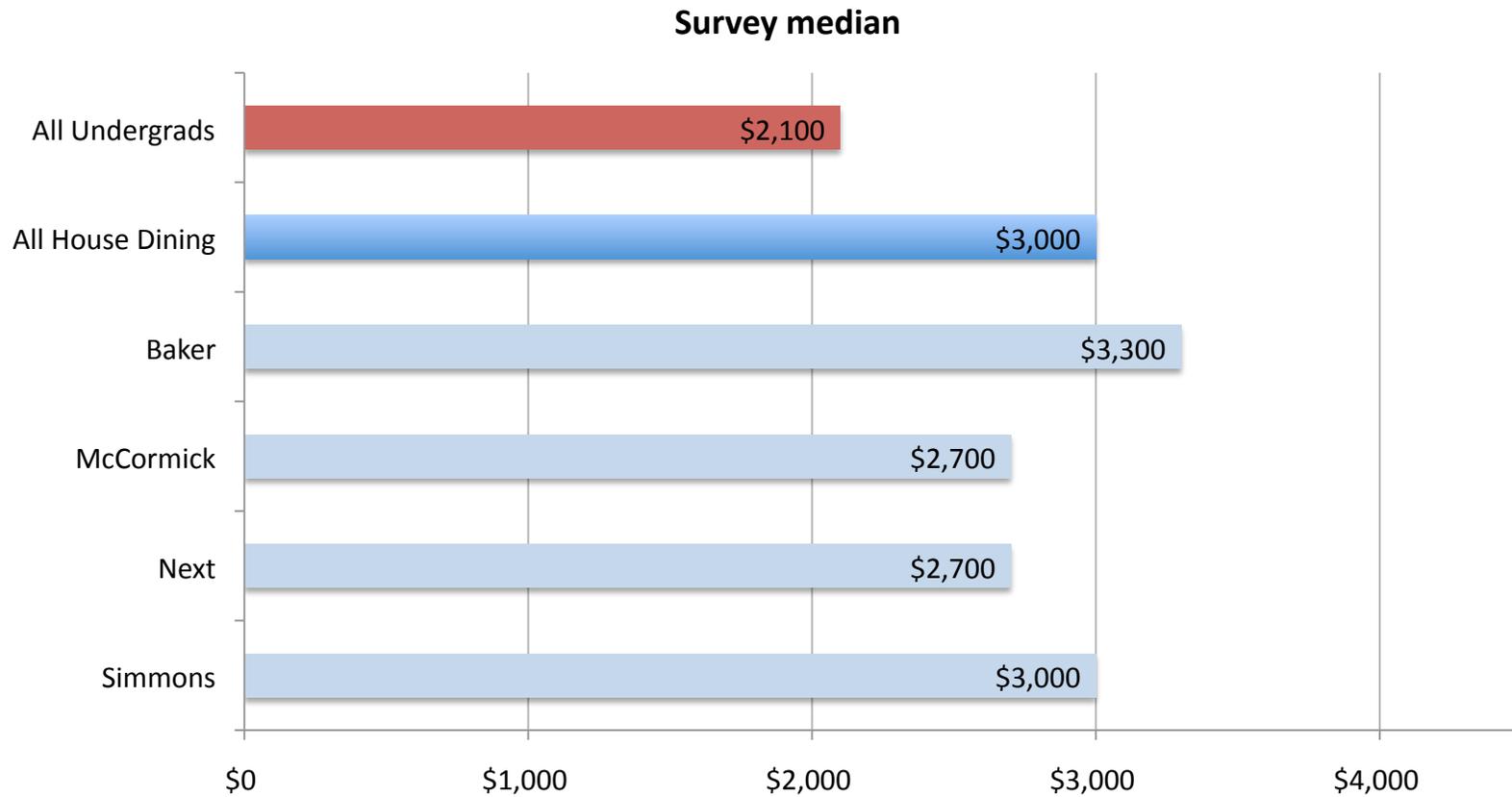
The House Dining Advisory Group reviewed data selected from the work of the Blue Ribbon Committee and other sources during its deliberations. This appendix contains data reviewed by the HDAG regarding student spending habits and meal plan costs from local and academic peer institutions.

Student spending on meals: overall



** Includes \$600 house membership fee
MIT Undergraduate Cost of Living Survey, Nov 2009 (CUAFA)
Totals represent spending for 30 weeks

Student spending: survey median



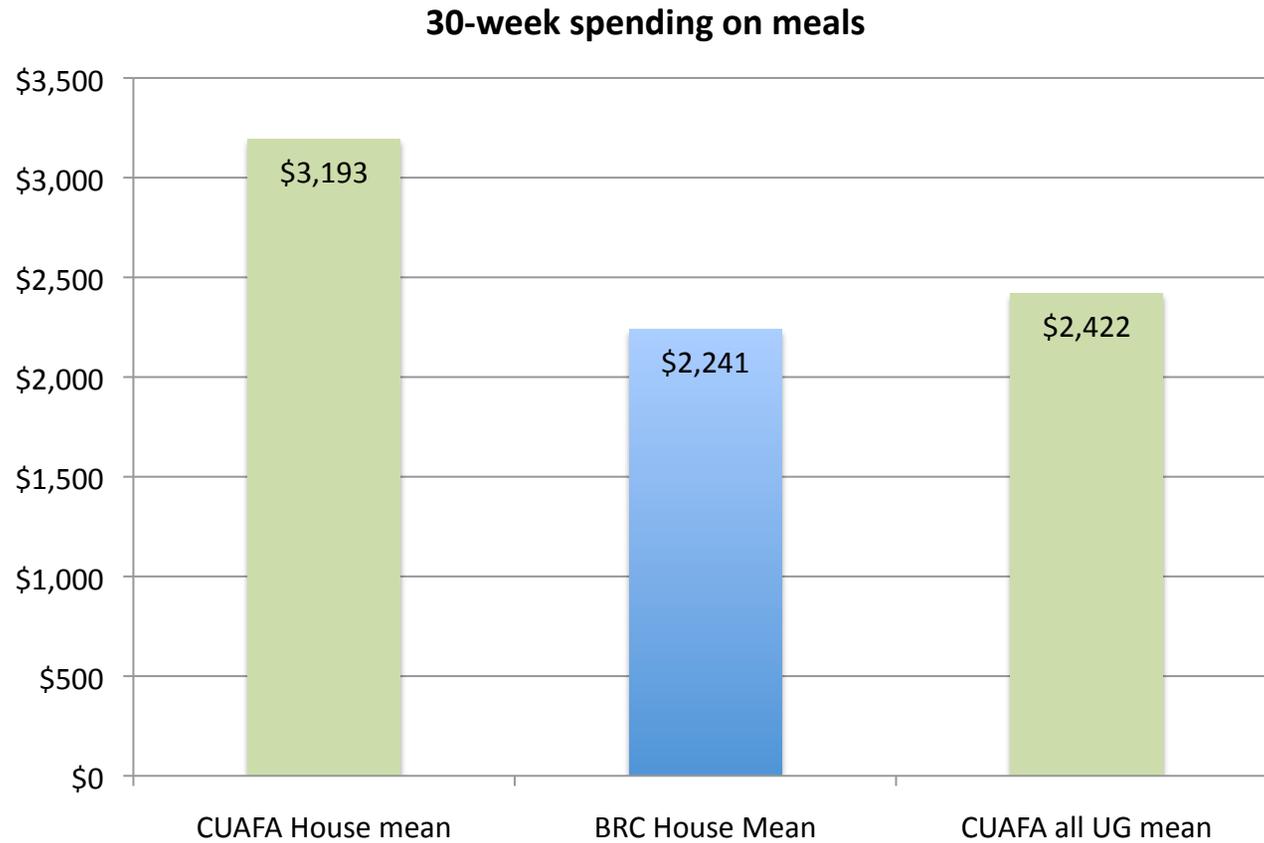
Figures for All House Dining and residences include \$600 House membership dining fee. MIT Undergraduate Cost of Living Survey, Nov 2009 (CUAFA). Totals represent spending for 30 weeks

Student spending: survey 75th percentile



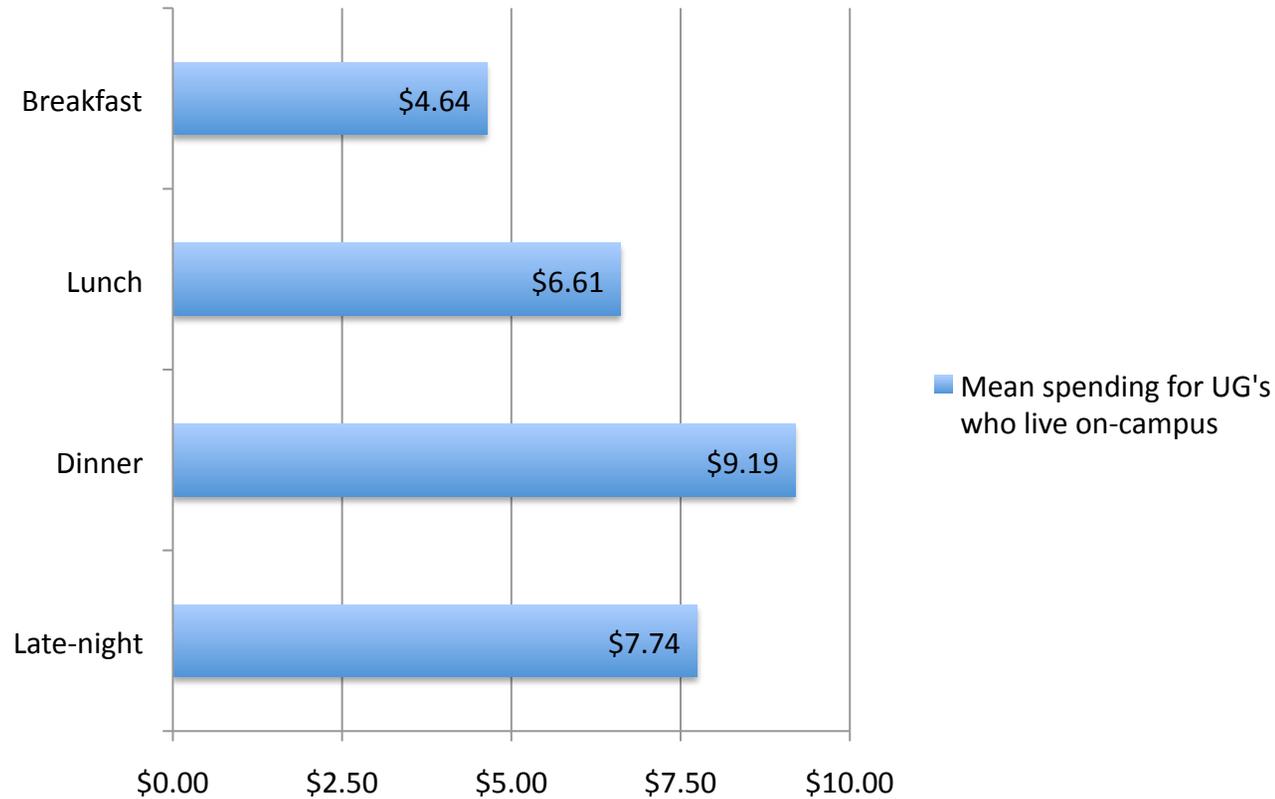
Figures for All House Dining and residences include \$600 House membership dining fee. MIT Undergraduate Cost of Living Survey, Nov 2009 (CUAFA). Totals represent spending for 30 weeks

BRC versus CUAFA spending



Figures for All House Dining and residences include \$600 House membership dining fee.
MIT Undergraduate Cost of Living Survey, Nov 2009 (CUAFA)
Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

Student habits: off-campus spending per meal



For respondents who purchased dinner and/or late-night at an off campus location two or more times per week: how much do you spend for meals off campus?

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

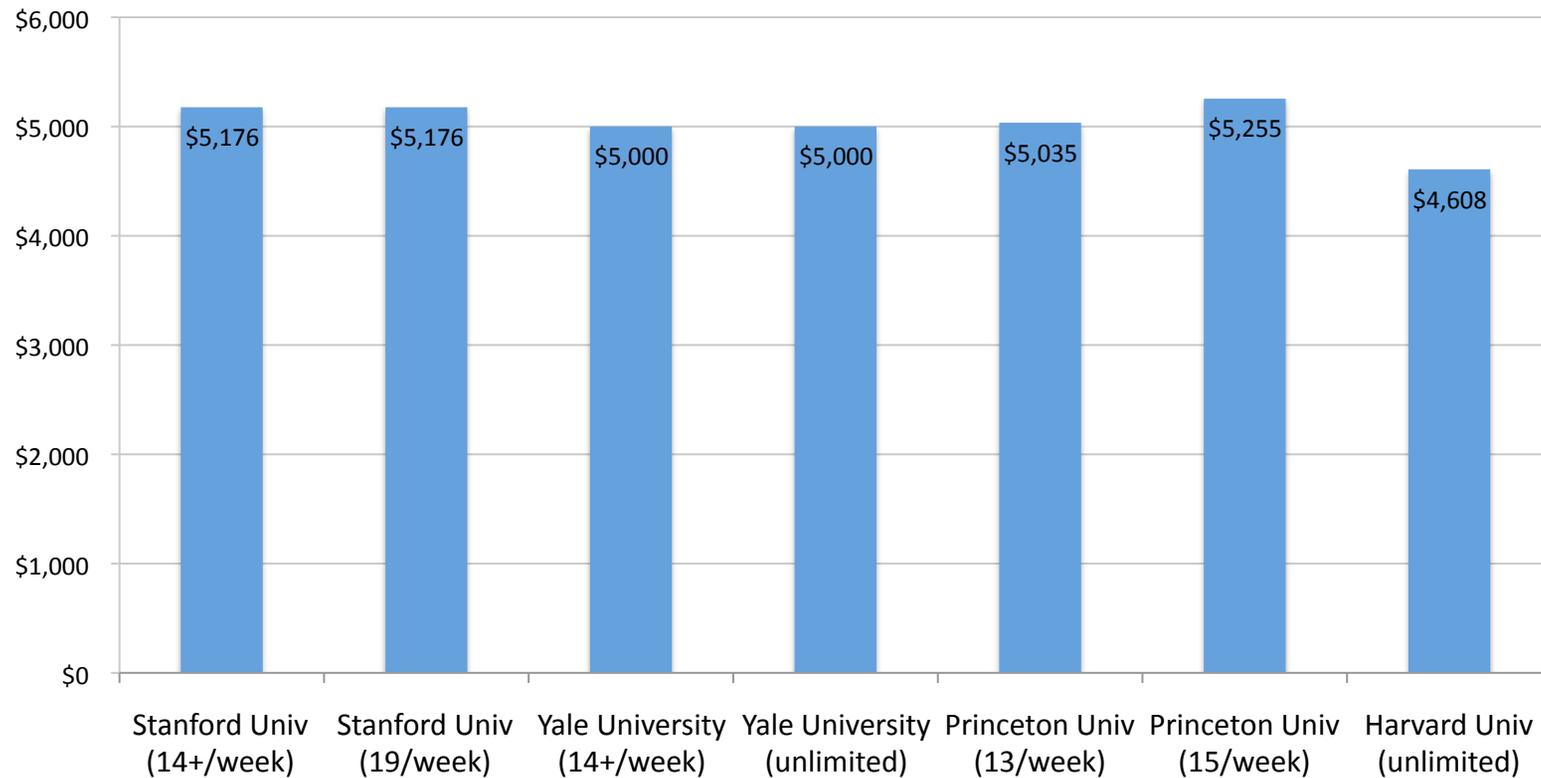
Average on-campus meal spending



For students who purchase dinner and/or late night meal at an on-campus location more than 2 times per week, how much do they typically spend when purchasing a meal on campus?

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

Peer institution comparison:



Notes:

Prices for Stanford, Princeton for 2010-11; Harvard, Yale for 2009-2010

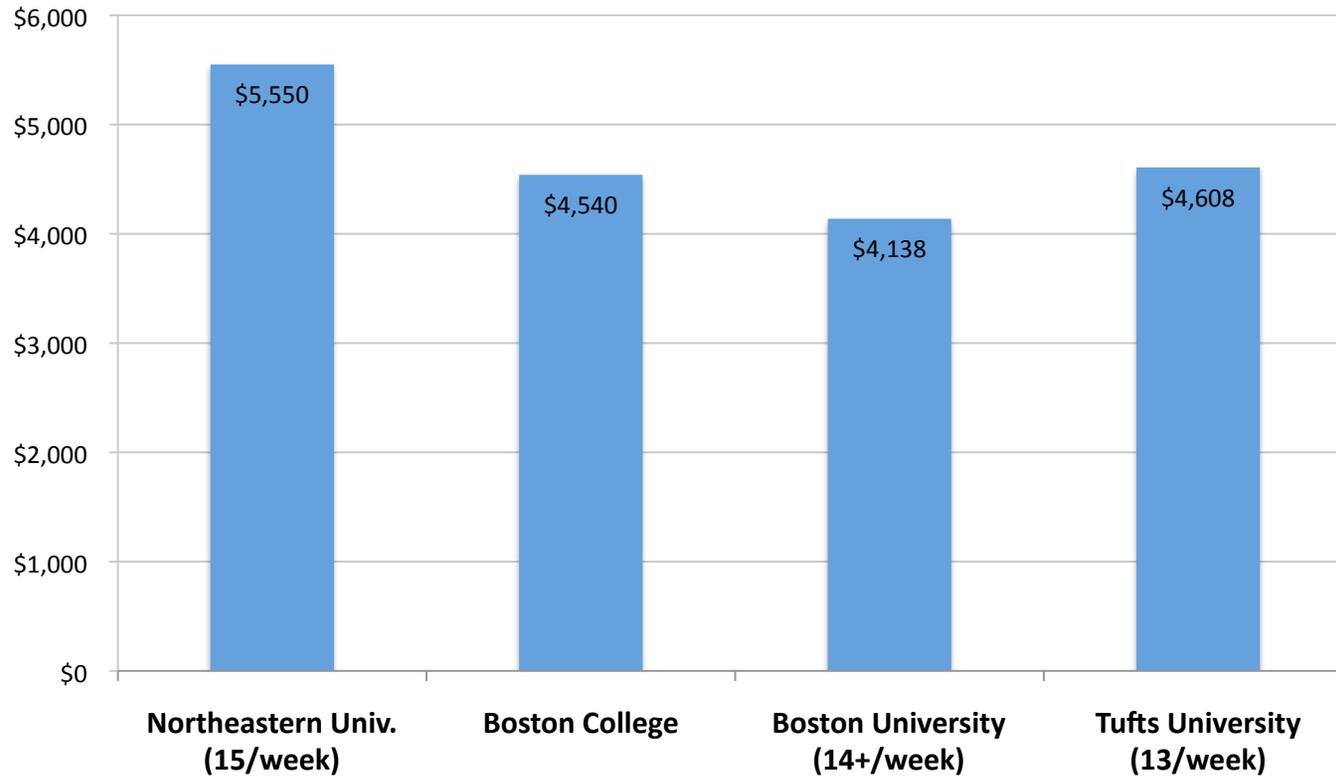
Stanford's rate is for full year 2010-11, or 33.5 weeks

Stanford and Yale's 14+ plan includes flexible declining balance plus meals

Harvard offers one, unified, unlimited plan for all students

Source: Campus Dining

Local institution comparison:



Notes:

Prices for NU, BC, BU are for 2010-11; Tufts for 2009-10
Northeastern's 19-meal plan is \$6,000 per year for 2010-2011
BC website does not indicate number of meals
Tufts plan calculated on 220 meals per year
BU plan includes \$410 in flexible "dining points"

Source: Campus Dining

Appendix F: Breakfast

The House Dining Advisory Group reviewed data selected from the work of the Blue Ribbon Committee and other sources during its deliberations. This appendix contains data reviewed by the group regarding breakfast preferences and habits.

About the surveys

Envision Strategies (Blue Ribbon)

Market Research Survey

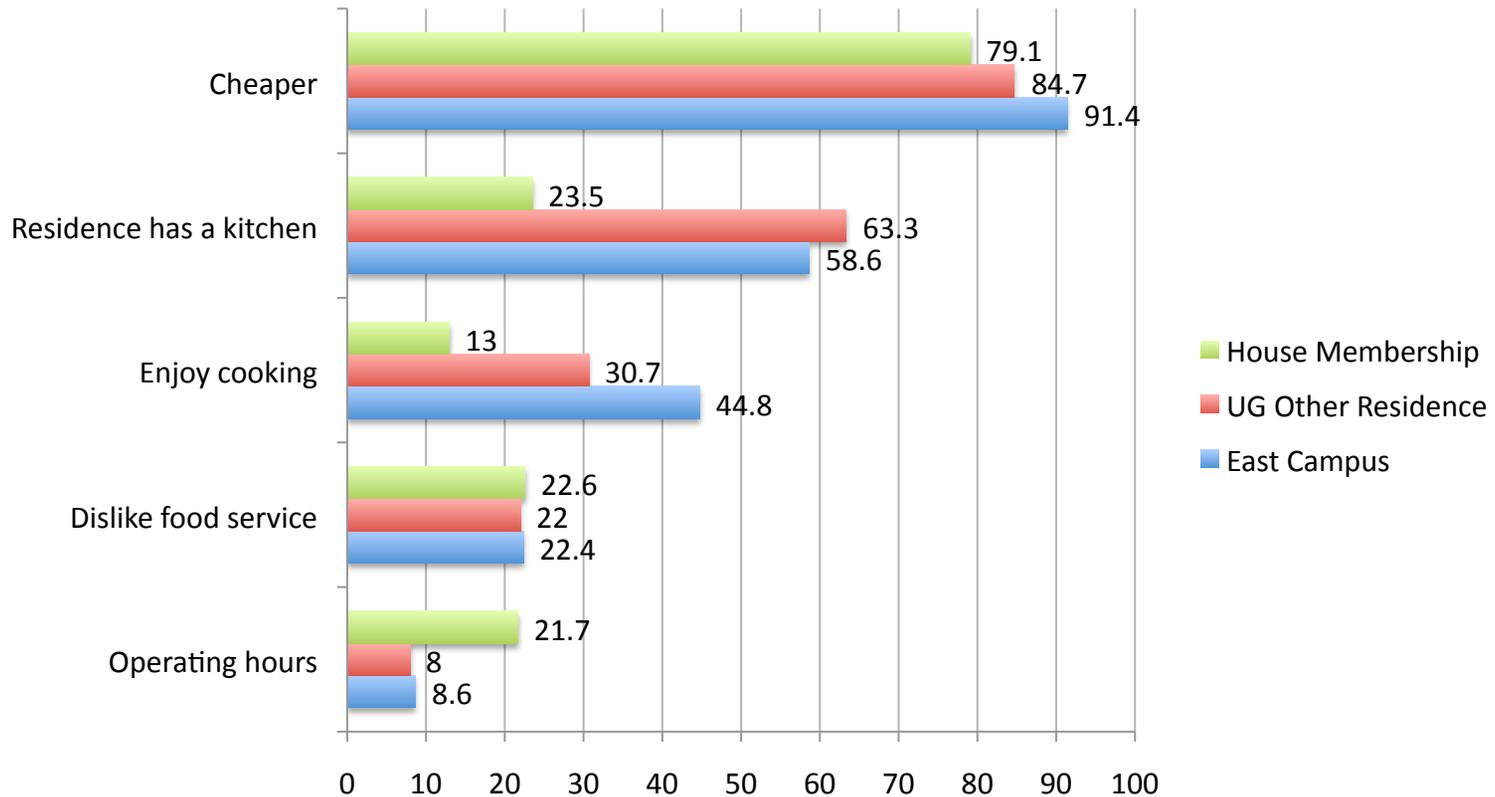
- 3,921 respondents:
 - 1,779 undergraduates
 - 1,745 graduate students
 - 328 faculty
- Confidence interval 1.6%
- 61.6% of undergraduate respondents live on campus

Envision Strategies (Blue Ribbon)

Market Research Survey

- 733 respondents:
 - 204 Baker (65%)
 - 149 McCormick (63%)
 - 195 Next (56%)
 - 170 Simmons (49%)
- Sale projections at 90% confidence

Why students prepare their own breakfast



Why undergraduates prepare their own breakfast

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

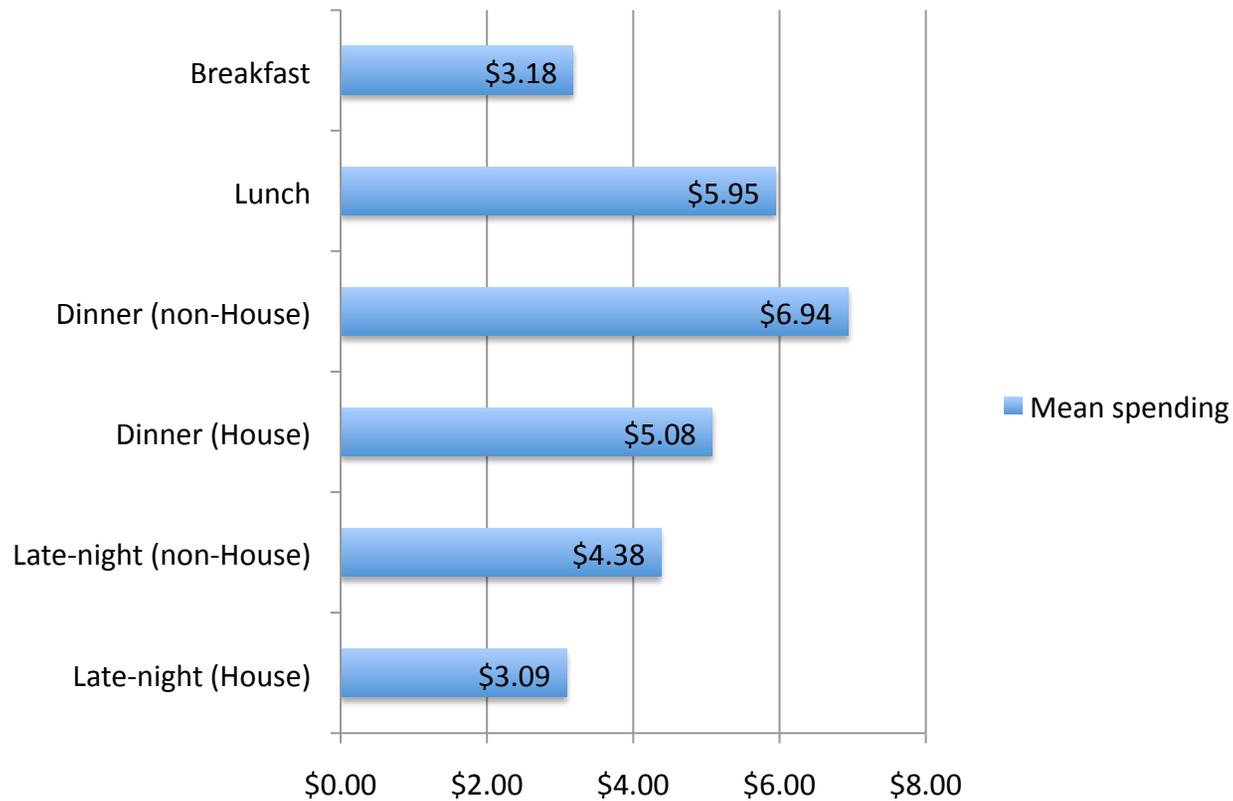
Breakfast habits in a 5-day period

Prepare and eat at home/residence	3.17
On campus/campus café	0.51
Skip	0.41
Eat a snack	0.32
Community dining (House/FSILG)	0.20
Brown bag	0.18
Off campus	0.13
Catered event/ “free food”	0.03

Frequency of breakfast options in a 5-day period for on-campus undergraduates

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

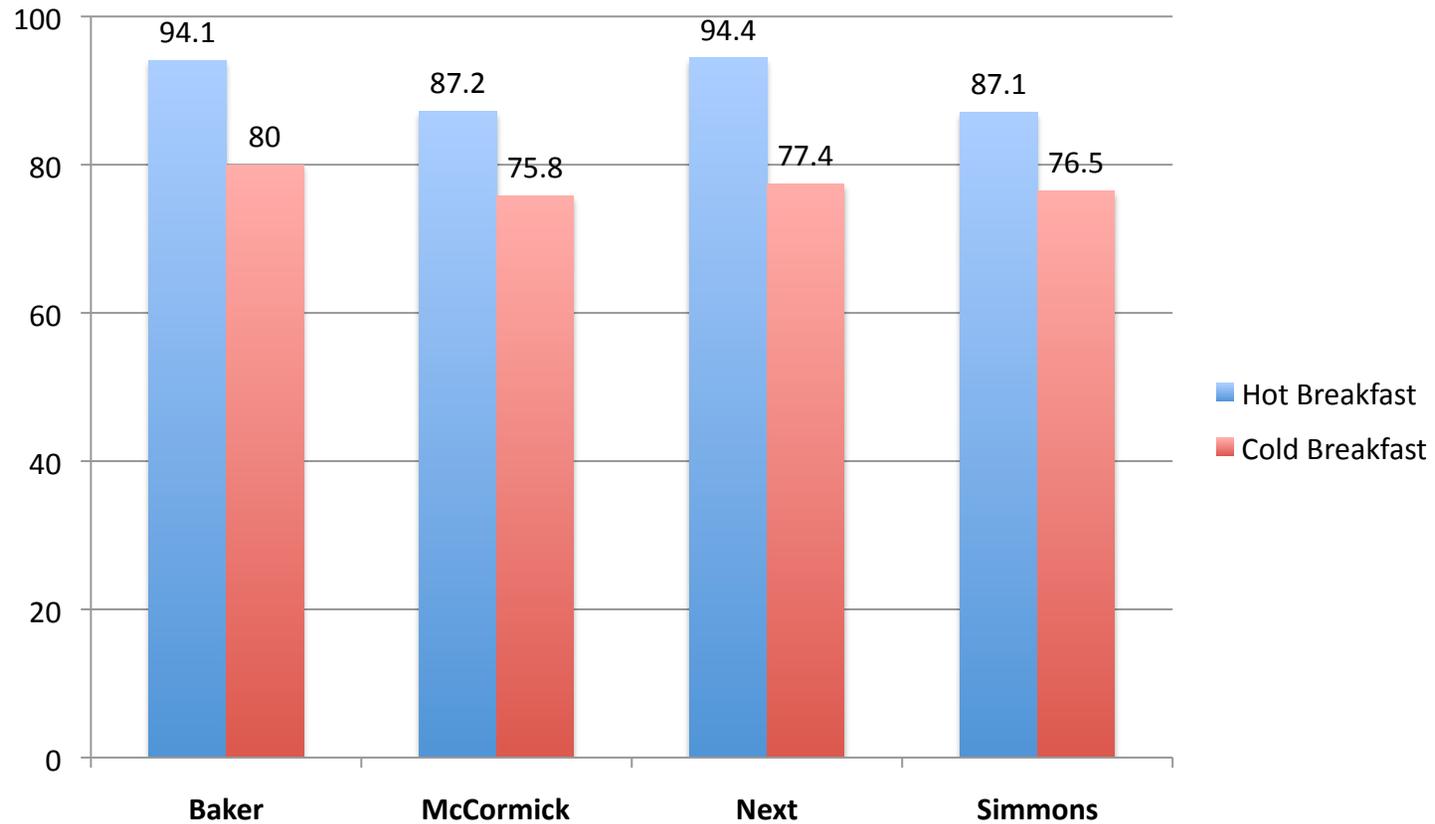
Average on-campus meal spending



For all respondents who purchase dinner and/or late night meal at an on-campus location more than 2 times per week, how much do they typically spend when purchasing a meal on campus?

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

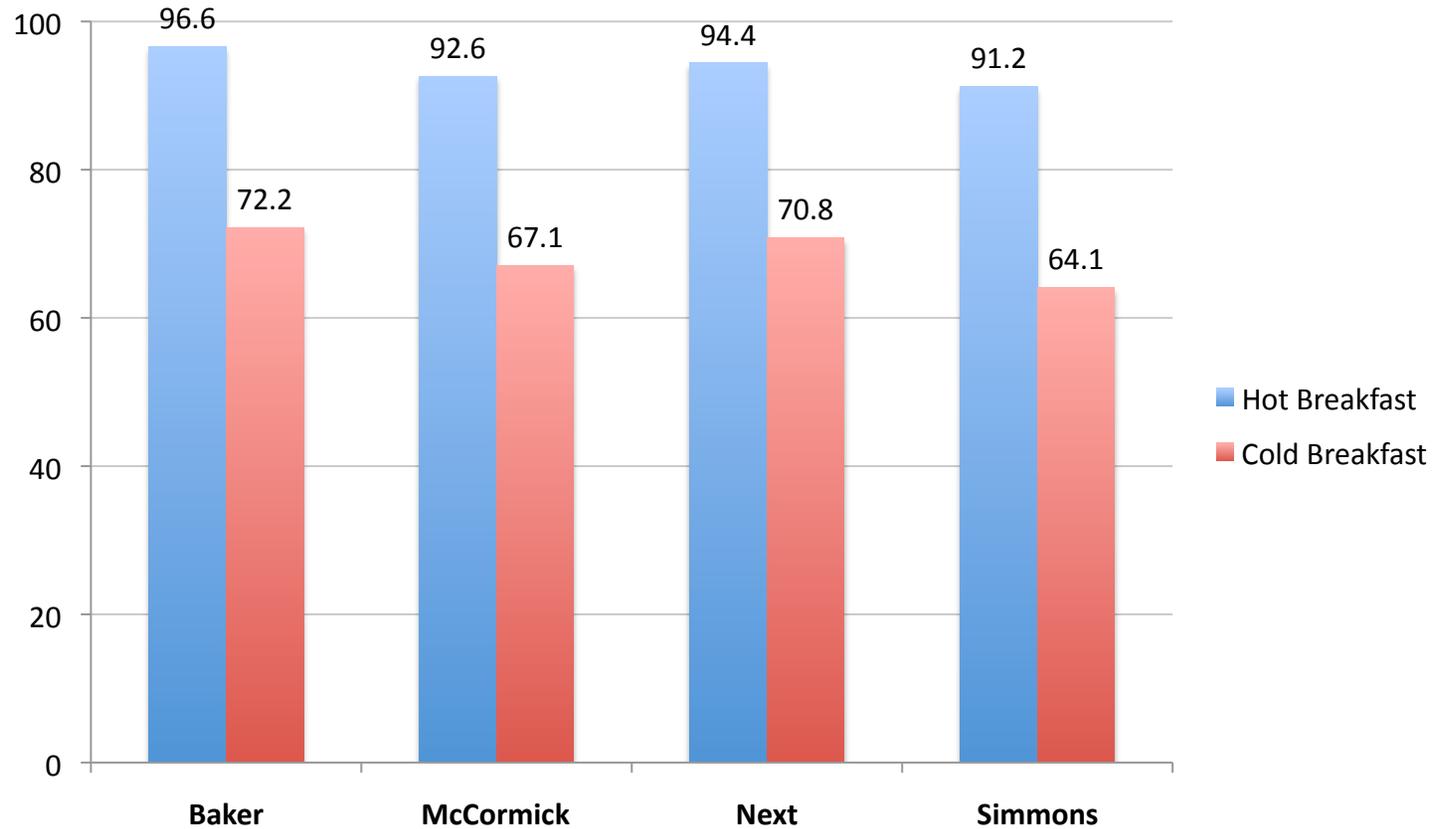
Student preference: weekday breakfast



Percentage of residents that would purchase an in-house breakfast at least once during the school week

UA Breakfast Survey 2010

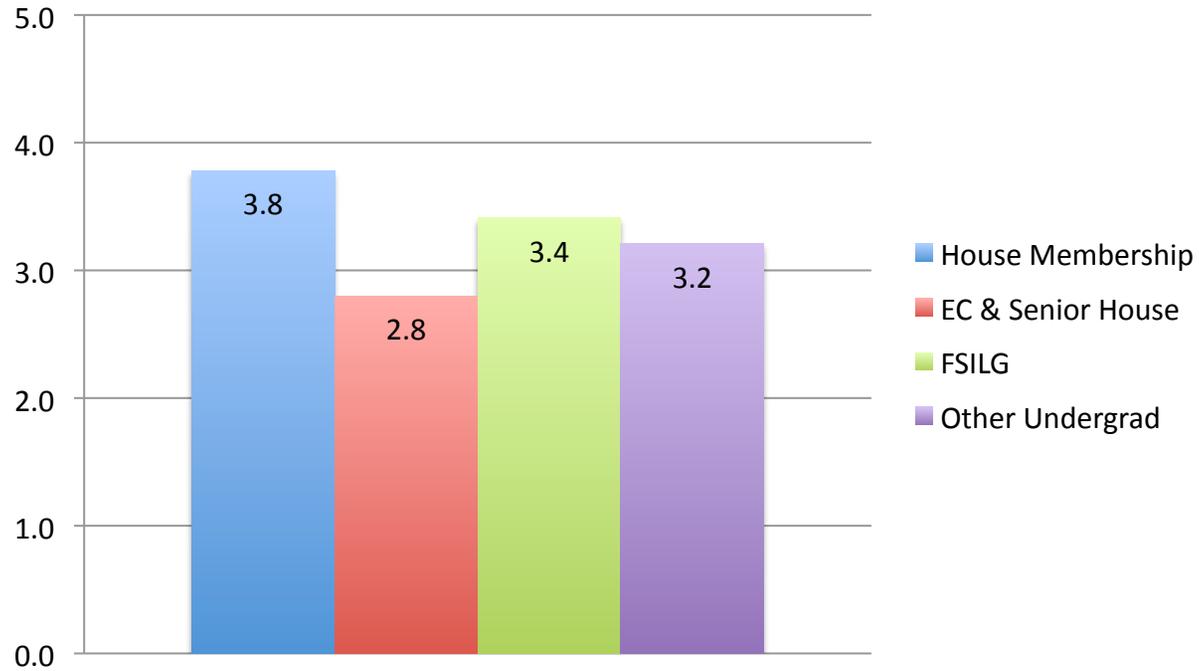
Student preference: weekend breakfast



Percentage of residents that would purchase an in-house breakfast at least one day of the weekend per month

UA Breakfast Survey 2010

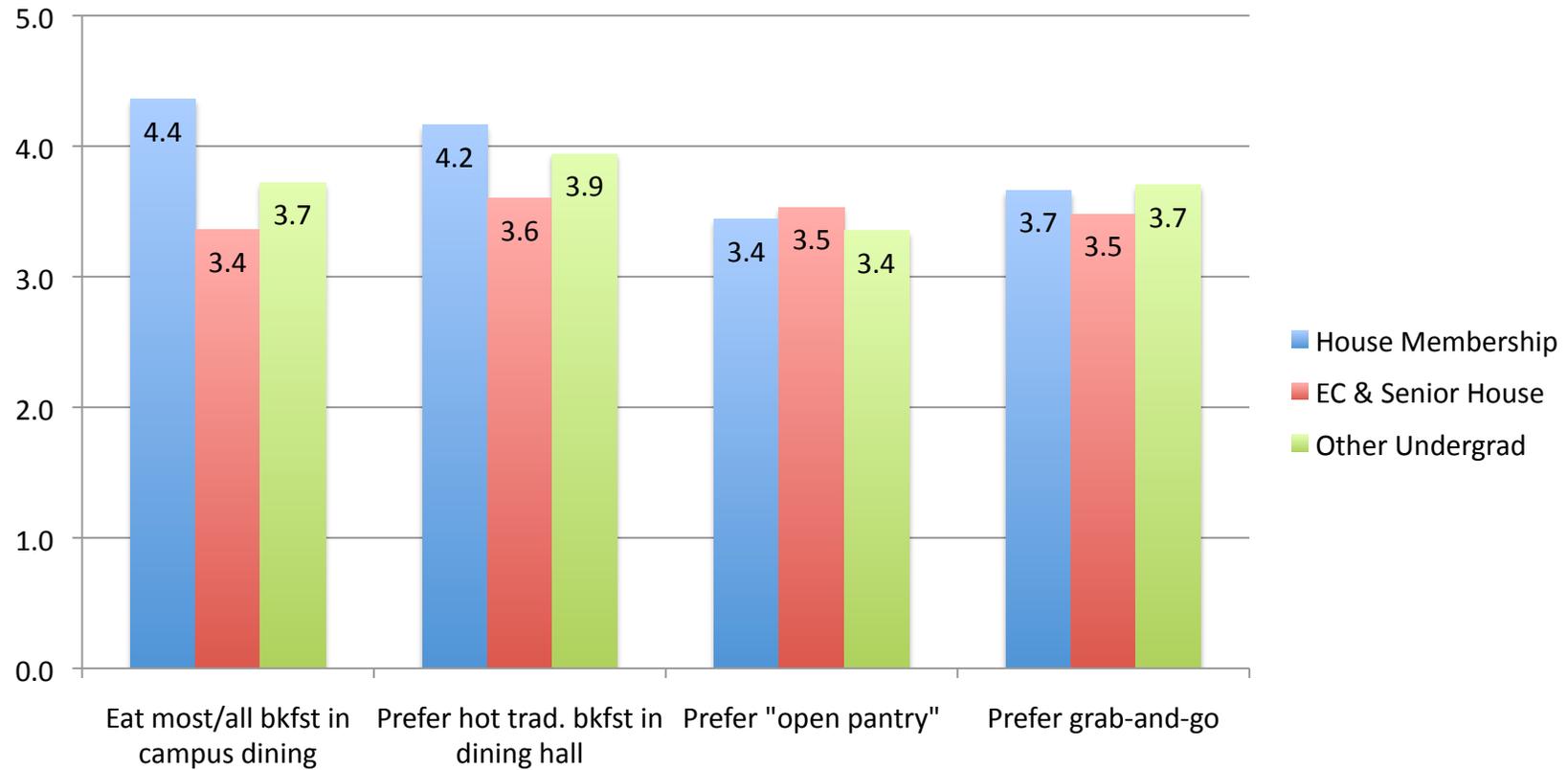
Breakfast preference by residence (A)



I would prefer my house plan to offer breakfast as well as dinner
(5 indicates strong agreement)

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

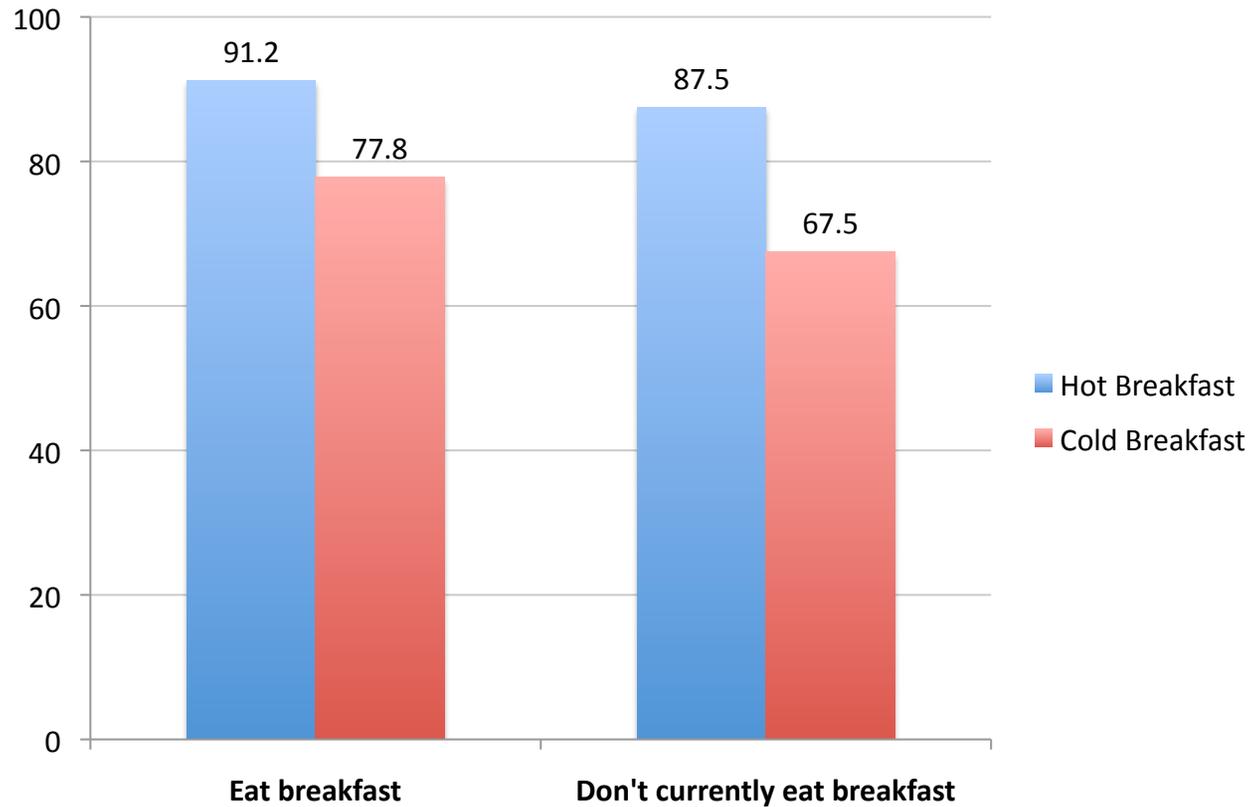
Breakfast preference by residence (B)



If a breakfast meal was part of my House Membership or meal plan program, I would ...
(5 indicates strong agreement)

Blue Ribbon Committee: Envision Strategies 2009

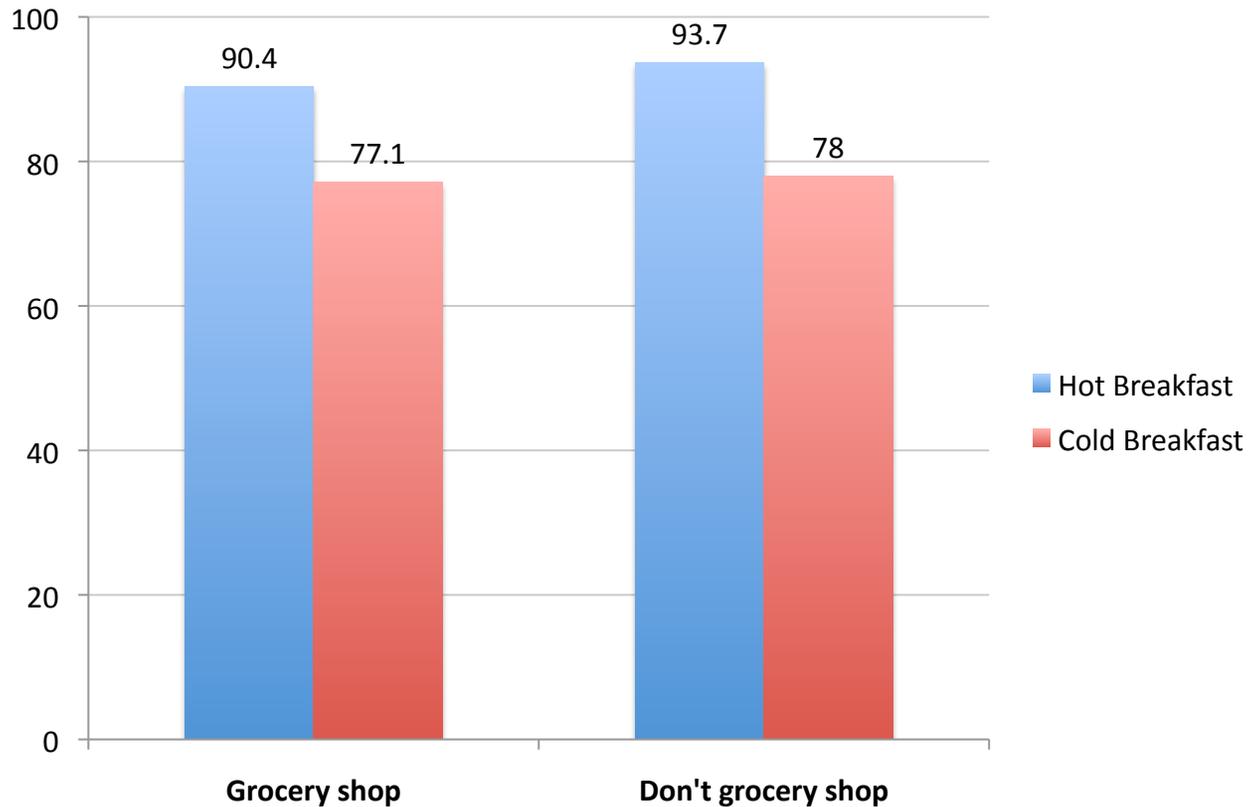
Overall demand during the school week: eats breakfast?



**Overall demand for an in-house breakfast option during the school week:
Compares demand by those who habitually eat breakfast to demand by those who don't**

UA Breakfast Survey 2010

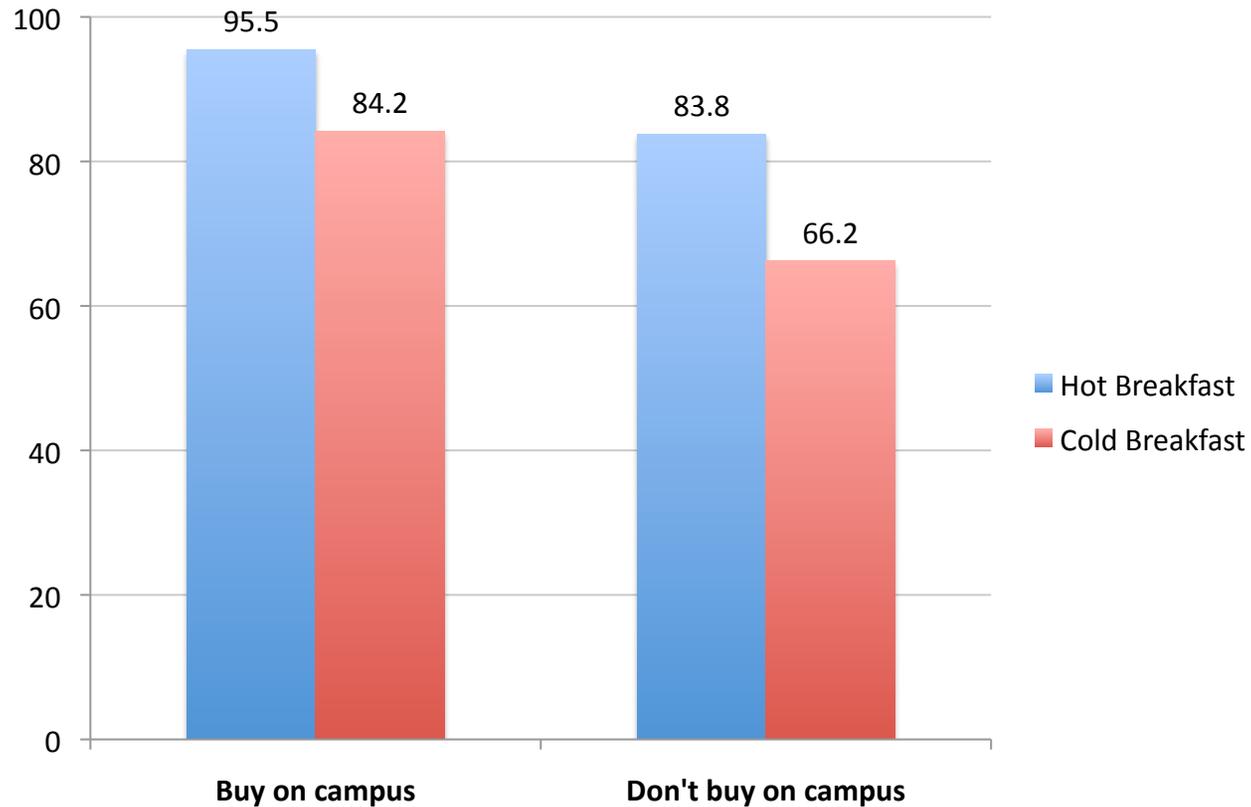
Overall demand during the school week: shops?



**Overall demand for an in-house breakfast option during the school week:
Compares demand by those who sometimes/always eat groceries for breakfast
to the demand by those who never do**

UA Breakfast Survey 2010

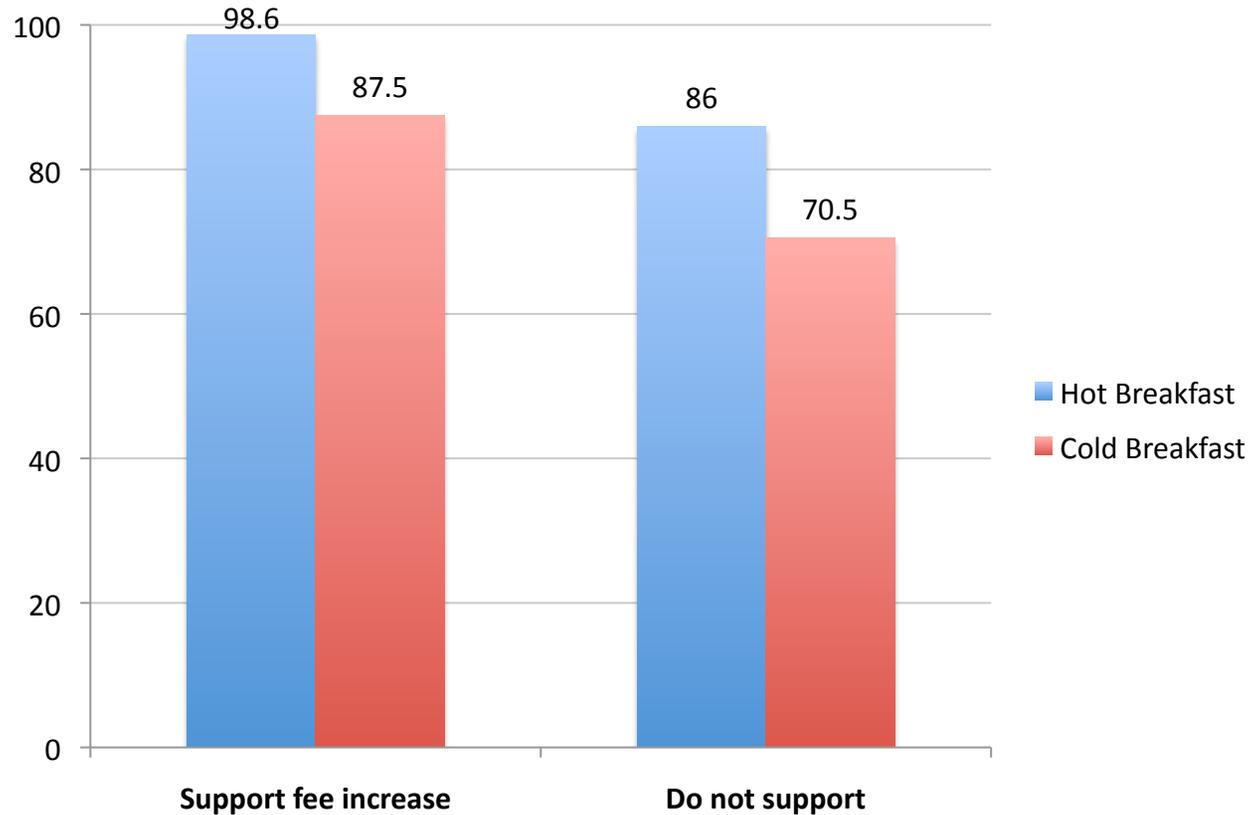
Overall demand during the school week: buys on campus?



**Overall demand for an in-house breakfast option during the school week:
Compares demand by those who sometimes/always buy breakfast on campus
to the demand by those who never do**

UA Breakfast Survey 2010

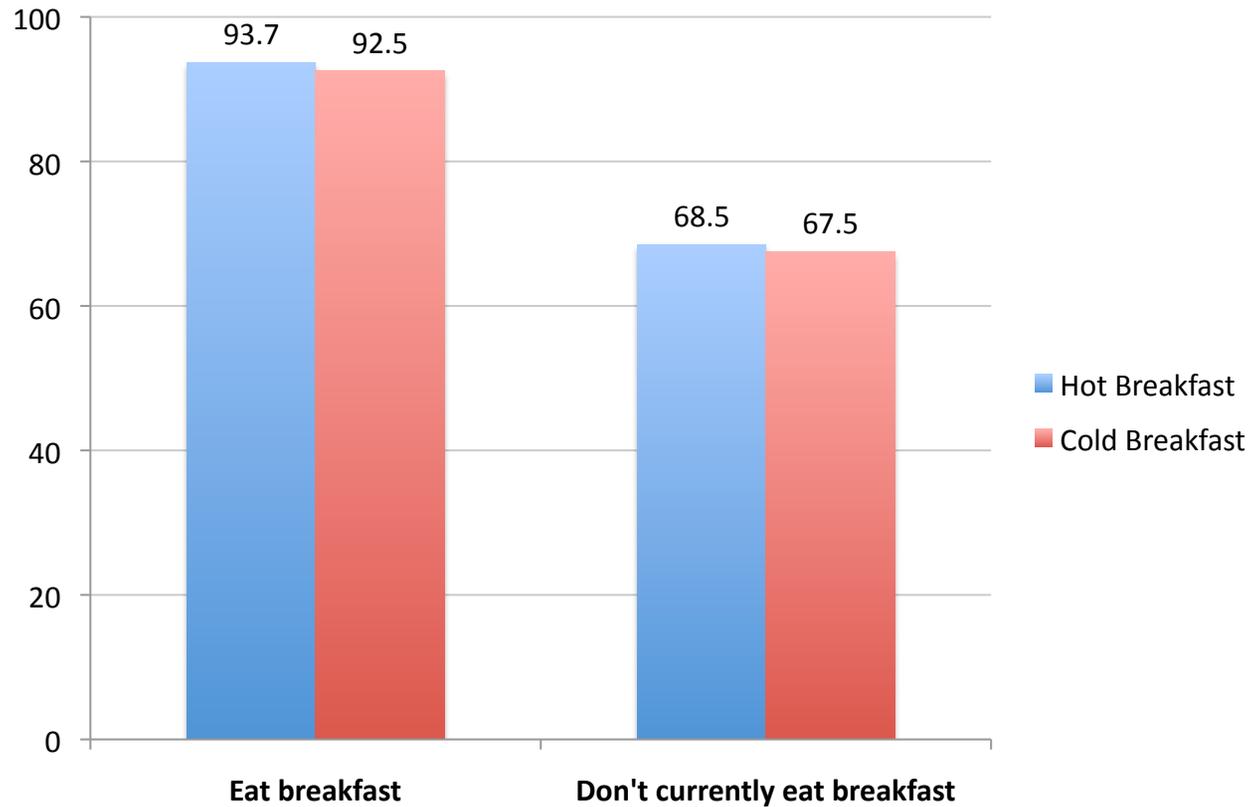
Overall demand during the school week: supports fee?



**Overall demand for an in-house breakfast option during the school week:
Compares demand by those who support an increase in the HD membership fee
to cover costs to the demand by those who don't support the fee increase**

UA Breakfast Survey 2010

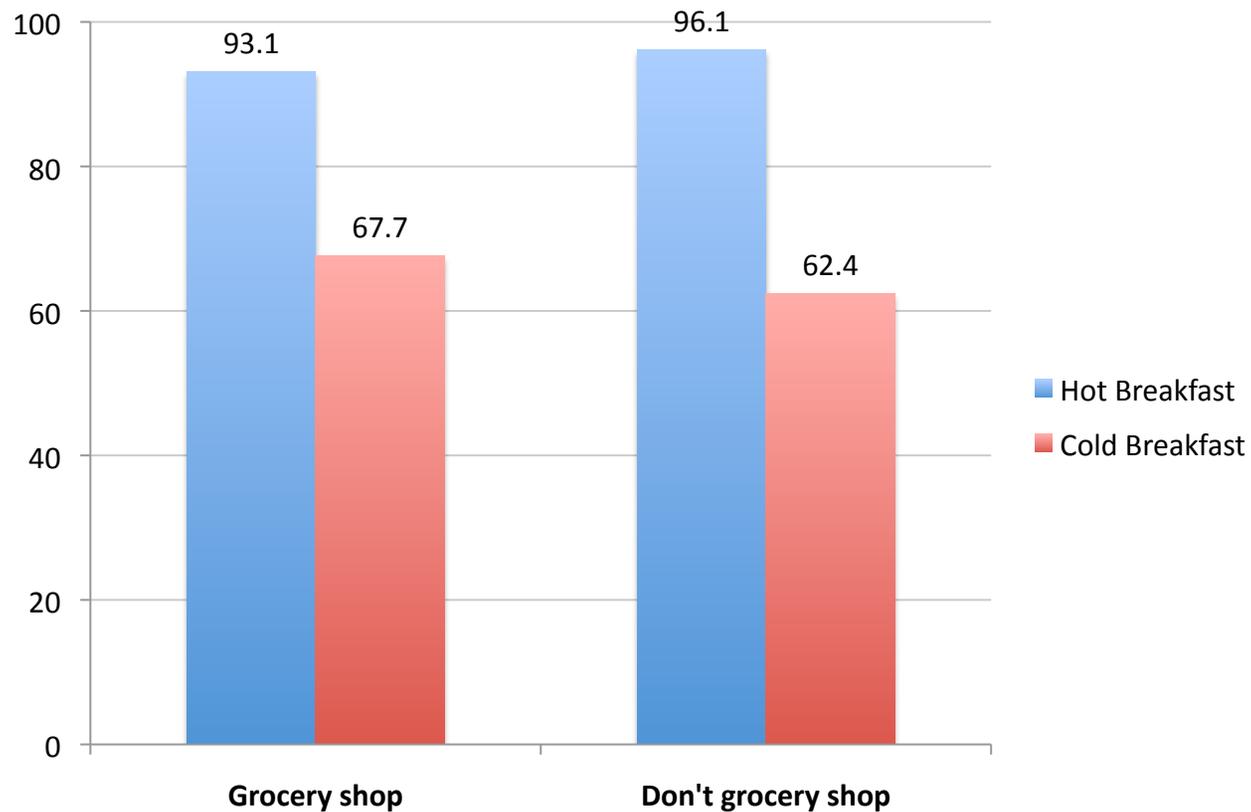
Overall demand during the weekend: eats breakfast?



**Overall demand for an in-house breakfast option over the weekend:
Compares demand by those who habitually eat breakfast to demand by those who don't**

UA Breakfast Survey 2010

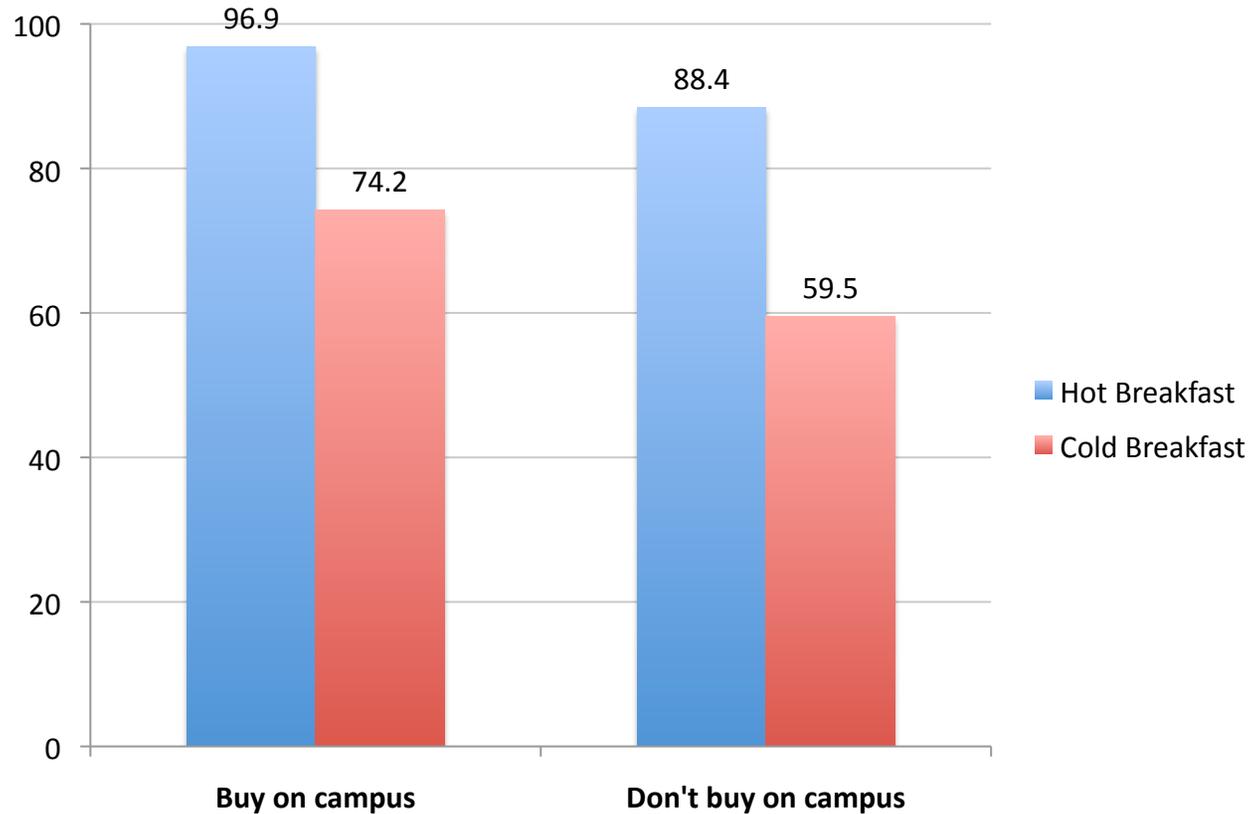
Overall demand during the weekend: shops?



**Overall demand for an in-house breakfast option during the school week:
Compares demand by those who sometimes/always buy groceries for breakfast
to the demand by those who never do**

UA Breakfast Survey 2010

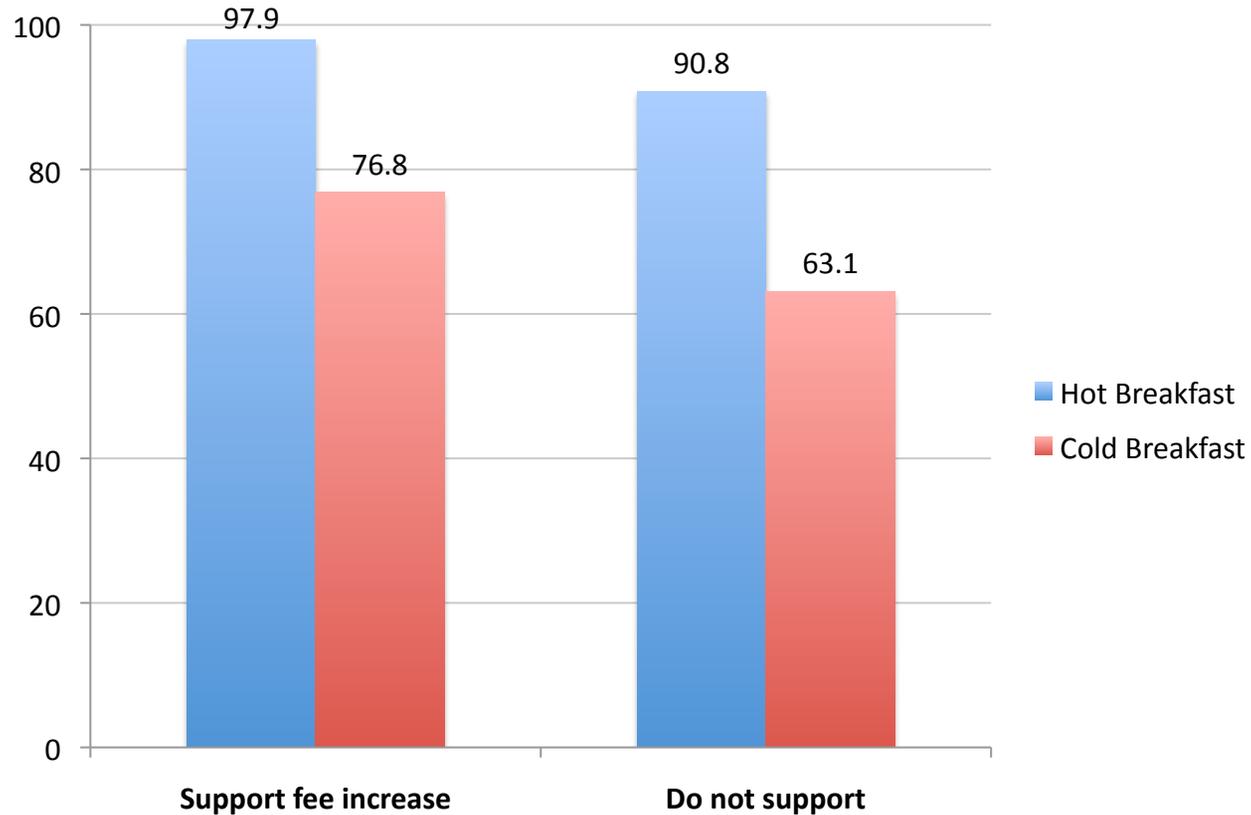
Overall demand during the weekend: buys on campus?



**Overall demand for an in-house breakfast option during the school week:
Compares demand by those who sometimes/always buy breakfast on campus
to the demand by those who never do**

UA Breakfast Survey 2010

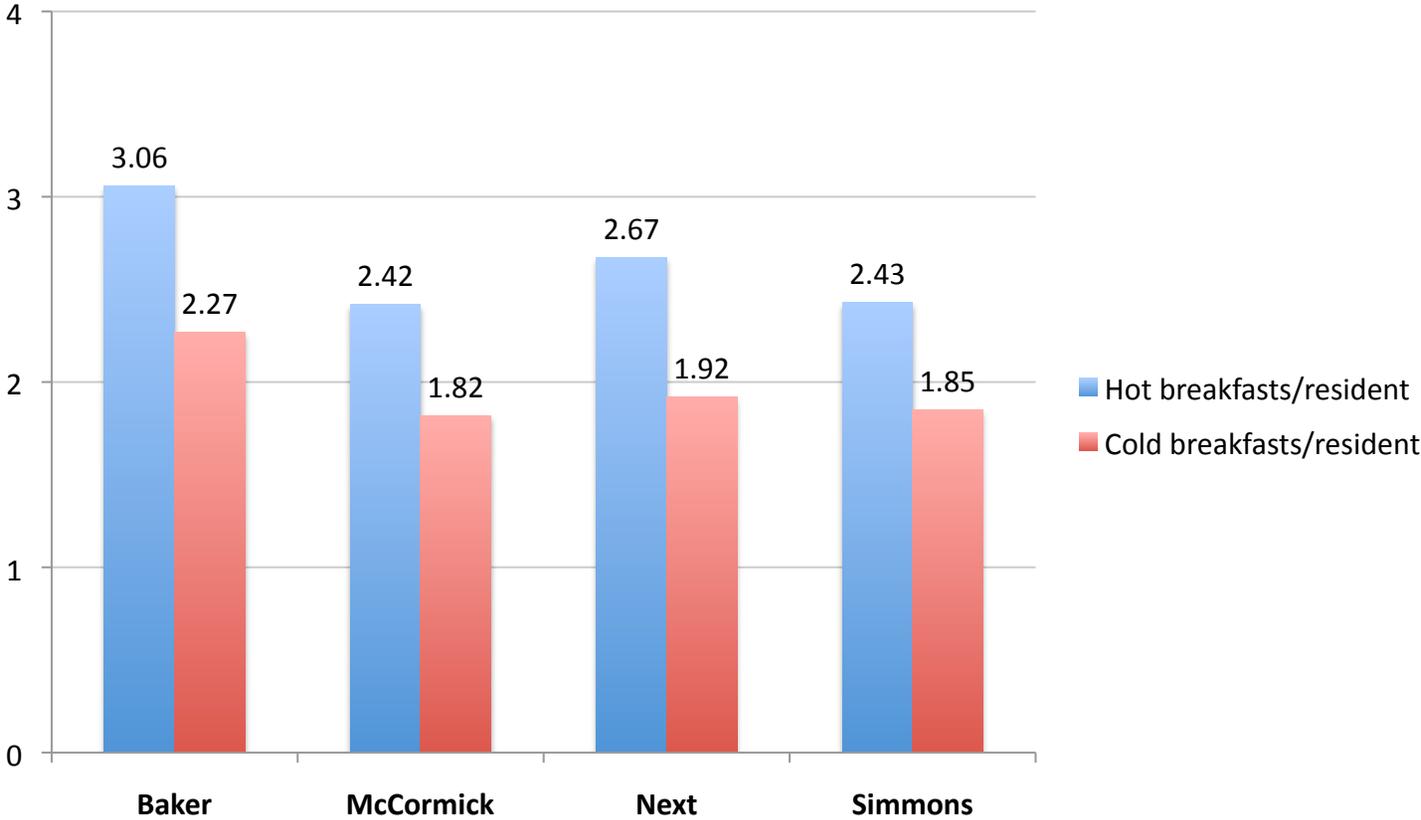
Overall demand during the weekend: supports fee?



**Overall demand for an in-house breakfast option during the school week:
Compares demand by those who support an increase in the HD membership fee
to cover costs to the demand by those who don't support the fee increase**

UA Breakfast Survey 2010

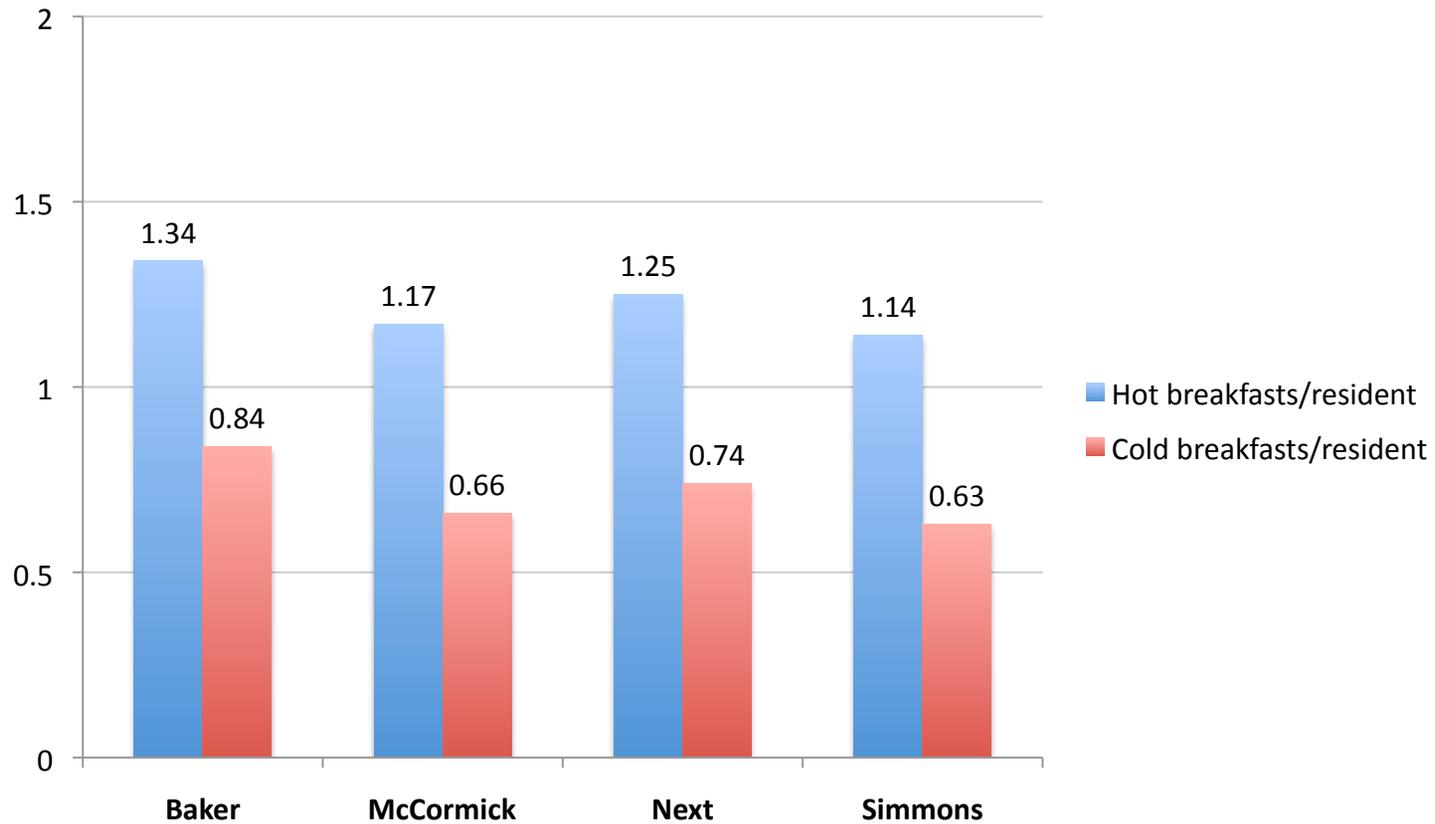
Projected breakfasts during school week



Projected average number of breakfasts sold per resident in each dorm during the school week

UA Breakfast Survey 2010

Projected breakfasts during weekends



Projected average number of breakfasts sold per resident in each dorm over the weekend

UA Breakfast Survey 2010

Preferred hours of operation: weekdays

	Baker	McCormick	Next	Simmons
7am-8am	37.6%	49.7%	41.0%	47.1%
8am-9am	87.3%	91.9%	87.7%	94.1%
9am-10am	92.7%	89.3%	89.2%	89.4%
10am-11am	63.4%	45.6%	51.3%	48.2%
11am-12pm	21.0%	9.4%	10.8%	8.2%
12pm-1pm	6.3%	2.0%	2.1%	1.2%
1pm-2pm	3.9%	1.3%	1.5%	0.6%

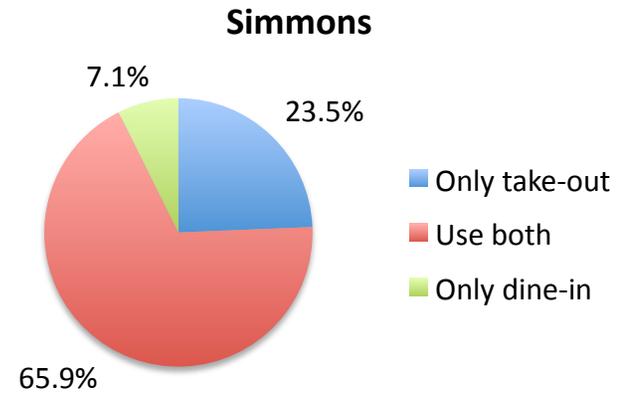
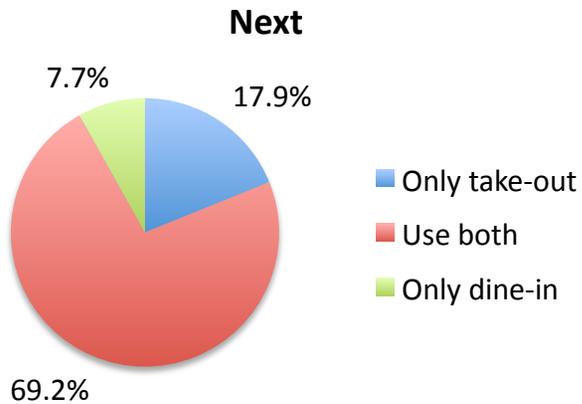
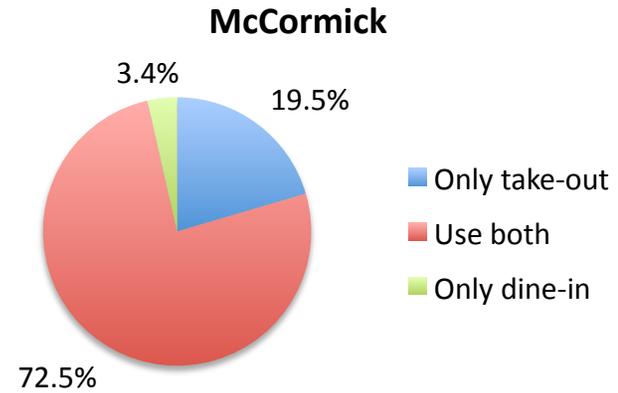
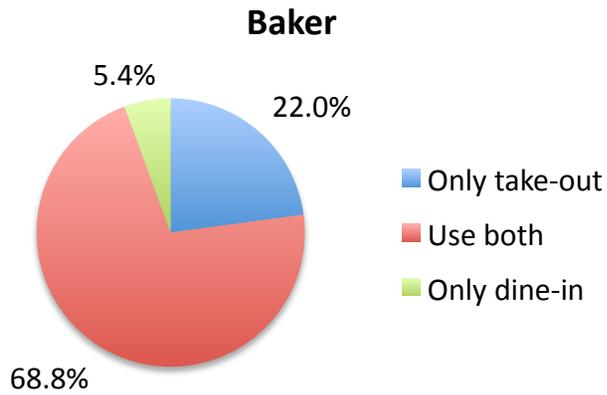
Figure 9 – Preferred operating hours on weekdays

Preferred hours of operation: weekends

	Baker	McCormick	Next	Simmons
7am-8am	14.6%	17.4%	12.3%	10.6%
8am-9am	36.1%	45.6%	36.9%	43.5%
9am-10am	70.2%	85.2%	77.9%	83.5%
10am-11am	90.2%	87.2%	87.7%	88.8%
11am-12pm	66.3%	47.7%	57.9%	60.0%
12pm-1pm	31.2%	16.8%	20.0%	21.8%

Figure 10 – Preferred hours on weekends

Preference for breakfast dine-in/take-out



UA Breakfast Survey 2010