

Cooking @ MIT

Idea Proposal and Evaluation

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Group Report
15.279 Final Project
Spring 2011



Campus Consulting Company

Prof. Terence Heagney

Campus Consulting Company
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April 13, 2011
Mr. Steven Hall
Chair
Committee on the Undergraduate Program

← WTF? Someone different

Dear Mr. Hall:

A month ago, Campus Consulting Company (CCC) suggested the creation of cooking classes at MIT to Committee on the Undergraduate Program (CUP), to which CUP requests a detailed proposal and feasibility analysis of the program. The idea of cooking classes was created to increase student health consciousness and to provide an ~~alternative to the current campus dining plan~~. This report will provide the details of why and how this program runs, as well as evaluation of its value and costs.

had better

scope associate costs

To back up our suggestions, CCC gathered data from both students and faculties regarding their opinions on the program. Surveys were sent out to student dorms on both east and west campus, interviews were conducted with the Committee on Curricula (CoC) regarding the establishment of classes, Director of Physical Education regarding the possibility attaching PE credit to the program, and Director of the Campus Facilities Complex regarding the utilization of corresponding public space.

singular not consulted

no

was this done

This report proposes ~~more than one~~ solution to every aspect of the program, whether it's staffing, curriculum, location or PE credit, providing CUP with multiple options to choose from. The practicality of each solution is also evaluated, with help from student and faculty opinions. Finally, we also accounted for practical concerns such as cost and resources, providing a holistic view on the program.

bad idea

The idea of cooking classes is a creative solution to both student health and dissatisfaction with the dining plan. Although the sizes and expenses of the program may vary, as our proposal finds, the program itself has proven to be feasible.

single objective

As an objective student consulting group, our goal is to provide as much information as possible to help CUP make the best decision. Therefore, if you have any additional questions, please email us at ccc@mit.edu.

did register?

Finally, Campus Consulting Company would like to thank you for the opportunity to work with the MIT Committee on the Undergraduate Program.

Sincerely,

Amy Zhang, Partner
Campus Consulting Company

Executive Summary

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to analyze the possibility of piloting a campus-wide cooking class at MIT.

Background

In order to assess the benefits, the paper will address student interest, staff support, possible locations, and deployment.

Research

To observe student interest, a survey was sent out. In addition, for staff support, many interviews will be conducted. Questions to consider involve where the cooking class should be located, how often the class should be held, and what would the potentially cost of each class be.

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Introduction

1/6

Over the past few years, MIT has sought to help students eat well so that they can perform their best in class. In order to achieve that goal, MIT has moved to implement a meal plan in five of the dormitories. However, much remains to be done to help achieve that goal.

First, the meal plan does little to help students become self-sufficient after graduating from MIT. In addition, current efforts have largely bypassed those who live in dorms that cook for themselves.

Students recognize this fact, and are clamoring for a program. Of the 246 people who responded to our survey, 86% of respondents said that they would be interested in a program.

There is currently a program at East Campus taught by Victoria Davenport, a Senior Administrative Assistant. (response from program)

Dean for Student Life Chris Colombo has acknowledged that more can be done to help students eat well, particularly at cook-for-your-self dorms. Henry Humphries, Senior Associate Dean for Residential Life and Dining and Director of Dining Richard Berlin, have shown interest in a cooking class program.

We realized that such a program will represent a substantial investment to MIT. While MIT has made these types of investments in the past, we felt that a test program should be established in order to plan for a more permanent program. This test program would help MIT test different models before committing to a full-time facility.

Review TOC

Include alt

Use this as beginning of report

(I should review original)

[Faint handwritten notes at the bottom of the page, including "I should review original" and "Use this as beginning of report"]

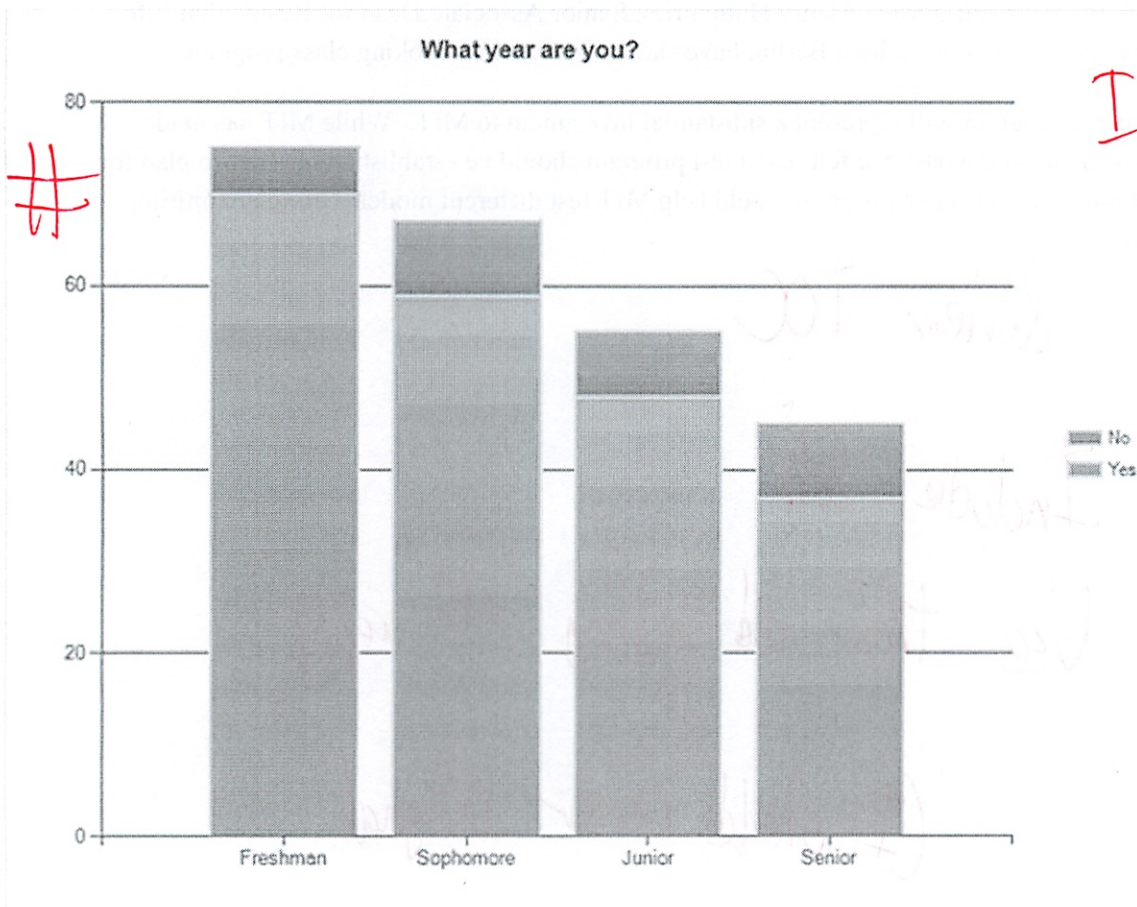
Student Interest

In order to gather information about cooking class interest on campus, we conducted a survey. After analyzing the results we obtained in the survey, it is clear that many people would support a cooking class. 246 people completed the survey. Of these, 88.6% answered "yes" to "Would you be interested in a cooking class?" Of those who answered "no", the most popular reason was "no time". Therefore, it would be necessary to stress that the cooking class would teach students to make dishes that take very little time. In addition, offering PE credit is a very popular option. 80.1% of those surveyed said they would be interested if offered PE credit.

← graph

~~separate out~~ find better place to put!

As the grade level increased from freshmen to seniors, fewer students became interested in the cooking class program. Of those interested, 31.0% were freshman, 27.7% were sophomores, 22.7% were juniors, and 18.6% were seniors. In Graph 1, it can be seen that as the grades increased, interest in the cooking class decreased, but not by much, from 93.3% to 82.2%. In other words, 93.3% of the 31.0% freshmen surveyed would be interested, and this decreased to 82.2% of the 18.6% of seniors.



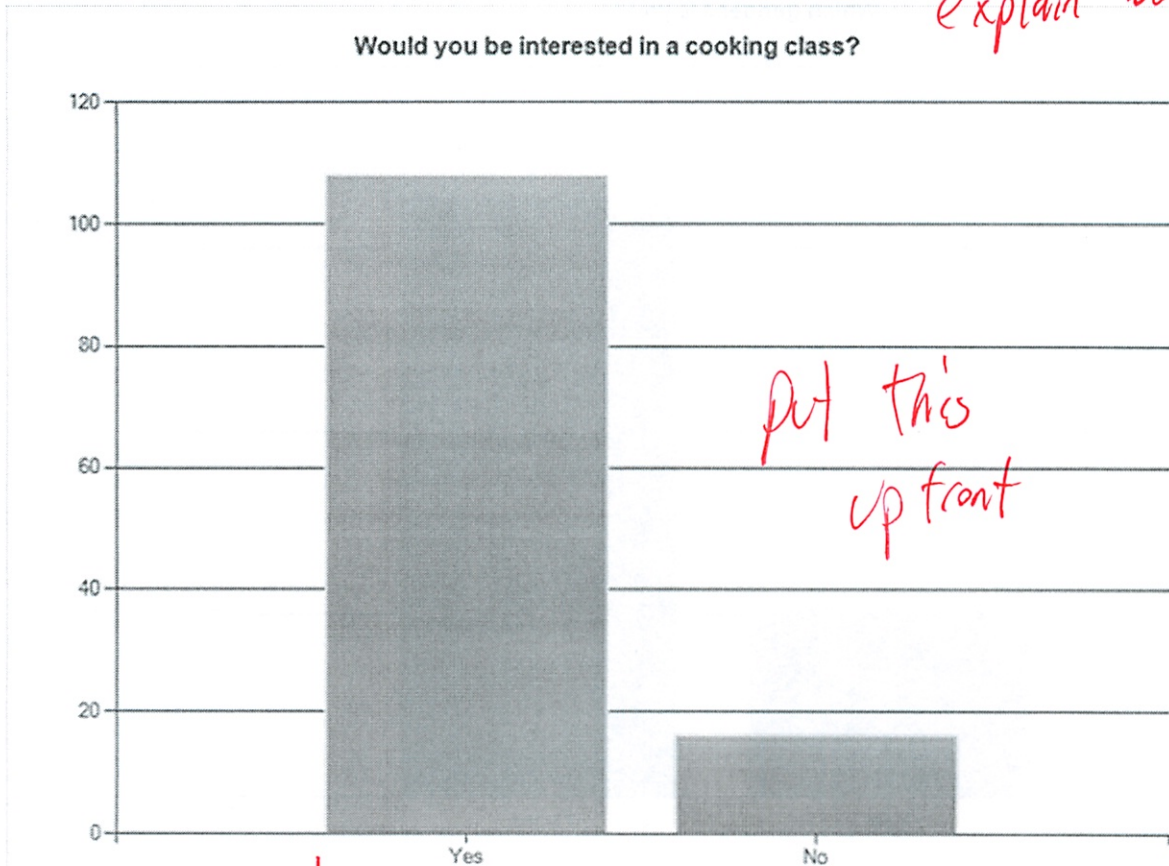
I've said change graphs

Graph 1. Cross-tab Analysis of Interest vs. Undergraduate Year.

No this is # survey respondents!
"No" box not getting much bigger

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Upperclassmen probably have less time to cook. In addition, they have completed more PE requirements. 50.2% of those interested said they already completed their PE requirements. However, 87.1% of those who completed their PE requirements would still be interested in taking this course.



Graph 2. Interest Level in Students Who Have Completed Their PE Requirements

Of the seniors who responded to the survey, 82.2% said they would be interested in a cooking class, and 75.6% would be interested if they received PE credit. Therefore, even though the seniors have the least amount of interest out of the four grades, they are still very supportive of the program.

word better/rearrange

In addition, *of the people who responded* 77.1% females and 22.9% males *were* interested in the cooking class, as shown in Graph 3.



Graph 3. Female vs. Male Interest in Cooking Class

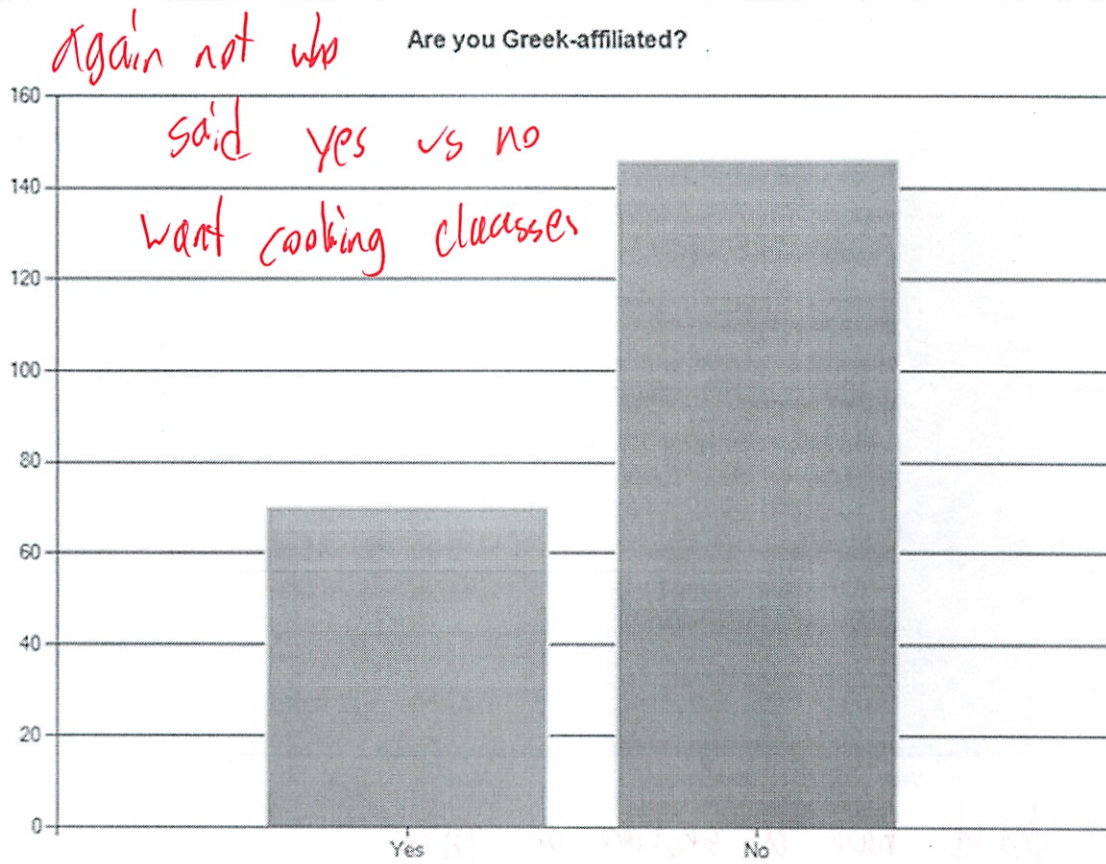
*This is not what we are looking at
77% of respondents ^{who} did survey were female*

*You made it sound like ~~the number~~ 22%
of male respondents said ~~no~~ yes
which is not true!!!*

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Survey respondents

69.8% of those who are interested are not Greek-affiliated, as seen in Graph 4. This could be because many Greek programs have a cooking rotation program which exposes students to those skills.

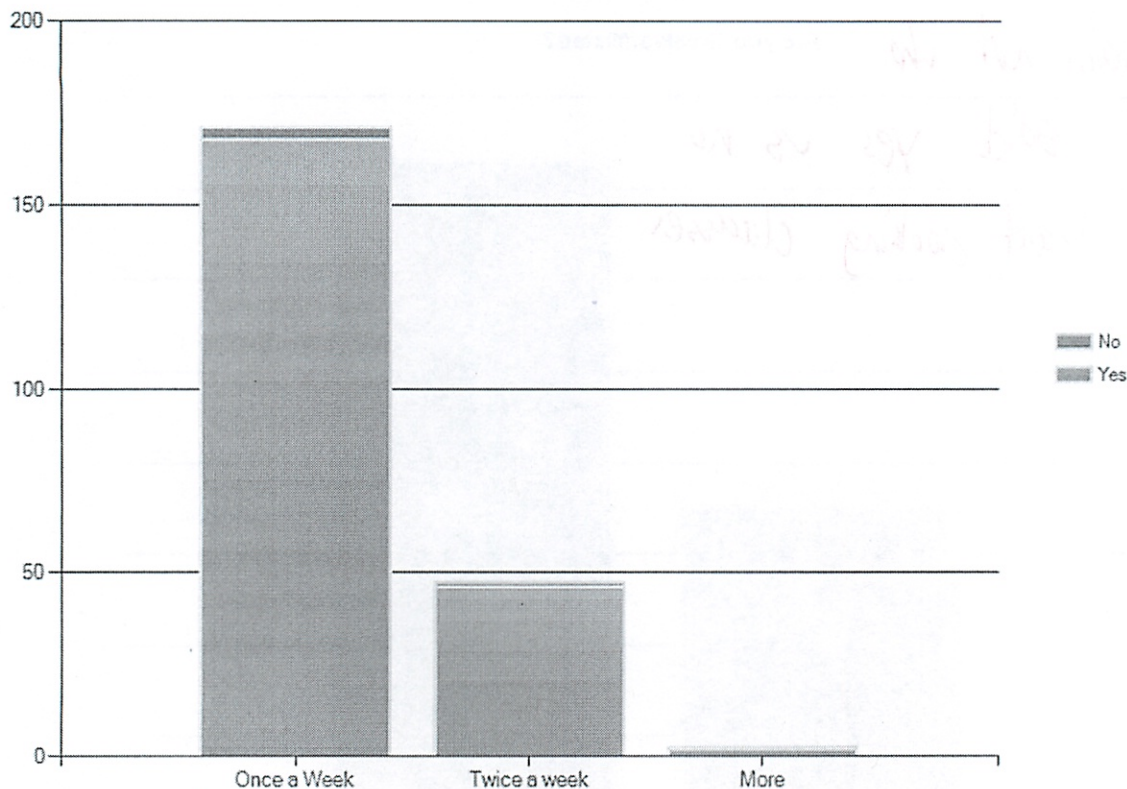


Graph 4. Greek-affiliated vs. Non-Greek Affiliated Interest in Cooking Class

The dorm most interested in the cooking course was Next House with 13.9%. Because Next House is so far from the rest of campus, the residents are probably less willing to go to other dorms' dining halls to eat and probably do not want to eat at their dining hall every day. Of those who are interested in the cooking class, 77.8% believe the class should be held once a week. 94.2% said they would take this course during IAP. Graph 5 clearly shows that this class should not be held too often.

*I don't
eat
but
this
reason*

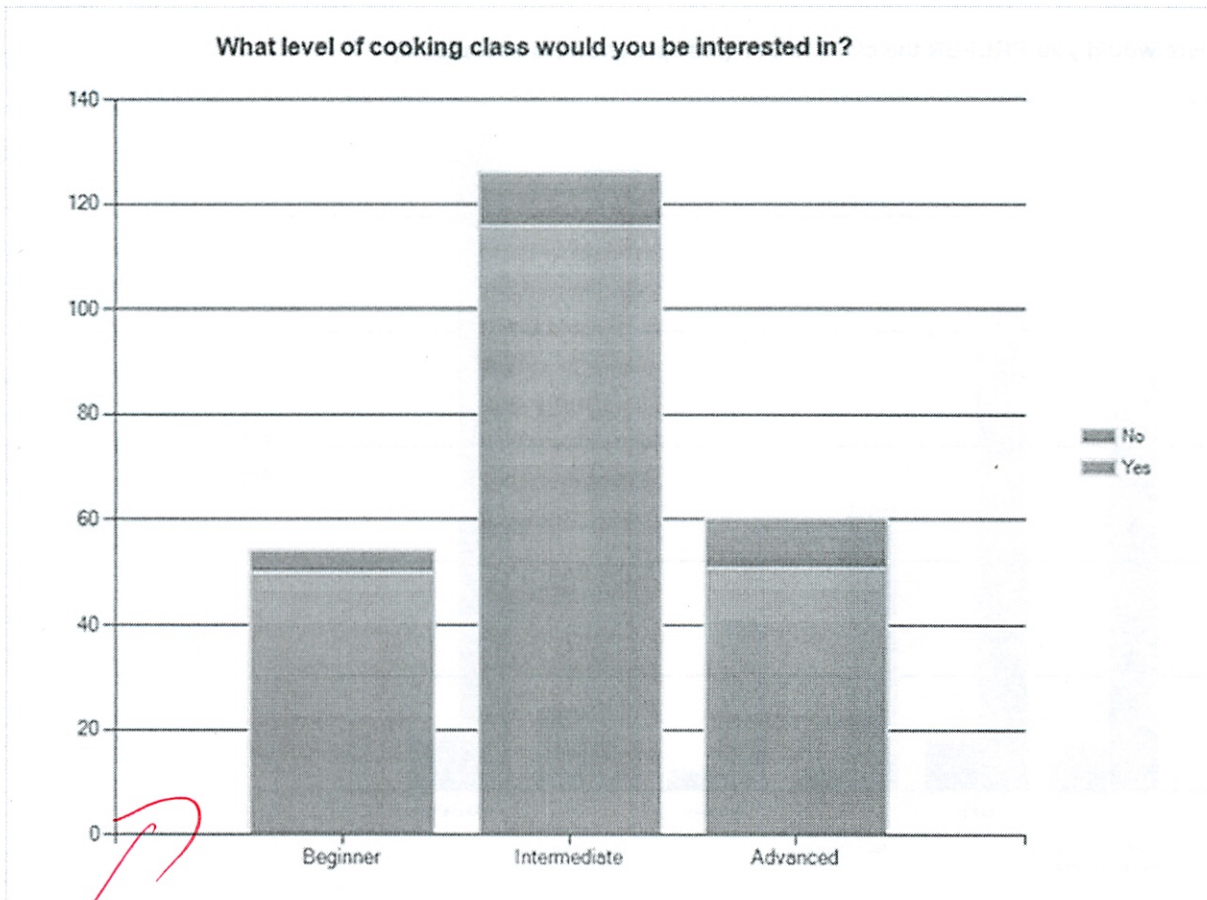
If you answered yes to Question 7, how often do you think the cooking class should be held?



We should have a section on this

Graph 5. How Often Should the Class be held?

When asked if the interested participants cooked, the majority lied between sometimes and very often. 52.3% would be interested in intermediate-level cooking courses. The others are evenly split between beginner and advanced courses. There should probably be more intermediate courses available, as shown in Graph 6.



Graph 6. Interest in Level of Cooking Class

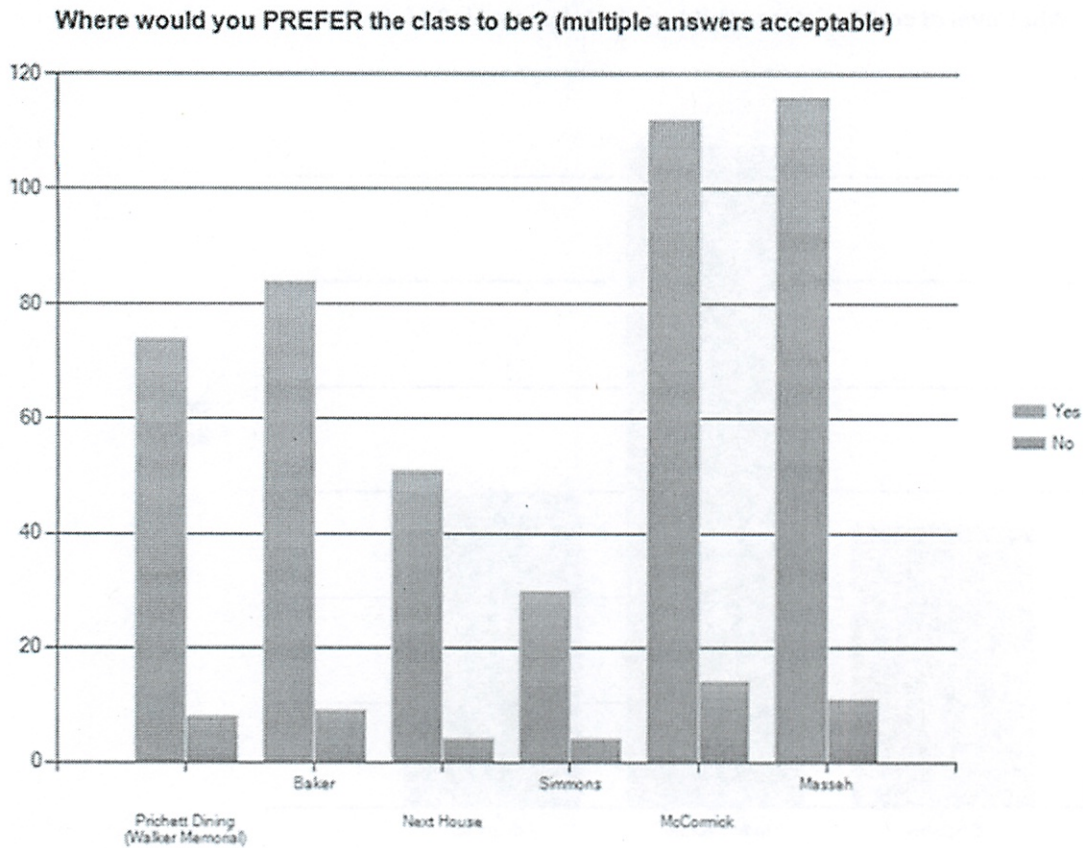
Size of fee

Even if the course were required a fee, 83.5% of the students would be willing to pay. They understand that this would be fair because they would be allowed to eat the meals after. Regarding the location, as shown in Graph 7, most people preferred that the course be held in McCormick, Masseh, or somewhere else central to campus.

Why back to location

perhaps leave location to location

this to curriculum



Graph 7. Preferred Location of Cooking Class.

This section should just establish interest level.

Subtopics should move to their respective sections.

Staffing

There are multiple options for the teaching position of the cooking classes.

1. Hire professional chefs or culinary instructors as part-time teachers. This strategy would work especially well for professionals who have on-and-off days, or if students prefer a time in the evening or on non-work days. Similar systems have proven to be successful with the MIT PE instructors.
2. Bring the chefs currently on campus, whether in dining halls or school cafes. This approach might enable us to collaborate with the MIT Committee on Dining to reach a low-cost, highly efficient agreement. *Con: Vol may not do*
3. Depending on student interest, we could also hire student volunteers. There are many talented student cooks on campus who would be more than willing to share their knowledge and skills. Their participation could potentially increase further if they get paid.
4. Invite specific chefs from local restaurants based on student requests. For example, students who enjoy food from Thailand Café might have particular requests about how to make one or two dishes. This way, the students get to sample a wide range of cuisines and focus on their favorite dishes; meanwhile the restaurants increase their publicity and popularity among students.

Rec for something

Bon App has expressed interest

Curriculum

Beg, int, advanced section graph

The content of the proposed cooking classes depends highly on student preference, which could be determined by survey instruments and field interviews.

In general, the dishes taught should be within the limitations of the available kitchenware in student dorms. This ensures the students can actually apply what they learned in class to daily cooking. The basic level classes will focus on dishes that are relatively simple to make. The materials required should also be easily collectable. At a medium level, students may request specific food types and cuisines, increasing the possible variety of dishes.

In the case where PE credit is associated with the cooking class, the content will focus more on health-conscious food. The goal is teach students about the health benefits of the ingredients and nutrients as they are cooking, and to increase their overall knowledge of food and nutrition. The class should also break the myth that healthy equals tasteless, and introduce other healthy options such as fruit smoothies or whole-wheat pasta.

Finally, if enough students have intentions of further pursuing the art of cooking, we could work with MIT to create an official and professional class similar to those offered by culinary schools. Given the cross-registration available with Harvard and Wellesley, this class could host students from all three populations.

More

- cleaning

- food safety

- cleaning

- safe serve

- time + temp

Location

Through the use of survey data, an approximate number of students interested in a cooking class has been determined, as well as relevant information such as their current housing placement, their year, whether they are affiliated with a Greek organization, and the status of the physical education requirements. While these numbers are only rough estimates, an initially interested 217 students out of 245 survey takers leads to many considerations regarding the location of a cooking class and the implementation of the class itself.

Since this class is the pilot version of a permanently established class in the future, there is flexibility to try different approaches without large expenditures. Through the location of this pilot class, we hope to answer a number of questions that will help us make the best possible decisions with regard to a permanent class.

The biggest location considerations are the following: accessibility to students; permanence; availability; current use patterns; and size.

Considerations) what order is this in?

Accessibility to students

The chosen location must be accessible to the students that are interested in the program. According to Graph 1, 126 and 128 students desired a cooking class to be held in McCormick or Maseeh Hall, respectively. There are more survey takers preferring these locations that live in other locations as compared with those that do live in either McCormick or the Phoenix Group (future residents of Maseeh), which erases some of the bias of residents. With this data and through additional comments, we generally see the desire for the class to be held in a central location to campus. With the question on the survey of where to hold the class, there are a number of confounding variables, such as student judgment of the quality of the facility as opposed to strict distance alone. This is why there are a large number of students that prefer Pritchett, despite 86% of survey takers not living in a dormitory near the facility. However, even with dormitories with industrial kitchens, those that were on the outskirts of campus received few votes, such as Simmons with 34 votes and Next House with 55 votes.

Permanence

While this may be an odd thing to consider on an established campus, it is necessary to note that renovations occur over time, and we would not want to pilot a class in a location that we could not potentially consider for a permanent class. We will look at the most popular options which are Maseeh, McCormick, Baker, and Pritchett. McCormick and Baker are both established dormitories that were built in the more recent decades of MIT, and will be unlikely to undergo major renovations that would affect a permanent class in the future. Maseeh is a brand new dorm opening in Fall 2011, so renovations of a large kind are highly unlikely. In the case of Pritchett, however, which is inside the Walker Memorial Building, a large renovation is currently being discussed for the following year. This a compelling reason to not pilot the class in this location despite its relatively appropriate facility, because it will be unlikely to exist

in the future (Walker is talked about being renovated as a performing arts center). However, it would not hurt to take part in the discussions of the future of Walker Memorial, in the case that the class can be part of the considerations on whether to renovate all parts of Walker.

Availability

Although details for the pilot class of not finalized, timing is an important consideration. The location we choose must be appropriate for the audiences we are targeting. Since the most popular options are all dormitories, we must take note of limitations. The industrial kitchens in McCormick and Baker are on a similar use schedule: they would be unavailable during dinner hours Sunday-Thursday, and probably a few hours before due to dinnertime preparation. In the case of Maseeh, which will serve breakfast, lunch, and dinner, the industrial kitchen would not be available at all Sunday-Thursday, except perhaps during the late evening hours. According to the data in Graph 2, 78% of students are in favor of a class that meets once a week, and a Friday or Saturday class would be a possibility given current constraints on the preferred locations.

No weekend not available next year

Current Use Patterns

Student country kitchens in those dorms?

While this is not an issue in the above mentioned locations, as the industrial kitchens have no official use after dining hours, it would be an issue when considering other locations not asked about in this survey. Whether or not other students or student groups use the space on a daily or event based basis would need to be a consideration for a consistent class, as there is a possibility of displacing these groups.

Size

89% of the students taking this survey are in favor of a campus wide cooking class-this is over 215 students. While this is not necessarily the number of students that would actually show up for such a class, it illustrates that there is significant interest. There will never be a space this large, and the space limitations of the final location chosen will limit the number of students that can actually attend. Maseeh, having the only industrial kitchen that will be serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner, is likely to have the largest capacity for a pilot cooking class. McCormick and Baker will large, but smaller, given the fact that the dorms themselves are smaller and they are only serving one meal each day.

Size allows more students to participate

Alternative Locations

Other alternative locations that were not options in the survey include a space in the student center and dormitory floor kitchens (not industrial kitchens). Dormitory floor kitchens would face competition from the residents of that dormitory that may be trying to use that kitchen, but there is much more overall freedom in their availability. The other option would be a minor renovation to a student center space, in which we specifically recommend the Coffee House Lounge (not in use as an actual coffee house).

Oh mention earlier

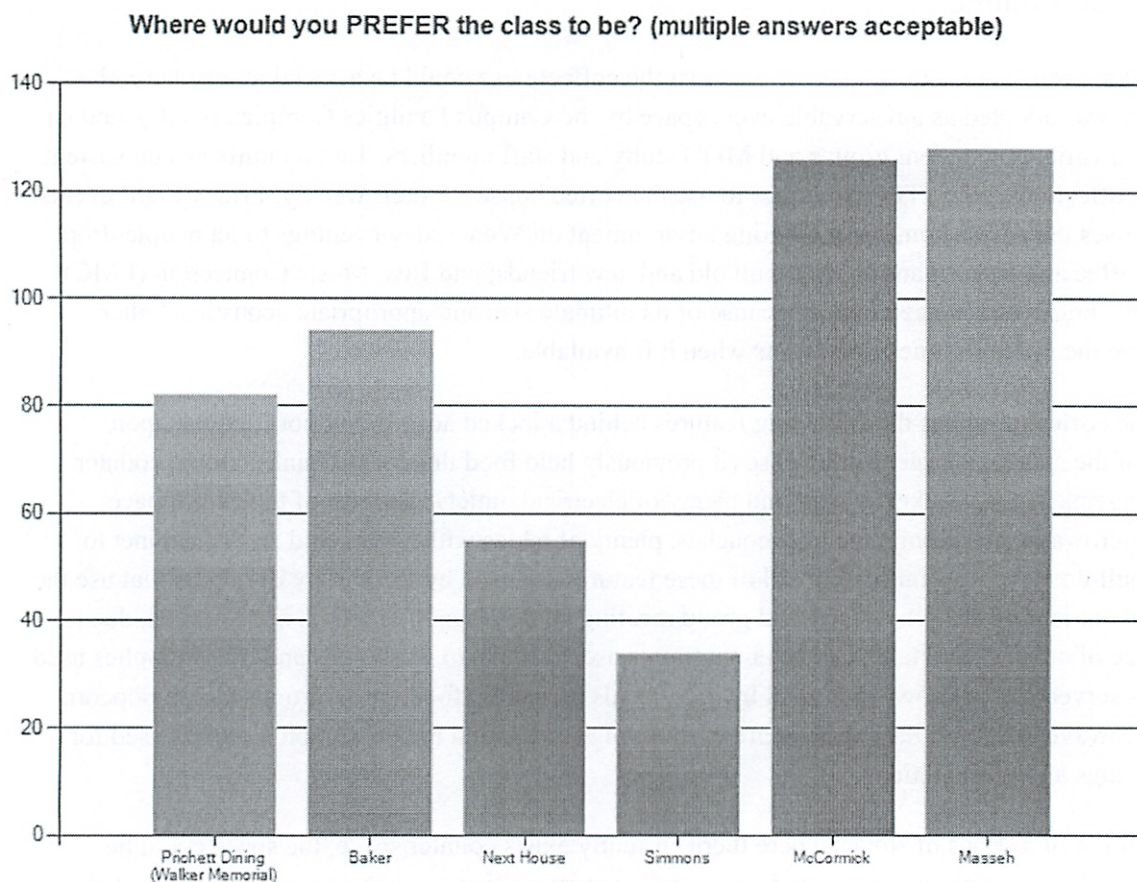
Coffee House Lounge

As a result of proven success by student groups that the coffeehouse could be a social atmosphere, the Coffee House was adopted as a reservable event space by the Campus Facilities Complex (CAC), and is now used by a variety of student groups and MIT faculty and staff members. Tare a number of consistent users of the coffeehouse. SaveTFP continues to use the coffee house for their weekly, Friday night events; Coffee Talk uses the coffee house as a relaxing environment on Wednesday evenings to let people drop by for free coffee and biscotti and to chat with old and new friends; and Live Music Connection (LMC) uses the coffee house as a concert space because of its intimate size and appropriate acoustics. Other groups reserve the space for one-time events when it is available.

Currently, the coffeehouse has the following features behind a locked accordion door (opened upon reservation of the space): a large display case (it previously held food items), two sinks, ample counter space, a storage pantry, a speaker system and plenty of electrical outlets. The rest of the event space includes a microwave, a vending machine, couches, plenty of tables with chairs, and an AV cabinet to control the pull-down projection screen. All of these features are used by the variety of groups that use the space – the room is used as both a study and group meeting space when the room is not reserved, due to the abundance of couches and tables and chairs; groups use the sinks to wash cups and other supplies used when food is served; the microwave is used by individuals to heat up food, or by groups to pop popcorn or serve microwaveable food; the speakers are used during events; and the projection screen is used for movie screenings and presentations.

With the addition of a series of stoves where there currently exists counter space, the space could be modified for wider usage by its current audiences, and for new audiences such as a cooking class. The stove tops would still serve as space for existing groups, but open up new opportunities for the space to be used for cooking classes of increased frequency over time, or for student groups.

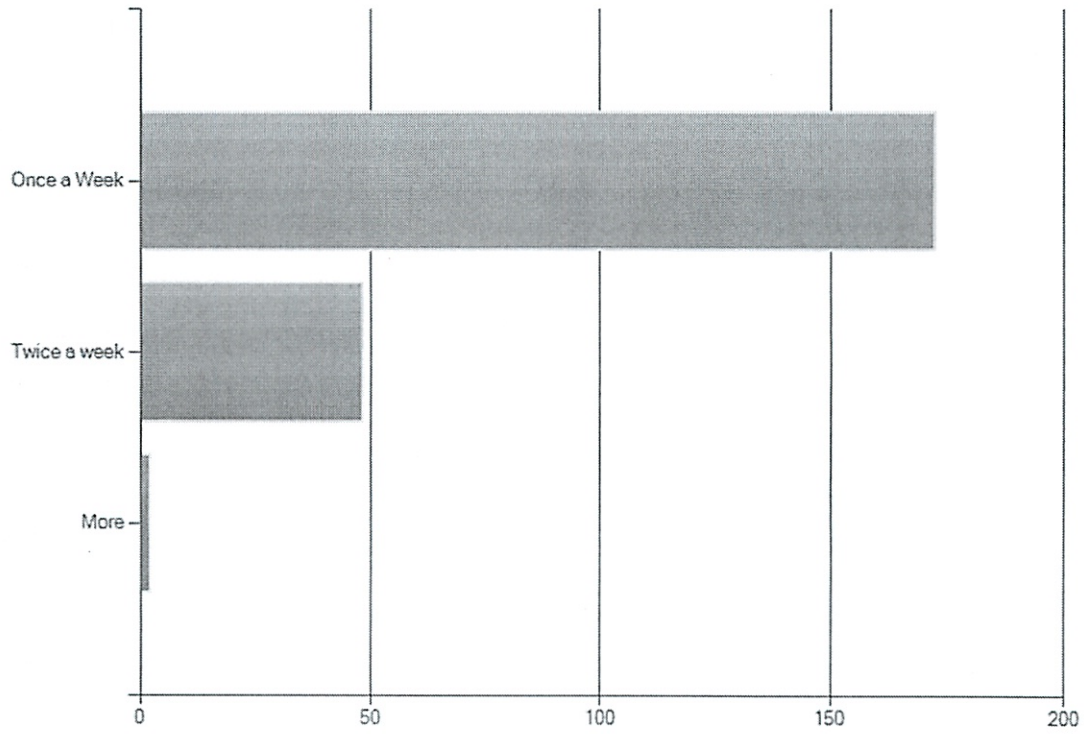
How about the whole scale replacement of space?
You can say that it is not recommended



Graph 1. Preferred Locations on Campus for a Cooking Class to be Held

Faint handwritten notes in pink ink, possibly a student's response or feedback, are visible in the background of the page.

If you answered yes to Question 7, how often do you think the cooking class should be held?



Graph 2. Frequency of Cooking Class

PE Credit

This section is pending a conversation with Carrie Sampson Moore on 4/14/2011.

Cost

Free instructors - volunteer?

Amazon Cook set 'section just silly

Heagney wants benefit

- I think mostly edu

- Not \$ saving

Who pays?

- This is separate section, kinda

- We have partial info

- Since kinda need report to fund raise

Conclusion

We believe that there exists sufficient interest in a cooking class, that a program be piloted at MIT. Furthermore, we believe that the program is feasible at many different levels. There is a tradeoff between the formalness of the program and the required investment. Many other programs at MIT have a dedicated space and instructor/maintainer. These programs have built up a deep history at MIT and have served many students while they were here. We see that potential for a cooking class as well.

Despite the overwhelming interest, however, we believe that a test program be established first before significant investments are made. This test program could be run a different staffing levels and in different locations.

Need rec.

Will talk Mon.

Appendix A: East Campus Cooking Class Advertisement

As in the past, it's a six-week class that will teach you the basics of cooking. It's taught by Victoria Davenport, Dean Colombo's Senior Administrative Assistant and a former professional chef. She focuses on meals that are cheap and quick to make, and also teaches how to shop for food, how to examine produce, and general cooking principals.

The class is happy to accept those with food allergies and vegetarians, but unfortunately the class cannot be adapted for vegans.

The class will run Wednesday nights: 6-7pm April 6, and 6-8pm April 13, 20, 27, and May 4, 11. It will be held in one of the EC kitchens.

You will be given a list of ingredients for each week (except the first week), and you will be responsible for shopping for these ingredients and bringing them to class. You are responsible for paying for food, but it will be partially subsidized by [EC] DiningComm, so the cost will be no more than \$5 per week, and possibly lower.

Appendix B: Survey

1. Which gender are you?

- Male
- Female

2. What year are you?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior

3. Are you Greek-affiliated?

- Yes
- No

4. Where do you live?

- Baker
- Bexley
- Burton Connor
- East Campus
- MacGregor
- McCormick
- New House
- Next House
- Random Hall
- Senior House
- Simmons Hall
- FSILG
- Off-Campus

5. Which club(s) are you in (if any)?

6. Would you be interested in a cooking class?

- Yes
- No

7. If no, why not?

8. If you answered yes to Question 7, how often do you think the cooking class should be held?

- Once a Week
- Twice a week
- More

9. Would you want to take this class during IAP?

- Yes
- No

10. Would you be interested in the class if you received PE credit?

- Yes
- No

16. Please provide any additional comments:

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