

Focus Groups

Focus groups were conducted on campus in November 2007. Participants were invited through several on-campus channels including emails to student groups, invitations by student committee members to friends, postings on the Campus Dining Web site (virtual) and postings in the Infinite Corridor and House Dining Rooms (print). Focus groups were held for the following constituencies:

- Graduate Students
- Undergraduates with House Dining Membership (2 sessions)
- Undergraduates without House Dining Membership (2 sessions)
- FSILG Members
- Athletes
- Special Dietary Needs
- General group for those who missed the specific meetings

Consultants also held meetings with undergraduate housemasters, dining contractors (Sodexo, Aramark and Bon Appétit) and senior leadership (Dean Benedict and Senior Associate Dean Nilsson). The issues raised during meetings and focus group discussions helped guide questions for the survey.

Survey

The Blue Ribbon Committee survey was designed to gather data about the dining habits of undergraduate students, graduate students and faculty members and to look at hypothetical situations that might affect dining habits.

The survey collected 3,921 unique responses, with participation among campus groups as follows:

- Undergraduates Living On Campus 1,692 (of which, 33.5% came from housing with dining, 14% from FSILGs and the remainder from housing without dining)
- Undergraduates Living Off Campus 87
- Graduate Students Living On Campus 765
- Graduate Students Living Off Campus 980
- Unknown Student 69
- Faculty 328

Based on statistical data found in the *MIT Common Data Set 2006-2007*, this demographic over-represents undergraduates and under-represents graduate students and faculty.

Respondents were asked to identify: their travel behaviors or location during given time periods during the day; eating and cooking habits; food purchasing habits; interest in community and student/faculty interaction around dining; time commitments as they related to dining habits; and perception of nutrition. Respondents were also asked to answer a series of hypothetical statements.