

# 2015-2016 meal plans reduce choices, value

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Long story short, the Create Your Own meal plan no longer exists. You can always count on the Illinois Institute of Technology to hear the concerns of the students, then act in their best interests. In the past, one of the issues students have been facing on campus is the required meal plans for those who wish to live on campus. There have been calls for a myriad of changes including reduced pricing, better and healthier options, longer hours, and more. Residence and Greek life has recently released the updated Room and Board Rates for the 2015-2016 school year and with them come the changes to the meal plans none of the students wanted. As I like to do every semester, let's review the math. Students are still required to

purchase a meal plan, the cheapest of which for the majority of students will be the all new HAWK 175. Replacing the Create Your Own, the HAWK 175 feels very familiar. The plan costs \$4,994 dollars, \$146 or 3% more than last year, and provides you with 175 meals and 175 bonus points. However, student are no longer able to convert the meals to Bonus points. A disagreement in years past has been that the meal that costs over \$13 and gets you access to an all you can eat buffet only converted to 7 bonus points, not nearly enough to afford a full meal at Center Court. This is alleviated by the fact you are allowed up to 30 exchanges. An exchange is a meal at Center Court, Talon's, or the Bog which can be traded for a meal at The Commons. This means that if you were interested in the Create Your Own, you will now have to eat the Commons at least 145 times in a semester.

The reason many students choice the Create Your Own was for the option and freedom to eat where you want. You could completely avoid going to the Commons if you so choose. You are an adult and you can spend the bonus you have to feed yourself in the best way you know how. You no longer have this choice; it's clear the university is trying to force you into the Commons. The Hawk 14 is only \$339 more for the whole year and provides you with 14 guaranteed meals per week with 175 bonus points. Since there isn't anything more interesting about the math beyond the average meal cost being over \$13, let's explore the ramifications of this new plan. Students should expect shorter hours in the coming year. The majority of purchases at Center Court come from Bonus Point holders. Even if there is a large flux of purchases from administrators and teach-

ers who pay with cash, these purchases will be concentrated during normal business hours. It's hard to imagine that Late Nite at Center Court will continue to be viable without bonus point holders dumping cash there. Another ramification is to consider the margins on the meals that Sodexo sells. The move is clearly a business one; the new plans are not an improvement for the students and the old plans were not a detriment, but for some reason a change was made. The 7 Bonus Point meal, which is heavily marked up, at Center Court must have smaller margins than the "food" at the Commons in order for the move to make sense. For 6 bucks shy for \$5,000 you would hope there would be more of a value proposition. One thing we can be certain of is those chicken nuggets in the Commons are going to become a scarce and precious commodity.

# SGA Finance Board Chair Candidacy Announcement

**Anoop Sundararajan**  
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Deciding to run for Finance Board Chair has been a process, about a year in the making. After thorough consideration of the several factors that contribute to a decision like this one, I officially accepted my nomination to run for Finance Board Chair in early March. So why am I running for this position and why should you vote for me? Before I outline the top three things I intend to accomplish as Finance Board Chair, let me first briefly describe what the Finance Board Chair does. The primary roles of the Finance Board Chair are to serve as the liaison between Finance Board and the student body, and to work closely with the Office of Campus Life (OCL) to facilitate the disbursement of the Student Activities Fund (SAF). In addition, the Finance Board Chair presides over every hearing and ensures that decisions are made in a fair and timely manner. My top priority as Finance Board Chair will be to improve transparency between Finance Board and students/student organizations. There are several modes of communication through which I plan to accomplish this. First and foremost, updates in TechNews, IIT Today and on HawkLink after each hearing to detail how much money was allocated and a summary of how it was allocated would be a staple. This would be followed by updates on social media. We will also have office hours,

similar to those we currently have before each hearing, after each hearing, to give student organizations the opportunity to come in and discuss any concerns with us in person. In this way, we will work to build a solid, efficient relationship between Finance Board and the student body, making us one united force working towards a more vibrant IIT community. The second important issue that I plan to take on is making student input a vital factor in determining SAF spending. This process will be implemented as early as this semester. Before the end of the semester, a survey will go out to all students and student organizations with questions about where we would most like to see our SAF money spent. It is, after all, OUR money. Every student pays into it and every student deserves a say in where they would like to see it spent. In addition, we could also have regular forums to discuss students' ideas and how, if feasible, they could be made a reality. The third issue that I consider to be of utmost importance is to ensure that Finance Board and the Senate work together to enable student organizations to get the best out of the SAF. The Senate approves new student organizations, and working with Finance Board from early on could help eliminate funding crises that may arise later. The Senate recently instated a program where every senator was assigned a number of student organizations that they would represent. This program was created as a way for the student government

to stay in touch with the student organizations on campus, and to ensure that newly approved organizations were remaining active post approval. As the president of an organization myself, I can say that this program did not take effect beyond one initial email. This innovative idea needs to be reinstated so that everyone plays their part in making SGA and the SAF as effective as possible. In the past semester, I have worked closely with most of the new members who have been appointed to Finance Board. Their enthusiasm, combined with my experience and the IIT student body's innovative ideas are, no doubt, going to make for an exciting year for Finance Board and for IIT. I am extremely excited to have the opportunity to present my ideas and thoughts to all the students who will have the chance to vote. I hope that every voter will make an informed decision and vote for the candidate they consider the most capable to carry out this role successfully. I would also like to wish my fellow candidates the best of luck in this election and look forward to working with them in the upcoming academic year. For more information about my candidacy, be on the lookout for the candidate bios on the SGA website and in this issue of TechNews. In addition, feel free to email me at asundar2@hawk.iit.edu if you have any questions, concerns, or simply want to share your thoughts.



Photo courtesy of Anoop Sundararajan

# The emergance of an inverse gender gap

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Stendhal, a French philosopher, once wrote in the 1800s that "All geniuses who were born women were lost to the public good." Today, thanks to nearly a century of tumultuous social reforms, that statement thankfully no longer holds true, but the opposite of that statement is worryingly close to becoming a reality. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a think tank focused on the growth and advancement of rich, developed countries, has found that more than half of new college and technical school graduates are now girls. Traditionally male dominated fields such as law and medicine have seen a drastic reversal in their gender makeup, and numerous universities in America are suspected of lowering their standards for boys in order to maintain a more even gender ratio. In addition to education, the "glass-ceiling-index", or the social tendency for women to be employed in lower paying and in less skilled jobs has dropped drastically over every region surveyed by the OECD except sub-Saharan Africa. Starting from primary education and extending far beyond, women in developed countries are outperforming men across the board. For students of a technical school dominated by males, this trend definitely holds some interesting implications. In primary education, the OECD deems literacy and language skills to be the most important skill, as reading is fundamental to the acquisition of any other skill. Stan-

dardized test results on reading, taken across 64 OECD affiliated countries, unanimously show that girls are consistently outperforming boys in reading skill, and the difference in scores suggest that girls are ahead of their male classmates by an astounding average of an entire year's worth of schooling in reading. Boys, however, do manage to retain a small average lead in math, equivalent to about three months of schooling. On average, the OECD finds that teenage boys are 50% more likely to drop out of school than girls. Specifically for America, the OECS categorizes 10% of girls as "consistent under-performers in all academic categories," while the same label is applied to 16% of boys. The fault does not entirely lie in the academic ability of the boys themselves. For an insight into mentality and stereotype, boys are twice as likely as girls to report that school is a "waste of time." Once outside of the classroom, the average 15-year-old girl devotes five-and-a-half hours a week to homework, an hour more than the average boy. Three-quarters of girls read for pleasure, compared with little more than half of boys. These behavioral patterns can be attested to a problem of stereotype, as reading a book or studious devotion to homework is perceived as feminine, and thus strongly avoided by maturing boys out to prove their masculinity. Mr. Ivan Yip, principal of the Bronx Leadership Academy in New York, has stated that "Unfortunately there's a tendency where [boys] try to live up to certain expectations in terms of [bad] behavior." Beyond primary education, female enrollment rates in institutions of higher edu-

cation have increased at a rate twice as fast as the rate for men, and the average gender ratio of women in higher education has exceeded parity in nearly all countries surveyed. In 1985, the percentage of females stood at 48%, today it is 56% and is projected to rise to 58% by 2025. Moreover, women in colleges are more likely than their male classmates to graduate. While women are still more likely to choose certain fields such as education, medicine, law, and the humanities, their performance in math and hard sciences are steadily rising towards parity, and their performance in the fields they are likely to choose have already surpassed men. The only fields in which men retain a statistically significant lead are the fields of computing, engineering, and physics. Social dynamics are shifting dramatically today for the two genders. Reputable employers practically require all candidates to finish college and exceed in academics, and yet males are still mired in the stereotype of masculinity from before the 80s, when jobs for uneducated men were plenty and competition from educated women was scarce. For women, rising divorce rates, the advent of the Pill, and decades of policy aimed at promoting female independence has had the opposite effect, driving women to study and prepare themselves for skilled, high pay and high demand jobs which until recently were practically closed to them. As a result, policymakers in developed countries who, just two generations ago and even today worried about the lack of women in STEM fields and in high ranking professional positions, now find themselves faced with

the equally daunting issue of a growing pool of undereducated men, unattractive to many employers. Hanna Rosin's book, "The End of Men and the Rise of Women", published in 2012, summarizes the direction of the current gender divide, it speaks about how women are pulling ahead academically, socially, and professionally. This trend should be worrying for women as well, for previously, women have married men within or above their own social group. Soon, the diminishing proportion of uneducated men will make that trend a near impossibility, and women will be forced to marry down or not at all. As a male in a male dominated engineering school, your correspondent initially found it hard to believe the findings of the OECD study. However, as more and more research pointed to the same socio-demographic trend, a most happy notion presented itself; if there is soon to be a lack of educated men in the professional workforce, driven by the 58% ratio of females in higher education and rising standards of entry for professional employment, then the current course of study of myself and my classmates will soon place us into a scarce and desirable demographic, while the demographic of well-educated women that we seek will be expanding. And so to all male IIT readers, who have attained the level of reading interest and skill to have suffered through this article, welcome to the club! The going may be hard presently with the oppressive local gender ratio of the school, but there looks to be good times on the horizon, so press on!