

# FRANKLY SPEAKING

Olin's unofficial,  
student-run news  
source.

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FREE, AS IN BEER

## Dining Hall Food for Thought

**Mariko Thorbecke and  
Kris Groth**  
Contributors

*"The fruit looks like it's going to fall over and die." "A large percentage of food offered is either pizza or burgers. Since we are college students and not picky 5 year olds I feel like there could be way more healthy, interesting options." "I think the biggest issue is a lack of transparency. Many people form strong opinions about getting rid of meat or paying for specific meals or that we're just getting robbed outright without really knowing any of the details about how our money is actually spent." "It seems like all I eat is carbs with crappy cheese." "I would really like to see more healthy and less processed foods."*

Last month the dining hall committee sent out a survey on Olin's dining services and received a wealth of responses. The takeaway message: nearly 70% of the Olin student body is dissatisfied with the current state of our dining options. And it shows. At dinner these days, it's not uncommon to overhear someone saying, "the food is much worse this year."

In the survey, several people asked for more transparency from the dining hall. Change will never happen unless we're all on the same page and make realistic demands. I often hear people say that the issue is either with the way the dining hall is run or with the way that Olin's administration is assigning budgets. But how about instead of pointing fingers, we look at the facts and work out reasonable solutions. That's what engineers do after all, right? We solve problems given a set of constraints.

The following facts were given to the dining hall committee by Dave Nadreau and Joanne Kossuth.

### **Operating Budget (based on 2012 data, numbers are ballpark figures):**

The total annual cost of operation of the dining hall is \$2.3 million. Annual revenue from students is \$1.9 million. The remaining \$400,000 bill is footed by Olin.

Of the \$2.3 million, \$1.4 million go to direct costs. And, no, that doesn't mean \$1.4 million pays for ingredients. In addition to ingredients, this portion pays

for labor and benefits of the staff, sales tax, cleaning, and serving ware (plates, cups, etc.), among others. This is the portion of the budget that Dave Nadreau handles.

The remaining \$900,000 is spent on overhead costs and is handled by the Olin administration. Costs here cover heating, cooling, lighting, maintenance, and space depreciation.

### **Cost of Food:**

The average cost of ingredients per plate is \$2.50. Contrast this to the \$1.70 plating cost at Babson, which is due to the larger scale of their operation.

With a \$2.50 plating cost per meal, that makes the annual money spent on ingredients roughly \$650,000.

Side note: For those of you demanding unlimited meals of exquisite quality, why don't you try feeding 350 people for 7.5 months on a food budget of \$650,000. Abandoning the all-you-can-eat format for slightly smaller meals that actually make you feel good might be the key. No more crying on the toilet after that fried chimichanga. Just think about it.

*continued on next page*

## Dining Hall Use (from card swipe data):

On average, 600 Babson students eat at Olin each week.

An average of 150 Olin students eat at Trim per week.

The net plating cost is exchanged behind the scenes between the two schools.

The Babson-Olin collaborative dining arrangement is by presidential order and was put in place to foster interaction between students of the two schools, whether or not that actually happens.

Now that you have seen the data, you may be wondering, "So what now?" I have not fixed anything yet, and I need your help to do so. Sure, as a result of the survey, the dining hall has agreed to serve less pizza and better labelling on food is now being practiced. But for real change to happen, you need to start caring. The food that you eat daily should energize you and make you feel healthy, and I know that I'm not only one feeling the opposite when I eat at the dining hall. So be

an Olin student and do something! You guys claim to care about the nutritional value and quality of the food over the quantity, yet the majority of you prefer the unlimited, buffet style meal plan. Well this is not feasible. With the budgetary restrictions that the school has, it really boils down to choosing either quantity or quality, and that's the conversation we need to start having. I'm not offering a solution, but I'm calling on you to take up the conversation so that we can find one together.

# Dining Hall: Did You Know?

Here are a few things you may not know about the cafeteria:

You can ask for gluten free bread. Or just don't want bread with your grilled chicken sandwich? Just ask for the chicken.

Don't like everything on the plated meal? Just ask for part of it.

You can use the kitchen

facilities in the cafeteria. A long time ago the Midnight Bakery Operation used the kitchen facilities to bake massive amounts of goodies. Just coordinate with Dave. Also, throwing a student event? Ask the cafeteria to special order stuff (Meat Club ordered a WHOLE PIG last year).

Leaving campus early for

soccer or frisbee or debate club? Ask for breakfast or lunch to go from the cafeteria.

Olin composts! All post consumer food is composted through a third party service. So don't throw your leftover food in the trash.

You get 10 guest swipes per semester! Bring your friends!

# Faculty and Staff Describe Jobs

*Last month, we did a twist on our regular column. Instead of asking open ended questions to students, we had students submit and vote for questions that we asked faculty and staff. Three questions came out on top. You will find the responses to these questions in articles titled "Least Favorite Part of Olin," "What You Do Saturday Nights," and "Coolest Project You've Done."*

*First however, we asked: What do you do at Olin?*

**ALYSON GOODROW:** Marketing

**PETER ANTOGNONI:** Instruct in the Fabrication shops.

**RAE-ANNE BUTERA:** Dean of Student Life

**ALISON BLACK:** Assistant Dean of Student Life

**SUSAN JOHANSON:** Administrative support to Dean of Admission and Admission office in general

**JESSICA TOWNSEND:** Associate Dean of Curriculum and Academic Programs

**MICHELLE DAVIS:** Marketing

**DREW:** Muck about with ro-

bots

**SARAH SPENCE ADAMS:** Faculty Member

**OSCAR:** Learn, sometimes I say useful stuff

**ANONYMOUS A:** Work

**ANONYMOUS B:** Admissions

**ANONYMOUS C:** Teach

**ANONYMOUS D:** (not specified)

*A special thank you to our Faculty and Staff contributors for taking the time to answer these questions, and a super special thanks for all you do beyond that.*

# Least Favorite Part of Olin

*The open ended question for faculty and staff that received the most student votes was: What is your least favorite part of Olin?*

**PETER ANTOGNONI:** The commute (2.5 hr./day)

**SUSAN JOHANSON:** The lack of an ombudsman for staff and faculty.

**JESSICA TOWNSEND:** We're all too busy all the time.

**DREW:** There are too many things to do, and not enough time.

**ALISON BLACK:** I wish the Olin community was more di-

verse, especially in terms of race and ethnicity.

**RAE-ANNE BUTERA:** I wish we had a snack bar/coffee shop. Maybe we should start one in OSL.... Would more students come up to OSL just to hang out if we did?

**OSCAR:** The lack of diversity and will to engage this.

**ANONYMOUS A:** People abusing "working from home"

**ANONYMOUS B:** Lack of empathy or understanding of one another's viewpoints. So many disagreements or struggles at Olin (and in the world) arise from two people

with mildly incompatible views thinking the other is wrong, unintelligent, and being intentionally difficult. Meanwhile, we aren't aware of the influence our own blind spots have on our actions, and the impact that we have on others based on our assumptions.

**ANONYMOUS C:** When students remember to criticize parts of a course but forget to mention the good parts (on course evaluations, for example)

**ANONYMOUS D:** Getting to know students personally. Y'all's interesting.

# What You Do Saturday Nights

*The second most popular Open Ended Question was: What do you do on Saturday nights?*

**ALYSON GOODROW:** Most recently, watch episode after episode after episode after episode of Homeland... or go out for dinner/drinks with friends, go on a date with my hubby, watch a movie, host 7 and 9 year olds for

sleepovers, etc.

**PETER ANTOGNONI:** I gather with friends and family to break bread, talk, watch content in our family projector room with the wood stove going (or if left to myself just tinker in my machine shop :<)

**SARAH SPENCE ADAMS:** Sleep

**SUSAN JOHANSON:** Make and share supper and the evening with my husband, take a late walk with our dog, read, lis-

ten to music or the radio.

**JESSICA TOWNSEND:** Cooking dinner with friends

**ALISON BLACK:** I'm usually on my couch reading, watching TV, and recovering from a long run/walk.

**OSCAR:** Sleep

**ANONYMOUS A:** Out for dinner, show, movie

*For the final question and answers, see the back page of this issue.*

NOT XKCD by Kai



(BECAUSE UNLIKE THE IMMORTAL SANTA, BEYONCE IS NOT FOREVER.)

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# Nintendo's Influence on Arcade Games

**Elizabeth Mahon**

*Columnist*

While Nintendo is known today for its home console games and does not have an arcade division, it has had a large influence on the arcade industry throughout its time making games.

Nintendo's first hit game was in fact an arcade game – Donkey Kong – released in 1981. This game resulted from the conjunction of two bad events with one very good event. Not long before Donkey Kong came out, Nintendo was selling another arcade game, Radar Scope. Initially, it did well, causing Nintendo to order many units. Unfortunately, once the novelty wore off, popularity crashed back down in a matter of weeks. Stuck with a large inventory of an arcade game that wouldn't sell, Nintendo needed a different game that could utilize the same hardware. Around the same time, Nintendo was trying to get the license for a Popeye the Sailor game for arcade. While the license didn't pan out, the designer was able to translate the game he was thinking of to new characters – specifically, the now-iconic Mario and Donkey Kong. Donkey Kong the game utilized the Radar Scope hardware, which let

Nintendo distribute it far and wide. It was such a hit that it got ported to many of the consoles that were popular at the time in the United States – the ColecoVision, the Atari 2600, and others. The money acquired from these ventures helped Nintendo of America when they decided to break into the home console market with the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES).

Nintendo didn't exit the arcade business immediately after hitting it big in the home console industry with the Famicom/NES. Several games for the console had arcade equivalents, such as Balloon Fight and Punch-Out. This was facilitated by the fact that they used a variant of the NES hardware, called the PlayChoice-10, in their arcade machines. The PlayChoice-10 is similar enough to the NES that many NES emulators can also emulate the PlayChoice-10, allowing users to compare and contrast the different versions of games.

The NES was not the only Nintendo console that had an arcade counterpart. Working together with Sega and Namco, Nintendo released an arcade board called Triforce, which was a variant of the Gamecube hardware. Triforce was so similar to its home console counterpart

that some Triforce games were even compatible with Gamecube memory cards, allowing you to unlock things in the arcade games if you had a related Gamecube game save file, and vice-versa. Among the games released for it was F-Zero AX, an arcade release of Nintendo's high-speed racer series, developed by Sega.

This pattern of Nintendo allowing other companies to make arcade versions of their series has continued to today. Namco has made three Mario Kart games for arcade, all of which have included Pac-Man as a selectable character. Pokémon got several installments of a Japan-only arcade game, Pokémon Battario, all made by Takara Tomy. Pokémon will also get a new arcade game, Pokkén Fighters, next year, in collaboration with Namco.

It's no surprise that Nintendo itself has little presence in arcades these days. The company is stretched pretty thin as it is, supporting both the 3DS and the Wii U, and they want to give consumers a reason to buy their systems rather than playing their games at the arcade. But the impact Nintendo has had on the arcade and the impact the arcade has had on Nintendo are both non-trivial, and not something to be forgotten.

# Comparison of GPAs at Olin

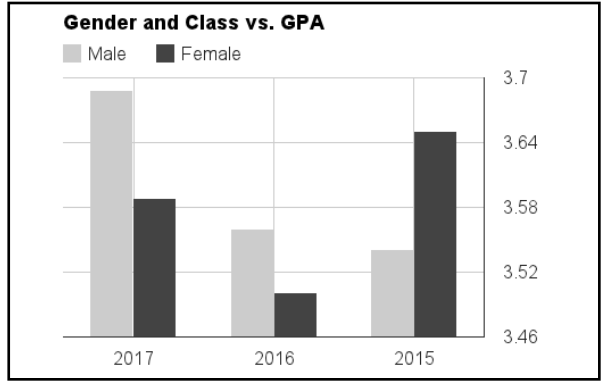
**Shane Skikne**  
Contributor

Last month, I sent out a survey to learn more about grade point averages at Olin. I received exactly 100 responses, split almost perfectly by sex (51 males and 49 female) and pretty evenly distributed by class. As for major, I received about 30 responses each for ECE and ME, 15 for E:C and less than 5 or 6 for every other major.

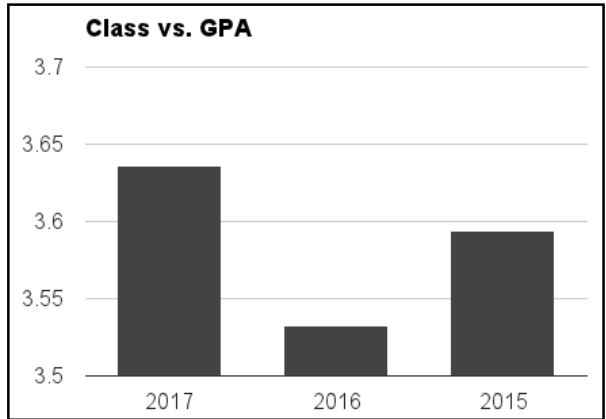
So, what did the data show? First, gender did not appear to matter. Males have an average of 3.583 while females have an average of 3.58. Things get a little more interesting when comparing the graduating classes. I expected younger classes to have higher GPAs, and as Figure 2 shows, this was true for everyone except females from the class of 2015 who have 3.65 average.

I also compared the average GPA for each major. Given the small sample size outside of ME, ECE and E:C, conclusions cannot be drawn about the other majors, but I included the graph anyway. Everyone I spoke to expected MEs to have a much lower GPA, but in the end ECEs, MEs and E:Cs were all within .03 of each other (ECE = 3.633, E:C = 3.614, ME = 3.603).

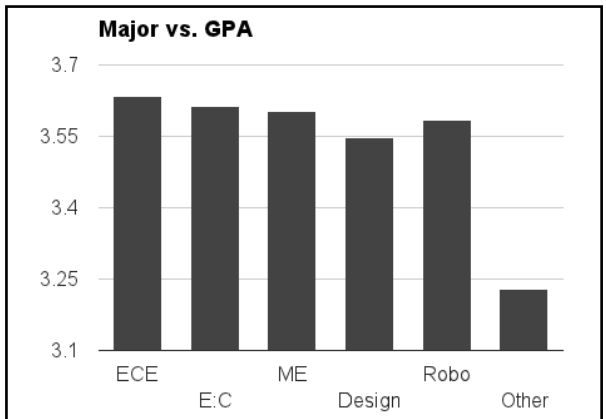
The last question on the survey was about sleep. Unfortunately (and fortunately), the vast majority of Oliners get 6-8 hours of sleep so I could not see a correlation between sleep and GPA.



**Figure 1:** In general younger classes had higher GPAs, but the females from class of 2015 deviated from the pattern.



**Figure 2:** Responses were evenly distributed across the classes surveyed. This shows the average GPA by class.



**Figure 3:** The average GPA for ECE, ME, and E:C was almost identical; the average differed by a mere 0.03 points.

# An Experience with Christianity

**Anonymous**  
Contributor

*Editor's Note: The following was written as a response to the article "Religion and the Broom Closet" by Claire Barnes originally published November 2014.*

Thank you for telling us you are Wiccan. We welcome you with open arms, and (I, at least) hope many of you other religious folk, minority or otherwise, write articles to let us know what your religion is all about.

There is one thing I wanted to address however, and that is the topic of Christianity. Yes, here we go – another article by a Christian about Christianity. Or wait, could it be instead a non-Christian bashing Christianity? Neither actually.

I grew up a Christian. In fact, I was a model one. The Christian community was something I lived and breathed, and I never knew anyone outside of it beyond what I read in books.

I was also in hell.

I never told anyone. I was taught no one cared and that I was just acting weird because I wanted attention. I exaggerated and made things up because I wanted to be noticed. If I was not "happy," I was causing trouble. But nothing became as ingrained as what I started hearing people scoff about others. A mass of chants accumulated in my mind, voices which should not have been there beyond echoing them as soon

as silence fell. I stopped being a human; I just acted like one – a little puppet on stage masquerading around in a lie because at least it made other people happy. I could feel my own mind ripping apart.

Then I changed. Those stories you hear about a light coming down from heaven? It happened to me. It took me out of that hell. But the people I thought would rejoice were the first to turn their backs. They began speaking, almost word for word, the same chants that put me in that hell to begin with. I never even had to tell them what those chants were.

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*"I could feel my own mind ripping apart."*

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I was so scared. I was so bleeping scared. The way they looked at me. Their necks slightly crooked, their pupils wide and almost on fire with a gaze full of scoffing pity. Their voices. Almost a hiss behind the subtle, quaking sob because part of me wanted to believe that beneath that deaf arrogance and fear, they actually did care about me. I was so bleeping scared.

Am I a Christian? Not anymore. By definition, probably – I still believe a lot of what they believe. But my family made it very clear their god is not mine and I am no longer welcome, no matter how many cards they send indicating their love.

I never told them about the hell I experienced before I changed. I never told them about the light. When I think maybe everything would be better if I did, I always end up asking: why should that even make a difference?

I want to apologize to Christians out there if I make them feel the same way. Someday I might be able to talk to one of you normally without cringing. I also apologize to anyone out there who I've made feel like they're unwelcome. I truly try not to. I wholeheartedly know that you believe what you believe as much as I believe what I believe. I apologize for turning a positive article into something that's so negative.

Finally, I want to say: This is not a bashing of Christianity, nor a bashing of religion.

Neither Christianity nor religion put me in hell. Ignorance did. Neither Christianity nor religion left me there. Apathy did. Neither Christianity nor religion started thrashing when I finally got out. Pride did. Neither Christianity nor religion "saved" me. God did. Even if that god was the hallucination of someone who lost their mind because they had been alone for too long – which I am perfectly happy to accept as an explanation – that light did more for me than anyone else ever would.

A "god" will live through their people, whether you believe in one or not. So what are you saying about yours?



# Qualifiers and Tentative Speech

**Kai Austin**  
Editor

Kind of, sort of, maybe, might, usually, probably, somewhat, very – the list goes on.

What do all these words have in common? They are all qualifiers – extra grammar words that pop up in sentences to alter the sentence's meaning, by either enhancing or limiting it. For example: This megabot might work.

Qualifiers have their place in this world. Lazy writers use them as short cuts when they cannot figure out a better way of writing (eg. “kind of cold” vs. “cool breeze from the north”, “a lot of puppies” vs. “a hoard of stubby tails”). But in reality, qualifiers serve one purpose: to establish uncertainty. Outside of that, they are grammatically useless.

This is part of a speaking style known as tentative speech, qualifiers that make statements become questions. Like qualifiers, tentative speech has its own place in the world – sometimes there is uncertainty, right? (You see what I did there.) After all, you do not really know if your megabot works, but it might, so you put a small ounce of yourself into the belief that your hopes and dreams will become a reality as soon as you flip the power.

Tentative speech also serves to open up conversation, give people a chance to express their opinions, and a means of inclusion. But ten-

tative speech doubles as the shy, intra-personal alternative to assertion. Tentative speech is a defensive (or sensitive) way of speaking. It is a means of playing nice and getting along with others, because things might work out how you want, and if they do not, you already knew that might happen, right? You cannot argue with that logic. And while nice people are awesome, tentative speech is a characteristic of people who lack confidence in themselves.

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*“Qualifiers serve one purpose: to establish uncertainty.”*

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Studies have also dubbed tentative speech as stereotypical of “women’s speech.”[1] However, in a broader sense, it is characteristic of those who subconsciously feel they “lack power” or are of “lower status”[1]. Gender does not matter.

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*“Tentative speech is a defensive way of speaking.”*

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Want to know a sure-fire way to sound confident? Simple. Drop the qualifiers. Drop them from your speech. Drop them from your writing. Drop them from your presentations. Drop them from your life. I do not expect you to throw out tentative speech completely (distinct from

just qualifiers here) because that still has its place in the world. And besides, your brain might explode because overthrowing a speaking style is harder than removing one or two unnecessary words [2]. Plus, chucking out tentative speech completely means you will turn yourself into an arrogant jerk. Qualifiers on the other hand, well, I will let you decide. Which sounds better? [3]

A: The megabot might work, but the thrusters are kind of off so it can be a little wonky at times.

B: The megabot will work. My primary concern is that the thrusters are sporadic, and will misfire if given uneven amounts of power. I am working to fix this.

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Notes:

[1] Before you start chucking tomatoes, tentative speech is examined in gender studies. Some studies support it, largely in the realm of “women being more socially sensitive” rather than lacking confidence, and others do not. For complete citations visit [franklyspeakingnews.com](http://franklyspeakingnews.com).

[2] Tentative speech is also incredibly persuasive (so if you are into law or psychological manipulation, go for it) and can make people agree with you (provided they are not frustrated with indecisiveness).

[3] Disclaimer: I know nothing of megabots. I just write sci-fi and watch anime and use big words for the context of this article....

# Coollest Project You've Done

*This month, three Open Ended Questions were posed to the faculty and staff. Their answers to the first two questions can be found on page three inside. The third question was: What is the coolest project you have ever worked on?*

**ALYSON GOODROW:** Redesigning Olin.edu. Hands down!

**PETER ANTOGNONI:** Without a doubt volunteering with home building through Habitat for Humanity.

That's where the saying "It is more blessed to give than to receive" comes alive!

**SUSAN JOHANSON:** It would have to be Project INTREX (information transfer experiments), an MIT-based project proposed to the National Science Foundation to put the entire contents of the MIT engineering library onto microfilm and microfiche, so it could be remotely accessed. At the time, we had no terminals, personal computers or internet - what an imaginative, remarkable idea!

**JESSICA TOWNSEND:** Testing rock-

et engines at Blue Origin.

**MICHELLE DAVIS:** One time I organized a headache sufferers art show to demonstrate the pain, suffering and visual auras that people with headaches experience, and to also show the creativity that can also accompany headaches.

We received photos, prints, paintings and sculptures of people with spikes in their heads, dramatic visual apparitions and representations of the sense of isolation that people felt when experiencing an episode. It was very empowering for our patients (I worked at a hospital) but it also generated tons of attention for our headache treatment facility, which was my job as a PR director at the time.

**DREW:** PackBot! A mobile robot that's fast, tough, easy to use and has actually saved people's lives. I've worked on other great projects, but knowing someone didn't die because of my robot is the best.

**SARAH SPENCE ADAMS:** Solving a really hard research problem

with two of my first Olin research students. We worked together for many years to solve the problem, solving lots of other problems and including many other students along the way. It was an incredible journey and a highlight of my professional life.

**OSCAR:** 1. Vibration-to-electric energy conversion using MEMS.

2. MIT microengine (a turbine the size of a dime).

PS: You asked for coolest, not most meaningful or important...

**ANONYMOUS D:** Space, when it was new, when nobody knew just what would work & wouldn't. You had to REACH -- both with imaginings and with products -- and only delivering counted. The fundamental P/F (NR just wasn't) was launch and all that sci/pol stuff it took to get to the pad, then data & the satellite-filled world as we now enjoy it. I have lived in the best, most fun & challenging times, methinks & me hopes u feel the same at yours as you find your contributions.

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