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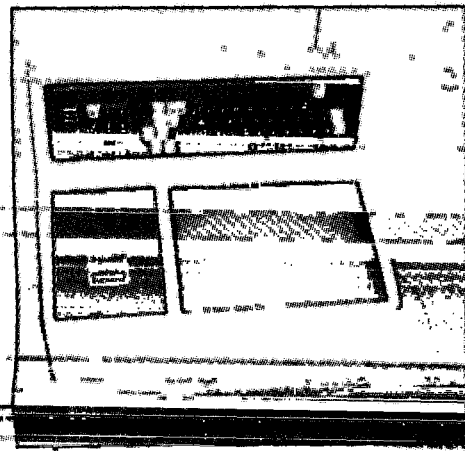
The Case for Restructuring Information Resources

ANNALIES KAMRAN

A show of hands, please. Who here is fed up with the lousy computer service at the Graduate Center? In the past two months, we have suffered through a catastrophic collapse of our email and the failure of the network drives on which our data is stored. The reputation of any university depends on the research conducted by its student programs and research institutes. Ours has suffered damage from these crashes, the result of missed deadlines for outside funding, unanswered email, and lost data. It is from this vantage point that the Graduate Center approaches the hiring of a new Assistant Vice President for Information Resources.

According to Associate Provost Stephen Brier's message regarding the recent e-mail outage, we are using a seven-year-old mail server, Microsoft Exchange 5.5. Not only is this antiquated, but it has been forced to handle approximately six times

the database activity it was designed for. That database has been growing exponentially for at least the past three years, yet steps were never taken to upgrade the server, provide a backup server in case of failure, or to curb the increase in the database. There is still no policy on what to do with old messages. While Information Resources scrambles in great haste to



implement a new system, the worries are that a short-term fix will be chosen, locking us more permanently into a sub-optimal system.

Much attention has been paid to the secondary departments of The Graduate Center—registrar, bursar, and so on. The Banner system now allows students to register and pay for class online, and will soon allow applicants to apply online. These bells and whistles are all very nice; but the fact remains that no one, student or faculty, will come to this institution if they cannot communicate with colleagues on the outside, and cannot be sure that they will have access to their research data. Even Web File Services/XYthos and Citrix, both projects that will hopefully enhance the graduate student experience, are not as important as basic communications and file storage.

Before the GC gets locked into a system that we will be stuck with for years, stu-

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Interactive Tech Certificate Program

Adjunct Drudgery

Central Park Goes Saffron with "The Gates"

Blow a Load on Museum on Sex

Remembering Hunter S. Thompson in Amsterdam

Advocate Interviews NPR's Terry Gross

When a Tsunami Raises Coffee Prices: What do Students Think about the Dining Options at the Graduate Center?

ANTONIA LEVY & DAN SKINNER

It's been a long winter. But upon coming in from the cold for another semester, Graduate Center students were faced with the second price increase in six months of their favorite legal drug: coffee (details see sidebar). Last fall, GC food provider Restaurant Associates' Regional Manager, Mark Romano, told the *Advocate* that RA's pricing decisions were governed by market forces. According to Mr. Romano students could simply go elsewhere in the neighborhood for food if they were unhappy with RA's services or prices. Mr. Romano reminded the *Advocate* that although RA is sensitive to the fact that the GC is a public educational institution, RA is a business that needs to remain competitive. Hence, the price of coffee at the GC is the same as the price of coffee in another location where RA provides, the financial giant Goldman Sachs.

Given this unfortunate fact and the *Advocate's* continuous interest in the dining options and policies at the GC (see articles in the December edition of the *Advocate*), we decided to find out what members of the GC community think about the food at the GC.

On Quality

When asked about the quality of the food

at the GC, the majority of students we interviewed rated it as either 'excellent' or 'good'. Criticisms focused mainly on the absence of organic food and the composition of the student lunch.

"The quality of the food is quite above average." (Luana Ferreira, Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Languages and Literatures)

"It's top notch. The vegetarian options are usually very good." (Jamie McCallum, Art History)

"I think it's great. Especially the salad bar and the cookies." (Ji Young Ryu, English)

"I think it is pretty good. There are a variety of selections, the food is fresh and well-prepared, and is taken from a variety of cultures. This is the first school I've been at where professors don't apologize for taking out-of-town colleagues to the cafeteria for lunch!" (Annelies Kamran, Political Science)

"Remarkably good, especially the entrees and salad bar, though the sandwiches in

the 'Express Café' are always absolutely flavorless." (Dominic Wetzel, Sociology)

"Occasionally, the food does taste very good, but that is rare. The selection is very poor, there are no organic choices, and student lunch seems to be designed with high school students in mind, not for discerning adults. A sandwich and a bag of chips? Chips by Lays, to be exact - the company that I know most of my fellow grad students despise." (Mariya Gluzman, Philosophy)

"Well, the student menu looks like a joke most the times. I think that for \$4.50 they should offer a 'real' plate." (A. Alonso, Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Languages and Literatures)

On Pricing

Most students we interviewed think that prices are too high for food services at a

public educational institution. Also as expected - the significant increase in coffee prices over the last months annoyed many students. Our interviews about price included one RA employee, who asked that they remain anonymous.

"The quality is fine; the prices are outrageous for a college cafeteria." (Patricia Ruiz-Navarro, Psychology)

"It's pricey, particularly coffee - 1.35\$ for a small cup is ridiculous! Generally prices of beverages are high. ... Back to cheaper coffee!" (Jasmine, Theatre)

"Slightly expensive - for example, I saw another retailer a block away from the GC selling 'Tea's Tea' at a price 50 cents lower than here." (Ji Young Ryu, English)

"I can get food cheaper around the corner or at Duane Reade." (Patrick Inglis, Sociology)

"The markup on gum and candy is outrageous. \$1.25 for a cup of tea only because I don't have to go outside to buy it? I can use the same argument for why the prices should be lower than they are outside." (Mariya Gluzman, Philosophy)

see *Coffee Price*, page 5

