

to relieve overcrowding, Derby said one thing is certain: "The building can't be expanded." Lenoir is surrounded by classroom buildings on the north and west, Davis Library on the east and the Pit on the south.

#### Food quality and price

"I don't really have any problem with the food." This statement, made by Robinson, sums up the feelings of most interviewees about the food served at campus dining halls. She gives the meals a good rating with regard to variety and quality, with one exception: "They don't cook the broccoli. I've never had broccoli that crunched."

Shah, a vegetarian, said the food was satisfactory, but she wished more vegetable entrees were offered. "There's very little variety for me," she said.

Walker said the food lacked variety and was often served cold.

But her major complaint is that the meals are "extremely overpriced."

"I can go out to McDonald's and eat something for cheaper than that and enjoy it more," Walker said. "There's nothing spectacular in Lenoir."

Derby said the food in the cafeterias is priced competitively with Chapel Hill restaurants that offer services similar to campus dining services, like Spanky's or K&W Cafeteria. Often students unfairly compare meal prices in Lenoir or Chase to grocery store prices. Also, many students may expect campus dining to measure up to home-cooked meals, Derby said.

He added that prices on several items are lowered every year, and price increases occur only when the cost of a particular raw product, such as beef, rises. Increases in operating expenses may cause price hikes as well, Derby said.

#### Dining atmosphere

When separated from the spacing problem experienced during rush hours, students generally liked the atmosphere and employees of Lenoir and Chase.

One employee, LaDon James, a freshman cashier at Lenoir, said she liked the environment in the dining halls but did have a couple of bad experiences with roaches. She saw a roach at Lenoir once while working, and in Chase she spotted one crawling on the tray supports directly across from the closed-in dinner entree.

"That's why I didn't eat at Chase a lot at the first of the semester," she explained. But the employees at Lenoir are nice and seem to have a good rapport with the customers, James said.

Robinson said many times she has come in right at closing to

an all-you-can-eat option to the Guaranteed Meal Plan without undercutting present services, he said.

"The Flex Plan was definitely not successful because we did not have an unlimited seconds facility," Derby said.

Most students interviewed said they would probably stick with the cash card regardless of any changes in the alternative plan. Shah and Walker both said the cash card was convenient because they do not feel compelled to eat at set times of the day.

"It's just a lot easier than having a certain number of meals per



# CAROLINA

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order food and was still not treated rudely by the food servers and cashiers. "They're all relatively courteous," she said. "I've come in here real, real late and they're still nice."

#### Meal plans and the \$100 minimum

Derby said students overwhelmingly choose the cash card with a declining balance over the guaranteed meal plan. The latter plan is based on the failed Flex Plan which was piloted in the fall semester. The cash card allows students more freedom than the other two plans, both of which limit the user to a certain number of meals per week, Derby said.

Although students would save between 20 and 25 percent using an alternative to the cash card, the restrictive guaranteed plan is still not popular, he said. Parents and students have often said they want a cheaper alternative to the cash card, which can encourage reckless spending, Derby added. "It's just going to take a new marketing approach," he said.

Marriott is considering adding

week," Shah said. "I wouldn't want meals to go to waste."

Derby agreed that the cash card is "the most flexible plan there is. The cash card's the ultimate."

One issue that is not flexible is the \$100 minimum that all campus residents are required to pay toward the meal plan of their choice at the start of each semester. According to Derby, this policy was instituted by UNC several years ago and serves to attract contractors by giving them an automatic, captive clientele. Even if Marriott loses its bid to run University food services and leaves the campus, the \$100 minimum stays.

If Marriott does remain for another five years (and as the incumbent they have an advantage over other bidders), they are likely to turn a profit and make history as the first service to do so.

What is the secret to their success? Maybe the answer can be encapsulated in simple statements made by Shah in reference to Lenoir: "Lenoir is doing its job. It's not the best, but it could be worse."

## Black Ink Survey

How do you feel about the services provided by Marriott Corporation?

1) Do you have a meal card? \_\_\_\_\_

2) Do you live on campus? \_\_\_\_\_

3) (Campus Residents) Do you put more than the required \$100 on your meal card? \_\_\_\_\_

4) If you only put the required \$100 on your meal card, where do you eat the rest of your meals? \_\_\_\_\_

5) Do you approve of the mandatory meal plan of \$100? \_\_\_\_\_

6) Where do you spend your meal card points (Chase, Lenoir, Circus Room, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_

7) Would you buy an unlimited seconds meal plan? \_\_\_\_\_

8) What changes, if any, would you make to Dining facilities that Marriott offers? \_\_\_\_\_

Please return all surveys to Suite 108-D or mail them to:

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