

***Remarks to the Food Service Advisory Committee—May 3, 2010***

We're all highly successful very important people with places to go and people to see, so I'll keep this brief.

Since 2006, I've been given the opportunity to serve on FSAC—first, as RHA's alternate, then with UC Policy Board, and now as the inaugural at-large representative. During that time, I've seen the quality of food service on campus in many ways go from a point of contention to a point of pride. Vegetarians today have many more—and better!—options than they did in 2006. Our dining halls are greener than they were in 2006. Through pursuit of fair-trade initiatives, our dining is more ethical than it was in 2006. Meals plans are better, selection is better, service is better—our dining program at UH is far better today than it was just four short years ago. It's all very, very good.

My request to FSAC today, though, is to not let good be anathema to great.

Without student feedback—constructive and contentious, advisory and adversarial—our dining program wouldn't be where it is today. Without students saying “Things are good, but they could be better”, we wouldn't have advanced to where we are today. And without the administration listening, we wouldn't be much better off either.

There is no great shame in disagreement. Differences of opinion are natural among even the most amicable partnerships. Student disagreement with administration is practically inevitable.

Students, as we move toward a new age in dining, don't stop complaining. Be constructive, but also be loud. Without your feedback, we are destined for stagnation.

Administrators, keep listening. Four students on a committee do not constitute the whole of student voice on campus. Stay abreast of what all our student leaders are saying, and don't be quick to dismiss their complaints.

We're standing at a crossroads in dining today. On one side is good. Acceptable. Satisfactory.

On the other side is something more.

You get to choose.