Embrace, don’t ignore student opinions

It is very disappointing that students were told to leave this week’s customer service listening session initiated by President Robert Breuder. Students not only are valued paying customers who are marketed to enroll, but a valued constituency with a legal seat on the COD Board of Trustees, with the ability to sign up to speak at college board meetings. Some even have other statuses as hired employees of the college and College District 502 voters. So it seems strange that students were uninvited to this session of the series when they previously had attended the first session without incident. No one attending was sworn to secrecy or forbidden to discuss issues publicly.

As the most valuable asset of the college, students need to hear from the front line about issues that affect them. Rather than guessing or speculating on what students think, maybe those present at the meetings could hear the student perspective firsthand. Customers only value a business by knowing power that results in sales. But if classes are products and different stores sell different products in terms of style, price and quality, it’s good to know the customer to match the buyer with the product. “Customer” is a label that many college administrators have stamped on students. But when what you sell students, they should have a greater say in college policy than “customers” have in a business.

Should the FDA allow the marketing of genetically engineered salmon?

G enetically engineer- ing offers food companies not only a remarkable child of modern science, but also a beneficial ad- dition to our diets and pockets. AquaBounty, the company proposing marketing of the fish, says the salmon are safe for intake. The FDA agrees as they are expected to approve it for marketing and human consumption pending more testing. The fish will be bred female and sterile. Although some may be allowed to breed, the salmon will be confined with little chance of escaping into the wild population and dis- rupting the ecosystem according to AquaBounty.

The processing of this salmon is part of the current harvesting of farm ani- mals such as cows, pigs and chicken. The meat you eat or might to have likely been raised through selective breeding. Genetically engineered food has simply a faster way of attaining the results of selective breeding. A growth hormone from the Chinook salmon has been added to the Atlantic salmon resulting in year-long growth. This creates more food for the same price and more profit for an industry with ge- netically altered salmon.

Many students have heard tales of campus events and promotion of events affecting students. But the students who actually attend SLC meetings aren’t the average student. It is difficult to get the aver- age student, or even average employee, involved because of the necessary extra time and commitment.

But the average stu- dent, or employee, or customer, still walks the confusing hallways, and will have an opportunity to vote in the upcoming Nov. 2 referendum. Open customer service ses- sions offer inclusion in the col- lege process. An average student has something to offer and should be courted, not booted.

President Breuder often has said he is the decision-maker in “the buck stops here” man- ner, but students need a legiti- mate voice in the workings of the college beyond the limits of SLC, just as President Breuder seeks input from multiple points of view beyond the board of trustees.

It’s important to simply let student leaders into a meeting about how to serve students. Administration needs to tar- get a larger diaspora of stu- dents to view the many angles of the average student.

Students at the college are adults, constituents, cus- tomers and legitimate voices AND LISTENERS in the workings of the college.

For more information on the “Customer Service” In- formation Sharing Sessions, turn to page 2.

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T he topic of genetically engineered food has left some consumers like Ron Wilson feeling a little bit wary. “That just don’t sound right,” he said in a tele- vision interview with the Associated Press (AP).

Altering food to produce de- sireable characteristics goes against the popular belief that we should ‘let nature take its course.’ If the FDA markets ge- netically engineered salmon, it will open the doors for all modified animals to be sold for human intake. It’s important for the FDA to gather more research before any decisions are made. Exec- utive Director of Food and Water Watch Wenonah Hauter, noted that only four studies have been done, three of which were conducted by the industry. Many consumers have their qualms about genetically en- ergized food, and rightly so. It seems that if ‘Frankenfish’ could poten- tially wipe out the entire wild salmon population.

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