



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on March 12, 2012

## Chick-fil-A Attacked for Supporting Christian Groups

Students at Boston's Northeastern University have succeeded in blocking fast-food chain Chick-fil-A from opening a franchise on the school's campus, following complaints that the company financially supports organizations that have an "anti-gay" bias.

Overall, the student body at the university had embraced a proposal for the popular restaurant to become a vendor in the student center, "until a small group of students complained about the organizations to which the company contributes through its [WinShape Foundation](#)," reported [World magazine](#). "Led by senior Taylor Cotter, a member of the school's student Senate who spent almost a year opposing the company's interest in coming to campus, the students circulated a petition and gathered 300 signatures — about 1.5 percent of the student body."



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Despite the relatively small opposition, the Student Government Association (SGA) voted 31-5 not to allow Chick-fil-A to become a campus vendor in the school's recently renovated food court.

Joining the SGA in rejecting the franchise was Northeastern's Graduate Student Government, which released a statement that read: "In light of Chick-fil-A's financial support for groups advocating against gay rights and gay marriage, [we felt] that it was not appropriate to invite Chick-fil-A onto campus ... because it contradicts Northeastern's values and standards with respect to diversity and the University's commitment to its LGBT community.... It is not in the interest of the University to allow onto campus a vendor associated with these beliefs."

The WinShape Foundation was started by Chick-fil-A founders Truett and Jeannette Cathy in 1984, to — as the non-profit charity's website explains — "shape winners." The foundation operates several Christian-focused efforts, including a college scholarship fund, homes for disadvantaged children, summer camps, retreat centers, and a ministry to strengthen marriages. What students opposed to Chick-fil-A were ostensibly upset about, however, is its support for groups that homosexual activists insist carry an "ant-gay" agenda.

Apparently, the Northeastern students, along with groups at several other universities around the nation, have been getting their information from a homosexual activist effort called [Equality Matters](#). That group's investigation found that through its WinShape Foundation, [Chick-fil-A gave a total of \\$1,733,699 in 2009](#) alone to such objectionable groups as the [Family Research Council](#), [Exodus International](#), [Focus on the Family](#), the [Fellowship of Christian Athletes](#), and — perhaps most galling to



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“gays” — the [Marriage & Family Legacy Fund](#), which promotes traditional marriage at the expense of legalized same-sex marriage.

Asked by the [Christian Post](#) about her campaign against Chick-fil-A at Northeastern, Cotter said that she was surprised at how quickly the university caved in to the demands of such a small minority of students who had expressed their displeasure over the restaurant’s presence on campus.

“I first found out that the school was interested in Chick-fil-A in January of 2011,” she said. “Only about 15 of us knew of the school’s plan for several months and that’s when I grew concerned about a company who supports causes that I feel are divisive.”

She said that while she personally is not anti-Christian, she opposed the plans for the restaurant because she believes in “equality” for everyone, explaining that “I didn’t want any portion of my student tuition going to support a company that I don’t agree with.”

Officials of Northeastern University, which had pursued the addition of Chick-fil-A to the restaurants represented at its student center, quickly changed direction, saying that Chick-fil-A’s values contradicted the school’s respect for diversity and support for the homosexual community. “We are proud of the decision that affirms our university’s commitment to be an inclusive, diverse community that is respectful of all,” a university spokesperson said in a prepared statement.

Chick-fil-A responded to the rebuff with a statement saying the decision by the university was “hasty” and “unfortunately based on one side of misinterpreted reports,” reported the [Boston.com](#) new site. The statement explained that the company “did not have an adequate opportunity to speak to the circumstances on the Northeastern campus with greater clarity and correction. The most important thing we need to confirm is that we are not anti-anybody and Chick-fil-A has no agenda, policy, or position against anyone as some reports continue to represent.”

The statement added: “Our agenda is simple: to graciously serve great food and have a positive influence on all who come in contact with Chick-fil-A. This is the reason why we were initially invited to the campus. Remember that the student governing body had [previously] overwhelmingly selected the Chick-fil-A brand as an addition to its campus restaurant offerings.”

According to [Baptist Press News](#), Chick-fil-A’s president, Dan Cathy, insisted that the company is not specifically Christian, but was founded by his father on biblical principles. “But thanks in part to the company’s affiliation with pro-family groups, its frequent presence at large religious rallies, and the praise music reverberating from speakers in its restaurants, both fans and detractors often refer to it as one of the country’s most overtly Christian businesses,” reported BP News. Cathy said that the “historical intent of our Foundation and corporate giving have been toward compassion, principally by serving youth and families.”

Northeastern is not the only university where small pockets of students have mounted campaigns against Chick-fil-A’s presence at their schools. [WorldonCampus.com](#) noted that the company has also faced opposition at Duke University, Bowling Green University, Florida Gulf Coast University, Gainesville State College, Indiana University-South Bend, Mississippi State University, Texas Tech University, the University of North Texas, and New York University.

At New York University, reported the college Christian news site, “freshman Hillary Dwarkoski, of Santa Monica, Calif., started an online petition asking school officials to close the existing Chick-fil-A location on campus. The petition now includes almost 11,000 signatures.”



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*Photo: Chick-fil-A President and CEO Dan Cathy (right) at a grand opening of a restaurant in Raleigh, N.C.*



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