



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on March 7, 2019

University Dean Takes Stand Over Campus Ban of Chick-fil-A

The dean of the College of Business at Rider University in New Jersey [has resigned her position](#) after the school's decision to ban the Christian-owned Chick-fil-A fast-food chain from opening a restaurant on campus.

Last year, the school sent out a survey asking students which restaurants they would like to have included in campus food service. While Chick-fil-A was at the top of the list for student preference, school administrators overruled the vote, citing their perception that the company was opposed to the "LGBTQ community." University officials explained in an e-mail to students that they felt Chick-fil-A's "corporate values have not sufficiently progressed enough to align with those of Rider."



In response, Cynthia Newman, who currently serves as the dean of Rider's College of Business, announced that she would be resigning in August over the university's ban of the fast-food restaurant. Newman, who is a committed Christian, said that after the school's announcement she reached out to university officials in an effort to bring a more balanced and tolerant perspective to the situation, but the university was unwilling to consider a more fair-minded approach.

In her resignation announcement to Rider staff, Newman explained that her Christian faith would not allow her to be complicit in the university's actions toward a business founded on Christian values. "As some of you already know, I am a committed follower of Jesus Christ," Newman said. "As such, I endeavor every day to do exactly what Chick-fil-A puts forward as its overarching corporate value: to glorify God by being a faithful steward of all that is entrusted to me and to have a positive influence on all who come into contact with me. Everything positive about me and everything I have ever achieved — whether in my personal or my professional life — that is viewed as being good, I fully attribute to God's working in and through me. Anytime I am kind or patient or wise, it is a result of God's goodness and mercy and my yielding to His presence in my life."

Newman recalled that when she first read the university's e-mail relative to its rejection of Chick-fil-A, "I felt as though I had been punched in the stomach." Reaching out to university officials, said Newman, "I expressed how disappointed I was, not that the decision had been made not to have Chick-fil-A on campus ... but rather that the university leadership had made such a judgmental statement about Chick-fil-A's values — values that reflect the essence of the Christian as well as other faiths."

Newman asked university officials to apologize for the false representation of Chick-fil-A and Christians



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in general. In response, a second e-mail was sent out by the administration with no apology, but with a set of talking points Newman and other university leaders were expected to use when addressing those who were critical of the school's decision about Chick-fil-A. Recalled Newman: "I could not, in good conscience as a committed Christian, adhere to those talking points."

Newman told her fellow Rider staff, "I am not willing to compromise my faith and Christian values and I will not be viewed as being in any way complicit when an affront is made to those values. So, I have submitted my resignation as Dean of the CBA and will return to my faculty position at the end of the summer."

Newman said that in her continuing role as a Rider faculty member she will be able to "advocate for a campus community where truly, as our Statement of Community Values says, 'we celebrate our differences' and 'respect our common pursuit for understanding.'"

In a prepared statement, a spokesperson for the university said, "While we respect Dr. Newman's personal decision, we maintain that the decision about choosing an on-campus restaurant franchise was in no way a judgment on religious values. Rather, our intention was to foster a sense of respect and belonging of all members of the campus community, including those who identify as LGBTQ+."

In an interview with CampusReform.org, which works to expose bias and abuse on college campuses, Newman encouraged fellow Christians in similar situations to stand up for their beliefs. "Don't be afraid [to] stand up for what you believe in," she said. "Do it in a respectful manner so that at the end of the day you can still respect yourself for how you expressed your views and how you stood up for your views. And understand that you're the one who has to live in the world that's around you and so if you feel something is not right in that world, you have an obligation to stand up and to say what your perspective is on that."

The Washington Times recalled that resistance to Chick-fil-A, especially on college campuses, reaches back to 2012, when the company's CEO, Dan Cathy, himself a conservative Christian, "revealed his disapproval of gay marriage. His comments and Chick-fil-A's history of donating to socially conservative organizations sparked nationwide calls for a boycott, which only seemed to bolster the company's success."

Rider's rejection of Chick-fil-A will doubtless have little impact on the fast-food chain's bottom line. Reported the Times: "The chicken chain is on track to become the third-largest fast-food chain in the U.S. and was named the nation's favorite fast-food restaurant for the third year in a row in last year's American Customer Satisfaction Index's Restaurant Report."

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