

Associated Students, Inc.
California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo

Resolution #23-03

ASI Board of Directors Stance on the Presence of Chick-fil-A on Campus

- WHEREAS: The ASI Board of Directors serves as the official voice of students at California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly), San Luis Obispo, and
- WHEREAS: A Chick-fil-A (CFA) location is franchised on the Cal Poly Campus by the Cal Poly Corporation (CPC) and the CFA Corporation benefits financially from its continuing business through a 10% franchise fee,¹ and
- WHEREAS: Cal Poly is one of only 2 college campuses in California that franchises a CFA, and the only public university in California that franchises a CFA, and²
- WHEREAS: In 2016, the Governor of California, Jerry Brown, signed into law AB 1887 which states that “California must take action to avoid supporting or financing discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people (LGBTQ+),”³ and
- WHEREAS: CFA is a private, family-owned company,⁴ and the former CEO, Dan Cathy, through the Dan and Rhonda Cathy Foundation, continues to make, as of 2020⁵ – significant donations to organizations including The National Christian Foundation Inc., which in turn provides tens of millions of dollars to groups such as the Alliance Defending Freedom and others⁶ that are designated as anti-LGBTQ+ hate groups by the Southern Poverty Law Center,⁷ and
- WHEREAS: The Chick-fil-A foundation has donated to groups such as the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and the Salvation Army, last in 2018.⁸ The Fellowship of Christian Athletes requires all Student Leader applicants to sign a “Sexual Purity Statement” that states “homosexual sex” is not acceptable.⁹ In a leaked memo from 2014, the Salvation Army’s position was that leadership within the organization would be barred from “same-sex sexual relationships,”¹⁰ and

¹[Confirmed by Andrea Burns, Cal Poly Corporation Associate Executive Director](#)

²[“Which College Campuses Serve Chick-fil-A?” – chick-fil-a.com](#)

³[Assembly Bill 1887](#), Gov. Code, § 11139.8, subd. (a)(5)

⁴[“Is Chick-fil-A Family-Owned?” – chick-fil-a.com](#)

⁵2020 Form 990EZ for the Dan and Rhonda Cathy Charitable Foundation, retrieved via [ProPublica](#)

⁶2020 Form 990 for National Christian Foundation, retrieved via [Cause IQ](#)

⁷[Southern Poverty Law Center Extremist Files](#)

⁸“The Chick-fil-A Foundation shares details of 2018 charitable donations,” 11/18/19, retrieved via [archive](#)

⁹[FCA Student Leader Application.pdf \(multiscreensite.com\)](#)

¹⁰[Leaked Salvation Army memo details internal homophobia and discrimination | Boing Boing](#)

WHEREAS: Cal Poly receives 40% of its budget through state funds¹¹ and the decisions on CFA were made in consultation with senior university leadership, and any further discussion will as well,¹² and

WHEREAS: On May 7, 2019 The Cal Poly Academic Senate adopted AS-875-19 “Resolution on the Campus Chick-fil-A” in which it resolved “that the Academic Senate urges Cal Poly and CPC to sever ties with CFA and terminate the contract with the on-campus franchise” and that “Cal Poly and CPC be mindful of the practices and donation patterns of its business partners and that said partners are held to the same high diversity and inclusion standards of as the rest of the campus community,”¹³ and

WHEREAS: In his response to the Academic Senate’s resolution, President Armstrong stated that he does not believe in responding to intolerance with intolerance. He continues that if the contract with CFA was ended prematurely due to its beliefs, Cal Poly would “be participating in [its] own form of censorship and intolerance,”¹⁴ and

WHEREAS: The CPC has heard students’ complaints about CFA being near the pride dorms in Poly Canyon Village,¹² and

WHEREAS: The presence of the CFA on campus has been the subject of public controversy which has led to this relationship being expressly denounced in public letters by the following campus and community partners:¹³

- Gay and Lesbian Alliance of the Central Coast
- Tranz Central Coast
- The Queer Crowd
- SLO Queerdos
- Your True Gender
- The Central Coast Coalition for Inclusive Schools
- Diversity Coalition of San Luis Obispo County
- 5 Cities Hope
- The Chairs Council of the Cal Poly College of Liberal Arts, and

WHEREAS: CPC did not sever ties with CFA, and did not terminate the contract with the on-campus franchise, which expires in May of 2023,¹ and

WHEREAS: CPC is planning to continue the franchise relationship with a new facility in the 1901 Complex,¹⁵ without directly surveying the campus community to ask them if they would like the CFA restaurant to return, while acknowledging that students in the LGBTQ+ community have voiced concerns,¹² and

WHEREAS: In their most recent survey conducted in the Fall of 2022, the CPC received feedback that the CFA pop-up was the least satisfactory of all the restaurants in Poly Canyon Village, and below the

¹¹[Cal Poly 2021-2022 University Budget](#)

¹²[Confirmed by Aaron Lambert, Cal Poly Corporation Communication Specialist](#)

¹³[AS-875-19 Resolution on the Campus Chick-Fil-A](#)

¹⁴[President Armstrong’s Response to AS-875-19](#)

¹⁵[University Union Advisory Board Minutes, Meeting 22-06, 02/10/22](#)

average satisfaction for restaurants in the Vista Grande and Kennedy Library neighborhoods; there were only five restaurants on campus that ranked lower than the CFA pop-up,¹⁶ and

WHEREAS: A survey was conducted, with 259 responses (249 students), asking the Cal Poly community to rank their choices for which fast-food restaurants they would like to see on campus, with the top 10 requested brands (ranked by total number of mentions as weighted by order of preference, with net mentions listed) being the following:¹⁷

1. Chipotle – 156 mentions
2. Panda Express – 129 mentions
3. In-n-Out – 113 mentions
4. Taco Bell – 103 mentions
5. McDonald’s – 65 mentions
6. Chick-fil-A – 50 mentions
7. Raising Canes – 38 mentions
8. Popeyes – 34 mentions
9. Wendy’s – 36 mentions
10. Jack in the Box – 30 mentions, and

WHEREAS: Seven responses were received that asked for any restaurant chosen to not be CFA, and no responses were received that specifically opposed any other restaurant,¹⁷ and

WHEREAS: The Campus Dining Advisory Committee has advised CPC that the decision made on CFA’s contract “should be a campus discussion and a decision made with transparency,”¹⁸ and

WHEREAS: CPC has not considered a franchise with any other similar restaurant as a replacement,¹⁵ and

WHEREAS: The facility being built to CFA’s “exacting standards” has cost approximately \$2 million as of March 23, 2023,¹ a figure higher than the University’s Diversity and Inclusion 2021-22 yearly budget¹¹ and ten times higher than Campus Dining’s yearly contributions to Cal Poly Cares,¹⁹ and the CPC has not received any funds from CFA to assist with this building,¹² and

WHEREAS: Dining Plans are mandatory for first-year students, and dining dollars can only be spent at campus dining venues,²⁰ and

WHEREAS: Representatives of the CPC have made the following arguments against termination of the franchising contract between CPC and the CFA corporation:

- That CFA has been a long-standing franchise on campus.¹⁵
- That data representing student spending indicates that CFA location on Campus is popular with students.¹⁵
- That CPC cannot put every vendor through the litmus test of their CEO’s personal beliefs.¹⁵

¹⁶[CPC Dining Survey Fall 2022](#)

¹⁷[ASI Fast Food Survey Responses](#)

¹⁸[2021-2022 Campus Dining Advisory Committee Annual Report](#)

¹⁹[Cal Poly Corporation Presentation at the Board of Directors Workshop 23-04, October 10th, 2022](#)

²⁰[Cal Poly Campus Dining First-Year Dining Plans FAQ](#)

- That having CFA as a provider on campus does not mean that the university or CPC agrees with the CFA CEO's beliefs.¹⁵
- That if CPC discontinues its relationship with CFA on the basis of their CEOs personal beliefs, it could be a slippery slope and would require CPC to analyze all its relationships with on-campus business partners.¹⁵
- It is difficult for franchises to work on campus due to the varying number of students on campus each quarter, especially with summer quarter having so few students.¹⁵
- Intolerance cannot be responded to with intolerance.²¹
- At this point, it is too late to choose a restaurant other than CFA.¹²
- CFA brings consistent quality at an affordable price.¹
- Students can "vote with their wallets" to show the CPC which companies they want on campus.¹
- CFA has come very far in the last ten years when it comes to homophobia, and Campus Dining has never seen any discriminatory beliefs from the people they've worked with there.¹
- We can't make connections from having a CFA on campus to the discriminatory beliefs of its owners and chairs,¹ and

WHEREAS:

The CPC lists a set of five core organizational values:²²

- #1: Be courageous and optimistic and see challenges as opportunities.
- #2: Listen closely and communicate openly, honestly, and directly.
- #3: Treat each other with dignity and respect, embracing all forms of diversity.
- #4: Debate constructively, decide definitively and support actively.
- #5: Accept responsibility and demand the same of others, and

WHEREAS:

The Cal Poly Strategic Plan lists a set of seven strategic priorities for Cal Poly University:²³

- #1: Enhance the Success of All Cal Poly Students.
- #2: Cultivate the Excellence of All Employees.
- #3: Enrich the Campus Culture of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
- #4: Strengthen our Portfolio of Academic Programs.
- #5: Create an Engaged, Vibrant and Healthy Community.
- #6: Leverage Data and Technology to Support the Institution's Mission.
- #7: Secure Our Future by Improving Finances, Facilities and Systems, and

WHEREAS:

Meetings were held between the CPC and with the authors of this resolution on two main occasions, once in October 2022¹² and

²¹KSBY, "[Push to remove Chick-fil-A from Cal Poly campus gains momentum with faculty vote](#)," 5/8/19

²²[Cal Poly Corporation Mission, Vision, and Values](#)

²³[Cal Poly Strategic Plan](#)

again on March 15, 2023¹ with consistent communication in the meantime,¹ and

THEREFORE
BE IT
RESOLVED:

In continuing its relationship with Chick-fil-A, the Cal Poly Corporation is communicating to students that their core values and the strategic priorities of the University are not being followed and that CPC is going against the interest of its campus and community partners and the interests of all Cal Poly Students, and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT
RESOLVED:

The ASI Board of Directors underscores that CPC continuing to franchise CFA implies that CPC supports the CEO's hateful views, as well as his income and contributions to hate groups, and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT
RESOLVED:

If the CPC chooses to renew the contract with CFA, it will have clear, negative effects on current and incoming students, faculty, and staff, and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT
RESOLVED:

That students believe that by franchising a CFA on campus, that CPC is conferring the prestige of the Cal Poly Brand on the franchise and company, and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT
RESOLVED:

The ASI Board of Directors asserts that students believe that by allowing CFA to continue operating on campus, the University is allowing the Cal Poly Corporation to finance hate and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT
RESOLVED:

The ASI Board of Directors finds the arguments of CPC in favor of continuing its relationship with CFA to be insufficient in the following ways:

- The history of the CFA franchise being on campus does not justify its continued presence.
- Due to limited dining options and the presence of a captive audience, student spending at a restaurant is not a reliable metric for whether the greater campus community continues to desire that restaurant. This is shown by the similar popularity of CFA and alternative chicken options to CFA in the ASI Fast Food Survey.¹⁷
- The CPC should consider and reconsider the views of any and all current and future companies' majority owners/holders that the CPC contracts with and ensure that they are compliant with the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion.
- The CPC already vets which companies it works with.
- The ASI Board of Directors asserts, unlike the CPC, that intolerant ideas and actions must not be tolerated. We cannot falsely equivocate the value of human rights and chicken

sandwiches. Freedom of Speech does not mean freedom from consequences.

- If Cal Poly chooses not to do business with CFA due to its owner's and executive's anti-LGBTQ+ beliefs and financial actions, it would not be censorship, but refusal to support human rights violations.
- As the contract with CFA has not been renewed yet, it is not too late to replace it with a restaurant that is in line with the University's and CPC's values.
- The CPC should work to ensure that all restaurants are affordable and high quality. CFA is not the only fast-food restaurant that meets these standards.
- The CPC "votes with its own wallet" to establish what ideas it supports and what values it finds are welcome on this campus. It has shown via its investment of millions of dollars into CFA which values it agrees with.
- Even if there have been improvements within the company itself, the owners and executives of CFA still support extremely hateful views through profits generated by their ownership of CFA, and this improvement is insufficient to prevent continuing harm.
- Very clear connections can be drawn from having a CFA on campus to supporting the lifestyle and income of its owners and chairs, as Cal Poly is directly financially supporting their current decisions through CPC's contributions to the organization which they own, and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT
RESOLVED:

The ASI Board of Directors believes that by allowing the CFA facility, Cal Poly is a significant negative outlier within the California State University System, and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT
RESOLVED:

The ASI Board of Directors stresses that students feel the decisions made regarding CFA's contract with CPC have not been a discussion open to the campus community nor has it been transparent, contrary to the Campus Dining Advisory Committee's recommendations.¹⁸ This is true regardless of whether or not the meetings these discussions were taking place were open to the public when minimal effort has been made to invite the public on this matter, and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT
RESOLVED:

The ASI Board of Directors finds that as a result of CPC's continued financial support for the CFA Corporation, CPC is in violation of all 5 of their stated organizational values, and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT
RESOLVED:

CPC's financial support of the CFA corporation through the franchising of the on-campus CFA location is, in the eyes of the ASI Board of Directors, incompatible with the Cal Poly University's strategic priorities numbered 1, 3, and 5, and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT

RESOLVED: The ASI Board of Directors denounces CPC's relationship with CFA and opposes the presence of the on-campus franchise, and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT

RESOLVED: The ASI Board of Directors urges that the University should formally denounce and oppose the relationship between CPC and CFA, and urge CPC to remove the CFA facility and terminate the contract between them, and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT

RESOLVED: The ASI Board of Directors demands that CPC's contract with CFA should not be renewed, and/or should be terminated as soon as possible, and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT

RESOLVED: The ASI Board of Directors implores that the University Administration acknowledge the impact on the LGBTQ+ community of Cal Poly and San Luis Obispo for their harmful inclusion of the CFA on campus, and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT

RESOLVED: CPC should replace the on-campus CFA with another restaurant that is determined in partnership between CPC, the Campus Dining Advisory Committee, University Administration, and especially with solicitation of feedback from the general student body: possibly choosing one of the following restaurants that were popular among those taking the ASI survey: Chipotle, Panda Express, Taco Bell, McDonald's, Raising Cane's, or Popeyes, and¹⁷

FURTHERMORE
BE IT

RESOLVED: This resolution be sent to California Governor Gavin Newsom, First Partner of California Jennifer Newsom, California State Assemblymember Dawn Addis, California State Senator John Laird, Interim CSU Chancellor Jolene Koester, University President Jeffrey D. Armstrong, CPC CEO Cody Van Dorn, Chair of the Cal Poly Corporation Board Cynthia Villa, CPC Associate Executive Director Andrea Burns, CPC Director of Campus Dining Jess Dozier, Interim University Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion Dr. Denise Isom, University Vice President for Student Affairs Dr. Keith Humphrey, Academic Senate Chair Thomas Gutierrez, The Pride Faculty and Staff Association, and Co-Chairs of the Campus Dining Advisory Committee Aaron Fernandes and Jo Campbell.

Certified as the true and correct copy, in witness thereof, I have set my hand and Seal of the San Luis Obispo Cal Poly Associated Students, Inc. this 24th day of April, 2023.

ADOPTED at the regular meeting of the Board of Directors at San Luis Obispo Cal Poly Associated Students, Inc. this 19th day of April 2023.

Attest:

ASI Secretary

Signed:

ASI Chair of the Board

Signed:

ASI President

Authored By:

Samuel Andrews, ASI Secretary of Sustainability

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