

Dear Chancellor Girod, Interim Provost Lejuez, Professor Ng, Mr. Mucci, and Members of the KU Community,

We, members of the Sexuality & Gender Diversity Faculty and Staff Council, write to express our extreme frustration at the University's moves over the summer to deepen its relationship with Chick-fil-A. Since the end of the last academic year, KU has permitted the chain to move to the Memorial Union and initiated a brand new contract to create the "Chick-fil-A Coin Toss" at every home football game for the next several years. In the Spring, we spoke out to denounce the decision to relocate the business, which has a history of supporting organizations that are hostile to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people, families, and communities. One such organization is Exodus International, which promotes "conversion therapy"—a practice that has been deemed harmful by several major medical and psychological organizations. (See <https://www.hrc.org/resources/policy-and-position-statements-on-conversion-therapy>.) Another organization is the Family Research Council, identified by the Southern Poverty Law Center as a hate group toward LGBTQ people. In 2017, Chick-fil-A donated \$1.8 million to anti-LGBTQ groups. Dan Cathy, the CEO, has stated multiple times that he supports "the biblical definition of the family unit" and "[w]e are inviting God's judgment on our nation when we shake our fist at Him and say "we know better than you as to what constitutes a marriage." While many Christians are supportive of the LGBTQ community and many are members themselves, the culture of Chick-fil-A fosters hate and discrimination on multiple levels. In short, Chick-Fil-A on KU's campus stands in direct contrast to the university's mission of fostering a multicultural, inclusive environment.

While we recognize that contractual obligations did not allow the complete removal of the brand from campus, we are outraged that they have been allowed to move from the Wescoe Underground to a new, bigger, more central location on the University of Kansas campus. Despite our denouncements and the university's own moves to increase the campus's diversity, equity, and inclusion, KU granted Chick-fil-A, a bastion of bigotry, a prime retail location in the heart of our campus. The Union houses spaces that the KU community designates as safe and accepting—not least of which are the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Center for Sexual & Gender Diversity. When the Memorial Union was first built, it featured segregated dining facilities. Over the past few decades, however, the building has become a crucial part of student life, accommodating dozens of student organizations and offices—all functioning to create an environment of academic, cultural, political, and social engagement for all KU students, staff and faculty, as well as numerous visitors to our campus. The Union was one of the first places on campus to incorporate gender inclusive bathrooms for the comfort and validation of the experiences and range of identities of the people who walk our halls. The arrival of Chick-fil-A in this building is insulting, counterproductive, and unacceptable.

Although the Provost's Message dated August 21, 2019 cites contractual obligations and financial considerations in the decision to move Chik-fila-A to its new, prime real estate location, it does not mention that the university lends further credence to the legitimacy of the chain and its philosophies with KU Athletics' initiation of the Chick-fil-A-sponsored coin toss at home football games. Our sporting teams and traditions play a key part in our identity as a university and community. The power of granting Chick-fil-A such a place of prominence in the fabric of KU cannot be lost on the Chancellor, who has set his own capital campaign goals on building a multi-million dollar new football stadium.

Moving Chick-Fil-A to the Union and granting it a role at the start of all home football games violates the feelings of safety and inclusion that so many of us have striven to create, foster, and protect on campus, and sends a message that the Union, KU Athletics, and the administration at large are more concerned about money and corporate sponsorship than the physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing of marginalized and LGBTQ people.

We beseech you to rectify this situation immediately, promoting inclusion and equity instead of hatred and intolerance. At the very least, we demand a guarantee from the Chancellor, KU Athletics, and the Provost that these contracts will not be renewed once expired. We also insist that KU make the process by which it chooses its on-campus vendors more transparent, principled, and inclusive of representatives of the larger KU community. In the meantime, we will urge our members and allies to speak with our dollars as well as our words, and boycott the restaurant. We look forward to educating the larger KU community about Chick-fil-A and working with KU to find a replacement vendor that better reflects our KU values.

ROCK CHALK,

The Sexuality and Gender Diversity Faculty Staff Council