



AP Executive Committee
MEMORANDUM

TO: Grand Valley State University Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
FROM: Administrative Professionals (AP) Executive Committee
SUBJECT: AP Social Justice Subcommittee's Chick-fil-A Memo Endorsement
DATE: March 21, 2024
CC: AP Executive Committee; AP Social Justice Subcommittee Members

The AP Executive Committee endorses the attached "Chick-fil-A" memo from our Social Justice Subcommittee.

The AP Executive Committee would also like to raise our concerns over the lack of transparent communication with regards to such projects and look forward to collaborating in the future as we pursue the values of Reach Higher 2025.

TO: AP Executive Committee
FROM: AP Social Justice Subcommittee
SUBJECT: Chick-fil-A Opposition
DATE: March 14, 2024
CC: AP Social Justice Subcommittee Members: Keigh-Cee Bell (Chair), Justin Bean, Trista Bergerud, Elyssa Durham, Leda Evans, Jacob Fortman, Rachel Salinas, Meaghann Smith, Anna Tollefson

The AP Social Justice committee is writing to address the recent discussions surrounding the opening of a Chick-fil-A (CFA) restaurant on the Grand Valley State University campus. We would like to raise concerns held by our committee members and appreciate the opportunity to engage in open dialogue on this issue.

Chick-fil-A has a long and demonstrated history of donating to charities that hold an anti-LGBTQ stance. In 2012, the controversy surrounding CFA's charitable giving centered around their contributions to two large charities with explicit, and public, antigay statements and policies: the Salvation Army, and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

While Chick-fil-A no longer provides charitable contributions to these organizations, this has more to do with the refocusing of their giving program on education, homelessness, and hunger, rather than concerns over supporting anti-gay causes. It's important to note that Chick-fil-A has never publicly committed to not working with antigay charities in the future or renounced their previous actions.

Although Chick-fil-A did change leadership and appears to have changed some of its policies, the current CEO of Chick-Fil-A, Andrew Truett Cathy, is the son of Dan Cathy, who is the CEO who made anti-LGBTQIA+ comments to news outlets in 2012 and has given sizable donations to lawmakers who support an anti-LGBTQIA+ agenda. Further, Dan Cathy is the current Chairman of Chick-fil-A and is involved in business practices and decision-making. Chick-fil-A as a company may have stopped making contributions to anti-LGBTQIA+ charities, though the Cathy family has not:

<https://www.chick-fil-a.com/about/giving-back>

<https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/chick-fil-a-anti-lgbt-donations/>

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/factcheck/2020/06/30/fact-check-chick-fil-a-has-not-resumed-donations-groups-oppose-lgbtq-rights/3244765001/>

The Grand Valley community has come together in years past to voice concerns about similar past partnerships. Such examples include when Grand Valley cut ties with the food chain Papa John's due to controversial racial comments made by their CEO. Moreover, Grand Valley has also cut ties with the food chain Taco Bell due to that company's labor malpractices:

<https://lanthorn.com/54182/news/papa-johns/>

https://www.ciw-online.org/tz_site-revision/breaking_news/breakingnews-main.html

The presence of a Chick-fil-A on campus may be interpreted by faculty, staff, and students that Grand Valley State University aligns with the anti-gay stance held by CFA. This association may make LGBTQIA+ students, faculty, and staff feel unwelcome and unsafe. As an institution committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion we

ask that the Senior Leadership Team consider disbanding their partnership with an external entity that is in direct conflict with the mission and vision of Reach Higher 2025.

Sincerely,

AP Social Justice Committee:

Justin Bean, Keigh-Cee Bell, Trista Bergerud, Elyssa Durham, Leda Evans, Jacob Fortman, Meaghann Myers-Smith, Rachel Salinas, and Anna Tollefson