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President Jeffery Armstrong
California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407

Dear President Armstrong,

We the undersigned Cal Poly faculty and staff are writing to express concern regarding our University's business relationship with Chick-Fil-A. The company's business philosophy, recently expressed by their corporate leadership on a national scale, actively and unapologetically opposes the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons. Because of the recent intolerant public statements made by the company's leadership, their unusually strict hiring and employment practices, and the nature of their corporate donations, we believe Chick-Fil-A's presence on campus contributes to creating an intolerant climate that violates the spirit and letter of our University mission as well as Cal Poly's Diversity Learning Objectives. We recommend that our business relationship with Chick-Fil-A be terminated immediately.

For example, Forbes, referring to Chick-Fil-A as a "cult," has reported that their rigorous internal hiring and screening practices were unusually narrow, filtering selectively on people that only share their religious and family-oriented worldview. In addition, public records indicate Chick-Fil-A donates profits to groups that aggressively work against the civil rights of LGBT people. For example, Chick-Fil-A profits have supported, through their charitable arm WinShape:

- The Marriage and Family Foundation, an organization devoted to upholding traditional marriage.
- The Fellowship of Christian Athletes which openly regards homosexuality as an "impure lifestyle."
- Exodus International, which claims to "cure homosexuality" through psychological coercion of LGBT people. It says LGBT people are "perverse."
- Focus on the Family (FOF) and its off-shoot group, Family Research Council (FRC), which has been designated as a hate group by Southern Poverty Law Center. FOF aggressively defames LGBT people as a threat to children.

We do recognize the First Amendment Right of business and individuals to sup-

port causes and express views protected under the law, even if we disagree with them. However, not inconsistent with this, Cal Poly also has a responsibility to choose campus partners whose values are aligned with our own mission as a University. As part of its policies and campus culture, Cal Poly has regularly taken formal positions against otherwise protected speech and actions in the context of racism, sexism, and other forms of unprofessional behavior that are not illegal, but which create an uncomfortable or hostile work or learning environment. Indeed, harassment guidelines mandate that we investigate instances where individuals are made to feel uncomfortable because of their sexual orientation, amongst other protected categories.

We can respect and celebrate the First Amendment Rights of all viewpoints, even those that violate our University mission, by providing a forum for open talks, debates, workshops, seminars, colloquia, courses, and protests. Any and all viewpoints should be welcomed in that context. But this celebration of intellectual openness and free speech does not obligate us to directly do business with companies promoting particular viewpoints. Moreover, we do not have to provide them a storefront on campus.

In addition to terminating our business relationship with Chick-Fil-A, we urge the University and Cal Poly Corporation to take issues like these into consideration when renewing campus partnerships and while developing any new partnerships in the future.

Sincerely,

Undersigned faculty and staff
(attached p. 3)

Signatories

September 2012

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