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Business

Northeastern students' protest blocks Chick-fil-A

By **Matt Rocheleau** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT FEBRUARY 29, 2012

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Northeastern University said yesterday that a Chick-fil-A fast-food restaurant will not be coming to campus, after the college's student government denounced the chain amid reports that it supports groups opposed to gay and lesbian rights.

In a move applauded by the university, the student Senate on Monday night passed a resolution, 31 to 5 with eight abstentions, against allowing the Atlanta-based chain to open in Northeastern's student center following renovations there.

"The decision tonight was based on all of the student feedback we've been receiving," the Northeastern Student Government Association said on Twitter.

The Equality Matters website, which advocates for full equality for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and

transgendered people, reported that tax records show that the company's charitable arm, WinShape, has donated millions to antigay causes in recent years.

"Based on the outcome of Monday night's senate resolution, Chick-fil-A will not be part of the group of vendors considered for the renovation of the student center," Northeastern said in a statement yesterday.

"We are proud of the decision that affirms our university's commitment to be an inclusive, diverse community that is respectful of all," college spokeswoman Renata Nyul said in a separate statement.

The company did not respond to several requests for comment yesterday.

In an interview last month with the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Chick-fil-A president Dan Cathy defended the company and said he was not "anti-anybody. . . . Our mission is to create raving fans."

Northeastern is the latest college roiled by controversy over Chick-fil-A, known for its mouth-watering boneless chicken sandwiches on a buttery bun. The issue has also arisen at New York University, Marshall, and Duke, among other campuses.



Northeastern senior Taylor Cotter, a member of the college's student Senate, said she had been urging the school to end negotiations with Chick-fil-A since she learned of the plan more than a year ago.

"I'm very excited and really, really surprised this is the decision [the university's administration] came to," Cotter said. "We didn't expect them to cut the contract with Chick-fil-A."

The chain operates more than 1,530 restaurants in 39 states. It has two outlets in Massachusetts: at the North Shore Mall in Peabody and at the Burlington Mall.

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