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Chick-fil-A calls Northeastern cancellation 'hasty'

Posted by Matt Rocheleau February 29, 2012 05:53 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

One day after Northeastern University canceled plans to bring a Chick-fil-A restaurant to its campus, the Atlanta-based company issued a lengthy and emphatic response calling the school's decision "hasty" and "unfortunately based on one side of misinterpreted reports."

After the university's student government passed a resolution Monday night to denounce the chain over its reported support of groups opposed to gay and lesbian rights, Northeastern's administration [applauded the move](#) and said the school would no longer pursue Chick-fil-A as one of a group of vendors being considered for its student center.

The Atlanta-based food company fired back today, saying the school's student government and administration rushed to judgment based on what the company called inaccurate information.

"We did not have an adequate opportunity to speak to the circumstances on the Northeastern campus with greater clarity and correction," a company

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[statement](#) e-mailed to Boston.com today by spokesman Donald A. Perry.

“The most important thing we need to confirm is that we are not anti-anybody and Chick-fil-A has no agenda, policy or position against anyone as some reports continue to represent,” the statement continued. “Here’s the clarification and correction: Chick-fil-A has been scrutinized of late about our charitable giving, specifically through our WinShape Foundation, and whether or not we have some hidden political agenda. We don’t.”

“Our agenda is simple: to graciously serve great food and have a positive influence on all who come in contact with Chick-fil-A. This is the reason why we were initially invited to the campus,” the company said. “Remember that the student governing body had [previously] overwhelmingly selected the Chick-fil-A brand as an addition to its campus restaurant offerings.”

In the e-mail, the company’s spokesman cited [a column](#) published earlier this week in “The BG News” campus newspaper at Bowling Green State University in Ohio, one of several colleges in the country that have recently voted to ban Chick-fil-A from their campuses, citing reports that the company supports groups opposed to gay and lesbian rights.

The column includes a critique of reports from the [Equality Matters website](#), which advocates for full equality for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered people, that Chick-fil-A’s charitable arm, WinShape, donated nearly \$2 million to anti-gay groups in 2009, and another \$1 million to such groups in the five previous years.

“Of the \$1,733,699 given by Chick-fil-A, \$1,714,199 was given to three organizations: The Marriage & Family Legacy Fund (part of Marriage CoMission), The Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and The National Christian Foundation. Of these three organizations, none of them can truly be said to have an anti-gay agenda,” the BG News column says. “The only thing about them that can be considered anti-gay is that they are all Christian-run organizations; so, because of their religious beliefs they naturally don’t promote homosexuality. But outside of that, no part of their mission involves actively battling gay rights.”

The Northeastern student government’s vote to denounce Chick-fil-A -- first reported by the school’s [Huntington News student newspaper](#) -- was supported by the school’s administration, which said that as a result of the student senate’s

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by the school's administration, which said that as a result of the student senate's vote, the food chain would not open on campus.

"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 statement yesterday.

The Chick-fil-A spokesman also e-mailed a separate statement that company president and chief operating officer Dan T. Cathy made in late January.

"Again, we have no political agenda, policy or position against anyone, especially the LGBT community," the statement said in part.

The company spokesman added today that: "I am sorry that we were not made aware of the immediate voting actions by the student governing body. We would have enjoyed an opportunity to share this clarifying information."

To read the statements from Chick-fil-A in their entirety, [click here](#).

E-mail Matt Rocheleau at mjrochele@gmail.com.

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