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Here's the latest thing to threaten university students' 'safe spaces': Chicken sandwiches

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Students at Duquesne University are triggered by the addition of Chick-fil-A on campus. (Photo by Matt Winkelmeyer/Getty Images)

A student senator at Duquesne University proposed last month during a Student Government Association that the group pass a resolution urging the university to reconsider their plans to bring a Chick-fil-A to campus because it might not make LGBTQ students feel like they are in a safe place.

Student senator-at-large Niko Martini claimed that the restaurant has a contentious history because of the owner's beliefs about same-sex marriage. "Chick-fil-A has a questionable history on civil rights and human rights," Martini said in a statement to the university's newspaper, *The Duke*. "I think it's imperative the university chooses to do business with organizations that coincide with the [university's] mission and expectations they give students regarding diversity and inclusion."

Martini, who is on the Lambda executive board, was joined in agreement by Lambda president Rachel Coury, who said she worried about the safety of the LGBTQ students on campus.

"I've tried very hard within the last semester and a half to promote this safe environment for the LGBTQ+ community," Coury said. "So I fear that with the Chick-fil-A being in Options that maybe people will feel that safe place is at risk."

Chick-fil-A was propelled to the center of controversy in 2012 when the company's chief operating officer

Dan T. Cathy made public remarks opposing same-sex marriage. Reports then uncovered the company's charitable donations, many of which went to non-profit organizations that fought against same-sex marriage.

The company released a statement later that year saying they would no longer donate to anti-LGBT causes, insisting that they would "leave the policy debate over same-sex marriage to the government and political arena."

Duquesne spokeswoman Bridget Fare said that students requested that Chick-fil-A be added to the available student dining options, and that the school has been assured by the restaurant that they do not discriminate.

Coury told *The Duke* that she is anxious for Duquesne administrators to acknowledge the issue. "It would be a really big deal for Lambda and the whole LGBTQ community on campus if someone could make a statement to eliminate the fear of being marginalized by having this business on campus," she said.

Lambda's faculty advisor Alia Pustorino-Clevenger said the group had met with the Auxiliary Services department to share their concerns over the proposed addition of the restaurant on campus. "Lambda's leadership met recently with Auxiliary Services to share their concerns regarding Chick-fil-A's corporate position on LGTBQIA+ issues," she said. "They will continue to have meetings in the upcoming weeks with Auxiliary Services and Parkhurst to address this matter further."

The SGA did not agree to pass a resolution, but compromised by agreeing to consider a different measure that would allow for a vetting process of the Chick-fil-A Express.

SGA President Olivia Erickson told *The Duke* that the addition of the restaurant was a matter the student government took very seriously and intends to look into it further.

"We at SGA take this concern very seriously," she said. "We are working on gathering students' opinions and getting all the facts we can so we can make the best decision."