Dear Provost Rogan Kersh,

This letter is concerning the ongoing debate about whether to allow the presence of the Chick-Fil-A franchise on our Wake Forest Campus. Many students, faculty and staff believe maintaining the franchise on our Campus compromises the human dignity of not only the LGBTQ community, but also the ethical commitment reflected by our Pro Humanitate motto.

Chick-Fil-A continues funding WinShape that, by way of many of its corporate donations, seeks to eradicate any and all of the few gay rights that exist today. The business contributed almost $2 million in 2010 alone to anti-gay organizations through the WinShape Foundation, supporting so-called traditional family values, anti-alternative lifestyle campaigns, and Focus on the Family's reparative therapy to cure the “disease” of homosexuality. In November of 2010, Focus on the Family was deemed by the Southern Poverty Law Center as a “hate group,” joining the Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazi groups on the “hate group” list. Furthermore, Chick-Fil-A supports Exodus International and the Family Research Council, which actively lobbied members of Congress against opposing Uganda’s Anti-Homosexuality Bill criminalizing homosexuality with life imprisonment as a mandatory minimum sentence or death. This arrant disregard for human dignity should not be tolerated and any connection to these types of proceedings is wholly unacceptable.

Wake Forest University approved an Equal Opportunity Policy in September 1974, which has been expanded several times and now includes nondiscrimination towards gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Given Chick-Fil-A’s discriminatory perspective, its continued presence on campus is not in sync with the values reflected in Wake Forest’s commitment to non-discrimination. Other neighboring universities including Elon and Davidson have already acted to sever their ties with Chick-Fil-A, demonstrating their inclusivity by ending relationships with an organization proven to be detrimental to the people in their own community.

Removing Chick-Fil-A from campus would not infringe upon the freedom of speech of Dan Cathy or members of our community, but instead would demonstrate what it means to be a part of the Wake Forest community: we not only protect our own, but also the values of humanity. It is our fervent position that institutionalized prejudice, such as the government-sponsored incarceration and execution of LGBTQ individuals, is contrary to our beliefs in human dignity and worth.

By not acting and by maintaining Chick-Fil-A’s presence on campus, Wake Forest is setting precedent for accepting, funding, and propagating an organization harming individuals in our community, our nation, and abroad. Keeping Chick-Fil-A on campus has already led students, faculty and perhaps even prospective students to feel alienated from a university that has not acted aggressively to remove Chick-Fil-A from campus. The students, faculty and staff who have signed this letter support the removal of Chick-Fil-A in solidarity with LGBTQ persons who are still subjected to discrimination, alienation, and even death. We signatories urge for a reconsideration of Chick-Fil-A’s presence on our campus in the hope that it will better reflect the University’s values, venerate human worth, and uplift the human spirit.

Sincerely yours,

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10. Molly Dunn
11. Celia Quillian
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14. Mike Griggs
15. Laura Hutchins
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17. Amy Shackelford
18. Olivia Whitener
19. Lee Larson
20. Miriam Chavez
21. Leigh Maiden
22. Maya Brown
23. Lauren Suffoletto
24. Alexandra Forkosh
25. Nick Cusi
26. Sam Boswell
27. Roger Khouri
28. Kiran Kumar
29. Sherman Ragland
30. Tanner Price
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36. Samuel Hart
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40. Ryan Whittington
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79. David Hagy
80. Molly Mitzner
81. Omaar Hena
82. Mike Mastanduno
83. Annie Sito
84. Maria Cannon
85. Amanda Pham