



XIWkrzjQ

Saul Rios

Entry details

Nominee Name	Saul Rios
Nominee Organization	Cal Poly Campus Dining

Impact Story: Describe the effort or initiative led by the nominee and the impact it had on your campus or community.

Saul Rios has spent the last 20 years cultivating memorable experiences for the students and staff at the Cal Poly Chick-fil-A. It is much more than a campus dining outlet, thanks in large part to his leadership. It is an award-winning community hub defined by genuine care and exceptional service. His guidance extends beyond operations, creating a profound impact on the thousands of students who pass through his line, as customers and as employees.

Saul understands that his role is about nurturing people, not just serving food. He sees the unique story in every student, an insight that fuels his deep empathy. "My pleasure," is not just a Chick-fil-A team tagline. It is the embodiment of Saul's service philosophy. He instills this principle in his staff, teaching them that a warm smile and attentive care can genuinely change someone's day. His commitment resonates across campus, which resulted in the student-voted Polly Picks Award, recognizing his location as a campus favorite for its welcoming atmosphere and service excellence.

The heart of Saul's impact lies in his mentorship of hundreds of student employees over two decades. He leads with generosity and understanding, recognizing the challenges students face, whether offering a meal to a hungry team member or patiently correcting an order with extra kindness for a customer having a difficult day. He empowers his team to provide "second-mile" service, turning routine transactions into positive interactions. Saul highlights his team in every success, ensuring credit is shared, and morale is high.

Saul ensures the Chick-fil-A brand on campus is synonymous with community by fostering an environment where every person feels seen and valued. His outlet is a place where operations are executed flawlessly, but more importantly, where spirits are lifted, students are supported, and the true spirit of service comes alive daily.

Leadership & Collaboration: How did this person lead, collaborate, or inspire others?

Saul exemplifies a leadership style that is both impactful and profoundly collaborative, grounded in genuine human connection and unwavering support for his team. He leads not from a distance, but from within the operation, inspiring others through consistent action, clear communication, and a profound belief in every individual's potential.

A quiet, powerful example characterizes his leadership. Saul understands that genuine influence is earned through daily consistency, not just words. He sets a standard of excellence in customer service — whether it's ensuring an order is perfect, offering warm "my pleasure" hospitality, or patiently giving directions to a lost visitor. That behavior

serves as a living tutorial for his student employees. He actively invests in their growth, mentoring them not just in procedures but in empathy, teaching them to see the person behind every order. As noted, Saul's focus is always on uplifting his team, whether by securing them new uniforms for a product launch or highlighting their contributions in promotions. He ensures everyone shares the spotlight.

Collaboration is second nature to Saul, extending seamlessly beyond his unit. His vast institutional knowledge, built over two decades, makes him a trusted resource for students, parents, and colleagues alike. He embodies the Chick-fil-A ethos of "protecting the brand" through rigorous quality and teamwork, effectively partnering with both campus leadership and corporate representatives. His calm, composed demeanor in the face of daily challenges or customer concerns fosters a trusted environment for solving problems collaboratively and without ego.

Ultimately, Saul's leadership strengthens the entire campus community. He builds teams where individuals feel safe, respected, and motivated to excel. By empowering student employees with confidence and instilling in them a passion for service, he doesn't just manage operations; he cultivates the next generation of conscientious leaders, ensuring his legacy of integrity and collaboration continues to inspire.

Personal Qualities: Share how this person embodies the spirit of Paul Fairbrook through compassion and service.

Saul is profoundly and personally committed to compassion, which can transform routine service into meaningful human connection. His legacy is built not on grand gestures, but on the quiet, consistent practice of seeing and uplifting everyone he encounters.

At the heart of Saul's character is an empathetic intuition that reads the unspoken needs of students, whether they are customers or employees. He understands that his role often intersects with someone's difficult day, and he meets those moments with generous grace. This is illustrated in an encounter with a student who received an incorrect order. Saul immediately corrected the mistake, but sensing her distress — she was near tears after a rough day — he offered a small token of hospitality. That simple act of seeing her struggle and responding with kindness didn't just resolve a transaction; it changed her afternoon. She now frequents his line, a testament to how Saul's compassion builds lasting community loyalty.

This quality is the cornerstone of his leadership. He is the trusted shoulder for both students and staff, offering the same genuine warmth to a stranger asking for directions as he does to a longtime colleague. Saul champions the belief that "it's just food" can be an agent of positive change — a refreshing drink, a correctly prepared meal, or a surprise treat can be a turning point. He reimagines food service as a human-centered experience where quality assurance and "my pleasure" hospitality are expressions of deep personal care.

Through his humility, unwavering generosity, and steadfast belief in people, Saul carries the Paul Fairbrook spirit forward. His lasting imprint is found in the thousands of students who felt valued during a stressful week, the hundreds of employees he mentored with patience, and a campus community that knows their Chick-fil-A is where they will be seen, respected, and bolstered.

Please submit a short video (1–3 minutes) featuring the nominee and/or their work. Videos may be used in conference presentations and marketing to celebrate all nominees. The content may be edited by NACUFS staff to create a broader video celebrating the winners.

- **Testimonials (colleagues, supervisors, or students)**
- **Social media highlights**
- **Photos of the nominee in action**
- **Survey results or other metrics**
- **Letters of appreciation**
- **Newsletters or articles featuring their work**

Log in to nacufs.awardsplatform.com to see complete entry attachments.

PDF

Alondra Martin... 38 KiB

6:05

5G

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Favor

BA

Brandon Alexander Aguila

To You

4:35 PM

This Message Is From an Untrusted Sender

You have not previously corresponded with this sender.

Report Suspicious

Hey Ashlee, this will be my response for Saul.

Saul Rios is like no other person you've ever met. He is a hard-working, motivated, and determined type of person on or off the clock. He is always making sure everyone at work is okay and is always attentive to our and customers needs. He is the best boss I've worked under and I respect his work.

Hopefully, this is enough Ashlee

-Brandon Aguila

On Jan 27, 2026, at 7:52 PM, Abenido, Ashlee <Ashlee.Abenido@compass-usa.com> wrote:

Reply All

Mail

Calendar

Apps

IMG_1507.jpeg 711 KiB

Being an employee at Chick-fil-A comes with a lot of predetermined tasks like being welcoming, offering exceptional customer service. Saul embodies this on a daily basis, and it is apparent in his interactions with his employees, customers and colleagues. Working on a college campus, with the majority of your employees being college students may seem like a challenge to some, but Saul thrives and enjoys his position while also offering guidance, opportunities and support to his employees. I have had the pleasure of working with Saul since my very first late-night shift at Vista Grande and he has always had such a positive and welcoming presence about him. In my personal experience, I can confidently say I have grown in my position here and I owe that to Saul, and the endless opportunities he has provided me. Saul consistently goes beyond standard customer service and creates second-mila moments with customers and team members by implementing the mindset of winning hearts every day that Chick-fil-A strives for in all their employees. He encourages everyone around him to do the same by leading by example and always trying to make sure guests leave with the best impression of him and the restaurant. I believe he is deserving of recognition for his consistent efforts of providing a welcoming experience to everyone that walks into our restaurant and for being a great role model to those around him.

Karina Hernandez | Supervisor | Cal Poly SLO
o. 805-756-1957 | m. (714) 567-1878 | dineoncampus.com/calpoly
 Campus Dining

Karina_Testimo... 178 KiB

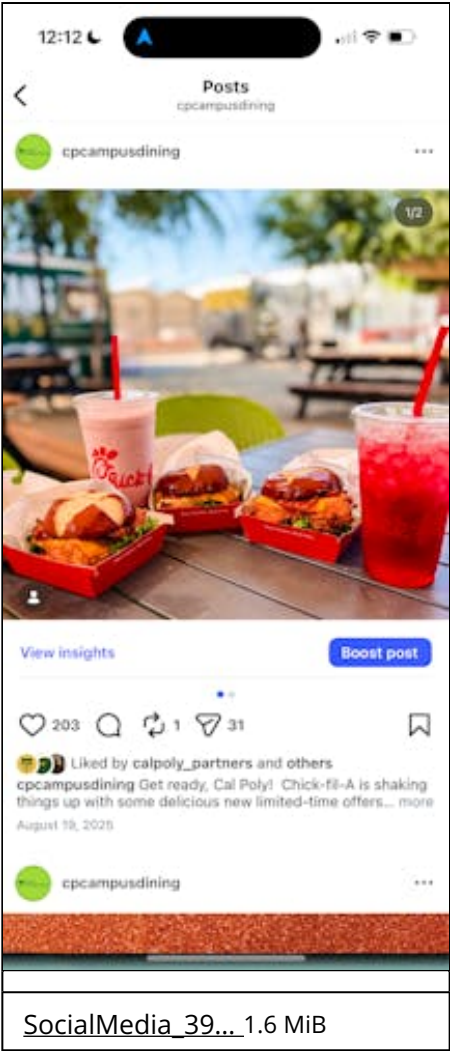
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Saul Rios_Letter... 69 KiB

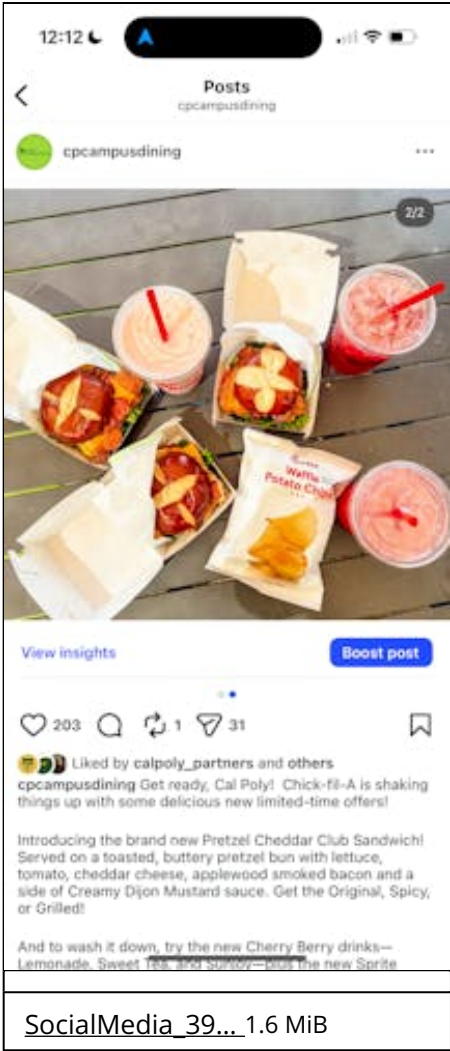




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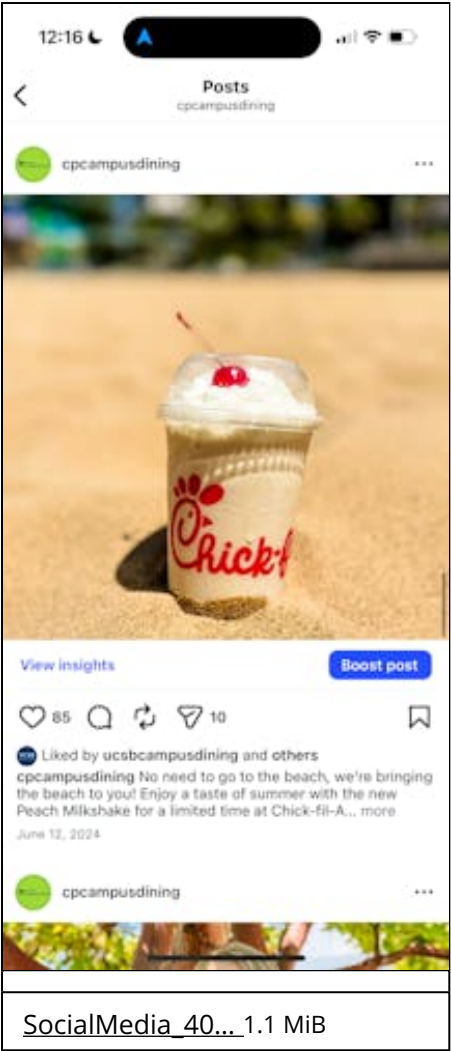
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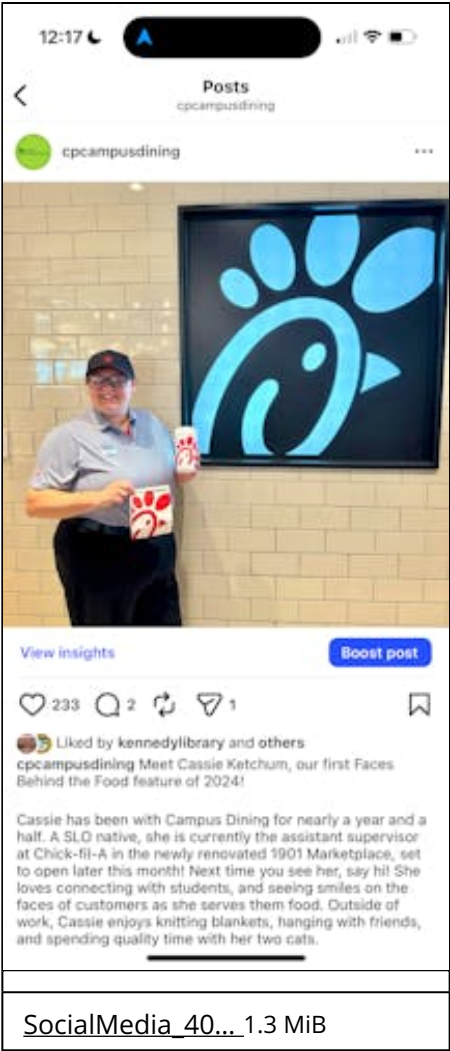


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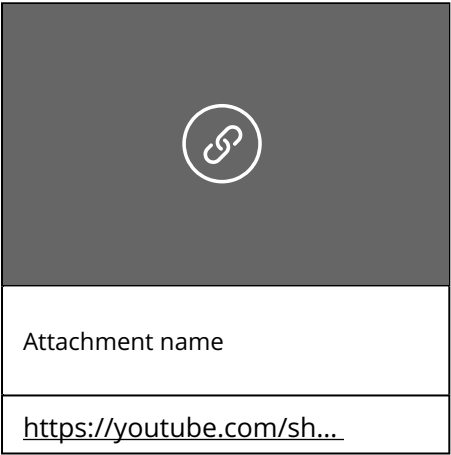
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SocialMedia_40... 1.5 MiB



SocialMedia_40... 2.0 MiB



Attachment name

<https://youtube.com/sh...>