



# USC Accused of Defrauding Tenants at University Village

*Two restaurants, BBCM and Rance's Chicago Pizza, represented by Russ, August & Kabat, filed a Complaint against the University of Southern California.*

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, August 16, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Two restaurants, BBCM and Rance's Chicago Pizza, represented by Russ, August & Kabat, filed a Complaint against the University of Southern California, alleging that USC defrauded local small business owners in order to induce them and other tenants into signing leases at above market rates at the USC Village. The Complaint alleges that USC was under tremendous pressure to lease their vacant commercial spaces at above market rates and accomplished this deception by falsely representing to prospective tenants that (1) they would be able to accept USC meal cards (USCards), (2) they would be part of a destination center servicing the local community, not just USC, (3) that

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It was a shock to learn that USC students would not be able to use their USCards. We never would have signed a lease had we known the truth.”

*Aaron Tofani, one of the owners of Rance's*

University Village would be a reasonable mix of restaurants and retail and (4) concealed the fact that there would be an 8,000 square foot dining hall at the USC village.

According to the Plaintiffs' claims, USC knew these representations were false. The Complaint states that USC never intended to and never permitted the tenants to accept USCards. The Complaint further alleges that USC planned to and did construct a massive dining hall in the middle of the Village that did accept USCards, but intentionally hid that fact from the tenants.

USC is also alleged to have strong armed these small business owners at the Village who attempted to organize and bring attention to these issues. At every attempt, the tenants were allegedly met with threats of default and legal action by USC's real estate team in order to suppress this information.

Further, the complaint alleges that USC made numerous promises regarding the benefits and how the USC Village would be a place for the local community in order to get the city and local community leaders to buy in on the project and obtain approval for their demolition of the local community shopping complex.

The BBCM Café operates a restaurant at the USC Village. Rance's Chicago Pizza operated three restaurants, one at the USC Village, one in Costa Mesa and one in Belmont Shore, Long Beach. The Plaintiffs are seeking in excess of \$5,000,000 in damages as well as the termination of their lease obligations and \$20,000,000 in punitive damages. According to Aaron Tofani, one of the owners of Rance's, "It was a shock to learn that USC students would not be able to use their USCards. That was a real game changer. We did not discover until after we opened. We never would have signed a lease had we known the truth".

For more information or a copy of the complaint, contact Larry C. Russ, Russ, August & Kabat, (310) 826-7474 or Email [Lruss@raklaw.com](mailto:Lruss@raklaw.com).

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