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Response to the Immigration Ban

Eric Jensen

January 31, 2017

To the campus community,

President Trump's recent executive order bans immigrants and nonimmigrant visitors from seven predominantly Muslim countries – Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia and Yemen – from entering the United States. While we do not currently have any students, faculty or staff from the countries named in the recent executive order, many international students are anxious that the list could expand, and our Muslim students are concerned about the executive order's focus on predominantly Muslim countries of origin.

Illinois Wesleyan University remains strongly committed to providing a supportive environment in which each of our students can become confident, participatory members of a global society. We define ourselves as a diverse, inclusive and welcoming campus, with the understanding that education in the context of diversity – whether diversity of nationality, race, religion or thought – creates the richest learning environment. We respect and value our fellow students, educators and staff across geographic and cultural boundaries, and stand with institutions of higher learning throughout the country in insisting that it is critical that the United States continues to welcome scholars of all backgrounds and nationalities.

Illinois Wesleyan University policy protects against discrimination on the basis of age, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin in our admissions policies, educational programs and activities, and employment policies. Student records are subject to Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protection. Immigration/citizenship status is not listed as part of our directory information and is not released without a student's permission, unless there is proper legal authority such as a subpoena or court order.

We will continue to work to help our governing officials understand the important value that international students, faculty and staff contribute to our campus, the economy, and our shared community. This work has been made more urgent by the recent executive order, but is also part of a larger concern for our community. As part of that broader effort, I joined hundreds of university presidents nationwide in signing the Statement in Support of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program and Undocumented Immigrant Students, and support bipartisan legislation, introduced early this month by Senator Durbin (D-IL), that would provide temporary relief from deportation and employment authorization to individuals who are eligible for the Department of Homeland Security's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).

As you contemplate ways in which you might show support to members of our community, please consider the following:

- Provide a listening ear and genuine friendship across cultures and experiences.

- Say something if you hear or witness intolerance in our community. Speak out. Don't be a bystander.
- Report occurrences on campus that deserve administrative intervention or attention to the Dean of Students or the Provost. I've asked them to keep me informed of any complaints or concerns
- Refer students to the support sessions being offered by the International Office.

As a community, I encourage you to stay informed and active in supporting your ideas and beliefs. While we may not all agree, civil civic engagement is critical to our success as a community - local, state, regional and national.