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Open Letter to the Faculty, Staff and Students of the California State University
Chancellor Timothy P. White
November 17, 2016

I write to provide assurance that we will continue to make every effort to provide a safe and welcoming campus environment for all our students, faculty, staff, alumni and members of the community.

Diversity and inclusivity – in all its forms – are core values of the California State University. These values drive our efforts each day to ensure that the 23 campuses are welcoming environments, and they enable our students, faculty and staff to be confident and secure in the pursuit of their education; research, scholarship and creative activities; engagement with community; and performance of campus work.

I spoke to these matters during my report (attached below) to the CSU Board of Trustees on November 16. My comments acknowledged the voices of students, faculty and staff that courageously addressed our board. Their passion and anxiety are understandable, and it pains me – personally and as chancellor – to see any member of the CSU family suffer because they do not know what the immediate future may hold for them and their families.

Indeed, my immediate concern is for our students and other members of our campus community who lack documentation and fear actions based on the emerging national narrative of potential changes in immigration policy and related enforcement action. This concern is shared broadly among trustees, presidents and vice chancellors, along with senate, student and labor leadership among others.

We are a university that prides itself on inclusion. Anything that diminishes one member of our community diminishes us all.

We must take thoughtful, prudent actions to acknowledge and address the fears and concerns of our students, faculty and staff that are real and debilitating. This includes maintaining focus on our positions in federal policy and funding, particularly those that affect student support and financial aid.

Understandably, there is some interest to declare campuses as oases or sanctuaries – as places that serve as a refuge to completely protect its community. While I understand and deeply respect the sentiment behind this interest, we, as a public university cannot make that promise unilaterally. The term “sanctuary” has several interpretations and is in many contexts ambiguous. If we were to use this term it would be misleading to the very people we support and serve.

Consequently, to address immigration matters, we intentionally adopted a flexible systemwide set of policy guidelines grounded in our value-based principles. This approach provides each campus with the opportunity to implement a policy reflecting its unique campus climate, while assuring conformity in certain key systemwide principles. Our policy is both clear and substantive, and removes the CSU from the enforcement of federal immigration laws.

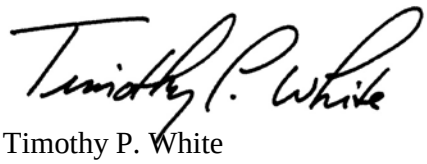
CSU policy directs, unless contravened by California Government Code or required by law, that:

- The CSU *will not* enter into agreements with state or local law enforcement agencies, Homeland Security or any other federal department for the enforcement of federal immigration law;
- Our university police departments *will not* honor immigration hold requests; and
- Our university police *do not* contact, detain, question or arrest individuals solely on the basis of being – *or suspected of being* – a person that lacks documentation.

We are also partnering with elected officials at the state and national level to inform and work to prevent negative developments regarding immigration for our undocumented students, including those with DACA status.

I thank you for reflecting upon this open letter and discussing it with others. I look forward to our journey ahead that enables us to fulfill the educational and public mission of the California State University in a safe and welcoming environment.

Sincerely,



Timothy P. White
Chancellor

Excerpts from Chancellor White's Remarks at The CSU Board of Trustees Meeting, November 16, 2016

…Lastly, I wish to comment on the news of the past few weeks, and offer some thoughts and perspective.

First, the campaign rhetoric that we have endured over the past year has had something offensive for everyone, regardless of a person's political ideology. And so today, we are now in a place where the rhetoric of the past starts to evolve into the governing policies going forward. And we have seen some early signs of change…both positive and negative.

And because of the lack of substantive policy discussions on things that matter for our future, there is a lot of uncertainty at best, and a sense of fear and vulnerability at worst.

There are many issues going forward that matter to the CSU, including education policy *writ large*; the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, along with federal support for research and low-income students with Pell and TRIO programs. There are concerns about future policies on climate and healthcare, to name a few.

As a university community, we are capable of thriving in a world of ambiguity. But there is more…I believe strongly that the CSU, because of our size and importance to America, can also be a voice that influences the future in positive ways. The CSU voice matters…if our employees and students were a city, we would be the sixth largest city in California, ahead of Sacramento. And if we include our living alumni, we are larger than 21 states.

Given our size, we have a responsibility to lead with our voices.

As such, there are areas of immediate concern…And there can be no ambiguity that we – as the CSU – are a community that embodies inclusivity and excellence. I was so proud to release a statement on November 9, 2016 with David Lopez, CSSA president, addressed primarily to our students, along with faculty and staff:

> *The California State University embraces its diversity and the way in which our students, faculty and staff achieve excellence through inclusion. We are unequivocally committed to supporting all members of our community. That is who we are. It is a core strength and part of our DNA.*
>
> *Elections are essential to democracy. Yet, they are not easy. They test our resolve, but also our understanding and compassion. They can be difficult and sometimes even painful, especially for those who hoped for a different outcome.*
>
> *Today, many in our community may feel anxious and perhaps vulnerable about their personal future, the future of those they care for and the future of our nation. It is our duty – as a community – to listen to each other and support each other through this time.*
>
> *It is also our responsibility to hold our political leaders to account, regardless of party. To meet that obligation, the California State University and California State Student Association will together be leading advocates in advancing the rights of our students, faculty and staff.*

> *In this effort, we stand with California's political and civic leaders, our colleagues in the University of California and California Community Colleges, and our many peers nationwide who care about and are dedicated to a nation that lives up to its highest principles.*

As you would expect of us, we have been developing the policy needs of our times. This past July, we provided guidance to campuses that clarified the relationship between our campus law enforcement activities and US Homeland Security.

There is *no* ambiguity here…We are deeply committed to fostering a campus community that is safe and welcoming for everyone.

Primary jurisdiction for federal immigration laws rests with the federal government, not University Police or other local municipal law enforcement.

Unless directed by California Government Code or required by law, the CSU *will not enter into agreements* with state or local law enforcement agencies, Homeland Security or any other federal department for the enforcement of federal immigration law. Our police departments will not honor immigration hold requests. And our University Police *do not* contact, detain, question or arrest individuals solely on the basis of being – *or suspected of being* – a person that lacks documentation.

Further…we are joining hands with other universities, colleges and educational associations across America, to protect access, affordability, intellectual freedom, inclusivity and diversity for all students…including supporting DACA students…and the communities that support them.

And finally…to our campus presidents, faculty, staff and students, I couldn't be more proud of you.

Each campus has created just the right set of circumstances to allow a cacophony of views to be expressed – and provide support to those who seek to do so – interspersed with academic and community discussions and forums of the issues at hand.

The voices of non-violent protest have a sacred place on our campuses, and it will be one of many important forces going forward, just as it has been in past decades.

It is regrettable that – in a few cases – there are participants involved in criminal activity including vandalism and violence…and the campuses are responding properly with law enforcement and Clery notifications as situations warrant.

Let me close with a comment directed to those individuals who feel most vulnerable…your university supports you!

And as I look around the room I see others…the trustees and presidents, CSSA, the Academic Senate, the Alumni Council and our labor partners…who will stand together to support you. And when I look across the state – as mentioned – I know we stand with the UC, the community colleges and many other political and business leaders.