

A letter to the entire Emory community on Feb. 6:

From: "President Claire E. Sterk" <president@emory.edu>

Date: February 6, 2017 at 4:14:34 PM EST

To: <All-Emory@emory.edu>

Subject: A message from Emory's president

Reply-To: "President Claire E. Sterk" <president@emory.edu>

Dear Colleagues,

Last Thursday, I was among 48 American college and university presidents who sent a letter, by some referenced as the "Princeton letter," to President Trump urging him to "rectify or rescind the recent executive order closing our country's borders to immigrants and others from seven majority-Muslim countries and to refugees from throughout the world. If left in place," we wrote, "the order threatens both American higher education and the defining principles of our country."

Later this week, I will be installed as Emory's 20th president. Having committed to serve humanity, it is essential that we work together and remain true to our purpose. This is not an easy task during times when society is fragmented — close to home and around the world.

Recent threats to deport millions of immigrants, the potential gutting of environmental laws, and the order to close our borders hinder Emory's ability to be a global research university and curtail our global — and thereby local — impact, including our impact in academic and health care domains. The contributions that bright, dedicated thinkers from all nations, faiths, and backgrounds have made to the collective welfare of our country cannot be overestimated.

Emory has stood for progress and knowledge many times throughout its history. As Emory's president, I will proudly stand with our faculty, students and alumni to clearly articulate and demonstrate what we stand for. I am encouraged by and committed to Emory's core values of inclusion, compassion, collaboration, integrity, optimism and boldness. I share these values and I will forcefully represent them.

Emory University is a safe harbor for students and faculty regardless of faith, nationality or background. I am incensed about the direct and indirect impact the current situation has on members of our community and pledge to continue our full support of all of our students — documented and undocumented — and work tirelessly against restrictions that impede the free flow of information and basic human rights.

A passionate expression of views on critical issues is something I would expect of the Emory community. I hear you and I stand with you. We may not agree on every action that should be taken, but we do agree fundamentally on the principles for which we fight. I promise to continue to listen and to lead.

Sincerely,

Claire E. Sterk

President Sterk's response to a letter from the Sanctuary Coalition:

From: "Tucker, Dan" on behalf of "Office of the President, Claire E. Sterk"

Date: Tuesday, January 31, 2017 at 5:16 PM

Dear Coalition Members,

Thank you for your advocacy for Emory's continued commitment to the education of all of its students, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, physical ability, or immigration status. From my perspective, this commitment does lie at the heart of Emory's mission to "create, preserve, teach and apply knowledge in the service of humanity." Moreover, I appreciate the steps that students, faculty, and staff have taken and continue to take to consider the proposals in the petition submitted in November by more than 1,500 members of the Emory community.

I received your letter dated January 18, 2017, requesting my signature to endorse three suggested policy proposals:

- 1. Emory University takes a pledge of lawful non-cooperation with federal immigration authorities.***
- 2. Emory University will admit all academically-qualified undocumented students regardless of their social status.***
- 3. Emory University guarantees its full support for undocumented students and students from mixed-status families.***

I am pleased to share that the substance, if not the symbolism, of these proposals, as well as the proposals in the November petition, have been addressed. In particular, as we have said in the past, Emory adheres to all applicable laws, and will continue to do so. Just as we respect the authority of government officials who are performing their legal duties, we respect federal and state laws that protect the privacy of all of our students, including those students who are registered with the DACA program. Following those laws, we do not share confidential student records with law enforcement agencies without a subpoena.

I know our decision to not declare ourselves a sanctuary campus is a point of contention for some members of our community. Declaring ourselves a sanctuary campus not only lacks substantive meaning for policy and practice, but also sends a message that is interpreted inconsistently across the country. There are many who interpret a university's declaration of "sanctuary" status to be a commitment to disobey federal law. Declaring ourselves a sanctuary campus, which has potent symbolism, could have the collateral effect of reducing funding for teaching, education and research, directly harming our students, patients and the beneficiaries of our research. I believe that Emory has moved beyond labels and words to actions that reaffirm our commitment to undocumented students.

The Emory administration seeks to make policy decisions by gathering facts and hearing from affected stakeholders. The November petition triggered such a process prior to winter break, addressing the policies outlined in your letter. As a result of the petition, Emory also is undertaking new initiatives that further assist our undocumented students, and recently established initiatives are also included in the progress report. I want to assure you that I fully

support the current initiatives and will continue to stand for the advancement of our shared goal of supporting undocumented students at Emory. Let me reiterate that Emory has already undertaken actions regarding all three of your proposals. These can be viewed in a [progress report](http://www.dialogue.emory.edu/undocumented) at www.dialogue.emory.edu/undocumented.

While support for undocumented students is not a new commitment for Emory, this moment in time calls for our community to strengthen institutional resources to underpin that commitment. And we have and will continue to do so. Again, I thank you for the love and care you have shown through your advocacy for our Emory community, especially for those members who understandably feel particularly vulnerable in the current climate.

Beyond labels and words, Emory has historically achieved social change by open communication and collaborative action. I welcome an opportunity to hear your concerns and help inform current and future initiatives. Let us work together to ensure that Emory is a place where all students can safely learn and grow without “fear of discrimination or persecution.”

Sincerely,

Claire E. Sterk
President