



The State University of New York  
Student Assembly

1617-068  
Wolfe, Drumm, van Reenan, Kumar

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### **MEMORANDUM 1617-068**

**TO:** Members of the Student Assembly

**FROM:** Conner A. Wolfe, University College Representative, SUNY Student Assembly; Robert Drumm, Chief of Staff for Student Affairs, SUNY Student Assembly; Eusebio Omar van Reenen, Senator, Student Association at SUNY Oswego; Vrinda Kumar, President, Plattsburgh Student Association

**ENDORSED BY:** Plattsburgh Student Association, Rules Committee

**DATE:** April 7, 2017

**SUBJECT:** Affirmation of Support and Safety for Undocumented and International Students

#### **Action Requested**

That the Student Assembly of the State University of New York call upon the SUNY Board of Trustees to take steps to further support and protect all students enrolled at the State University of New York in their pursuit of higher education regardless of real or perceived country of origin, race, religion, or immigration status.

#### **Resolution**

We recommend that the Student Assembly of the State University of New York (SUNYSA) adopt the following resolution:

Whereas; The Student Assembly of the State University of New York has a responsibility to represent all 600,000 students enrolled in the State University regardless of their real or perceived country of origin, religion, or immigration status; and

Whereas; It is the mission of the State University of New York to “to provide to the people of New York educational services of the highest quality, with the broadest possible access, fully representative of all segments of the population”<sup>1</sup>; and

Whereas; on November 20, 2016, in a letter to students, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, echoed the State’s commitment to protecting all New Yorkers regardless

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<sup>1</sup>“Mission Statement”, *The State University of New York*. Accessed February 2, 2017, <https://www.suny.edu/about/mission/>

of their differences and stating that “our responsibility is to protect all who are here, whether native-born or immigrant, whether documented or not”<sup>2</sup>; and

Whereas; quality higher education as described in the mission statement of the State University of New York ought to be accessible to all people regardless of real or perceived country of origin, race, religion, or immigration status; and

Whereas; discriminatory actions taken against international and undocumented faculty and staff of the State University of New York would prove detrimental to students ability to access educational services of the highest quality as affirmed in the mission statement of the State University; and

Whereas; on January 21, 2017, the University Faculty Senate of the State University of New York approved a “Resolution on ‘Petition to make all SUNY locations Sanctuary Campuses’”<sup>3</sup>; and

Whereas; on January 24, 2017, the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York approved a memorandum affirming support for undocumented students and reaffirming the commitment of the State University of New York to the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion;<sup>4</sup> and

Whereas; “The State University of New York enrolls approximately 22,140 international students from 180 countries, including 320 students from the seven countries” where travel was banned by Executive Order 13769<sup>5</sup>; and

Whereas; in reaction to the Executive Order 13769, the State University of New York released “Information on Changes in Federal Policies for SUNY Students, Faculty and Staff” affirming both “our commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion”<sup>6</sup> and our “support for undocumented students”; and

Whereas; on January 28, 2017, President Marc J. Cohen made a statement on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Student Assembly of the State University of New York and the presidents of the respective State University of New York campus student government associations strongly opposing the

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<sup>2</sup> “Governor Cuomo’s Open Letter to All New York Students”, *Civil Rights, New York State*. Accessed, February 2, 2017, <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomos-open-letter-all-new-york-students>

<sup>3</sup>“Resolution on ‘Petition to Make all SUNY Locations Sanctuary Campuses’”, Approved Resolutions (175-01-1), *The State University of New York*. Accessed, February 2, 2017, <http://system.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/faculty-senate/resolutions/175-01-1-Resolution-on-Petition-to-Make-all-SUNY-locations-Sanctuary-Campuses.pdf>

<sup>4</sup>“Information on Federal Immigration Policies”, Immigration, The State University of New York, Accessed, February 2, 2017, [http://www.suny.edu/about/leadership/board-of-trustees/meetings/webcastdocs/ResoTab8\\_Affirmation%20of%20Support%20for%20Undocumented%20Students.pdf](http://www.suny.edu/about/leadership/board-of-trustees/meetings/webcastdocs/ResoTab8_Affirmation%20of%20Support%20for%20Undocumented%20Students.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> “Information on Changes in Federal Policies for SUNY Students, Faculty and Staff,” The State University of New York, Accessed February 2, 2017, <https://www.suny.edu/immigration/>

Executive Order 13769 “halting the legal immigration and free movement of refugees and citizens of several Muslim-majority countries to enter our own”; and

Whereas; on January 31, 2017, President Marc. J. Cohen and CUNY University Student Senate Chairperson Chikaodili Onyejiukwa made a joint statement reaffirming “their systems’ commitment to social justice and equality and [to] call on students to speak out on President Trump’s Executive Order...” by way of a student “Call to Congress” undertaken February 1, 2017 in collaboration with the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students; and

Whereas; effective, March 16, 2017, Executive Order 13780 continues to call for the travel ban of foreign nationals from 6 muslim majority countries placing prospective or already admitted international State University of New York Students students in jeopardy of obtaining a student visa or renewing them<sup>7</sup>; and

Whereas; on the evening of March 15, 2017, US District Court Judge Derrick Watson blocked Executive Order 13780 as “targeting these countries likewise targets Islam” and cited “the questionable evidence supporting the Government’s national security motivations;”<sup>8</sup> and

Whereas; under the Direct Action Resolution 1516-108 the Student Assembly of the State University of New York is bound to “meaningfully acknowledge the concerns” and “to address the issues raised by students participating in acts of nonviolent direct action;” and

Whereas; as a form of nonviolent direct action, the “Petition to make all SUNY locations Sanctuary Campuses” has now been signed by over 5,000 students, faculty, and staff from 53 campuses of the State University of New York (Appendix 1)<sup>9</sup>; and therefore, be it,

Resolved that the Student Assembly of the State University of New York hereby meaningfully acknowledge the concerns of students raised through the “Petition to make all SUNY locations Sanctuary Campuses;” and, be it further

Resolved that the Student Assembly of the State University of New York hereby continue to oppose discriminatory restrictions on travel to the United States and affirm that real or perceived country of origin, race, religion, and immigration status should not restrict the ability of a student to pursue quality higher education at the State University of New York; and be it further,

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<sup>7</sup> “US President Donald Trump Signs New Travel Ban, Exempts Iraq”, *CNN*. Accessed, March 15, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/03/06/politics/trump-travel-ban-iraq/>

<sup>8</sup> “Federal judge blocks new travel ban; Trump calls it ‘judicial overreach’”, *CNN*, March 15, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/03/15/politics/travel-ban-blocked/>

<sup>9</sup> “Petition to Male all SUNY Locations Sanctuary Campuses,” Accessed February 2, 2017, <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeg5BSGsZomjj44wIMu629o5zJjSRRPbmzTPQ4McKsJVG4nng/viewform>

Resolved that the Student Assembly of the State University of New York respectfully acknowledge the January 24, 2017 memorandum (Appendix 2) as approved by the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York but recognize that more can be done to protect the right of all students to access a quality higher education as described in the Mission Statement of the State University of New York regardless of real or perceived country of origin, race, religion, or immigration status; and, be it further,

Resolved the Student Assembly of the State University of New York urge the State University of New York to continue and advance its policies protecting international and undocumented students including not volunteering information to the Federal Government and Immigration Officials with regards to immigration status or country of origin and seek to not collect information pertaining to students' immigration status or country of origin beyond what is minimally required by applicable law; and, be it further

Resolved that in undertaking these actions, the Student Assembly of the State University of New York urge the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York to consider the "Petition to make all SUNY locations Sanctuary Campuses" most carefully and undertake further action to protect the integrity of our campuses and the members of our campus communities; and, be it further

Resolved that the Student Assembly of the State University of New York urge the students of the State University of New York to consider the "Petition to make all SUNY locations Sanctuary Campuses" most carefully and act to protect the integrity of our campuses and the members of our campus communities; and be it further,

Resolved that the Student Assembly of the State University of New York urge the respective campus student government associations of the State University of New York to consider the "Petition to make all SUNY locations Sanctuary Campuses" most carefully and act to protect the integrity of our campuses and the members of our campus communities; and be it further,

Resolved that the Student Assembly of the State University of New York formally endorse the statement made by President Marc J. Cohen on January 28, 2017 opposing Executive Order 13769 (Appendix 3); and be it further,

Resolved that the Student Assembly of the State University of New York formally endorse joint statement made by President Marc J. Cohen and Chairperson Chikaodili Onyejiukwa on January 31, 2017 opposing the Executive Order 13769 (Appendix 4); and be it further,

Resolved that an International Student Advocacy Committee be created as a sub-committee of the Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion effective for the 2017-2018 academic year in an effort to continue advocacy and

representation of international students within the State University of New York; and, finally, be it

Resolved that within 20 days upon its passing, the Student Assembly of the State University of New York will forward copies of this resolution to the SUNY Board of Trustees, SUNY Chancellor Zimpher, Commissioner of the State University of New York Campus Police Paul Berger, Executive Committee of the University Faculty Senate, Executive Committee of the Faculty Council of Community Colleges, the Deans of the Statutory Colleges at Cornell and Alfred, SUNY Campus Presidents, SUNY student governing bodies, CUNY University Student Senate Chairperson Chikaodili Onyejiukwa, and all other parties deemed necessary and proper.

### **Background**

On January 27, 2017, President Donald J. Trump signed an Executive Order placing a 90 day entry ban for immigrants and nonimmigrants from seven Muslim majority countries “of particular concern”: Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Syria, Sudan, and Yemen. The order also indefinitely suspends the entry of Syrian refugees and bans the resettlement of refugees from any country for four months. Shortly thereafter, approximately 20 immigrants and refugees were detained at John F. Kennedy International Airport. In response, anti-xenophobic protests opposing the executive order erupted at airports around the country. On Sunday, January 29, 2017, a judge of the Eastern District of New York issued an emergency stay halting the executive order and after 20 hours, the detainees at JFK were released.