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An Open Letter Addressing Xenophobia in Our Community

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ADDRESSED TO:

All Santa Clara University Students, Faculty, and Staff



An Open Letter Addressing Xenophobia In Our Community *February 2025*

To all Santa Clara University Students, Faculty, and Staff,

We, as members of the Santa Clara University community, write to express solidarity with local immigrant communities following the re-election of Donald Trump as President of the United States. In the wake of an escalating national xenophobic climate, this rhetoric – fueled by Trump’s anti-immigration policies – has created an environment of fear and hostility for many across the country and on our campus. Now more than ever, we must reject these attacks and stand in unwavering support of those targeted by his administration.

On January 20th, 2025, within hours of his inauguration, President Trump issued a series of executive orders directly targeting immigrant communities in the United States. These orders actively dismantle critical protections for immigrants, including a direct attack on the constitutionally-protected birthright citizenship; the removal of protected areas, allowing immigration authorities to enter schools, healthcare facilities, and places of worship to conduct arrests; and the elimination of the CBP One App as a pathway to asylum. The declaration of a state of emergency at the border to deploy additional military personnel further demonstrates the criminalization of immigrant communities and the escalation of anti-immigrant policies. These actions have deeper implications than potential policy shifts: **they are direct assaults on human dignity, safety, and core principles of equity and justice.**

It is imperative to refute the claim that these are “unprecedented times”; to call them such would be a misnomer. **Instead, we recognize them as a continuation of the systemic oppression and exclusion that has long defined the experience of immigrants of color in this nation.** From the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 to the Operation “Wetback” of 1954 to the Muslim Travel Ban of 2017, marginalized communities have faced ongoing struggles for recognition, safety, and belonging in this nation. The current administration's actions are merely a violent continuation of these injustices as white supremacist policies have been emboldened once again.

The effects of these policies are not confined to the border. They ripple through our communities, including here at Santa Clara University. Immigrant community members and their families now face heightened fear of deportation, separation, and criminalization. The Laken Riley Act, for example, allows the Department of Homeland Security to detain any migrant arrested for any crime, even shoplifting. Beyond undermining due process, this act also continues to fuel narratives that erroneously villainize the immigrant community. Additionally, the dismantling of asylum protections undermines the safety of thousands fleeing violence and persecution, while the attack on birthright citizenship directly threatens the

futures of countless American-born children. These policies amplify the barriers immigrant individuals already face in accessing education, healthcare, and mental health resources.

Since the election in November and post-inauguration, students have expressed growing fears of racial profiling on campus, exacerbated by online rhetoric and campus conversations that reflect national hostility toward immigrant communities. Anonymously-posted comments on platforms like Fizz, including attacks on individual programs, have heightened concerns. Such rhetoric creates an environment where students feel targeted simply for their racial or ethnic identity, adding to an already pervasive climate of fear and exclusion.

Regardless of personal views on immigration policy, human beings are *not* political and are deserving of basic human dignity and respect. These actions are not an expression of political views but undisputed acts of hatred and racism. Such acts of bigotry are unacceptable and must be actively addressed by the university. **We condemn these policies as antithetical to our Jesuit values of inclusivity; social justice; solidarity and kinship; and care for the marginalized.**

As a Jesuit institution under the Catholic order, we must commit ourselves to the [Universal Apostolic Preferences](#) and the [Catholic Social Teachings](#). Santa Clara University must do more to support and protect all members of the community, including publicly denouncing any acts or expressions of xenophobia. While various resources exist, greater transparency and accessibility are needed to ensure those affected can easily find and utilize available support. Moreover, a concrete commitment to non-cooperation with enforcement actions targeting vulnerable communities is essential in upholding the values of this institution. Without this commitment, any claim to our key Jesuit values of *cura personalis* remains incomplete and hollow.

Despite these challenges, we believe in the power of education as a transformative force. In an institution of knowledge creation – such as our university – education remains a tool for empowerment. **It is through education that we learn to confront systems of oppression and reimagine a world that uplifts all people.** As such, our collective responsibility lies in the use of the systems we are a part of to support our communities. The classroom, the campus, and the university as a whole must be places where all students are empowered to thrive without fear.

To the communities impacted by these policy changes, we see you. Your dreams, leadership, and mere presence in these spaces enrich our nation. We honor your resilience and stand with you in the fight for justice and equity. At Santa Clara University, we have a responsibility to reject the normalization of xenophobia and actively cultivate a community of inclusion. For students impacted by these dynamics, we recognize the immense toll this takes on your mental health, academic pursuits, and overall well-being. **You are not alone, and there are [resources available](#) to support you:**

- **[SCC Rapid Response Network](#):** Anyone can call the 24/7 hotline at this number (408) 290-1144 to report ICE activity in our county and receive help in real-time.
 - If you want to stand in solidarity with families impacted by immigration activity in your community, attend a [Rapid Response Training](#).

- You can also attend a “[Know Your Rights Training](#)” to learn your constitutional rights, how to assert them, and to receive support preparing a family emergency plan.
- [Know Your Rights Cards](#) are also available for print. These cards are being distributed by the **Ethnic Studies Department and the Ethnic Studies Club** in twelve different languages.
- **[Services, Immigrant Rights & Education Network \(SIREN\)](#)**: San Jose non-profit offering free or low-cost legal services, policy advocacy, and community organizing support for immigrants. Office located at 1769 Park Ave, Suite 200, San José, CA 95126, open from 9 am to 3 pm from Monday through Thursday. You can also reach them at (408) 453-3003.
- **[Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County](#)**: provides immigration legal services and other [programs](#), including citizenship classes and social services for immigrant families. Office located at 2625 Zanker Rd, Suite 201, San José, CA 95134, open from 9 am to 5 pm from Monday through Friday. You can also reach them at (408) 468-0100.
- **[National Immigration Law Center \(NILC\)](#)**: offers legal information, advocacy updates, and resources for immigrant rights, including DACA renewals and in-state tuition rights.
- **[United We Dream](#)**: immigrant youth-led network that provides [resources](#) for undocumented students, mental health support, scholarship opportunities, and advocacy resources.
 - [Know Your Rights](#) resources
- **[The Multicultural Center](#)**: Home to 16 multicultural organizations on campus. Staff can be reached at scu-mcc@scu.edu, and the center serves as a safe space for all students daily. The MCC is temporarily located at Benson 1, and permanently located in the Shapell Lounge after renovations.
- **[Office for Multicultural Learning](#)**: Staff are available from 10 am to 4 pm, Monday through Friday, and can be reached at (408) 551-7168 or oml@scu.edu. The Office is located at 832 Market St, across the street from Benson.
- **[Campus Ministry](#)**: Staff are available from 8:30 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday, and can be reached at (408) 554-4372 or 408-551-1930 and campusministry@scu.edu. Campus Ministry is located on Benson 1st Floor.
- **[Ignatian Center](#)**: Staff are available from 8 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday, and can be reached at (408) 554-6917 and ignatiancenter@scu.edu. Ignatian Center is located in Nobili Hall.
- **[Wellness Center](#)**: Staff are available from 10 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday, and can be reached at (408) 554-4409 or wellnesscenter@scu.edu. The Center is located at 852 Market St, across the street from Benson.
- **[Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#)**: Located at Cowell Center, CAPS is open from 8:30 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday, and is reachable at 408-554-4501. Crisis (drop-in) hours are available daily from 9 am to 3 pm. [CAPS 24/7](#) is available for after-hours crisis calls by calling (408) 554-5220.
- **[Career Center](#)**: Staff are available from 9 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday, and can be reached at careercenter@scu.edu or (408) 554-4421. [Career Resources Directory](#) for Diverse Populations are also available for additional support.
- **[Office of Student Life](#)**: The Office - located at 862 Market St or Benson 205 - is open from 8:30 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday, and can be reached at (408) 554-4583.
 - [Student of Concern Referral](#)
 - [Request for Harassment Support](#)

- [Bias Incident Report](#)
- [FULL COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF WELL-BEING RESOURCES](#) On-Campus

To the wider SCU community, we urge you to:

1. Educate yourselves on the policies dismantling immigrant rights. Stay informed and advocate for policies that uphold the rights and dignity of all individuals.
2. Engage in advocacy by calling on your representatives to oppose these measures.
3. Support immigrant communities by attending events, amplifying their voices, and volunteering with local advocacy organizations.

We stand united in these trying times. We refuse to let fear dictate our policies, our values, or our future. No executive order, no militarized border, no fear-mongering can erase the fundamental truth that immigrants are the lifeblood of this country. We must honor the legacy of those who came before us, resist injustice in all its forms, and work tirelessly to build a future where everyone – regardless of their immigration status – is afforded dignity, opportunity, and safety. Together, we can uphold the values we claim to cherish and create a community where justice prevails.

In solidarity with all who call this nation home,



Imaan Qureshi
Senior Senator
Document Author



Julissa Martinez
Junior-Year Senator
Document Author



Graciella James-Hickey
Senator at Large for Sustainability
Document Author



Liv Alleyne
Senator-at-Large for Diversity & Inclusion
Document Author



The Multicultural Center
Student Representatives
Document Author

So endorsed by the following individuals, representative of their relevant parties,



, Denae Rivera, Multicultural Center, Director

, Kenneth Park, Multicultural Center, Associate Director

The Multi-Cultural Center (MCC) is home to **16 student-led organizations, comprising 200+ student leaders who serve 1000+ students** every year. As representatives of diversity and belonging at SCU, we, the MCC, **collectively** sign the above letter in solidarity with immigrant communities and in hopes of educating our campus community.



, Jacklyn Alonzo Heredia, Youth Empowerment Program, Director

The Youth Empowerment Program (YEP) stands in solidarity with all impacted communities, advocating for a nation where all students can pursue their dreams without fear. In our commitment to equity and learning through community, we, the leaders of YEP, proudly endorse the above letter.

, Dylan Ryu, Disabled Students Union, President.



, Ricardo Padilla, Jr., Diversity & Inclusion Student Center, Programs Director for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in STEM.

The Diversity & Inclusion Student Center serves underrepresented student populations in STEM, creating a safe space in which all students feel heard, represented, and included. We sign the above statement in our mission to celebrate diversity in all forms.



Kayla Zapata

, Kayla Zapata, Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, Co-President

SHPE stands in solidarity with immigrant communities and in the hope of a supportive space on campus where students can thrive, grow, and pursue their aspirations without fear for their future.

Maria Autrey

, Maria Autrey, Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education, Associate Director of

Community Engaged Student Learning

I sign the above letter collectively with all my students and colleagues who cannot sign their names, in hopes of a humane and just future for all.

Darcy Phillips

, Darcy Phillips, Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education, Director of Community Engaged Student Learning.

Jazmine Low, Jazmine Low, Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education, Program Director of Immersions

Tony Cortese, Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education, Director of Ignatian Spirituality.

John P. McGarry

, John P. McGarry, S.J., Campus Ministry, Director

I am grateful for the student leadership in writing this letter, and I stand in prayerful support and solidarity with all of our students, especially those most vulnerable to what is happening in our country now. The student authors of this letter have set an example for us all—faculty, staff and students. Thank you for taking a stand and speaking up for justice, equity, equality, inclusion, belonging and the dignity of every human being. 100% support. Thank you.



All Faculty of the Ethnic Studies Department

Together, we sign in solidarity with our students and share our collective commitment to justice and human dignity.

Anna Sampaio, Anna Sampaio, Department of Ethnic Studies, Professor.

James S. Lai, James S. Lai, Department of Ethnic Studies, Professor

Jesica Siham Fernández, Department of Ethnic Studies, Assistant Professor

, Naomi Andrews, University Honors Program, Director & Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J. Professor of History

I sign this letter in solidarity with my students and colleagues and with immigrant communities across the US and in support of the social justice mission of Santa Clara University.

, Amy Randall, College of Arts and Sciences, Center for the Arts and Humanities, Director & Departments of History and Gender and Sexuality Studies, Professor

I sign the above letter in solidarity with immigrant communities and in hopes of advancing SCU's commitment to social justice and respecting the dignity and humanity of all people.

, Sonia Gomez, Department of History, Assistant Professor

To all the students and community members navigating these challenging times, I stand with you. In solidarity, we rise together.

Mateo J. Carrillo, Department of History, Assistant Professor



, Sharmila Lodhia, Department of Gender and Sexuality Studies, Associate Professor and Chair

I sign on behalf of the faculty and staff of the Department of Gender and Sexuality Studies. We stand in steadfast support of the powerful call to solidarity issued by our incredible student leaders and commit to engaging in the collective work ahead to safeguard the rights of immigrant and other vulnerable communities as enshrined in law and embedded in the University's Jesuit, Catholic core values: commitment to students, service to others, and community and diversity.

, Laura Nichols, Department of Sociology, Professor and Chair.

Maggie Hunter, Maggie Hunter, Strategic Advisor to the Dean for Faculty DEI Initiatives & Department of Sociology, Professor

My signature indicates my solidarity with all of the communities currently under attack from the new federal administration. As university leaders, we have a unique obligation to resist the prohibition of ideas, words and people. Now is the time to lean into our SCU community values of competence, conscience and compassion.

Elsa Chen, Department of Political Science, Professor and Chair

I see you, care about you, appreciate you, and am here to support you. Thank you for all that you contribute to our community.

, Eric Mosinger, Department of Political Science, Assistant Professor

Vivien Leung, Department of Political Science, Assistant Professor

Naomi Levy, Office of Student Fellowships, Director & Department of Political Science, Professor

Terri Peretti, Department of Political Science, Professor

Thomas Meredith, Department of Political Science, Lecturer



, Juan Velasco Moreno, Department of English, Professor & Programa Velasco, CEO
Thank you for your hard work and everything you do for the community.



Denise Krane, The Hub Writing Center, Director & Department of English,
Associate Teaching Professor

Amy Lueck, Amy Lueck, Department of English, Associate Professor



, Miah Jeffra, Department of English, Assistant Professor

Robin Tremblay-McGaw, Department of English, Teaching Professor

Simone J. Billings, Department of English, Senior Lecturer Emerita

Jackie Hendricks, Department of English, Teaching Professor

Aldo Billingslea, Department of Theatre Arts, Father William J. Rewak, S.J. Professor



, Jill Pellettieri, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, Associate
Professor

José Ortigas, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, Assistant Professor

Maricela Portillo-Loayza, Department of Modern Language and Literatures, Assistant Teaching
Professor

Tomoko Takeda, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, Lecturer

Laura Callahan, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, Teaching Professor

Maria Bauluz, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, Associate Teaching Professor

Tripp Strawbridge, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, Assistant Professor

Yurim Kim, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, Lecturer

Mohammed Kadalah, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, Associate Teaching Professor

Nina Tanti, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, Teaching Professor

Mythri Jegathesan, Department of Anthropology, Associate Professor



Lisa Cramer Whitfield, Department of Psychology, Chair

In solidarity with our immigrant communities. "We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented." — Elie Wiesel



Kieran Sullivan, Department of Psychology, Professor

Jui Bhagwat, Department of Psychology, Assistant Teaching Professor

Michelle Rivers, Department of Psychology, Assistant Professor