

**To:** Faculty, Staff and Students of the California State University

**From:** Chancellor Timothy P. White

**Subject:** Open Letter to the Faculty, Staff and Students of the California State University

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy P. White". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'T'.

Timothy P. White  
Chancellor