

Message from GW President Steven Knapp

## **Dr. Knapp responds to presidential executive order on immigration restrictions.**

January 30, 2017

Every year we bring students from around the world to the George Washington University so they can enrich the intellectual life of our campuses and acquire the knowledge and skills that will enable them to build their communities when they return home. They are a vital part of what it means to be a great university in the world we share, and our commitment to their educational and personal welfare is a core value of our institution.

Whatever its intent may be, the presidential executive order banning citizens of seven countries from entering the United States directly threatens the well-being of students as well as of faculty and staff members who come from the affected countries. We are therefore taking the following steps in response to this order.

Currently, the GW International Services Office, the Office of General Counsel and the External Relations division are working to understand exactly how the executive order will affect our students, faculty and staff and for how long. The situation continues to evolve, and there are many questions we cannot answer today. We can say, however, that travel outside the United States for some members of our community is now very risky and may remain so for the foreseeable future. There is the possibility that individuals from the listed countries, including not only foreign nationals on student or scholar non-immigrant visas but also dual citizens and possibly permanent residents (green card holders), will not be readmitted, even if they currently hold a valid visa.

I want to assure you that we will do all we can to obtain answers to your questions and to support the members of our community who are affected by the order. We have invited all affected students whose visas are sponsored by GW to an informational session this Friday. We encourage others who are affected to contact the International Services Office to be included in this event and future communications on this topic.

We are working with other universities and with professional associations to keep up to date on a rapidly changing situation. Meanwhile, in keeping with the [statement of principles](#) we issued on December 9, 2016, the university will safeguard student records and provide legal and counseling services to all who need them. Students, faculty members and staff will not be questioned, held or arrested by the George Washington University Police Department (GWPD) on the basis of immigration status alone. University police officers will not participate in joint immigration enforcement efforts with other law enforcement officials unless required by law.

In recent weeks, I have urged GW students and all members of our community to continue to respect our differences, maintain civility and celebrate our diversity. Now I am asking also that

we offer our support and friendship to our international students, faculty members and staff who are rightly concerned about their and their families' future in a nation that, in its proudest moments, has opened its doors to the hopes and aspirations of all people.