June 6, 2018

Statement on Violence in Nicaragua

Santa Clara University joins with Jesuit institutions across the U.S. in denouncing the recent tragic events taking place in Nicaragua. The alarming violence, threats, and suppression of non-violent demonstrators by police and pro-government forces compel us to speak out in solidarity with our sister institution, Universidad Centroamericana (UCA) de Nicaragua, located near the epicenter of the violence. UCA’s rector, Fr. Jose Alberto “Chepe” Idiaquez, S.J., has had his life threatened for advocating for peaceful negotiations. Reports are coming in that more than 100 people, including a Jesuit high school student, have lost their lives in protests. Violent suppression of non-violent protesters has no place in a democracy. It undermines the safety of its people and the legitimacy of its government. It further threatens to escalate the civil unrest, which faith leaders and others are pleading to be resolved through peaceful means.

We, at Santa Clara University, and Jesuit leaders worldwide, call upon the Nicaraguan government to honor the constitutional rights of its citizens, starting with freedom of expression and peaceful protest. The UCA of Nicaragua, like all Jesuit institutions, has the mission both to provide students with professional formation and to encourage their commitment to a just, humane, and environmentally sustainable world. We support UCA and its courageous efforts to protect its students, to be a voice for justice, and to shelter citizens who are under attack. We urge dialogue that fosters a peaceful resolution to the conflict for the benefit of all. Finally, we pray for the UCA community and all the people of Nicaragua that peace returns quickly.

Sincerely,

Michael Engh, S.J.
President