

To: Members of the University Community
From: Sian Beilock, Executive Vice Provost, and Michele Rasmussen, Dean of Students in the University
Date: February 7, 2017
Subject: Update on Support for the UChicago International Community

Dear Colleagues,

We are writing to provide additional information and an update on actions the University of Chicago has been taking in support of our community members who may be affected by recent developments on immigration, including the January 27, 2017 Executive Order on immigration. Many people across the University community have offered input on these issues, and we are grateful for their shared concern for their colleagues and classmates.

The University of Chicago has been unwavering in support of international and undocumented members of the campus community, and in our position that the United States should continue to welcome immigrants irrespective of their country of origin. The January 27 Executive Order on immigration (which as of this writing has been stayed by a federal court) is inconsistent with this commitment. Below we underscore the actions taken to uphold the University's commitment to excellence based on the strength of each individual's ideas, regardless of status, identity or perspective.

- The University has publicly and continuously asserted its commitment to admitting outstanding students regardless of citizenship. As Provost Diermeier wrote in a message to the campus community on November 18, 2016, “[a]ll students who apply to the University, regardless of citizenship and including undocumented students, are considered for admission and the financial aid for which they qualify.”
- The University is committed to protecting the privacy of student educational records with the means available by law. As outlined in the [FAQs posted on January 4, 2017](#), in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the University will not release information from a student's education record, including immigration status and other identifying information, without the student's written consent, except as required by law.
- The enforcement of federal immigration laws is not part of the mission of the University of Chicago Police Department (UCPD). Accordingly, UCPD does not engage in immigration enforcement work and it does not release information on immigration status to local, state or federal law enforcement agencies, except as required by law. More information regarding the role of UCPD in this context can be found in the [FAQs posted on January 4, 2017](#).
- We are committed to working with individual students and scholars from the countries referenced in the Executive Order and assisting them as they encounter problems and issues brought about by the order. Because individual situations are distinct, the nature of this support may vary, and can include both legal advice and financial assistance. The

University will continue to hold information sessions for international students and scholars, provide travel advice and deploy resources to assist those who are detained or otherwise prevented from returning to the U.S. from abroad.

- We are committed to providing support for all students to succeed at the University. A national search is well underway for a new Executive Director of the Center for Identity + Inclusion, which includes the Student Support Services office. In the interim, staff in CI+I, the Provost's Office, CSL, the Office of Legal Counsel, and the College are working to ensure that the needs of undocumented, DACA, first generation, veterans and low-income students are being met.
- Likewise, we believe it is vital that our students and graduates with F-1 visa status continue to benefit from the federal government's Optional Practical Training program (OPT), which provides individuals with employment authorization for periods ranging from 12 to 36 months. This is a highly valuable program for the University, our students and graduates, and U.S. employers, and a curtailment of the program would result in a significant loss of talent for the U.S.
- The Office of International Affairs (OIA) has created a [website](#) to post updates regarding the presidential executive orders affecting immigration, provide guidance to members of the University's international community and post links to other relevant information such as upcoming events and prior University messages. This office has been engaged with affected faculty, students and staff to develop plans for them to continue with their employment and degrees and we welcome individuals to contact OIA if they have questions, concerns or difficulties.