

Notre Dame as Sanctuary Campus

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Dear Father Jenkins,

In the wake of recent political events and the imperiled status of undocumented students on this campus and in this nation, we – the undersigned University of Notre Dame students, faculty, staff, and alumni – ask you to implement a plan to declare our campus a sanctuary for undocumented students, staff, and their family members who face imminent deportation. We believe this to be a practical and concrete step that will have profound implications for those affected by the president-elect's promise to increase deportations immediately upon taking office in January. It is the fulfillment of your beautiful promise at Monday night's prayer service to protect undocumented students in any way we can.

As you might know, according to an internal 2011 memo of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, officers are subject to certain restrictions upon entering college campuses and churches without authorization. (<https://www.ice.gov/doclib/ero-outreach/pdf/10029.2-policy.pdf>) This puts the University in an important and unique position, which it can and should use to protect undocumented community members from law enforcement. It is, we believe, the moral responsibility of this University to ensure that it remains a place where the administration actively protects the rights and safety of all members of its community.

We firmly believe that, as a Catholic campus with a well documented record of standing for social justice, Notre Dame is uniquely poised to be a national leader in the movement to create campus sanctuaries. And so we urge you to immediately begin to set in place the policies and practices that will make Notre Dame a sanctuary campus.

As we jointly envision a safe future for our community, the sanctuary of our campus must not exclude members of our city and the broader community. Therefore, we urge Notre Dame to support the work and demands of organizations led by undocumented people in the wider South Bend community.

We respectfully ask that you implement the following actions as quickly as possible:

(1) Declare Notre Dame to be a sanctuary campus that will actively refuse to comply with

immigration authorities regarding deportations or raids.

(2) Guarantee student privacy by refusing to release information regarding the immigration status of our students and community members to any government agency.

(3) Create an undocumented student program, with a full-time director, and free on-campus access to legal counsel. Create funds to assist undocumented students (and faculty, staff and students with family members) in need.

(4) Assure that all students receive a campus, classroom, and community experience free of hostilities, aggressions, and bullying regarding immigration status. Communicate unequivocally and repeatedly that undocumented students are full members of the Notre Dame community who will be protected to the fullest power of the administration.

(5) In line with the Catholic tradition of providing sanctuary to the persecuted, identify particular spaces on campus where those who feel threatened can seek refuge and protection.

We believe that declaring Notre Dame a sanctuary campus reflects many of our core values and, specifically, our duty to protect the most vulnerable members of our community. Please join us in our care and concern for our friends, colleagues, and students by reaffirming your commitment to undocumented students and declaring Notre Dame a sanctuary campus. As you so eloquently said Monday, "Either we walk together in mutual support, or we do not walk at all. Either we are all Notre Dame, or none of us are."