Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities in Canada

Statement by the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities in Canada

On January 27, 2017, United States President Donald Trump signed an executive order relating to immigration. This order bans individuals from seven countries (Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen) who hold valid visas and green cards from entering the United States for 90 days. The president has also banned refugees from entering the USA for the next 120 days.

The Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities in Canada shares many of the same concerns as expressed by Universities Canada regarding the devastating implications that these new restrictions will have on refugees, as well as for international students, staff, researchers and faculty in Canada who are from the affected countries:

http://www.univcan.ca/media-room/media-releases/statement-response-u-s-executive-order/

We also join with our American counterpart, the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU), in objecting to this executive order:

 http://www.accunet.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageID=3827

The Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities in Canada (ACCUC) is deeply concerned that these executive orders are contradictory to basic human rights. Furthermore, restrictions for those from the specifically named seven countries will have a deleterious effect on many academic communities by stranding individuals who are temporarily in Canada for scholarly pursuits, block those needing to renew study permits that require crossing the American border, prevent family members residing in the USA from uniting with others, and prevent many from attending research and academic conferences, service learning, exchange programs, as well as field research and joint projects.

The free flow of ideas and scholarly research is imperative to our society. As leaders of our Catholic institutions of higher learning, we are very concerned that this executive order runs counter to principles of basic human rights as well as educational and scholarly pursuits. We quote from the 1990 *Ex Corde Ecclesiae, The Apostolic Constitution of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II on Catholic Universities*:

> Every Catholic University, *as a university,* is an academic community which, in a rigorous and critical fashion, assists in the protection and advancement of human dignity and of a cultural heritage through research, teaching and various services offered to the local, national and international communities.

And regarding the protection of all, especially the most vulnerable, we call on everyone across Canada and the USA to recognize that we have a moral duty to assist migrants, particularly those who are fleeing any kind of persecution. To quote Pope Francis: "It's hypocrisy to call yourself a Christian and chase away a refugee or someone seeking help…."

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