Dear GCC Community,

Soon after the Thanksgiving holiday break, I sent an email to all students with a copy to faculty and staff. I would like to quote from that letter.

“I had the opportunity to visit the Ellis Island Museum soon after it opened. I walked the very same steps that my father did as an immigrant coming to this country with his parents in search of a better life...as I got to the top of the staircase, my knees buckled from the weight of the moment. I entered a large room with floor to ceiling windows open to the incredible majesty of the Statue of Liberty, standing there to welcome all in search of a better life. I could only imagine what seeing that statue felt like to my dad as he entered America. Engraved on a bronze plaque and mounted inside the monument is a sonnet written by Emma Lazarus who wrote:

‘Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!’ cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!’

*The statue and those words have withstood the test of time and many a storm. Despite the ebb and flow of tidal changes that stir beneath her feet, she stands with such strength and courage holding out a lamp for all who yearn to breathe free.*

Today I feel compelled to write with deep concern about President Trump’s executive order, signed last Friday, restricting entry to the U.S. by citizens of seven foreign countries. Federal district judges in several cities, including Boston, have since issued orders preventing further enforcement of the executive order. That executive order, while it might have been intended to serve to protect, undermines the very egalitarian values that our nation was built upon. It is also an insult to the millions of immigrants whose hands have built this nation, literally. I want you to know that GCC hosts many students who were not born in this country but who deserve the opportunity to pursue an education. Each of our international students has been contacted by the college and so too the staff who have immigrated to our community. Each of those students and all who work here contribute in most meaningful ways to the college and the education of all who attend. I also write to restate GCC’s convictions to keep open our doors to all who aspire to a better life for themselves and their families. It is no wonder that many have referred to GCC as the Ellis Island of Higher Education. And just as Emma Lazarus’s poem is a guiding compass and more than words on paper, GCC has guiding principles of education and inclusion that help to navigate our actions. Below are links to both our “Statement of Inclusion” and our “Principles of Education” for you to review. Those principles and policies are truly guiding values that act as navigational tools for our college. As these days of change and uncertainty unfold, please know that GCC also continues to stand strong with courage and with our doors open, lifting a lamp to all!
Sincerely,

Bob

http://www.gcc.mass.edu/about/inclusion/ - Statement of Inclusion

http://www.gcc.mass.edu/about/principles-of-education/ - Principles of Education