January 30, 2017

Dear Goucher Community,

On Friday, January 27, 2017, President Trump signed an executive order limiting the entry of individuals from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen to the United States for 90 days. The order also directed the suspension of the U.S. refugee admissions program for 120 days and suspended all refugee processing of Syrian nationals indefinitely. To the best of our knowledge, all of Goucher’s current faculty, staff, and students from or with ties to the affected countries are accounted for and safe.

What happens next is not clear and we know that this changing situation creates great anxiety for many members of our community. So today I want to affirm two important messages:

First, to ALL of our students we say: you are welcome here. As set forth in Saturday’s statement from our Center for Race, Equity, and Identity, we affirm all members of our community, including foreign-born people, immigrants and non-immigrants with intersecting identities, people of color, and people of marginalized religious backgrounds, as well as all members of our community whose identities, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, ability, race, or national background might put them at risk from changes in government policy—you are part of our community.

To our Muslim students, in particular, we will defend your right to express your religion freely and without fear. To our immigrant students, we affirm our previous message to you that Goucher College protects the privacy of all students, faculty, and staff. We do not—and will not—share private information with third parties, including law enforcement or immigration officials, without consent.
or unless required to do so by law or in exigent circumstances.

Second, I sincerely wish that I could speak on behalf of our entire nation, but at least at Goucher we condemn policies that discriminate based on religion or country of origin and they have no place in our community. We support our government and the legal and peaceful process of passing and enforcing laws, but it is the role of academic institutions—and, indeed, our moral obligation living in a democracy—to voice our objections when we believe injustice is occurring. As an institution of higher education, we will continue to promote the free exchange of ideas among a community of students and scholars that welcomes citizens from around the world.

The federal government determines the policies that will guide our country moving forward. We are monitoring the situation carefully and will update the community with information as it becomes available. Any questions or concerns you may have about your personal situation should be addressed to Karen Sykes, Luz Burgos-Lopez, or Summer Torres, in CREI, or Cynthia Terry, College Chaplain.

Sincerely,

José Antonio Bowen