July 14, 2020

The UCLA International Institute stands with immigrants and international students and scholars
(also on the website here)

Recent visa decisions by the U.S. administration have temporarily halted the immigration of skilled workers to our country and threaten to deport foreign students enrolled solely in online courses that universities have put in place to slow the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. In response to these decisions, we affirm the essential and invaluable contributions of international scholars, students and researchers to U.S. higher education, and of immigrant workers to U.S. society.

U.S. institutions of higher education are the envy of the world because they attract the best and the brightest minds from across the globe. Talented individuals are drawn to study and work here by the academic freedoms of our campuses and the opportunities to work with equally gifted peers to conduct research, push the boundaries of innovation and train future generations.

International scholars, researchers and students are essential to a 21st-century education. They bring unique perspectives and experience to our classrooms, widen our students’ worldview and prepare them for careers in an interconnected world where success requires the ability to work well with people from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. The challenges that threaten the world today — pandemics, climate change, structural inequities, systemic racism, xenophobia, human rights violations, global economic shocks — can only be overcome through international collaboration, and a sincere and humble desire to learn from others.

Universities must be central participants and facilitators in this collaboration if it is to be successful. Whether our students study history, art, biology, law, business, medicine or other subjects, they benefit from being taught and doing research alongside top experts in their field, many of whom come from countries around the world. This reality is not detrimental to the United States and its citizens, it is the United States, it is a driving force of our entrepreneurship and it gives U.S. universities a competitive edge in a global economy. There is no “us” and “them,” there is only us — all of us, made stronger, wiser and more informed by working together.

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