

STATEMENT CALLING ON PENN TO PROTECT INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN LIGHT OF RECENT EXECUTIVE ORDERS

To: Interim President Larry Jameson, Provost John Jackson, and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee

As faculty, staff, grad workers, postdocs, students, and community members of the University of Pennsylvania, we write to express our concern about Penn's commitment to its undocumented, immigrant, and international students and employees.

Recent [Executive Orders](#) issued by the White House that threaten the safety of immigrants and minorities in the name of "protecting the American people," "protecting women and girls," or "combating anti-Semitism" raise grave concerns and necessitate a clear, principled stance from university leadership. Although your message to the community on Tuesday, January 28, took some positive steps toward "*protecting each other*," it did not go far enough in addressing the climate of fear and uncertainty these orders have created. Our community is reeling—students, faculty, and staff alike in fear for themselves and their neighbors. In this moment, it is imperative that university leadership offer unequivocal reassurance and a concrete commitment to protecting those most vulnerable. Specifically, the university must publicly clarify its stance and the steps it will take regarding cooperation with the federal government in the enforcement of these executive orders.

We ask for clarification on these questions:

1. What is campus policy with regard to working with federal immigration authorities?
2. Whom should faculty contact in the event that they are approached by ICE agents?
3. What private/limited-access spaces can you make available where ICE agents cannot enter without a valid warrant?
4. Are you planning to communicate with students, staff, and faculty about their privacy rights and about whom to contact if approached by ICE?
5. What legal support and representation will the university provide for people who are faced with visa or deportation problems?

In 2016, Penn declared itself a "*sanctuary*" for undocumented students, affirming that it "*will not allow Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) / Customs and Border Protection (CBP) / U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) on our campus unless required by warrant*" and that it "*will not share any information about any undocumented student with these agencies unless presented with valid legal process.*" This commitment aligns with the protections afforded under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which strictly limits the disclosure of student records, including immigration status, without explicit student consent. FERPA mandates that institutions safeguard the privacy of student information, and any deviation from this standard—such as compliance with federal requests for student data absent a legal warrant—would not only violate Penn's stated values but also risk breaching federal privacy laws.

President Trump's order to "[Combat Anti-Semitism](#)" also directs the Secretaries of State, Education, and Homeland Security to provide "*recommendations...[to] monitor and report activities by alien students... [that] lead to investigations... and, if warranted, actions to remove such aliens.*" This vague and open-ended directive amounts to an attack on academic freedom. Using civil rights protections as pretext, it allows administrators to target student activists and silence criticism of a foreign state. Historically, university campuses have served as the conscience of the nation, leading movements against war and oppression—whether opposing the Vietnam War, supporting the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, or challenging institutional complicity in human rights violations. Now, in this moment of heightened risk, we call upon you to reaffirm Penn's commitment to freedom of expression and to expand its commitment to include protections of undocumented staff and workers as well as those community

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members on F-1, J-1, and H1-B visas—and to make clear that Penn will not cooperate in any way with these unjust policies of intimidation and deportation.

Signed,

AAUP-Penn Executive Committee

Penn Undergraduate Assembly (UA)

IDEAL Student Council of GAPSAs (Graduate and Professional Student Assembly)

Penn Carey Law Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild (NLG)