



January 30, 2017

To the Campus Community:

Yesterday, the Association for Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), of which the University of Montana is a member, issued the following [statement](#) concerning the announcement of a presidential executive order that temporarily bans citizens of seven countries from entering the U.S.:

“Public research universities are deeply concerned about the administration’s new policy preventing visa and green card holders of seven countries from returning to the U.S. for 90 days. The consequences of this action, along with the ban on refugees, reverberate far beyond the higher education community and are worthy of everyone’s attention. As a public research university association, we are keenly aware of the impact this is already having on college campuses throughout the U.S. The most recent figures show that more than 17,000 students from the seven countries that this ban targets studied at U.S. universities during the 2015-16 school year.

The new order is causing significant disruption and hardship to some university students, researchers, faculty, and staff who are citizens of the seven countries targeted and happened to be abroad at the time it was issued. These individuals returned home to visit in compliance with the immigration designation they received, but are now stranded abroad and unable to return to their studies and responsibilities in the U.S. This means that students’ work toward degrees are in question and the ability of faculty to continue teaching or conducting research is uncertain. On a personal level, some of these people are now separated from family members and torn away from the lives they had already legally established in the U.S.

But the impact of this decision goes beyond those immediately impacted. Our nation’s universities are enriched and strengthened by the talent, insight, and culture that international students, faculty, researchers, and staff bring. With appropriate and effective vetting, international students from all countries and of all religions have long been a core part of our campus communities and that should continue uninterrupted. We are also concerned that this decision adds great uncertainty to international students, researchers, and others who might consider coming to our campuses.

The hardship is now clear and, as a matter of fairness and in accord with the values of this nation, the decision that bans these current visa and green card holders from returning for 90 days should be promptly reconsidered.”

Office of the President

While this is an evolving situation, the APLU statement reflects the University of Montana's position and my immediate thoughts on this matter as well. I realize that the executive order, the court responses, and the ensuing challenges and changes to policy brings many questions and concerns from those both directly and indirectly affected at the University of Montana.

Please know that we are following this matter closely and working to clearly define our responsibilities and how best to address the needs and concerns of our campus community members. Please contact Effie Koehn, Interim Director of the Global Engagement Office, at 406-243-5580 or effie.koehn@umontana.edu for assistance. Check the [President's Office website](#) for updates.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sheila M. Stearns".

Sheila M. Stearns
President
University of Montana

SMS/rp
Stearnsmem02