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Principal's Statement: Canadian values, Queen's values

Monday January 30, 2017

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The following is a statement from Principal Daniel Woolf in response to the attack on a Quebec mosque and the US immigration ban.

While the Queen's community addresses, internally, issues of race and inclusion at home, we also need to be mindful of what is happening in the rest of the world. Sunday evening's attack at a mosque in Sainte-Foy, Que., is yet another reminder that even in Canada we are not immune to hatred and violence towards a group or individuals on the basis of their background, religion, or ethnicity.

The abrupt imposition of a halt on refugee admission in the United States and a particular ban on immigration from seven countries with an overwhelmingly Muslim population is a challenge to all of us who believe in an open and inclusive society. The values that underlie this divisive politics are not Canadian, and they are not those of Queen's University.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has stated that Canada will continue to welcome those "fleeing persecution, terror, and war" regardless of faith and has reaffirmed that "diversity is our strength." Queen's, along with other Canadian universities, stands in support of those who may be affected by the US policy, in particular our international students and scholars.

Queen's welcomes and supports students, faculty, and staff from all countries and backgrounds. They bring a wealth of experience and diverse perspectives, and strengthen our campus in myriad ways, from research and innovation to overall student learning experience.

The administration of Queen's will work to ensure that our students and faculty travelling in or through the United States are not adversely affected by this change in US policy. But we may well need to go beyond this, and offer a safe haven in our university to faculty, staff, and students who suddenly find themselves in immigration limbo, unable to return to a US home and unable to go back to the country whence they travelled.

We are working within Queen's on what we can do, and I am in discussion with other university leaders about concrete measures our institutions can take to help scholars affected by the ban.

At this stage we do not know how any of this is going to play out. But as a country, and as an individual university, it's our obligation to do what we can to mitigate the consequences to faculty, students, and staff.

Flags on campus are lowered and will remain at half-mast until Wednesday morning out of respect for the victims of the Quebec mosque shootings.

Resources for the Queen's community regarding travel and immigration

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