Jan. 30, 2017

Dear friends,

The University of Denver—like the city, state and nation in which we reside—greatly benefits from the diversity of our people. Students, faculty members and staff from across the world bring to DU their talents and passions. Together we produce scholarship that propels society forward; we share knowledge that transforms lives and produces ethical leaders in all fields; and we commit collectively to improving communities in Colorado and around the globe.

As you know, last Friday, President Trump signed an executive order regarding refugees, immigrants and other travelers from seven nations. Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Gregg Kvistad issued a brief statement Saturday morning encouraging any community members who may be affected to defer any travel plans outside the United States. I write today to provide additional details and to clarify the University’s commitment to all members of this community.

Put simply, the University of Denver will continue to uphold our values in support of our mission. We endorse immigration policies that are thoughtful and sensitive and which allow our nation, including colleges and universities, to benefit from the talents, perspectives and passions of students and scholars worldwide. To waiver in our support would be a detriment to our mission and a compromise of the values we hold dear.

Like many of our colleagues across the country—including DU Board of Trustees’ member Mary Sue Coleman, president of the Association of American Universities—we know that our learning environments are weakened when scholars, students and staff feel threatened or afraid. This University—and this country—have long benefited from immigrants who have contributed to our ability to innovate, create and discover. Josef Korbel, for example, came to the United States under political asylum, before coming to teach at DU and found the school of international studies that would later come to bear his name.

We are committed to providing the supports needed for our community members to know that they belong here and that they are deeply valued. As we continue to gather resources, we will be adding to this list available to students, faculty and staff.

Fortunately, we have confirmed that none of our students from the affected countries of Iraq, Syria, Libya, Somali, Sudan, Iran and Yemen have been detained, nor are we aware of any member of our community who has been denied entry to the United States. Of course, we recognize that these individuals may have shaken confidence in their ability to travel to and from the United States, despite their having the proper documentation. We are also aware that many of you may have loved ones who are directly or indirectly affected by the executive order.

Like many of you, we spent the weekend trying to gather as much information as we could. Unfortunately, there remains significant confusion, and the situation continues to change and evolve rapidly. Legal challenges in federal courts mean that different jurisdictions are acting differently. Despite initial detainment of legal permanent residents of the United States, we understand that today, such “Green Card” holders are no longer being detained. At this point, there is no clarity regarding the treatment of students on visas. Therefore, we maintain our recommendation that affected members of our community continue to refrain from travel outside the United States.

Along with faculty, staff and students, the University’s senior leadership team is working to ensure that members of our community know the resources available to them—including assistance from University offices, volunteer legal services, emotional and mental health support and more. We will do everything we can to support those affected to ensure they can remain members of our community and know they are valued and supported.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Chopp
Chancellor