

Dear staff, colleagues, faculty, students and friends,

The President's Advisory Committee on Building an Inclusive Community (PACBIC) condemns the recent executive order by the President of the U.S.A. to ban nationals and refugees from Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia and Yemen. This abhorrent action has already led to increases in immigration detention, denials of entry and other forms of criminalization. We wish to express our opposition to this fear – mongering, Islamophobic form of systemic, institutionalized racism and disrespect. We stand in solidarity with members of the Muslim communities affected including PACBIC members, staff, faculty, and students, and wish to express our sincerest condolences to the families of the 6 men murdered in a Quebec mosque on January 29th 2017.

PACBIC is mandated to identify and anticipate issues affecting equity-seeking communities both within the University and relevant to those seeking access to the University, and to advise President Patrick Deane on such issues. We also aim to provide advice to the President on the planning and development of policies and programs related to “building an inclusive community with a shared purpose” (the third strategic goal of Refining Directions), both within the University and the broader McMaster community.

Over the past weeks PACBIC's focus has been increasingly geared toward responding to the rise in bigotry and hatred, fear and anxiety that has significant impacts on members of our campus community and beyond. In addition to the banning of nationals and refugees from seven predominantly Muslim countries, there have been a series of other executive orders issued in the United States that have implications locally and globally.

We denounce the inherent damage and disrespect within the order to approve the Keystone XL pipeline and the Dakota Access pipeline in the US, as well as the approvals of the Trans Mountain and Line 3 pipelines in Canada - approvals which fly in the face of any claims to a commitment to the environment and to respecting the voices of all Indigenous peoples and allies who have fought so strongly against these projects.

We are dismayed by and oppose the executive order reinstating the Mexico City policy which ceases US funding for non-governmental organizations internationally that provide women's healthcare services, supports and advocacy for a range of issues including contraception, fertility, and family planning. This order is oppressing choice, rights and restricting access to these necessary services.

Recent anti-immigration sentiments also became horrifyingly solidified through executive orders to build a wall blocking the Mexico-US border in addition to the separate order banning nationals and refugees from Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia and Yemen.

As an institution that is committed to inclusion, it is of the utmost importance that we condemn and oppose such measures that aim to impose blanket restriction on rights and freedoms based on bigotry, hatred and white supremacist ideas that have no basis in legitimate knowledge. McMaster University posted an initial statement yesterday evening, together with a link to the statement from Universities Canada¹

During this critical period and going forward it will be upon all of us to help foster a sense of safety and inclusion on campus and in the community. It is necessary to recognize the increased need for resources on campus to support affected individuals in our community; specifically, providing resources, supports and protections for staff, faculty and students targeted by the current policy changes and for those changes that may be yet to come. While much resistance and opposition is in progress, much more is necessary. We can choose to be a part of this history in a way that history itself will respect us. We hope that our work through PACBIC, the work of the McMaster community and in our lives as people in the world, continues toward the now seemingly imperiled

¹ <http://dailynews.mcmaster.ca/worth-mentioning/significant-concerns-regarding-us-travel-restrictions/>

goals of inclusion and justice. We invite you to join us and others at McMaster who are engaged in the struggle to resist the fear and hate that threatens our right to exist.

In solidarity,

Ameil J. Joseph, Ph.D. (On behalf of PACBIC)

Chair: President's Advisory Committee on building and Inclusive Community

Assistant Professor, School of Social Work