

SANCTUARY CAMPUS COVENANT

Living the Mission

Dominican University's mission to educate inclusively is rooted in its service to immigrant communities, initially the Irish lead miners of the rural Midwest. When, on the invitation of Cardinal Mundelein, the Sinsinawa Dominican sisters moved the college to Illinois in 1922, it was "to give the opportunities of higher education to the many," with the understanding that "neither wealth, nor age, nor race would be of any advantageor provide a hindrance." Today, Dominican University is one of the most diverse private, four-year institutions in the State of Illinois, and one of the first universities in the country to welcome publicly and financially support students regardless of documentation and immigration status.

In our community, the issue of immigrants' safety, and the safety of other marginalized student groups, transcends politics. It is a human rights issue that we approach through the lens of faith. The university community deeply respects the democratic process and the freedom of expression that grounds the academy. We are also compelled by mission to advocate for, and walk along side, our undocumented students, their families and the communities whose future is so uncertain. Accompaniment is the foundation of sanctuary at Dominican. This support for students at risk strengthens the university experience for all students.

Sanctuary as a Community's Choice and a Moral Imperative

The history of the modern sanctuary movement dates back to the 1980s when the Catholic Church and other religious institutions provided refuge to thousands of undocumented immigrants from Central America who fled civil unrest at home, but were denied access in the U.S. As the movement spread, a number of cities throughout the country joined in solidarity, passing resolutions to overlook the immigration status of residents. The concept itself, however, emerges from the Hebrew Scriptures and refers both to sanctuary as a place set apart *and* an act of refuge or protection. Recently, students from around the country have called for their universities to designate themselves as sanctuary campuses. This term mirrors actions taken by various municipalities of sanctuary cities, and while it does not promise that universities will provide refuge for undocumented immigrants, it does challenge campuses to do what they can, within the law, to protect residents from deportation. As a Catholic University, committed to social justice, Dominican seeks to be part of this movement. These historical layers inform our understanding of sanctuary as being a choice that our community makes to name the kind of space we desire for our campus and to hold true to the moral imperative presented by this moment in history.

In grateful response to and in support of President Carroll and the Board of Trustee's Sanctuary Campus Resolution:

We, as members of the Dominican University community affirm:

1. Dominican University is, has been, and will continue to be a sanctuary campus. Our commitment to being an inclusive campus for undocumented students and any and all students targeted by those in power facilitates the inclusion of all members of our wonderfully diverse student body.

2. Dominican University commits to maintaining a safe, inclusive, and equitable campus in which the university upholds constitutional protections; including equal protection and due process under law.

We, as members of the Dominican University community, commit to:

1. *Strengthen Privacy Practices:* Invest in resources to train our campus community to be allies and effective student service personnel in regard to immigration and documentation status in order to maintain the privacy of all individuals on campus. This investment includes commitments to:

- A. Comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and strengthen data protection protocols with all faculty and staff with particular attention to front line student service personnel.
- B. Ensure Public Safety officers and employees should not inquire into immigration status or cooperate in any law enforcement action based on immigration status or potential violations of the civil immigration laws.
- C. Reaffirm that faculty and staff members should not inquire into any student's immigration status unless they are strictly required to do so by law as a part of their job duties.

2. *Protect Community Members' Rights:* Clearly define practices and protocol if and when engaged by federal law enforcement and/or immigration enforcement activities on/near campus.

- A. Establish "Front Door Team" to be the point of contact for any law enforcement entity attempting to enter campus for any reason and implement clear engagement protocols and adequate training for this team about sanctuary campus policies and practices.
- B. Reaffirm the scope and limitations of Public Safety officers and employees in law enforcement actions taking place on or around campus.
- C. Clarify due process in interactions with federal law enforcement agencies including training all campus employees on their rights and responsibilities.

3. *Support Community Members:* As part of its growing commitment to civic and community engagement, Dominican University will stand alongside partners in the communities where the families of our students live, work and dream.

- A. Cultivate an activist approach to accessing financial aid resources to sustain the education of all our students in the face of federal policies or policy changes.
- B. Increase resources for confidential counseling services for all our students, including DACA recipients, staff, workers, and their families.
- C. Strengthen campus partnerships with organizations throughout the Chicagoland region, including on-campus union representatives, community-based organizations, and immigrant advocacy coalitions that can provide legal assistance and other necessary resources to undocumented immigrants, refugees, and other groups of students, faculty, and staff who may feel they are targets of any upcoming federal policies or policy changes.

4. *Exercise Freedom of Conscience:* Dominican University urges faculty, staff, and students to follow their conscience to collectively and creatively work together to ensure that Dominican University lives out its commitment to a safe, inclusive and equitable campus.