

**Ethics Center statement of concern about Executive Orders of
January 25-27, 2017**

Statement from the Director and Board of the UCI Interdisciplinary Center for the Scientific Study of Ethics and Morality, in response to the January 25-27th 2017 Executive Orders on refugees and immigrants.

The UCI Interdisciplinary Center for the Scientific Study of Ethics (Ethics Center) does not take political stands. Our mission is to study the causes and consequences of moral behavior. Nevertheless, as members of a university community, with special interest in ethics and morality, we must speak out in opposition to the Executive Orders signed the week of January 23 which, in our opinion, insult the dignity of immigrants, threaten the rights of immigrants and refugees, violate academic freedom, harm the educational system of the United States, fall outside the American tradition of thoughtful, legal vetting of laws, and run counter to the educational mission and values of the UCI Ethics Center.

The impetus for our statement came on January 25 at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), where President Trump signed an Executive Order on border security and interior enforcement. On January 27, he signed an Executive Order at the Pentagon on refugees and visa holders from designated nations. This Executive Order -- entitled *Protecting the Nation from Terrorist Attacks by Foreign Nationals* -- suspended the issuance of visas to nationals from Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Syria, Libya, Somalia, and Yemen. It shut down the US refugee program for 120 days and reduced the number of refugees to be admitted to the United States in FY 2017 from 110,000 to 50,000. It indefinitely halted the resettlement of Syrian refugees and established a screening mechanism for the entry of foreign nationals. Finally, it required the Department of Homeland Security to expedite completion of an entry-exit tracking system.

We fully understand the concern for national security and the threat of terrorism, and we recognize the importance of a strong visa process to our nation's security. But the Trump administration's new Executive Order barring the entry or return of individuals from certain countries is already

causing damage and should end as quickly as possible. The Order is stranding students who have been approved to study here and are trying to get back to campus. It limits members of the American academic community in their travel. It threatens to disrupt the education and research of many others.

As leaders and faculty members of one of the country's great institutions of higher education and research, we believe it is crucial to welcome immigrants to our community, along with the talent and energy they bring to this country. Scientific and technological advances – education itself -- should have no borders. Welcoming talented people to our institutions of higher education is what makes the American educational system the wonder that it is. Failing to maintain this position will serve only to weaken the nation's institutions of higher education. It will diminish the innovation energy in the country, cause a decline in the pace of technology development, and end by weakening America as a nation and depriving the world of many great scholars.

We therefore need to reaffirm, in the strongest possible terms, our commitment to our international students, scholars, staff, and faculty, as well as to those members of the local community who have undocumented immigration status or who have family members in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

We need further to note our concern about the lack of compassion and the full legal vetting behind the recent Executive Orders. We wish to go on the record as finding that those Orders reveal a shocking lack of empathy, governmental experience, and historical memory in regard to refugees and immigrants.

We urge the Trump Administration, as soon as possible, to rescind these Executive Orders, to make clear to the world that the United States continues to welcome the most talented individuals from all countries to study, teach, and carry out research and scholarship at our universities. It is vital to our economy and in the national interest that we continue to attract the best students, scientists, engineers, and scholars.