




OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
Telephone: 270.745.4346  
Facsimile: 270.745.4492

---

February 21, 2017

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Dr. Kate Hudepohl, Chair University Senate  
FROM: Gary A. Ransdel   
SUBJECT: University Senate Resolution on Sanctuary Campus

Thank you for the University Senate Resolution on Sanctuary for Undocumented Immigrant Students and Campus Community Members Affected by Executive Orders. It was received in my office on Friday, February 17, 2017. I have studied the Senate action carefully.

While I am supportive of the spirit behind the Senate Resolution, I cannot support WKU declaring itself a sanctuary campus, a designation for which there is no legal status. Such a declaration would potentially put WKU at risk with both the state and federal governments and could ultimately endanger financial aid and/or grant funding. I am also concerned that doing so would suggest a level of protection to students that the University cannot actually guarantee. WKU, and especially the WKU Police, simply must comply with all state and federal laws. We are an agency of Kentucky state government and must conduct our affairs responsibly.

As best I can tell, there are only 13 American colleges or universities which have made the absolute declaration that they are a sanctuary campus. Most of these are small private colleges without the same level of public accountability that we have at WKU.

After careful consideration, I offer the following in response:

- First, and foremost, we will do everything in our legitimate authority to protect all of our students.
- Provision No. 2 is not possible or prudent. WKU cannot interfere if Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and/or US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) have reason or need to investigate a WKU student.
- With regard to Provision No. 3, WKU would cooperate with a local, state, or federal law enforcement agency investigation but would do so while fulfilling our obligations under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which affords all college and university students specific privacy rights.

Memo to Dr. Kate Hudepohl  
Page 2  
February 21, 2017

- With regard to provision No. 4, WKU accepts students who meet our admission standards. All enrolled students have access to university resources and services, and all are valued members of the WKU family.
- To the extent it is lawful to do so, WKU will provide resources to support students and scholars adversely affected by the recent Executive Order or subsequent orders. I can only commit to providing in-state tuition rates to students who graduate from a Kentucky high school or high schools in our surrounding reciprocity counties. We can provide distance learning options for eligible students to complete their degrees. We will continue to provide our students with housing options throughout their time at WKU, including during holiday breaks and closures. Those seeking legal guidance will be appropriately directed.

My record of embracing our international students speaks for itself. We have worked hard over the last 20 years to grow our international student population and to create a welcoming environment for all students. While I understand the symbolic gesture that accepting this resolution may provide, I believe it is more prudent to remain focused on those tangible things that we can do to support students who may be impacted by current or future immigration actions.

GAR:sh