



# Howard County Council

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December 21, 2016

Howard Community College  
Office of the President  
10901 Little Patuxent Parkway  
Columbia, MD 21044

Dear Dr. Hetherington and Esteemed Members of the Board of Trustees:

Thank you for allowing us to have our Stand Up, Speak Up Howard listening session last night at Howard Community College (HCC). HCC has been lauded for your commitment to serving all our students and providing exceptional educational and financial opportunities so that every student has the chance to succeed. Continuing to achieve this, we believe, requires attention to the physical safety and emotional well-being of all students and staff by ensuring that HCC is a safe learning environment for everyone. While it is clear HCC does not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, or bullying and has taken steps to address these vital issues, after last night's community conversation, it is clear that there is still much work to do throughout the community, including HCC.

Last night, we heard from several undocumented students and recent graduates from HCC. All had positive things to say about the education at HCC. However, they were candid about the troubles they have faced, how many continue to keep their immigration status a secret for fear of reprisal, and how concerned they are about their futures in the New Year as this new administration assumes control. Their testimony reminded the crowd that this is their home, they are our neighbors, and we are a community. We emphatically believe this and know that we can, and must all do our part to serve as beacons of hope and inspiration for all students, regardless of immigration status.

It's our understanding based on comments from several past and present HCC students, that HCC has recently declined their requests for HCC to become a Sanctuary Campus. We are deeply concerned about this decision and respectfully request your reconsideration. Given the recent national political climate, increased incidents of hate speech and violence, and unfortunate statements made by our nation's President-elect, we must unite as One Howard County, proactively and publicly reaffirming a commitment to our undocumented students and communicating clearly that HCC will not part from its course. That HCC will help all of its students, including those who are undocumented, "Find [their] Path," and "discover a vibrant and welcoming campus."

At a time when many residents of Howard County, including students of HCC, both legal and undocumented, fear for their personal safety and the loss of civil liberties, HCC's policies and procedures continue to protect vulnerable students. This commitment may be tested under the incoming federal administration.

We respectfully request HCC consider reviewing and updating your policies as needed and providing accompanying cultural proficiency training for all professors, instructors, administrators, and staff to include the following components, which are some best practices based upon our experience as policy makers and educators:

- HCC personnel are authorized to ask for, and indeed must ask for, the ICE agent's credentials, the purposes for requesting access, and the justification of reasonable suspicion.
- HCC personnel should be required to demand that ICE agents produce appropriate written authority that instructs them to enter HCC property and states why.
- HCC personnel shall not ask about a student's or staff member's immigration status or that of the individual's family members.
- HCC personnel shall not be permitted to disclose, without appropriate legal consent, the immigration status of any individual.

In addition, HCC should have a well-developed plan for notifying students and their families about ICE efforts to gain information about students, staff, or their families, and how to support students and staff whose family members have been displaced by ICE. This plan should be communicated to all HCC students and personnel in all appropriate languages.

Thank you for your careful consideration of and prompt action on these suggestions and for your ongoing commitment to providing a safe learning environment for all HCC students.

All the best,



Dr. Calvin Ball  
Councilmember



Jennifer Terrasa  
Councilwoman

Cc: County Council  
County Executive Allan Kittleman  
Howard County State Delegation