



January 29, 2017

A message to the UMass Dartmouth community

As many members of the UMass Dartmouth community may already know, two members of our faculty were detained by U.S. Customs and Border Control officers at Logan airport yesterday afternoon (Saturday, January 28) upon their return from an academic conference in Paris. This was a direct result of President Trump's executive order, signed on Friday, restricting entry to the U.S. by citizens of seven foreign countries. Both professors are legal permanent residents of the United States with green cards.

Our first priority was to confirm the location and status of our colleagues and to take whatever action we could to ensure their safety and prompt release. Throughout the evening and early morning, we were in contact with the two professors and reached out to federal authorities and our elected representatives. Immigration lawyers and the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts also became involved. After three hours of detention, our colleagues were released Saturday evening and are now safely home. Federal district judges in several cities, including Boston, have issued orders preventing further enforcement of the executive order.

Now that our colleagues are safe, we want to be clear that we believe the executive order does nothing to make our country safer and represents a shameful ignorance of and indifference to the values that have traditionally made America a beacon of liberty and hope. This executive order is, furthermore, shockingly oblivious to the fundamental tenets of intellectual and academic freedom, which are enriched – not endangered – by international collaboration. As UMass President Marty Meehan said in a statement earlier today, “we are honored that ...international students and scholars choose UMass. They enrich our campuses and communities by providing a fullness of perspectives that helps fulfill our mission of research and public service....”

We wish to assure all members of our campus community that we will work with our colleagues in the UMass System and with others who are committed to individual and intellectual freedom to protect the rights, safety, and well-being of our international students, faculty, and staff.

Peyton R. Helm, Interim Chancellor
Mohammad Karim, Provost