# Sample Letter of petition for a sanctuary space

To [XXXXXX]:

This country’s institutions of higher education are foundations for scientific advancement, economic growth, technological innovation, cultural creation, and civic engagement. Through teaching, research, and service, our campus communities – students, faculty and instructors, and campus workers who support them – are engaged in a continuous defining and enacting of our nation’s highest ideals. While our institutions and our nation have too often fallen short of these high standards, the goals themselves are part of the engine that drives our progress as a nation.

President-elect Donald Trump’s hateful rhetoric threatens the climate in which this progress is possible. It has already taken a toll on our campuses. Swastikas, nooses, and racist graffiti are appearing on college campuses daily. Professors are being placed on watch lists. Tens of thousands of undocumented students face renewed threats of deportation. Muslim students and faculty were informed by the President-elect during his campaign that they will be forced to register on a federal database and may be issued government ID that lists their religion. Victims of sexual assault and hate crimes have heard Trump personally legitimate sexual violence, and signal that he will dismantle the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights, which has required college campuses to protect targets of sexual violence and to discipline those who have engaged in that violence. President-Elect Donald Trump has embraced morally repugnant ideas that are hostile not only to the values of the academy, but to the common good we strive for. The impending Trump presidency represents not only a threat to our basic academic and civic values, but to the people—students, community, faculty and staff—who make the educational enterprise possible.

[Our institution] must act to defend the ideals upon which it is founded and the people who bring them to life. We demand that the [institution] declare itself a Sanctuary Campus and make the following commitments to protect our community and our shared values:

* To refuse physical access to campus to U.S. Customs and Border Protection and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement for investigating or detaining students, faculty, and campus workers and prohibit campus security from inquiring about or recording as to an individual’s immigration status or enforcing immigration laws.
* To refuse to voluntarily release academic records, employment records, or membership lists of organizations to the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or other law enforcement agencies targeting members of the campus community solely on the basis of their immigration status, religion, racial or ethnic background, sex or gender identity, sexual preference, or political affiliation.
* To defend the principles of academic freedom and the free exchange of ideas from political interference. Specifically, institutions must decry and defend against the un-American practice of blacklisting faculty, whether they are tenured, untenured, or non-tenure-track. Institutions must similarly defend the free association rights of campus workers, students and their respective organizations.
* To aggressively protect the civil rights of all members of the campus community from crime. This must include actively protecting campus workers, students, and instructional staff against hate crimes and sexual assault, ensuring their physical safety, and providing for their ability to conduct their work in an environment free from intimidation and discrimination. This must include informing the entire college community that [our institution] will continue to use the guidelines for handling sexual assault cases released by the Office for Civil Rights on April 4, 2011 and expanded upon on April 29, 2014, and preserving the guidance regarding transgender students released on May 13, 2016.
* To provide the financial, academic, and social supports to students, faculty, and campus workers that are necessary to ensure true educational opportunity and economic well-being, recognizing that these supports are particularly vital for members of the campus community who may be the targets of government or private action solely on the basis of their immigration status, religion, racial or ethnic background, sex or gender identity, sexual preference, or political affiliation.

**What we are facing is unprecedented; our response must also be unprecedented.** Our students, our colleagues, and our community need to see that we will stand with them, and proactively reject any attacks on our campus. [Our institution] *must* take action to defend our campus from a presidential administration that has declared itself hostile to the American higher education community’s deepest values. Failure to meet these challenges is a betrayal of the college’s/university’s core academic mission and of the students, faculty, and campus workers who live this mission on a daily basis. We believe in a better and more just America, and we must demonstrate our convictions publicly.

We demand that [our institution] embrace the commitments described here, declare this a Sanctuary Campus, and work with campus leaders, student and employee organizations, and community groups to implement this declaration.