

***The Center for Education Equity and Diversity and Education and Social Justice Program
Sanctuary Statement***

The Center for Education, Equity, and Diversity (CEED) and the Education and Social Justice (ESJ) Program at Western Washington University (WWU) unites with students and community members who have appealed to the University to uphold its mission to serve “individuals of diverse backgrounds and perspectives in an inclusive, student-centered university...”. In specific response to appeals from the WWU Blue Group, the undersigned CEED and ESJ faculty publicly and unapologetically act in solidarity with undocumented students. We recognize that since the presidential election undocumented students have come under attack by others, including those from our own WWU community, simply because they are undocumented. This is a human rights issue and therefore we declare CEED/ESJ a student-centered sanctuary for undocumented communities on our campus. While future policy changes remain unknown, we will not tolerate violent, racist, hateful, and mean-spirited acts that reflect and reproduce white supremacy, homophobia, xenophobia, racist nativism, Islamophobia, and misogyny in CEED/ESJ spaces. The safety and well-being of undocumented students and students from a wide range of historically marginalized identities will be prioritized in CEED/ESJ and by CEED/ESJ faculty.

In collaboration with the WWU Blue Group, we declare CEED/ESJ a SANCTUARY SPACE. This means we prioritize the needs of the undocumented community as defined through the following actions. These actions will be upheld to the best of our ability as the undersigned CEED/ESJ faculty:

- Denying ICE access to CEED/ESJ spaces
- Refusing to provide ICE with information about the immigration status of students and their families
- Refusing hateful, criminalizing, and dehumanizing language
- Insisting on inclusive language that recognizes the interlocking facets of our identities
- Offering literature and multi-media resources that critically examines and situates the experiences of undocumented people
- Providing student-centered emotional and physical support
- Providing self-and-community care methods
- In the case of student detention, we are committed to provide personnel to seek legal help, and access to other resources to complete their degree
- Working collaboratively with other units across WWU so that our entire university becomes an inclusive place for those from historically marginalized identities
- Making the undersigned CEED/ESJ faculty immediately available to respond to student needs

- Developing step-by-step protocols for supporting undocumented students in varying contexts

As put forth by our colleagues at Portland State University, “We also note that it is imperative to recognize that as long as our institutional litmus test is “unless legally compelled to do so,” students who identify within politically and religiously marginalized communities may interpret our efforts as a façade. Without doubt, we have to balance the federal government’s potential threat to withhold funds for non-cooperation with our responsibility to all members of the student body. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, in the weeks since the election, over 700 incidents of violence have been committed against LGBTQ persons, women, Muslims, and people of color”.

As the political context unfolds, policy shifts, and we continue to collaborate with others in response to the Blue Group Sanctuary Campus document, these actions will be further detailed in collaboration with the WWU Blue Group and other undocumented students, CEED/ESJ faculty, and WWU historically marginalized students.

In Love and Solidarity,
Verónica Vélez
Kristen French
Anna Lees