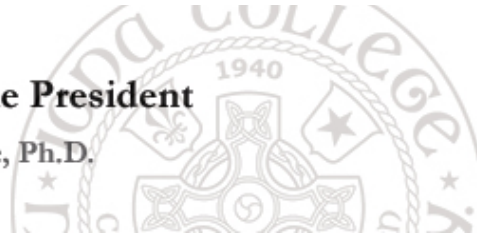




**Office of the President**

Joseph E. Nyre, Ph.D.  
*President*



January 26, 2016

Dear Members of the Iona Community,

In recent days, several announcements and potential actions regarding sanctuary cities, DACA, and immigration in general have been reported in the media. The implications of the statements, orders and actions are not entirely clear. Communities, scholars, policy makers, legislators and leaders across the country are sharing their concerns while working feverishly to better understand related implications.

While we work to share concerns and better understand what is being proffered, it is also important to ensure that we are clear about who we are. We are Iona College. We stand by our commitment to diversity and inclusion of ALL students. We embrace our: mission, vision, and values; our Blessed Edmund Rice charism; and, our Statement on Diversity (see next page). In doing so, we are a community striving to welcome and support all students regardless of country of origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, race or cultural orientation.

We will continue to support all members of our community and look forward to larger discussions and action emanating from the:

- 1) SGA Meeting this afternoon,
- 2) Upcoming College Council Meeting,
- 3) Spring college-wide town hall meeting,
- 4) Student Life programming activities including open counseling opportunities and #SpeakUpIona, and
- 5) A panel discussion with students, professors and our general counsel being organized by our Provost.

We will continue with our agenda for diversity and inclusion. We will continue to support each other.

God Bless You,

Joseph E. Nyre, Ph.D.  
President

# Iona College Statement on Diversity

Iona College strives to be a diverse community of learners and scholars dedicated to academic excellence in the tradition of the Christian Brothers and American Catholic higher education. We commit ourselves to education within the rich heritage of these legacies, especially intellectual inquiry and the values of justice, peace and service. Inherent in the Mission of Iona College is a commitment to diversity.

Therefore, the College seeks to promote, embrace and celebrate an open and inclusive environment for those of multiple backgrounds and differences including but not confined to age, lifestyle, national or ethnic origin, race, creed, color, sex, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, affectional preference, gender identity, citizenship status, disability or socio-economic background. A goal of Iona College is to foster an understanding, appreciation, and valuing of diversity. It holds that diversity should permeate all areas and aspects of Iona College in ways that demonstrate its institutional commitment to multicultural diversity.

As an inclusive institution, Iona College welcomes its faculty, student body, administration, staff and alumni associations to learn, grow and share their worldviews in a constructive manner. We recognize that diversity enriches the educational environment by fostering respect for differences, stimulating innovative teaching and learning, and preparing students to live and work in a global society.

*Please also note recent steps toward increasing student, faculty and staff diversity (on the following page).*



In recent years, Iona College has taken many important steps toward increasing student, faculty and staff diversity as well as to create an inclusive environment and increase supports for underrepresented populations. However, as noted in the recent letter from the President, and recognized during our year end planning meetings, we have much more to do.

As we plan for the 2017 academic year, the administration has called for strengthening the Bias Incident Response Team, strengthening hiring practices and procedures, updating College policies, and advancing a coordinating approach to facing division, by building bridges of unity.

As a community, we have implemented our [Strategic Plan](#), resulting in many initiatives and accomplishments including:

- Changing the College Council Constitution to establish a [Diversity Committee](#) as a formal part of college governance;
- Implementing mandatory diversity training for faculty, staff, and administrators;
- Changing the core curriculum of the college to include a focus on diversity and inclusion;
- Reviewing, revising and approving the institutional Statement on Diversity;
- Developing and approving an institutional statement on Academic and Artistic Freedom;
- Establishing various student clubs (most recently, SGA approved the creation of SLAM (Student Leader Alliance for Multiculturalism) in support of multicultural appreciation;
- Elevating the RESPECT campaign;
- Launching Strategic Plan Goal 4.B.5 to: *“Study best practices for increasing the diversity of faculty, staff and students and implement those that will bring results”*, then charged the Diversity Committee to examine changes in hiring practices and policies to elevate the diversity of faculty, staff and administrative hires.
- Launching and funding the Diversity Lecture Series
- Forming the Bias Incident Response Team (BIRT); and,
- Formation and action of the Unity Over Division Project Team and governance standing committees.

With the Strategic Plan, the College also introduced a revised Mission Statement and new statements on institutional Vision and Values citing diversity and diversity supports as paramount priorities for Iona.

While much has been accomplished, there is much more work ahead of us, as the student population continues to be increasingly diverse.