Call for All Public Colleges and Schools to be Sanctuary Institutions

WHEREAS, President-elect Trump was elected following a campaign that mobilized racism, misogyny, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, homophobia and other forms of violent, systematic oppression and his cabinet choices signal an unchanged commitment to normalizing racism; and

WHEREAS, all members of the community are affected when any of us are unsafe. No educational institution can operate in a climate of fear; and

WHEREAS, schools and colleges must be safe spaces for all students, faculty and staff; learning and collaboration cannot occur in an atmosphere of fear; and

WHEREAS, there are thousands of undocumented students and children in New York State’s public schools and colleges who were brought to this country as children or infants and now have no access to citizenship; and

WHEREAS, undocumented youth are at immediate risk. President-elect Trump has vowed to revoke President Obama’s executive actions, particularly those concerning immigration reform, such as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), which grants reprieve from deportation and allows undocumented youth to work. Trump has also proposed to create a dedicated task force that will focus on detaining and deporting undocumented residents; and

WHEREAS, the revocation of DACA places the most vulnerable new immigrants in danger. It could rip apart students’ families and destroy the lives they have worked to build for themselves against great odds. The “Dreamers,” as the students protected by DACA are known, are among the most determined and courageous; and

WHEREAS, there is a growing movement by students, faculty and staff to declare educational institutions “sanctuary campuses” defined by AAUP to be colleges and universities that make all efforts to guarantee the privacy of immigrant students and pledge not to grant access to information that might reveal their immigration status unless so ordered by a court of law and not to gather information about the citizenship or immigration status of people who have interactions with the administration, including with campus police. College and university police should not themselves participate in any efforts to enforce immigration laws, which are under federal jurisdiction. Faculty members should join efforts to resist all attempts to intimidate or inappropriately investigate undocumented students or to deny them their full rights to due process and a fair hearing;¹ therefore be it

RESOLVED, that NYSUT call on its affiliated locals to seek the support of their members to demand that their schools and colleges be declared sanctuary institutions; and

RESOLVED, that NYSUT support locals in demanding that

- their institutional administration unequivocally condemn any acts of violence, any threats and any expressions of bigotry,
- administrations refuse to allow immigration officials into their institutions unless specifically ordered to do so by a warrant or court of law,
- administrations refuse to provide information on the immigration status of undocumented students or any other sensitive information about faculty, staff or students to federal officials unless required by subpoena or court order, or unless prior, explicit authorization has been given by the individual concerned,
- administrations direct institutional security personnel not to take any role in enforcing federal immigration laws and not act on behalf of U.S. Customs and Immigration Enforcement (ICE) or any other immigration enforcement agents,
- they oppose surveillance of students, faculty and staff who are Muslim or Arab American, or members of any other community,
- they issue a public statement that urges state and federal governments to protect students, faculty, staff, and families from deportation, and calls for a path to permanent residency and citizenship for students, faculty, staff, and families.