

# Message from Interim President Stellar

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## UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

James R. Stellar, Ph.D., Interim President

December 5, 2016

Dear UAlbany Community:

Campuses across the nation, including UAlbany, are engaged in discussions about possible changes to federal protections for undocumented immigrants, focused on concerns about what these changes would mean for undocumented students. These conversations include calls to declare UAlbany a "sanctuary campus."

SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher recently issued an important memorandum on this topic to campus presidents, advising us that presidents do not have the legal authority to declare our campuses sanctuaries in relation to undocumented students, staff, and faculty.

However, Chancellor Zimpher encouraged us to use this opportunity to "reinforce SUNY's strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion." I wholeheartedly endorse the invitation to do so on our campus, as it helps us build on our significant ongoing efforts with our students to create an educational environment in which all can grow and develop their hearts and minds. We have taken many positive steps and we need to continue with that vital work. A full commitment to diversity and inclusion is a necessary condition for the excellence to which UAlbany aspires.

In terms of supporting existing law protecting undocumented students, I have joined the Chancellor and more than 400 college and university presidents in signing the ["Statement in Support of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals \(DACA\) Program and our Undocumented Immigrant Students."](#)

At the same time, the value of inclusivity requires us to protect freedom of speech and to encourage the expression of the wide range of opinions and perspectives held by members of our community. The dialogue must take place in an environment of mutual respect that protects the safety and rights of every individual.

I look forward to continuing to work closely with each of you to deepen our positive impact as a diverse and inclusive campus.

Sincerely,

James R. Stellar  
Interim President

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