

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UW Unions Urge University of Washington Campus and Medical Centers to Become “Sanctuaries”

Leaders present concrete steps to protect UW students, workers in the Trump Era

SEATTLE, WA -- Seven unions that collectively represent over 15,000 University of Washington employees held a press conference today urging UW President Ana Mari Cauce to take further action to make Seattle, Tacoma and Bothell campuses as well as all Univeristy Medical Facilities “sanctuaries”.

“Our opponents say that non-citizens and particularly non-white citizens are less central and less valued to our society, and therefore suitable targets for hostile action,” stated Andrea Canini, Bargaining Committee member for UAW Local 4121, the union for student workers. “Our movement says the opposite: that we are a nation of immigrants, including undocumented immigrants, who are a vital piece of our society who deserve to live without fear. We are not alone in expressing this vision.”

“There is a lot of fear right now and the University needs to ensure that their students, their staff, their patients that use these hospitals, that this is going to be a safe place for them to come too,” says Paula Lukaszek, President of WFSE Local 1488, representing staff, custodial and trade workers. “We are calling on the entire campus and the University administration to take additional steps now to keep all campus community members safe and ensure they know they are welcome.”

A delegation representing the coalition of UW unions presented President Ana Mari Cauce and Provost Gerald Baldasty with a [letter](#) on Monday, December 12th containing specific actions UW could take to create a “sanctuary” -- including but not limited to; a refusal to cooperate in efforts to deport undocumented students or staff, ceasing all voluntary information sharing with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), prohibiting UW Police from inquiring about immigration status, dedicating resources to support immigrant students and staff who are faced with urgent legal, housing, health or school needs related to anti-immigrant policy changes or detention, and continuing to allow qualifying “Dreamers” to pay in-state resident tuition.

“The unions are here to let you know that we want the University to show it’s concern for our members, students and faculty of this campus,” said Tom Small, UW Chapter President of SEIU 925, representing classified staff at UW. “We will remain the conscience of the University of Washington.”

“We as a union are ready to protect everyone’s civil rights and human rights, regardless of immigration status or religion or ethnic background,” added Richard Moore, Executive Board Member of AFT 6486, representing extension lecturers at UW.

“Our hope is that the University’s initial statements continue, and that the tensions, insecurities and hostility toward undocumented communities is not just highlighted now, but also over time,” said UAW 4121 member Vero Guajardo.

As part of these efforts, on Monday, December 19th at 9:30 a.m. in Seattle Center, we will join Congresswoman-Elect Pramila Jayapal, Gov. Jay Inslee, King County Executive Dow Constantine and other union and community leaders to declare Washington a Hate-Free state.

AFT 6486, The Inland Boatmen’s Union (IBU), SEIU 925, SEIU 1199NW, Washington Federation of State Employees Local 1488, the Washington State Nurses Association, and UAW 4121 collectively represent over 15,000 employees at the University of Washington.

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