November 15, 2016

Dear Fellow Graduate Students,

We stand in solidarity with groups that feel threatened by the recent divisive discourse, hateful speech and policy implications stemming from the presidential campaign and election.

We have asked the International Program Office (IPO) and the Chancellor’s office to be aware of their accountability towards forms of violence (foreseeable in their nature but not foreseeable in their specific manifestation target and degree). We have requested that the administration provide specific action plans to prevent these forms of violence. We would like the university to acknowledge the psychological distress that affects our fellow classmates, particularly those who have been historically marginalized.

We have asked the administration to refuse implementing policies of discrimination against undocumented migrants. We are concerned that policies such as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals could be eliminated, which would lead to disrupting and uprooting the lives of students who are vital members of our community.

GSS welcomes suggestions for proposed action and events that will serve to build solidarity and offer support to all of the affected groups. Please send us an email at gss-pres@grad.umass.edu to propose any action plan. If you would like to advertise an already organized action on- or off-campus, please let us know and we will be happy to disseminate the information. We will offer logistic and/or financial support for the implementation of proposed plans to the best of our ability.

We are prepared to start and support focus groups to assess the needs of our community, which would help create programs in an effort to reduce anxiety and fear given the uncertainty and threat in the air. We are also willing to organize support groups with the help of Center for Counseling & Psychological Health (CCPH) and Center for Women & Community (CWC). Please let us know if either or both of these sound like helpful avenues to pursue.

Our efforts will continue until we hear and see an official action plan on the part of the administration with concrete steps and definitions in place, a plan that ensures full protection and support for the entire graduate student body, and especially for the most vulnerable groups.

Sincerely,

Graduate Student Senate