Dear members of the campus community,

As I write this, I find myself reflecting on the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He said, “Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable. Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.”

We all have an important role to play in furthering the mission and values of our College. Central to these values is our commitment to enhancing and sustaining a campus culture that is inclusive and welcoming for all.

Some of you have voiced your concerns about the potential repeal of DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), and whether the College will support and protect those students who could be affected. At the December faculty meeting I announced our commitment to support our DACA students should a repeal occur.

During the latter part of the fall semester, Brad Lancaster, Director of International Student Services, and Darrien Davenport, Executive Director of Multicultural Engagement, arranged a variety of support services for our DACA students. These services included free legal advice for students in the form of in-person consultations with an immigration attorney, one-on-one counseling, and weekly gatherings of support. Gettysburg College is committed to meeting all educational expenses of our DACA students if they would lose financial aid due to a change in their immigration status. We will also protect the privacy of our DACA students—and all of our students—by continuing to abide by the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA); we will release student records only when required to do so by a judicial order or subpoena.

Some of you have asked why we are not declaring Gettysburg College a sanctuary campus. Different institutions have used this term to mean different things, creating confusion about its meaning. What I believe is most important is that we be clear about the actions we are taking to support our DACA students, as described here.

At Gettysburg we believe that a diverse and inclusive learning environment is essential to academic excellence, student success, and a thriving community. This has been a challenging time for our DACA students, and I ask that each of you personally provide support and encouragement to these Gettysburgians.

Let us stand by our mission and values, and let us stand with our DACA students.

Sincerely,

Janet Morgan Riggs ’77
President