September 5, 2017

Dear members of the Gettysburg College community,

Earlier today, the Trump administration made an announcement that it will rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. The enforcement of this decision will be delayed for 6 months to allow time for Congress to formulate a new plan for the over 800,000 individuals who benefit from DACA. In addition, the Trump administration will continue to renew permits for anyone whose status expires in the next 6 months.

Eight-hundred thousand is a big, impersonal number; however, the decision today could have a direct and devastating impact on individual members of our Gettysburg community—students we know, as well as faculty and staff who have family members who could be affected.

Beyond that, the College has a tradition of partnering with community organizations to provide information, expertise, and student power to support immigrants in Adams County through educational programs and advocacy. These individuals and families in the community—our friends and neighbors—could also be affected.

At Gettysburg College, DACA has enabled a number of students on our campus to feel security and stability in their status while they pursue higher education. These students, all of whom have grown up in America, are going to classes, working, studying, and contributing much to our community. They call Gettysburg College their home just as their classmates do.

Last winter, in a message to our community, I announced the College’s commitment to support our DACA students should a repeal occur. While we are still assessing the impact of this decision, I’m writing to you today to reiterate that commitment:

**Gettysburg College is committed to meet all educational expenses of our DACA students if they should lose financial aid due to a change in their immigration status. We will also protect the privacy of our DACA students—and all 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 law.**

We are committed to working with our DACA students to understand their situations better and offer them whatever support and guidance they need.

We live in a town that is immersed in American history, a place where Abraham Lincoln reminded us of our nation’s founding principle of equality for all. As I said at Convocation, we have a special responsibility as Gettysburgians to live up to that ideal. I also remind you that the College’s mission statement lifts up the worth and dignity of all people—and that is not dependent on their country of origin.
Let us come together to support and stand with our DACA students and those other members of our community who are affected. As I have said before, let us embrace the South African term *ubuntu*: we are indeed better together than apart.

Sincerely,

Janet Morgan Riggs
President