



Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for your letter.

We are all confounded by national events, and worried for our friends, students, and colleagues. I understand, respect, and share your instinct to try to protect them.

Like you, I am seeking actions that NYU could take that would deliver greater certainty and security for our fellow community members. However, I do not believe that declaring NYU a sanctuary campus would achieve that.

The term has no clearly agreed upon or understood legal definition. Such a declaration would not confer upon us any special status, or give us greater legal authority, or insulate our campus or our people from the law, or yield any additional steps (beyond [the ones we have already taken](#)) or resources to safeguard our undocumented community members. Indeed, it might wrongly convey to individuals in our campus community a sense of reassurance that we cannot, in fact, uphold. I worry that the very lack of clarity around the term sanctuary campus would allow others – people who are indifferent to the welfare of our students and colleagues – to define it in a way that could disadvantage those we seek to protect.

I am concerned that labeling ourselves in this way may yield no benefits to the people we are trying to protect and instead put them at risk.

As is true of other universities that have not embraced the use of the term sanctuary campus – including Harvard, the University of California, Princeton, and Boston University – NYU has set out clear, specific policies and actions it will take to protect the undocumented and other immigrants. These commitments are entirely in line with the specific requests you make in your letter. It would be a pity if terminology were to divide us when we seem so aligned on substance.

As I outlined in [November](#) and again [yesterday](#), the University's values are clear: we are committed to taking every step we can to protect and support immigrants and undocumented people at NYU. However, I do not believe declaring NYU a sanctuary campus would help, and I am concerned that it may do the reverse.

Sincerely,

Andrew Hamilton  
President