

## University of Maryland Department of History Statement of Values

Dear University Community,

The Department of History is fully committed to providing a positive environment for both American and international scholars and students. We consider our diversity and differences to be among our greatest strengths. In the current political climate, our shared commitment to free inquiry, open debate, critical thinking, and nondiscrimination faces challenges that call us to reaffirm these central values. We do so not only on our own behalf, but also on behalf of our colleagues, students, and neighbors who have been and will be directly affected by government actions designed to limit their influence and opportunities.

As teachers and intellectuals, we are aware that we are part of a “community of inquirers” that benefits from the free and open exchange of ideas. Government measures that limit civil debate, restrict its participants, or constrain global travel and collaboration will be deleterious to our work. Intellectual inquiry will not thrive in a climate marked by explicit, or implicit, encouragement or tolerance of prejudice based on race, ethnicity, religion, class, gender, or national origins.

As historians, we have a particular stake in the current debate. Our teaching and our writing are based on a scrupulous adherence to facts and an awareness that while we may differ about their interpretations and relevance, facts do exist. We therefore stand in strong opposition to the introduction of “alternative facts” and “fake news” into the national and global discourse.

Maryland’s own Frederick Douglass declared, “To educate a slave is to make him discontented with slavery, and to invest him with a power which shall open to him the treasures of freedom.” We reaffirm that knowledge and critical insight are human necessities that can only be fully attained in a free society. We are committed to defend the right of every human being to pursue these necessities in our classrooms, university community, America, and around the world.

The University of Maryland History Department  
February 18, 2017