I'm a PhD student in Geography at University of Kentucky (UK). I have been a teaching assistant and now am an instructor for regional geography courses on Latin America in our department.

My thinking for our session is informed by a few things:

1. The activism of students on UK's campus (teach-in in opposition to Trump's inauguration, petition to make UK a sanctuary campus, march against Trump's first Executive Order, the March for Science, and more).
2. I'm working on an ethnography of student's and administrator's reactions to immigration policy changes since the election: the Executive Orders, and possible changes to DACA.
3. I have a collaborator who couldn't be here this weekend. Rory Barron is an undergraduate student and he made an oral history on film: "Responses to the 2016 Election."

All this to say, what I share with you today comes from the activism of many students - graduate and undergraduate, at UK. Activism is challenging work and that's why I want to talk about and reflect on how we are building solidarity at UK.

Rory and I interviewed students who are directly affected by the Trump agenda: we predominantly spoke with international students, DACA recipients, students of color, queer students, and women. They told us that the political climate at UK is tense, polarized and that they feel self-conscious, uncomfortable, and unsafe. They describe carrying an intense emotional weight since the election and I am concerned about their capacity to carry that weight and how it is affecting both their time as students and in the long term.

Some students are pulling inward. They describe going to class and going home. They don't want to be on campus. They don't want other people on campus to hear them speaking Spanish or Arabic. They have other things on their minds, for instance, they are afraid for their parents and families who are also vulnerable.

But students are also speaking out and doing solidarity work - trying to break through this fear. For instance, after the election a ton of undergraduate student groups held this incredible event that was equal parts processing emotions after the election, introducing students to organizations and resources, and exploring what it means to show up for each other.

The teach-in against Trump's inauguration and the march against the Executive Order, both were on campus, are two events that students identify as bold actions that they feel opened up new political space on campus, and helped them to imagine different ways that solidarity, resistance, creativity, and non-compliance could manifest. They described how these events broke through the quietness, apathy, and isolation that they saw on campus. UK's not known for being an activist campus, but it got students thinking about how it might become one.
I feel like my role in this, I'm a graduate student who is teaching, is that we must pry open political space for students to take further action. It's not enough that we teach students about what is going on. I want to challenge my fellow graduate students and especially faculty in their relatively privileged positions to model actions for students. Too often I hear from professors, Deans, and other administrators, that it is students that must demand things of the university, and now that I'm in this in-between place of being a grad student, not an undergrad and not faculty, I don't think it's right to say "activism has to come from the students." In solidarity, we all have something to offer and we all have a responsibility to act.

We must step out of line and take more risks as Chandra Mohanty recently said in a talk at Temple University. This is particularly important in places like Kentucky which is a frontline battle site for defending abortion, the fight against white supremacy, and I could go on, but you know.

In closing I just want to share some of the favorite ways to model solidarity and care for each other I have been thinking about recently

- I'm inspired by the elementary school in NYC that turned away ICE agents that came for one of their students a couple of weeks ago.
- I think it is fantastic that people guerrilla postered UK's campus with images that said things like "no human being is illegal," "white silence is violence," and "be careful with each other so you can be dangerous together."
- My students are always challenging each other and me, and I think that these classroom moments are like solidarity work, they are messy and temporary, but discomfort is generative.
- And I think there are many lessons and political guidance that we should be seeking from activists. For instance, the DREAMers teach us that we can't rely on institutions, policies, laws, or sanctuary to protect people - instead we must rely on the people and our communities.

And that's where solidarity work is so important, so that people will be as ready as they can be in difficult and dangerous moments. For instance, it is solidarity work that helps people prepare to be non-compliant with immigration authorities. And deportation on a mass scale is not possible without our cooperation.

I am excited to create some materials out of this session. I have ideas for readings about solidarity and guidelines for teaching activism. Please ask me questions about our actions at UK: sanctuary, teach-ins, marches, I want to tell you more details, but there wasn't time in this short five minutes. If you want to see my collaborator Rory's film, please let me know. It's not publicly available yet but it's going to have a home in the UK archives soon.

**Bibliography**


Session Organizers: Banu Gökarıksel and Sara Smith
Participants: Lauren Duffy (Clemson), Jennifer Rice (UGA), Araby Smyth (UKY), Eli Meyerhoff (Duke), Ann Oberhauser (Iowa State), Risa Whitson (Ohio U), Farhana Sultana (Syracuse, remote connection).