

Chancellor's Ad Hoc Committee on DACA /Undocumented Students Proposed Recommendations

Friday, June 30, 2017

The Chancellor's Ad Hoc Committee on DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals)/Undocumented students was formed to review and study Syracuse University's current procedures for providing resources to DACA/undocumented students, explore best practices from other colleges and universities to fill any weaknesses or gaps that the University may have to better support such students, and collaborate with students, faculty, staff, relevant councils and organizations, and subject matter experts to identify and recommend ways in which the University can enhance its support of this group of students. The Committee also sought to address the concerns of students with "mixed-status" families, who may be citizens themselves but who have family members that are undocumented.

The Committee's scope was to address DACA/Undocumented students' needs throughout their entire Syracuse University experience, from the point of application through graduation and beyond. Through research undertaken by the Committee and feedback received from a student focus group, we have identified a set of recommendations that fit within the larger scope of the institutional goals as reflected in the One University strategic plan and the Diversity & Inclusion Council recommendations. Due to the ever-changing landscape of national immigration issues affecting these students and their families, the Committee has structured our proposal to include recommendations that address immediate as well as short-term and long-term needs.

Recommendations

- I. Immediate (By July 1)
 - A. Communicate to impacted students about current campus support contacts.
 - B. Identify career advising expertise for graduating students that takes into consideration their unique circumstances.
 - C. Assemble an institutional immediate action team until other recommendations are implemented. This team will respond to urgent scenarios and provide emergency response, legal and academic advice, and education to the campus community.
 - D. Given the rapidly changing legal context of this issue, identify a specialized legal expert and provide impacted students access to advice and assistance.
- II. Short Term (Within the next academic year)
 - A. Highly Visible Campus Leadership and Support Network
 1. Create a permanent committee with a formal structure for oversight and accountability that can also be ready to convene quickly as needed. This

committee should reflect the composition of the current Ad Hoc Committee, including students (particularly DACA, undocumented, and students with mixed-status families), faculty, and staff, ideally carrying over some Ad Hoc Committee members to maintain continuity. The committee should also formally address “mixed-status families” in the title of the committee.

2. Designate a University-wide single support contact to act as an entry point and liaison for this population with the greater campus community. Ideally, this person will be publically listed and highly visible as a contact.
 - a) Competencies should include familiarity with the impacted student population, campus support services and resources, and possess a strong network on campus.
 - b) Responsibilities of this liaison:
 - (1) Chair the standing committee and maintain a campus support network and list of legal counseling contacts.
 - (2) Keep the campus community (particularly academic department chairs and student service unit directors) informed of developments related to this population of students.
 - (3) Personally contact identified new students, assist students with arrival to campus, and host an informal orientation.
 - (4) Organize workshops in tandem with campus service units to meet the unique needs of this population. For example, advising about off-campus and study abroad opportunities as undocumented/DACA students.
 - (5) When applicable, also organize student transportation to relevant off-campus events, including legal clinics or workshops.
 - (6) Solicit faculty mentors for these students.
 - (7) Host conversation hours for students similar to ‘commuter lunches’ in the Office of Off-Campus and Commuter Services, or the Hendricks Chapel free lunch and discussion.
3. Utilize designated liaison to educate and connect students to existing campus resources and support units that meet the unique needs of this population; for example, the Center for Learning and Student Success (CLASS), the Office of Student Assistance, the Counseling Center, and peer mentoring programs.
4. Update the Student Employment website language related to non-Federal Work Study job listings to indicate that DACA students with valid employment authorization documents (EADs) are eligible to apply.
5. Provide career and alumni networking support such as the Center for Advances Systems and Engineering (CASE), the Mary Ann Shaw Center for Public and Community Service (CPCS), the Alumni Association (specifically to network with undocumented status alumni), and Career Services. Individual schools and colleges, as well as Career Services, should maintain lists of relevant opportunities for students who are undocumented/DACA.

B. Communications

1. Provide standardized language that all academic departments and campus offices may utilize indicating that faculty and staff are open and welcoming of students from all immigration statuses. Also provide standardized language that faculty may include in syllabi about accommodating immigration emergencies.
2. Create a DACA/undocumented/mixed-status family webpage on the Syracuse University website as a portal to house the content below:
 - a) a solidarity statement (example: [Georgetown University](#));
 - b) a campus support network contact list indicating single points of contacts within various student service units;
 - c) links to campus and community resources such as legal counseling resources, counseling, multicultural affairs, international services, etc.;
 - d) a Know Your Rights section;
 - e) printable PDFs of resource material;
 - f) information on national scholarships available to DACA/undocumented students;
 - g) an immigration related community events calendar listing events such as pop-up legal immigration clinic notices, campus workshops, etc;
 - h) statement of recognition of non-Latino communities (as recommended in the [UndocuCollege Guide](#), pg. 11);
 - i) a video explaining the process of accepting admission to Syracuse University through the point of arrival and orientation check-in, including applying for housing, scheduling classes, and traveling to and from campus (this can also apply to international students, first-generation students, etc.);
 - j) contacts within relevant multicultural student organizations;
 - k) and translation of home page information into relevant languages such as Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, and Korean.
3. Create and implement a social media communications plan to push out information and updates to current and incoming students, and enhance the University's message of diversity and inclusion.

C. Training

1. Provide professional development training to faculty and staff that regularly work with this population, to teaching assistants, and to student leaders (resident advisors, orientation leaders, and other peer mentor programs on campus); the [UndocuAlly Training Program](#) is an example.
 - a) Develop an institutional lexicon for addressing this population.
 - b) Offer a variety of training format options, such as stand-alone workshops or as part of academic department meetings, student leader meetings, office staff meetings, etc.
 - c) Create a visual symbol of support (such as door stickers, posters, or a logo) for faculty and staff to display in offices and/or departmental websites upon completion of training.

III. Long-Term

- A. Develop a campaign aimed at establishing a legacy scholarship fund for DACA/undocumented students. Use these endowed funds to increase the

number of undocumented students admitted to the University to contribute to the institution's mission of being an inclusive and diverse community.

- B. Initiate a Global University theme.
 - 1. Include ally training in Human Resources onboarding sessions.
 - 2. Include ally training in faculty orientation and within the First Year Forum faculty training.
 - 3. Address immigration issues in Freshman Forum classes with new students. Include common readings such as *Lives in Limbo* by Roberto G. Gonzales.
 - 4. Invite expert lecturers to campus.
- C. Once the number of undocumented students grows:
 - 1. Establish a Resource Center.
 - 2. Develop an undocumented student pre-orientation program.

Conclusion

In creating this ad-hoc committee, Syracuse University has taken a step forward in recognizing the unique needs of our undocumented and DACA students, as well as the similar needs of our students with mixed-status family members. These recommendations are a snapshot of the needs we are aware of at this current moment and are by no means static. With the continually changing environment, we encourage the permanent version of this committee to revisit and re-assess these needs periodically and adjust the support offered accordingly.

We extensively utilized the UndocuCollege Guide and Equity Tool (2016) in our analysis, along with other peer institutions' best practices and DACA/undocumented student websites; however, our current DACA and undocumented students, and students of mixed-status families, were by far our most helpful resource. Hearing their stories and perspectives were invaluable. We strongly encourage the continuation of these conversations, as we feel it is the University's responsibility to empower all of our students with a safe, supportive learning community and the opportunity to share their unique ideas and experiences.