

A Blueprint for a Coalition for Dreamers

We in the Latino Caucus applaud the efforts made by President Cole and the University Senate in support of our community touched by the current capricious immigration context. In the spirit of those efforts, we have developed a blueprint on supporting our undocumented and DACAmented students here at Montclair State University. Following best practices for campus-based supports, we propose a blueprint for action along three axes: welcoming undocumented and DACAmented students; protecting those students; and supporting those students. This approach is based in developing and offering multiple points of support from coordinated offices and groups on the Montclair State campus. We ask for your endorsement of the blueprint to show support for such an approach.

First, we hope to clarify that undocumented students are welcome at Montclair State. Equal access for undocumented students can be a challenge because of misinformation about access from high schools and doubts about access when filling out admissions and financial aid paperwork. For example, we wish to ensure that the university is able to communicate to guidance counselors about resources available to undocumented high school students wishing to enroll at Montclair State. The university can ensure that website information for these students is clear and understandable.

Second, we hope to protect these students and their information. For example, information about citizenship status should be limited to necessary applications and computer programs.

Third, we would like to support these students. We propose to develop safe spaces where any student can come and obtain informational, logistical, social, and emotional support on immigration questions. Trainings or workshops for staff, faculty, and students will enable them to better support undocumented and DACAmented students. We would like to compile a university-wide set of off-campus resources, for example for legal assistance, where we might refer students. Partnerships with community-based and immigrant organizations would facilitate building such resources.

A central means of accomplishing all three of these goals is communicating and sharing information between relevant and interested offices and groups on campus. Such groups include but are not limited to the International Services Office, Financial Aid, Counseling & Psychological Services, the Dean of Students, University Police, the Office of Equity and Diversity, Admissions, the ESL program, the Educational Opportunity Fund Program, the Latino Caucus, Local 1904, and interested student groups. We propose developing a repository of information on such matters, an immigration-related wiki, to share information effectively and quickly. This could be done on a platform like Canvas. The current precarious context of immigration-related issues augments student stress with misinformation and the protracted process of sharing relevant and accurate information across offices and groups. Information sharing can go a long way towards mitigating the uncertainty—and anxiety and fear—for undocumented and DACAmented students.

We look forward to a conversation with the administration about these and other ways that our university can work with other offices and community actors to follow best practices for welcoming, protecting, and supporting our undocumented and DACAmented students.

The Latino Caucus