

The rising STAR of Texas

MEMORANDUM

TO:

Dr. Denise M. Trauth

President

FROM:

Dr. Jaime Chahin, DACA Task Force Chair

Dr. Ron Johnson Dr. Kama Davis Mr. Jesse Silva Mr. Ramces Luna Dr. Bob Vasquez Dr. Stella Silva

Ms. Yunuen Alvarado Bustos

DATE:

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SUBJ:

DACA Task Force

DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) is a program reimplemented as a presidential executive order in 2012. The order recognizes individuals that meet certain criteria:

- Were under the age of 31 as of June 15, 2012;
- Came to the United States before reaching one's 16th birthday;
- Have continuously resided in the United States since June 15, 2007, up to the present time;
- Were physically present in the United States since June 15, 2012, and at the time of making their request for consideration of deferred action with USCIS;
- Had no lawful status on June 15, 2012;
- Are currently in school, have graduated or obtained a certificate of completion from high school, have obtained a general education development (GED) certificate, or are an honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States; and
- Have not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, or three or more other misdemeanors, and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety.

Current Capacity:

- The University adheres to its responsibilities related to Title V and its Hispanic-Serving Institution designation.
- The University continues to strengthen need-based financial aid.
- Latina/o Studies, with its Academic Advisory Committee, currently shows 42 interdepartmental courses available over various semesters.

- Many of the faculty who are involved in the Latina/o Studies Minor are directly involved or somewhat involved in immigration research regarding Latina/o identities.
- Latina/o Studies has partnerships with the Center for Research and Policy, Center of the Study for the Southwest, Center for Diversity and Gender Studies, Center for General Studies, Wittliff Collections, and Philosophy Dialogues
- Health, counseling, career services, and legal services are offered to all students.
- University College-- via PACE, CAFE, and its freshman seminar-- increase a sense of belonging for all students and meet the diverse needs of students.
- The primary purpose of the University Police Department (UPD) is public safety for all at Texas State University. UPD does not have any policy specifically pertaining to DACA, and UPD does not ask about immigration status because it does not relate to their policies and practices. UPD does not enforce immigration policy, and UPD will not detain a student on the basis of immigration status.
- Students who need information about reapplying to the DACA program are referred to Michelle Sotolongo (Student Development Specialist, Honors College), Jesse Silva (Associate Director, Student Diversity and Inclusion), Angelica Coronado (Director, Attorney for Students), Kama Davis (Attorney, Attorney for Students), and Student Community of Progressive Empowerment (SCOPE, a student organization dedicated to supporting immigrants).
- <u>Texas House Bill 1403 (2001)</u>, also widely known as the Texas Dream Act, allows all students to apply for state financial aid regardless of immigration status, including undocumented students with or without DACA.
- Via the "In Limbo: Dilemmas Faced by Undocumented Students" training, Student Support Staff provide continuous training for staff (including those in financial aid and admissions) and faculty, and this includes information on Bobcat Dreamers.
- Student Support Staff promote the Bobcat Dreamer Safe Office Program which requires units to have 50% of Full-Time Employees trained through "In Limbo" training.
- Our Director of Financial Aid and Scholarships is Director and Past President of the Texas Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators and has been encouraging the TASFA (Texas Application for State Financial Aid) to offer an online application.

Recommendations:

• The University needs to continue to enhance the digital communication and management skills of the students, faculty and staff. Use high-quality data to advance transparency, and encourage decisions based on evidence to improve communication and outreach.

- The University should diversify their communication platform to enhance timely and quality responses to social media.
- Share messages on social media to amplify the higher education message. Share your stories with @ACEducation on Twitter using the #ProtectDreamers hashtag.
- Produce a marketing video to inform and educate the public about DACA on an ongoing basis.
- Provide and advertise forums to educate and inform the University community about the facts regarding individuals and families under DACA.
- Intentional communication that encourages DACA/undocumented students to access academic and support services offered through tuition and service fees.
- Develop collaborative events between academic departments and student organizations to ensure engagement and retention of immigrant students including DACA/undocumented students.
- Offer continuous training for best practices for faculty and staff recruitment.
- Encourage Student Government to facilitate a dialogue between students and UPD.
- Promote the Bobcat Dreamer Ally Training to increase "Bobcat Dreamer Safe Offices" which welcome immigrant students including DACA/undocumented students and support them by creating a network of those who have completed that training.
- Provide opportunities for faculty to find ways to be more informed about DACA and to achieve best practices for teaching and supporting immigrant students including DACA/ undocumented students.
- Provide faculty with training information to be able to understand how to support our immigrant students including DACA and undocumented students in order to help in developing a more welcoming and helpful environment.
- Train all faculty who teach US 1100 to integrate diversity content into course discussions.
 Promote services and opportunities related to immigrant students including DACA/undocumented students' status by encouraging faculty to include a list of resources within their syllabus.
- Have Organizational Development and Communications establish a professional development training focused on DACA for faculty and staff. Integrate the training into the training calendar and catalog.
- To advance an academic affairs approach, in addition to that of student affairs, we need to consolidate the support of all academic researchers who can approach DACA from

multiple perspectives and through different lenses. Create a **Dream/Immigrant Resource Center** that consolidates all academic research and resources efforts.

- To ensure timely and accurate recommendations, establish a standing committee, known elsewhere as a Hispanic-Serving Institution Advisory Board, that advises the President of shifting student demographics and trends.
- A Student Development Specialist or Coordinator for immigrant students should be appointed, and that person needs to be hired for a position that will focus on providing support to immigrant students including DACA/undocumented students throughout the campus community.
- The Director of Financial Aid and Scholarships requests the DACA Task Force to develop a message regarding confidentiality and FERPA protections. The message is to remind students of their right to privacy and that their financial aid information will not be shared.
- To ensure students understand their financial need and their financial aid package, Financial Aid and Scholarships should collaborate with training workshops and should partner with SCOPE and other relevant offices and groups.
- Financial Aid and Scholarships should further streamline and minimize conflict with flagging to ensure students have timely access to financial aid funds.
- Parents of undocumented students have to be counseled and guided about filing annual income tax returns in order for students to receive aid.
- Engage in continuous development of a supportive community, space, and place for immigrant students including DACA/undocumented students to flourish at Texas State.
- Develop alumni and donor-based scholarships and accounts to fund program and cocurricular opportunities that support the retention of immigrant students including DACA/undocumented students.
- Foster a campus climate that promotes retention, completion and graduation and one that celebrates the achievements of all students.