Wake Forest University Support for Undocumented Students

What does undocumented status mean?

- Undocumented refers to people who are not United States citizens or Permanent Residents of the United States, who do not hold a current visa to reside in the United States, and who have not been approved for legal residency in the U.S.

- Undocumented individuals have an opportunity to participate in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Federal Program to avoid deportation and receive work authorization in the United States. The program announced June 12, 2012 by President Barack Obama protects undocumented applicants who came to the United States as children from deportations. The program also gives work authorization for a renewal period of 3 years. It is important to note that DACA is not a law or regulation. It is an executive order and does not provide lawful status only lawful presence.

- Additionally, in 2014, President Barack Obama announced a series of executive actions for immigration, including expansion of DACA. The expansion allows parents of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents who have been present in the country since January 1, 2010 to apply for protection from deportation and employment authorization for 3 years. To date, more than 700,000 young people have gained temporary protection from the possibility of deportation.

- It is also important to note that while all DACA participants are undocumented, all undocumented individuals are not DACA participants. Selection is contingent upon completion and review of an individual’s DACA application.

What is the current concern or climate for undocumented students?

- President-elect Donald Trump said that he would end DACA after his inauguration on January 20, 2017. Until that time, DACA will remain in place and the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services will continue to process both initial and renewal DACA requests; however; many students are concerned for their wellbeing and that of their families.

- There has never been large-scale immigration enforcement directed at undocumented individuals at American colleges and universities. It is far from clear whether the new administration will target, include, or exclude current DACA students and other undocumented members of our nation’s campus communities. It is also unknown what form such actions might take.

- Many students come from mixed immigration status families, meaning there may be United States citizens, lawful permanent residents (green card holders) and undocumented family members all in the same family. The protections available and
options to obtain immigration status vary among families and among family members. Because Donald Trump said that he would end DACA and change immigration laws, students are concerned that some of their family members who are undocumented will be deported, disrupting their family units and leaving some without parents, siblings or close relatives.

- Students are also concerned how an end to DACA and the enactment of new immigration laws might impact their ability to continue their studies on campus as well as abilities to study abroad and access to jobs and internships post-graduation.

What might be sensible for DACA students to consider doing now?

- The possible changes to DACA could have serious implications for DACA students studying abroad. If DACA were rescinded while a DACA student is out of the United States, there may be no way to return. Anyone with DACA status studying abroad for the fall semester or temporarily out of the country during winter break should make plans to return to the United States before the new administration takes office on January 20, 2017. DACA students who intend to study abroad next semester should fully understand the risks of leaving the country. We encourage students to make alternative in-country plans.

- DACA students who are within 180 days of the end of their status period are eligible to apply for renewal of their status and may do so now. Processing times for renewal applications filed today are well over two months; there is no guarantee that the new administration will continue to grant DACA renewals, and the application fee is $465.

How is Wake Forest supporting undocumented students at this time?

- Many members of the University administration, faculty, and staff are deeply concerned about the fear created by recent political rhetoric and recognize how many in our community feel unsafe, unvalued, or unwelcome because of the current divisive climate. We pledge full support, and that the wonderfully talented staff that are here will help undocumented students get the most from their Wake Forest experience.

- Staff members in the Wake Forest University Scholars Office located in 102 Reynolda Hall, the Intercultural Center in Suite 346 Benson University Center, and the University Counseling Center in 118 Reynolda Hall and the Office of the Chaplain in Suite 22 Reynolda Hall are all resources for undocumented students. The same confidentiality protections associated with the University Counseling Center and the Office of the Chaplain apply to all students.

- The University also ensures that student privacy remains guaranteed and refuses all voluntary information sharing with United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP) across all aspects of the
University to the fullest extent possible under the law. We will continue to provide scholarships, support and counseling services, and connection to legal resources for undocumented students.

- The University is committed to ongoing dialogue with students about additions to the University policy and support for community efforts that protect immigrants and other members of marginalized communities who study, live, and work at the University and their families and the community.

**Will undocumented students be able to continue their studies if there’s any interruption due to changes in immigration laws?**

- The University will work with students to ensure they are able to continue their studies and encourage students to seek support from Office of Academic Advising should they encounter any personal or familial hardship or challenges due to changing immigration laws.

**What is a Sanctuary Campus and why did Wake Forest decide not to become a Sanctuary Campus for undocumented students?**

- Designation as a Sanctuary Campus represents a symbolic statement of a university’s commitment to protect students who lack legal immigration status. However, this concept has no clear or substantiated basis in law, and colleges and universities have no authority to exempt any part of their campuses from the nation’s immigration laws which designation as a Sanctuary Campus suggests.

- We do not believe adopting the position strengthens our community as we are already operating in a way that supports the wellbeing of undocumented students. The University ensures that student privacy remains guaranteed and refuses all voluntary information sharing with United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP) across all aspects of the University to the fullest extent possible under the law. We will also continue to provide scholarships, support and counseling services, and connection to legal resources for undocumented students.

- President Hatch also joined hundreds of other university leaders in signing the petition asking the president-elect to uphold, continue and expand the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy implemented in 2012. Wake Forest is also a member of the “Every Campus a Refuge” program, providing housing and other forms of support for newly-arrived political refugees from around the globe.
Is Winston-Salem, N.C. a Sanctuary City and is it relevant that an institution is geographically within a Sanctuary City?

- A Sanctuary City is another term with no consistent definition and does not involve a legal status that is recognized under federal law. Winston-Salem is not a Sanctuary City. Sanctuary City policies and practices vary around the country. One motivation and benefit of a Sanctuary City is to encourage undocumented immigrants to feel secure going to the police for help or cooperating if they have information that can aid law enforcement. In a Sanctuary City, police and municipal employees may be instructed not to inquire about an individual's immigration status, and the city's resources are not allocated to enforce federal immigration laws.

What financial support is available to undocumented students?

- Undocumented immigrants are not eligible for federal student aid; however, if the student has been granted DACA they can fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to get their Student Aid Report (SAR). The SAR report is sometimes used by community/private scholarships or institutions to grant financial aid that is not connected to federal or state funding to undocumented students. Additional information can be found at: https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/sites/default/files/financial-aid-and-undocumented-students.pdf

- All undocumented students at Wake Forest University maintaining satisfactory academic progress will retain their institutional full scholarship support.

If a student discloses their undocumented status to me, what should I do?

- Educators for Fair Consideration, a nonprofit comprised of diverse coalition of undocumented young people and allies created a resources that names 10 ways people can support undocumented individuals. You can access the resource at this link: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EGNrsdXF0j3CWoHp0i6np0K8xcoFvV22AIL8itwRFus/edit

- Additionally, please encourage students to find out about their rights and options. Undocumented members of our community who may need legal service providers for immigration options may consider the following:

  Faculty in the Wake Forest University School of Law School are available as needed for referrals to legal services. Please contact Steve Virgil at virgils@wfu.edu and Margaret Taylor at taylormh@wfu.edu.

  The Immigration Advocates Network maintains a national directory of more than 950 free or low-cost nonprofit immigration legal services providers in all 50 states. It can be found online at https://www.immigrationlawhelp.org.
• Encourage members of the community to follow the news. The proposed immigration policies have not been enacted. It’s impossible to predict which ones will become a reality and when. Members of the community need to follow credible news organizations to see what develops and to assess which may most affect them.

What training or educational materials are available for staff and faculty wanting to learn more about the experiences of undocumented students?

• uLEAD Network and the National Forum on Higher Education for the public good offers an informative online course on immigration and higher education policy. The course aims to significantly increase awareness and understanding of unauthorized immigrants and federal and state higher education policies that promote and constrain educational opportunities for undocumented students. Members of the community can access the course at http://uleadnet.org/content/immig-education-policy

• The College will provide updates to College faculty and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion will provide updates to staff on the impact of changes to DACA and immigration-related policies on an as-needed basis. This will not only include the impact on Wake Forest students, but also these students’ overall well-being as well as their families. The University recognizes that getting pertinent information to faculty and staff as quickly as it becomes public and clear is the most efficient and effective way to ameliorate the impact of current and future immigration policies on the academic success of our students.

• The National Association of College and University Attorneys (NACUA) will sponsor a webinar on December 8 from 12-2:00 PM EST for higher education professionals to learn more about DACA, sanctuary status, and other post-election issues that impact higher education. The NACUA member rate (also available to ACE members for this webinar) is $265 per site. Details for the webinar can be found here: https://www.nacua.org/program-events/online-virtual-education/december-8-2016-webinar/

Sources used for the development of this document:
https://www.ilrc.org/daca
http://uleadnet.org/content/immig-education-policy
http://www.e4fc.org/whatcaneducatorsdo.html
American Council on Education: IMMIGRATION POST-ELECTION Q & A: DACA Students, “Sanctuary Campuses,”and Institutional or Community Assistance

Updated December 12, 2016 | 5