

ADVOCATING FOR UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS ON CAMPUS

**GENERATION
★
PROGRESS**

The Trump Administration has moved to put the futures of 800,000 young people at risk with the plan to rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. Many of these young undocumented people have lived in the United States their entire lives, knowing no other home since being brought to this country as children.

Many undocumented people, especially those who qualified for DACA, are students getting ready to enroll in or complete their college education.

Now more than ever, we need to do all we can to make college campuses a safe and supportive environment for undocumented students and make sure they have the resources they need to earn their degrees without exceptional risk and financial hardship.

Use this toolkit to help organize your campus to better aid and advocate for policies at colleges and universities that support undocumented students. How you choose to go about your advocacy can and should be unique to your capabilities and strategic thinking, but we hope this toolkit will help guide you as you work to affect change!

GET TO KNOW THE LANDSCAPE

- **Figure out the status quo.** Look into what policies your school has regarding admissions, services, financial aid, and campus security policy for undocumented students. It's important to understand how your school already supports or does not support undocumented students.
 - Be on the lookout for policies referencing DACA, which would need to be adjusted if the policy changes. For example, if your school requires undocumented students to have DACA to be admitted or granted aid, that's a problem you should know about.
- **Reach out.** Consider organizations and school departments that would have information regarding policies and services for undocumented students, like a sponsored student advocacy group on immigrants' rights or your school's Student Affairs office.

FIND LIKEMINDED STUDENTS

- **Talk.** Reach out to undocumented students on campus or groups that specifically advocate for and are led by these students.
 - If you don't know of any groups that specifically deal with immigrants' rights, and if you can't find a group in the student organization registry for your school, the next best thing is to approach a "multicultural" or "diversity and inclusion" department for information on who advocates for undocumented students.
 - You can also identify and connect with local affiliates of the youth-led, undocumented immigrants' rights organization, United We Dream, at info@unitedwedream.org.
 - Listen to undocumented students' obstacles and concerns in the areas of admissions, school services, financial aid, and campus security policy.
- **Gather your newly formed group** of likeminded students and figure out what changes you all agree on before going to your school administration.

CAMPAIGN ON CAMPUS

- **Create a petition letter** on behalf of the student body asking the school administration to support undocumented students, listing the specific ways it can take action.
 - Build public, social, and traditional media pressure (consider writing an op-ed for your school newspaper!) around the effort to support undocumented students.
 - Encourage faculty and students to sign your petition letter leading up to a meeting with school administrators.
 - Examples of such letters can be found [here](#) and [here](#) from United We Dream.

CAMPAIGN ON CAMPUS *cont.*

- **Identify other campus groups** to join in the petition and organizing efforts. If necessary, ask your student government to back a list of actionable items to send to the school's president or chancellor.
 - Be on-message with policy and language. Avoid using language that hurts your cause like "illegal alien" or "illegal immigrant."
 - It can be tough to keep a broad coalition on the same page, but having a large base of multi-race, multi-ethnic, multi-issue cultural and/or advocacy groups support you shows how important this issue is and will be helpful when meeting with school administrators.
 - Include faculty, department chairs, and staff in your advocacy, which will help facilitate meetings and add pressure to the issue.

TAKE THIS TO DECISIONMAKERS

- **Schedule a meeting with the office of your president or chancellor** to formally bring your petition and requests to the school administrators.
 - Insist on meeting with the president's/chancellor's chief of staff or the president/chancellor themselves.
 - Let undocumented students lead the conversations as they want.
 - Insist that the school address the concerns you are bringing to the meeting, show what other schools are doing to address those concerns through examples, and explain the benefits of adjusting or reforming policy.
 - Be prepared to explain the legal basis for policies, where necessary. Make clear how your school can enact certain policy changes, as laws allow. [The National Immigration Law Center](#) and [Harvard Law Today](#) have resources on this subject, and if you have any questions, you can contact us at hello@genprogress.org for support.

TAKE THIS TO DECISIONMAKERS *cont.*

- **Be persistent.** Insist that any policy pertaining to undocumented services – especially on any changes in policy – around admissions, school services, financial aid, and campus security policy be made public.
 - Sometimes a school might think it best not to completely publicize how it's supporting undocumented students for strategic reasons. If that's the case, make sure your school is at the least providing that information to current undocumented students and undocumented students who are considering applying to your school.
- **Schedule follow-up meetings** to review conclusions of the administration on what they intend to do for their undocumented students, and how policy will be rolled out and made public.
- **Let us know how things are going** at your school by emailing us at hello@genprogress.org and sharing social media updates and tagging @genprogress. We're happy to help and want to make sure your good work gets recognition!