

October, 2010

Georgia Bans Undocumented Youth from Higher Education: Letter from UCLA Student President and IDEAS at UCLA

In the midst of very promising progress with the Federal Dream Act it is nothing less than a massive blow against the work and effort that students nationwide have dedicated in advocating for the Dream Act for lawmakers in Georgia to introduce legislation to ban undocumented students from obtaining access to public institutions of higher education. Furthermore, it is a complete contradiction for a university such as Georgia Tech that boasts a campus motto of "Progress and Service" to be one of the campuses that would begin to exclude a sector of students from receiving access to higher education.

As the student body representatives at UCLA, we understand that it is our duty to foster and encourage education, tolerance, access and retention within institutions of higher learning. We would only hope that legislators, educators, and educational administrators in every state would also uphold their duty to advocate on behalf of students despite citizenship status---as we understand a student's willingness and capacity to learn and ability to add to the richness and diversity of the educational environment of a campus community should be the two primary considerations for determining a student's admittance, regardless of documentation status. Students in this country deserve the right to higher education, especially at institutions deemed public that aim to serve local communities in which they are housed. It is disgusting and misguided at best for Georgia to adopt these xenophobic laws that aim to alienate and disenfranchise a legitimate population of hard working, and deserving students.

Furthermore, as undocumented youth and allies at UCLA, we are in solidarity with our undocumented peers in Georgia and we understand that an attack on education anywhere is an attack to education everywhere.

On behalf of the Undergraduate Student Association at UCLA, we strongly oppose any legislation that attempts to alienate and restrict undocumented students in their plight to gain higher education in this country. The Student Government at UCLA are allies of higher education and we urge elected officials and decision makers to also side on behalf of education.

On behalf of Improving Dreams, Equality, Access and Success at UCLA, we will not stand by as our community continues to be unjustly attacked. Rather than pushing young individuals into underground economies, we hope you will help keep our American youth on a path towards education and away from hate and fear.

Learn about it:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/10/13/georgia-illegal-immigrants-ban_n_761131.html

Do something about it:

http://www.change.org/petitions/view/tell_georgia_regents_to_repeal_ban_on_undocumented_students

--Sofia Campos and Mario De Leon

IDEAS at UCLA, Co-Chairs

www.ideasla.org

--Jasmine Hill

University of California, Los Angeles

Undergraduate Student Body President