

**University President Statement in favor of the DREAM Act**



**“Why We Support the DREAM Act”**

In the university admissions process, we do not judge a student based on his or her immigration status. Instead, we look for talent. We scrutinize SAT/ACT scores and grade point averages. We read thousands of essays. We seek out leaders and community servants. And every year, undocumented students are admitted to our colleges, fair and square.

Many undocumented students cannot afford college (they are not eligible for financial aid or work study). But some do manage to overcome language barriers, financial barriers, and the stigma of being undocumented to enroll in our institutions. Like their peers, they are star athletes and promising artists. They are honors students and student government representatives. Like their peers, college is a time for them to fall in love, to make mistakes, and to forge life-long friendships. They pull all-nighters and change their majors like all other students do.

The only difference is that when these students graduate, they will have no way to work legally in the country they call home: the United States. Because of outdated immigration laws, they will not be allowed to serve in our military. They will not be able to fulfill their dreams of owning their own businesses or becoming doctors or lawyers.

Our economy needs their talents more than ever. Our military is spread too thin. But to these aspiring students, our country says “no thank you.” Don’t start your business. Don’t cure the sick. Don’t make the ultimate sacrifice.

Universities are institutions committed to the education of young people. It is our duty to prepare the next generation for lives of service and achievement. So when one segment of our community is cut off from educational and career opportunities, it is also our duty to act.

At times in American history, we have withheld educational opportunities from women, from African-Americans, from Jews. But each time, universities stepped into the fray. Our campuses desegregated. We opened our doors to women. We said no to religious discrimination in higher education. Each time, universities were called upon to provide equal access to education and career opportunities. Today, we can rise to the challenge again.

The DREAM Act would allow undocumented youth who graduate from an American high school the chance to earn legal status by completing college or entering the military. The bill is about preserving the American dream and lifting up the values of hard work and fair play. That’s why the DREAM Act has won support from Democrats and Republicans, military veterans and faith leaders, business owners and labor unions.

We are proud to support the DREAM Act. We call on every member of Congress – Democrat and Republican – to support this bill when it comes up for a vote after Thanksgiving. Let’s show the rest of the nation what it looks like to put aside party politics in favor of our common values of hard work and fair play.

The time is now. Our economy cannot afford to shun another business owner. Our military cannot afford to spurn another recruit. And our universities should again be institutions where hard work is rewarded without regard to the personal status of our students.

*Signed by*

**Dr. Michael J. Hogan, President of Illinois University**  
**Rev. Dennis Holtschneider, C.M., President of DePaul University**  
**Rev. Michael J. Garanzini, S.J., President of Loyola University**  
**Dr. Sharon K. Hahs, President University of Northeastern Illinois University**  
**Dr. Charles Middleton, President of Roosevelt University**  
**Dr. Donna Carroll, President of Dominican University**

*To join statement, please contact Stephen Smith ([ssmith@icirr.org](mailto:ssmith@icirr.org)), with the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights.*