DACA, Immigrant Students and Community Colleges

Presentation to the AACC Commission on Diversity, Inclusion and Equity

November 16, 2017
A refresher: What is DACA and who does it affect?

• Since 2012, has provided 2-year work permit & temporary protection from deportation for undocumented youth

• Currently ~690,000 DACA recipients

• Enables students to participate in work-study and internships, travel abroad, and plan for the future

Photo credit: Flickr user Antonio R. Villaraigosa

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What’s happening at the federal policy level?

• September 5, 2017: President Trump rescinds DACA

• October 5, 2017: Last day for DACA recipients to apply for renewals

• Now: Approximately 122 DACA recipients are losing their status every day

• After March 5, 2018, roughly 983 people per day will lose DACA status

Data sources: Center for American Progress; CNN; US Citizenship and Immigration Services.

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Implications for community colleges

• Student DACA recipients losing the ability to participate in travel and employment opportunities

• Students may lose access to state financial aid if state “tuition equity” legislation is tied to DACA status

• Additional impact on student mental health and well-being
What are the fixes?

• Congress is considering **multiple bills** to address the issue: DREAM, RACC, SUCCEED…

• Big Q: Will the path to citizenship be wide and inclusive, or narrow and steep?

• Keep in mind: **DACA recipients are only a subset** of the Dreamer population
Implications for community colleges if Dreamer legislation passes

• **Surge** in individuals eager to earn higher education credentials

• Increased demand for **on-ramps to higher ed** for those without secondary credentials (e.g. Integrated Education and Training programs a la I-BEST)

• **Higher stakes** in ensuring student persistence and degree completion
Implications if Dreamer legislation does not pass

• Economic and morale impacts on current students
• Potential effects on CC staff and faculty
• Potential effect on future student enrollment pipeline
Making the Economic Case: Dreamers in Your Community

- US businesses face a middle-skill gap
- Community colleges play an important role in preparing people for middle-skill jobs
- Dreamers are an important part of the middle-skill solution

Also see handout for links to resources from Migration Policy Institute, New American Economy, Center for American Progress, and more.
Beyond Dreamers: Other recent developments

Federal policy changes:

• Temporary Protected Status
• Visa renewal processes
• Naturalization backlogs
• Enforcement priorities
What do these changes mean for community colleges?

• **Less predictability** and stability for immigrant students, staff, and faculty

• Potential for impact on employees

• Increased “friction” and cost of doing business for individuals, institutions, and businesses

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