

## NASPA Priorities for Immigration Policy and Higher Education

NASPA supports legislation that fosters the full participation of immigrant students, faculty, and staff in our institutions, that lessens ambiguity and negative impacts on students and the services to support them, and that creates a more robust and inclusive higher education community. Efforts to increase college enrollment for marginalized students may positively affect the wealth of the states<sup>1</sup> and our nation and support efforts to close the gap in high school graduation and college attainment rates. Further, financial support for undocumented students increases college affordability for these students, which has been an issue widely connected to college completion rates for racial minorities.

NASPA's priorities for immigration and in particular support of undocumented individuals include:

- **Create a permanent pathway to citizenship for the 3.6 million qualifying undocumented immigrants, referred to often as “DREAMers.”** This includes legislation that neither excessively limits the number of qualifying undocumented individuals for citizenship nor increases the criminalization of immigrants to a point that the pathway to citizenship becomes nearly impossible.
  - **Create a permanent pathway to citizenship for past and current DACA program beneficiaries.** DACA recipients contribute substantially to institutions of higher education and use the benefits provided by the DACA program to support their families and communities at large. DACA recipients are not just students, but also faculty and student affairs professionals on campuses across the country. These individuals deserve the peace of mind and certainty in the form of a permanent solution would provide.
  - **Develop or reinstate programs that would create pathways to citizens for individuals who have resided in the United States for decades.** NASPA reaffirms support for undocumented students and colleagues in light of the decision by the Department of Homeland Security to rescind the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA) program and the continued litigation battle over the future of DACA. The rescission of DAPA and uncertain future of DACA fuels a growing harmful stigma around who is deserving of the undocumented community both on- and off-campus.

<sup>1</sup> Bergeron, D. and Martin, K. (February 19, 2015). Strengthening Our Economy Through College for All. Center for American Progress:

<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education/reports/2015/02/19/105522/strengthening-our-economy-through-college-for-all/>

- **Oppose legislation or regulatory action which includes punitive and unnecessary limitations to legal immigration, such as “public charge”, or which is predicated on a false narrative of immigrant criminal activity or participation.** Policies proposed by the White House for the creation of a physical wall along the U.S. border with Mexico are costly and do little to address the facts of how immigrants gain access to the United States. The curtailing of family sponsorships and termination of the diversity visa lottery program jeopardize the economic growth of our nation’s knowledge economy. Further restricting an already overly limited system by unfairly targeting immigrants from war-torn and developing nations serves neither our national economic interests nor our national security.
- **Increase financial assistance opportunities for immigrant students.** NASPA supports legislation at both the state and national levels that increases access to higher education for immigrants, including in-state tuition policies and access to state and federal financial aid for undocumented individuals brought to the U.S. as children.
- **Continue humanitarian asylum policies and relief for immigrant and international students fleeing personal and political violence.** Recent developments by the Department of Justice limit opportunities for asylum of immigrants fleeing their home countries due to domestic or gang violence. NASPA supports policies that provide relief for these individuals deserving of asylum.

## About NASPA

NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education is the leading association for the advancement, health, and sustainability of the student affairs profession. Student affairs is a critical component of the higher education experience, collaborating with colleagues across institutions of higher education to offer students valuable learning opportunities, meaningful social engagements, and safe and inclusive environments. NASPA’s Public Policy Agenda is grounded in a commitment to ensuring opportunity for all institutional members’ students and a belief that higher education is a great benefit to both individuals and society.