

November 30, 2016

Members of the Manhattan College Community,

For your information, and as a contribution to our continuing campus-wide discussions of our mission-grounded commitment to human dignity and social justice, I am sending you a link to a statement issued today by the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU). I have joined with dozens of leaders of Catholic institutions in signing the statement, which reaffirms our collective commitment to educating and supporting recent immigrants and the children of immigrants, including those who meet the criteria for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy, issued in 2012.

The statement:

Catholic education has been part of the fabric of American life for more than two centuries. Our colleges and universities share a long history of educating students from a diverse array of socioeconomic, geographical, and ethnic backgrounds, often welcoming those on society's margins, especially immigrants and underprivileged populations. Today, Catholic institutions of higher education continue this mission and legacy. Our college and university communities are home to students from around the world who seek to contribute to American society, to the life and mission of the Church, and to their own formation and growth by pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Many of us count among our students young men and women who are undocumented, their families having fled violence and instability. These students have met the criteria of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy, issued in 2012. We, the undersigned presidents of Catholic colleges and universities, express hope that the students in our communities who have qualified for DACA are able to continue their studies without interruption and that many more students in their situation will be welcome to contribute their talents to our campuses. Undocumented students need assistance in confronting legal and financial uncertainty and in managing the accompanying anxieties. We pledge to support these students – through our campus counseling and ministry support, through legal resources from those campuses with law schools and legal clinics, and through whatever other services we may have at our disposal.

When Pope Francis visited the United States last year he had this to say to the World Meeting of Families gathered in Philadelphia: "Among us today are members of America's large Hispanic population, as well as representatives of recent immigrants to the United States. Many of you have emigrated (I greet you warmly!) to this country at great personal cost, in the hope of building a new life. Do not be discouraged by whatever hardships you face. I ask you not to forget that, like those who came here before you, you bring many gifts to this nation." We are committed to educating these young people, brought to the United States by their parents, who come to our universities to build for themselves and us a brighter future.

In addition, ACCU has created a resource page on the issues on its website:

<http://www.accunet.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageID=4003>

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President

