

## Update on Access to Higher Education for Hispanic/Latino Students From the Federal to Local Level

### Federal Legislation – DREAM Act

Federal Legislation directly affecting access to higher education for Latino students is the DREAM Act. The DREAM (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) was introduced into the Senate in November of 2005. It is currently in the Judiciary Committee waiting to be voted on. Many think that a smaller bill will be introduced in the House at any time. Currently no NC Senators are co-sponsoring the bill.

The DREAM Act was introduced in the Senate (S. 1545) in 2003 and in the House (as the Student Adjustment Act-H.R. 1684). Although the bill was approved in Senate committee it never came to a full vote in the Senate. If enacted the DREAM Act would:

- Eliminate a federal provision that discourages states from providing in-state tuition without regard to immigration status,
- Permit some immigrant students to apply for temporary legal status, eventually obtain permanent status and become eligible for citizenship if they meet certain conditions (came to the US before the age of 16 and 5 years before the date of the bill's enactment, have graduated from a US high school, and have good moral character).

(Source: National Immigration Law Center, DREAM Act Summary. For more information go to [www.nilc.org](http://www.nilc.org)).

### NC State Legislation – In-state Tuition

**At the current time no in-state tuition bill has been reintroduced in the NC House or Senate.**

In April 2005, House Bill 1183, "Access to Higher Education and a Better Economic Future" was introduced. This state legislation would have allowed immigrant students, who graduated from a North Carolina high school and met the residency requirements of the state, to pay in-state tuition. Although there was broad support for the bill, it never left the NC House of Representatives Education Committee, due largely to vocal anti-immigrant groups.

### Public Universities in North Carolina

**Policy:** Currently NC public universities are accepting undocumented students; however, they must pay out-of-state tuition.

Due to policy adopted on November 12, 2004, UNC campuses have opened admission to qualified, undocumented immigrant students who have graduated from high school in the US. Undocumented immigrant applicants do not qualify for in-state residency for tuition and shall be charged at the out-of-state tuition rate. (Full text of the policy can be accessed at, [http://intranet.northcarolina.edu/docs/legal/policymanual/700.1.4\[g\].pdf](http://intranet.northcarolina.edu/docs/legal/policymanual/700.1.4[g].pdf).)

**Resources:** Students that are accepted at public universities can apply for private scholarships. Students can also be eligible for full scholarships from the university.

### Independent (Private) Universities in North Carolina

**Policy:** Currently independent (private) universities and colleges can set their own policy regarding admission of undocumented students. Independent four-year colleges and universities should be contacted individually for information about admission eligibility for undocumented immigrant students.

**Resources:** Students that are accepted at independent universities and colleges can apply for private scholarships or institutional scholarships.

### Community Colleges in North Carolina

**Policy:** Currently each NC Community College can set their own policy regarding admission of undocumented students. Some Community Colleges are accepting undocumented students; however, they must pay out-of-state tuition. Adopted in August, 2004, the NC Community College System has determined that, "Local community colleges have the discretion to implement admissions policies that permit the enrollment of undocumented immigrant applicants to curriculum, continuing education and basic skills programs. Undocumented immigrant applicants do not qualify for in-state residency for tuition and shall be charged at the out-of-state tuition rate for curriculum programs." Each community college should be contacted individually to inquire whether or not the school has chosen to adopt the policy.

**Resources:** Students that are accepted at community colleges can apply for private scholarships.

For a list of NC Community Colleges and their status in admitting undocumented students please visit the NC Society of Hispanic Professionals online at [www.TheNCSHP.org](http://www.TheNCSHP.org).

Information compiled by participants of the Adelante Education Coalition.

Center for Participatory Change, College Foundation of NC, El Pueblo, Inc., NC Justice Center, NC Latino Coalition, NC Society of Hispanic Professionals, Student Action for Farmworkers