November 29, 2016

Dear Western Faculty,

In light of the volatile political climate surrounding the recent presidential election, we write to offer some useful information, specifically regarding one of our most vulnerable populations, our undocumented Western students.

It is important to know that undocumented students have legal rights. However, these rights are often difficult to protect and historically have been abused. Faculty can educate themselves about these rights and the ongoing effort to protect them [here](http://www.example.com). As early as 2003, the Washington State legislature passed the historic [HB 1079](http://www.example.com), which conferred on these students the status of state residents for the purposes of higher education which then allowed them to pay in-state tuition. This House Bill was later strengthened by [The Real Hope Act](http://www.example.com) in 2014, which permitted them to apply for state financial aid.

Along with these state laws, in 2012, President Obama created [DACA](http://www.example.com), Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, an executive order, issued through the Department of Homeland Security, which offers students who qualify a temporary stay of deportation.

During his campaign, president-elect Trump promised to rescind DACA, an act he can perform swiftly once he is sworn into office. All students who have registered with the program with the promise that they will be able to attend school could be subject to deportation.

Our undocumented students thus find themselves in an unusually vulnerable position. Many are fearful of impending changes in law and policy that might radically affect their lives. In addition, since the election, undocumented students have been subject to hate speech, harassment, and violence across the country. As faculty, it is incumbent upon us to offer them compassion and support.

What can we as faculty do to support our students?

- **Educate ourselves**
  Along with the links above, Student Outreach Services offers an excellent page of resources for [undocumented students](http://www.example.com).

- **Be aware of newly developing resources**
  Western has established a new webpage, “[Caring for the Western Community](http://www.example.com)” which offers information about, among other things, a new helpline (650-3773). This helpline provides supportive and informed listeners who can offer referrals to appropriate services and answer questions.

- **Service**
  The [Faculty Senate President Blog](http://www.example.com) also offers a good source of information, including, soon, opportunities for faculty who wish to learn how to integrate support of undocumented students into faculty service responsibilities.
• **Donations**
  For faculty considering making a donation to the [Washington State Combined Fund Drive](#) and who wish to contribute to cause of our undocumented students, there are opportunities among the many organizations listed. You can find them through the extensive [Charity Guide](#) (a good starting point might be the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, p. 22)

• **Treat our students with compassion and respect.** Be advocates, be allies, and report all incidents of harassment and discrimination to the [Equal Opportunity Office](#).

This last point deserves elaboration. In the brief weeks since the election, the nation has experienced an alarming number of incidents of hate speech, harassment, threatened violence, and actual violence. Significantly, [The Southern Poverty Law Center](#) notes that 40% of the over 700 hateful incidents of harassment reported in the week following the election occurred in educational settings. Of these incidents, which are anti-immigrant anti-black, anti-LGBT, anti-Muslim, anti-woman, and anti-Semitic, immigrants are the most targeted group.

Western has zero tolerance for harassment and discrimination, and as faculty, we need to be advocates for all of these threatened students. We need to report incidents of harassment when we see them, and we need to be allies to those who are threatened.

Our undocumented students have legal rights, as well as the right to a safe, respectful learning environment. As faculty we can actively work to create the conditions under which all our students have access to an excellent education.

Sincerely,

**The Faculty Senate Executive Council**

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Below you will find the links embedded above, along with a few more useful sites:

- The Northwest Immigrant Rights Project: https://www.nwirp.org
- Realhopewa.org: http://realhopewa.org
- The Southern Poverty Law Center: https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2016/11/18/update-incidents-hateful-harassment-election-day-now-number-701
- United We Dream: http://unitedwedream.org
- Caring for the Western Community: https://wp.wwu.edu/cfwc/
- Student Outreach Services: Undocumented Students: https://wp.wwu.edu/sos/undocumentedstudents/
- Washington State Combined Fund Drive: https://wp.wwu.edu/cfd/