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Letter - Reaffirming Our Support and Commitment to All Students

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Reaffirming Our Support and Commitment to All Students

September 5, 2017

To the university community:

Today, the Justice Department announced that it is ending DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and will stop considering new applications for legal status, but will allow any DACA recipients with a permit set to expire before March 5, 2018, the opportunity to apply for a two-year renewal. The extension gives Congress six months to act on DACA, the executive order issued by President Obama in 2012 that allows eligible undocumented immigrants to have a work permit, attend college, and be protected from deportation for a renewable, two-year period.

While the final outcome will be debated in the months to come, I want to reaffirm University of the Pacific's strong support of all of our students, including those who are undocumented. In mid-January, shortly after the election of President Trump when concerns about the fate of DACA were expressed by many in our university community, *I took a firm stand that our students' immigration status and/or their religion should never affect their ability to access and benefit from a Pacific education.* I want to reassure you that University of the Pacific remains steadfastly committed to the well-being of all of our students regardless of their immigration status or their religious background. We will continue to provide a respectful, safe and inclusive environment and continue to embrace the intellectual freedom, religious freedom, and freedom of expression that are the hallmarks of being a Pacifican.

In support of our students and all college students, we will seek to influence federal policies and actions as Congress begins its work. Shortly after the election, I joined more than 600 university presidents across the nation in a [petition](#) urging the incoming administration to continue to honor the promises of DACA. I also serve on the governing board of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU), because doing so will allow me to understand, influence and advocate for federal policies and actions that are consistent with Pacific's commitment to diversity and the inclusion of all students. Through this important organization, our collective voices can powerfully advocate for justice and fairness and allow us to be true to our values and our commitment to students.

Consistent with our mission, our principles and our values, we commit to the following:

- The university will continue to welcome applications to its programs from qualified applicants who are undocumented, including those who have DACA immigration status or who are DACA-eligible. If DACA is revoked, we will expand financial assistance to impacted students. In addition, we will continue our practice of making financial aid available to undocumented students from private or public sources legally available to them from the State of California.
- If the university receives requests for information that implicate individual privacy rights, it will work closely with the Office of General Counsel to protect the privacy of those members of the community in compliance with federal and state student privacy laws. We will not release immigration status or related information in confidential student records to federal agencies or other parties without permission from a student, or without a judicial warrant, a subpoena, a court order or as otherwise required by law.
- University of the Pacific campus public safety officers are here to protect our students and the university community. Officers will not contact, detain, question or arrest an individual solely on the basis of suspected immigration status or to discover the immigration status of an individual. University police will not detain an individual in response to an immigration hold request from ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement), or any other law enforcement agency enforcing the immigration laws, unless doing so is required by law.
- The university does not tolerate acts of hatred, discrimination or harassment against members of its community based on their citizenship or immigration status, race, religion or other status.
- The university will not cooperate with any federal effort to create a registry of individuals based on any protected characteristics such as religion, national origin, race or sexual orientation.
- The people of our institution and our larger community benefit from the talent and expertise of our faculty. We are grateful that our faculty members versed in immigration law and the constitutional rights of individuals will be strong voices on our campuses, in our communities and on the national stage. We have a [webpage](#) on DACA that has comprehensive information and resources for students, faculty and staff.

While we don't know what will come from Congress, we do know that our work today is more important than ever. By fostering mutual respect, engaging in difficult dialogue, and caring for one another in these uncertain times, we will become not only a stronger organization, but a powerful force that makes the world a better place.

I am reminded yet again why I am proud to be President of this exceptional university.

Sincerely,

Pam Eibeck