



HACU Policy Statement

Immigration and the Future of the Nation*

I Background

Immigration has been the basis for the unparalleled economic and industrial growth and development of the United States. New immigrants have brought new ideas and made major discoveries that have enhanced the economic and social life for the entire nation.

Currently, the U.S. is in a period of increased population growth through immigration, particularly from Latin American countries. Immigration brings to the United States' marketplace, individuals with expertise and training in agriculture; food production; manufacturing; processing and distribution; infrastructure development of roads, highways, and transportation venues; construction; education; and economic and business management among many others skills.

During the next two decades, this influx of new immigrants will be needed to counter the retirement of an aging cohort and the decline in numbers of the native-born population. The exodus of the post-WWII cohort from the workplace will require a massive infusion of highly educated individuals with high levels of technological proficiency and scientific knowledge. Without a highly competent and properly trained workforce the U.S. will lag behind other nations that are moving quickly to educate and train their citizens to create and fill professions and occupations requiring such skills. To remain in the forefront, the U.S. must commit greater investments toward educating and training the nation's youth.

To address emerging workforce challenges, the U.S. will need to draw on the skills and energy of all immigrants, regardless of their residency status. Hispanic youth are achieving exemplary academic credentials in our secondary schools and have the potential to become the foremost leaders and members of the professional workforce of the U.S. Unfortunately for some, their economic and residency status prevents them from matriculating in our postsecondary educational system.

II. Past and Future Initiatives Necessary to Develop and Strengthen Our Future Workforce

The U.S. Congress and State Legislatures have already begun to address this issue. The bipartisan Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, first introduced during the 108th Congress, reintroduced during the first session of the 109th and again in the 110th Congress, is of critical importance to the education community, and particularly to our nation's fast-growing "emerging majority" populations. The DREAM Act allows states the flexibility to offer in-state tuition to students, regardless of their immigration status, thus allowing students the opportunity to achieve the dream of a higher education. This measure will benefit those deserving students who have met the same rigorous academic requirements as their college-bound peers, but who now lack access to financial aid and in-state tuition provided to other students. Most importantly, the DREAM Act will provide these talented and hard-working students with a pathway to citizenship and allow them to pursue their professional goals and aspirations.

III. The Role of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) in the Education and Development of a Future Work Force for the Nation

Many HSIs are located in communities where Hispanic youth without proper residency documentation live, making these HSIs well-situated to provide postsecondary opportunities to these youth. By providing educational opportunity and a pathway to citizenship for undocumented Hispanic youth, the nation would benefit significantly through the education and development of future leaders, educators, and professionals in areas of critical importance to the nation's economic well-being and security.

HSIs have the capacity and experience in educating individuals for work at the professional, para-professional, and technical areas of expertise. From community colleges that offer associate's degrees and technical and vocational certificates to four year teaching and research institutions that open doors to professional careers and advanced degrees, the nation's HSIs are equipped to address the educational needs of the workforce of tomorrow.

HACU POLICY STATEMENT

HACU and its membership strongly support a comprehensive, fair immigration law that protects our borders, upholds our values as a multicultural nation, and strengthens our economy and prosperity by providing educational opportunity for all students and, in particular, for immigrant students.

To accomplish this goal, HACU and its membership will work with the 110th Congress, the Administration, and other associations and organizations to advocate for the DREAM Act and other appropriate legislation, so that all students, and especially immigrant students, have the opportunity to complete their college education and become contributors to the American Dream.

HACU policy statement on immigration and the DREAM Act approved unanimously by the HACU Governing Board on March 25, 2007 Governing Board meeting.

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THE CHAMPIONS OF HISPANIC SUCCESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION