

Dear Members of the Franklin & Marshall College Community,

A few minutes ago, on behalf of the Trump administration, Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced a decision to rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program through a phased “wind-down process.” While many practical details remain to be announced by the federal government, it is clear that this decision personally affects some of our students and, in diverse ways, many throughout our campus community.

DACA is a program that allows young people brought to the U.S. as infants or children to apply for renewable two-year work or study permits. Since 2012, about 800,000 young people (often referred to as “Dreamers”) have freely come forward to register with the U.S. government through the DACA program. Many of these young people have gone on to earn college degrees, enlist in the military, become teachers, and work in many fields, contributing significantly to our society, economy, and tax base. Ninety-seven percent are reported to be working or studying full time.

Here at F&M, we welcome, value and believe in our Dreamers. Many times during the last year, including over the past week, the College has called for the DACA program to be continued until a permanent legal status can be secured for the Dreamers through new Congressional legislation. While the Trump administration’s decision is deeply disappointing, new legislation is now an urgent priority and viable option, given that there is genuine support for the Dreamers among Republicans and Democrats, and throughout America’s business, academic, and religious communities.

I am proud to say that F&M’s Dreamers have excelled academically and made major contributions to this campus, our educational mission and society. Since last November, following the change in Presidential administrations, F&M has worked to hear and respond comprehensively to the individual needs of our students. We will continue to take all necessary steps so that our students can pursue their educational goals here at F&M, including vigorously protecting the privacy of all our students to the extent that the law allows. For example, we will not voluntarily disclose information about any student’s immigration status, and law enforcement agents cannot come onto campus to interview an F&M student without a valid warrant. In these challenging times, we have many caring educators and support services for students who may be impacted by this change in policy.

Consonant with our mission to educate talented students of all backgrounds, over the past nine months, Franklin & Marshall College has signed four collaborative letters alongside many educational institutions and made clear our support of DACA and Dreamers to our elected representatives. In the wake of the Trump administration’s decision, we will continue to support our own students while redoubling our calls for Congress and the President to enact new legislation to secure the futures of these young people.

We cannot predict whether Congress will act, but there is much that each of us can choose to do. First and foremost, we can respect the dignity of individuals within our community who may be vulnerable. We can protect others’ privacy. We can learn more about immigration

issues. We can support the efforts of non-profit organizations serving immigrants. We can contact our legislators and advocate for policies we support.

And, we can all extend our hands in friendship to Dreamers and their families, as well as to all newcomers, immigrants and refugees at Franklin & Marshall, in the City of Lancaster and in our home communities.

Sincerely,

Dan Porterfield

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