

Members of the Macalester community,

On September 5, 2017, the President of the United States—speaking through Attorney General Jefferson Sessions—rescinded the policy of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA.

Barring legislative action from Congress, this means that about 800,000 people who were brought to the United States as children will lose their legal eligibility to work and attend school and will face deportation, in many cases to countries of which they have no memory and whose language they never learned to speak. 800,000 people who provided personal information to the federal government with the understanding that it would not be used against them could have that information used against them.

Every independent analysis concludes that the elimination of DACA, the vast majority of whose recipients are employed, serving in the military, or in school, will be economically harmful. It takes no degree in economics to conclude that the upending of more than three-quarters of a million lives, absent a compelling reason, is capricious and cruel.

At Macalester the elimination of DACA is more than simply a question of policy or politics. It poses a direct threat to members of our community. DACA recipients are our students and our workers, our classmates and our teammates, our friends and our role models. When we speak about creating a safe and supportive campus, about being an inclusive community, we do not make exceptions. Indeed, we take it as a special responsibility to extend our hands to those among us who are most in need of help.

At a time when most of us are excited about the start of a new school year, some of our students are facing expulsion from the only country they have ever known.

Macalester will do all in its power to provide legal assistance and other forms of support to students who are placed at risk by the elimination of DACA. We will honor our students' right to privacy. We will lobby members of Congress to create a legislative solution before the deadline established by the President. We will seek opportunities to join with other colleges, organizations, and businesses to strengthen our impact through collective action.

We must, and we will, abide by the law. We will also keep in our minds and our hearts the words of Martin Luther King, Jr.: "***A just law is a man made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law.***" Republican Senator James Lankford has said that "we as Americans do not hold children legally accountable for the actions of their parents." Each of us must decide on the justice and morality of a law that would criminalize 800,000 of those children.

If you are a student affected by the DACA decision, or if you are aware of an affected student who is in distress, please do not hesitate to contact Sedric McClure, Assistant Dean for College Access, Retention, and Success, or Cárol Mejía, Program Assistant, or to reach out to other members of the Macalester staff and faculty.

Even the most casual observer of history is aware of the human capacity for both hatred and love, destruction and creation. Even as his “right” to be in the United States was being called into question, a 31-year-old DACA recipient, Alonso Guillen, sacrificed his life attempting to save others from the flooding in Houston. The least we can do is honor his example by refusing to give up and by meeting darkness with light.

Brian Rosenberg
President, Macalester College
September 5, 2017