



Letter to the Editor
July 25, 2010

A broken immigration system

As university faculty we're not supposed to have favorites in our classrooms. But we must admit that we do work with some "DREAM" students.

These students study hard. They come to class prepared. They ask smart questions. They're not afraid to speak their minds. They demonstrate maturity beyond their 18, 19 or 20-something years. Many of them are bilingual, or even trilingual. And they have big dreams for their futures.

But they're undocumented.

Their hard-earned diplomas will be relegated to mere decorations, framed and hung proudly above their parents' living-room couches in immigrant enclaves across metro Chicago. These bright, talented students will have few professional options when they graduate. Their stars shine brightly in our classrooms, but they will be forced back to the shadows after they graduate, accepting low-paying jobs as they fear deportation.

These students — immigrant youth who came to this country with their parents when they were very young children — are victims of a broken immigration system. They are undocumented but eager to contribute to the only country they've ever called home.

A way forward for these bright students exists with the DREAM Act, a piece of legislation that offers a pathway to education, careers and documentation. The DREAM (Development, Relief and Education of Alien Minors Act) Act will allow them to step out of the shadows and to continue their education, which benefits them, their families *and* the U.S. economy. It's a win-win for us all, but it can only move forward with broad public support.

Enabling these students to realize their full potential through DREAM provides a solid step forward as a down payment on immigration reform. As their teachers it is our job to foster their dream — and that's why we fully support the DREAM Act, legislation that will allow them to do just that.

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— *Sumi Cho and Shiera Malik, DePaul University, Chicago*

— *Shubhik K. DebBurman and Gizella Meneses, Lake Forest College*

— *Erica R. Meiners, Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago*

— *Raúl Coronado, University of Chicago*

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