

Opinion: LTCC to protect immigrant students

By Jeff DeFranco

Lake Tahoe Community College stands with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office and its board of governors in strongly supporting the values and benefits of diversity and inclusion; not just on college campuses, but in towns and cities large and small across the country. The current White House administration's recent executive orders regarding immigration, the building of a border wall, and its rhetoric regarding Dream Act students has caused widespread concern among California's community college students.



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LTCC is and always has been deeply committed to the security of all its students, and to ensuring that a safe environment is available to everyone who relies on the college to better their lives.

In alignment with the California Community Colleges board of governors, LTCC will not release any student information related to immigration status without a warrant, subpoena, or court order. The college will not cooperate with any efforts to create a student registry based on constitutionally protected categories such as religion, nationality, race, or sexual orientation. And, LTCC stands firm in its resolve to make certain that all students have a chance to receive a

quality education regardless of their immigration status.

Public education is the great equalizer. As educators, it's our civic duty to make educational opportunities available to everyone. This doesn't just help individual students; it provides an avenue for growth and progress for our entire country.

At LTCC, in-state enrollment fees and state financial aid, including fee waivers, Cal Grants and privately funded institutional scholarships, are available to undocumented students known as Dreamers. These benefits are protected by California law in the form of the Dream Act, which allows students who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents to apply for and receive non-state funded scholarships and state-funded financial aid for college. More information about these benefits can be found **online**.

It is uncertain what direction the White House will take regarding Dream Act students located around the country. But LTCC's firm commitment to its own Dreamers is clear: Our doors are open for all LTCC students, and we stand with our Dreamers and international students.

The college is currently drafting a board of trustees' resolution formalizing the positions stated above. Campuswide events with community organization involvement where legal information and advice will be shared are also in the works. More information about these efforts will be coming.

Jeff DeFranco is president of Lake Tahoe Community College.