



November 20, 2013
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

To Janet Napolitano, President of the University of California:

We, the Asian Pacific Coalition (APC) at University of California - Los Angeles, are a collective of twenty-four Asian American and Pacific Islander organizations. We are the official voice of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community on campus. Through our Principles of Unity, a code that our organization stands by, we stand for the right of underrepresented communities to access higher education. In particular, we are writing in support of the undocumented community and the recent decision to turn your pledged \$5 million dedicated to loans and work-study programs to forms of financial aid for the undocumented community.

A decision to offer undocumented students more loans is troubling, as it ignores the struggles that they already face. For undocumented students, the pursuit of higher education is already a huge financial burden. Undocumented students are ineligible to receive many scholarships that require the applicant to have residential status and cannot receive federal loans. With the student loan debt at \$1.2 trillion dollars, loans are problematic in themselves. Loans are especially hard to pay off for the undocumented community because of the complications of becoming eligible to apply for a job.

Of the 11 million undocumented people in the United States, roughly 1 million of them are Asian and Pacific Islanders (API). APIs are the fastest growing population in the United States today and represent the second-largest group of DREAMers. Our histories are grounded in the immigrant and refugee experience; where many of our ancestors have either escaped political persecution and wars in their home countries in the pursuit of freedom or were in search of better opportunities promised by the American Dream. Some have navigated the American Dream through higher education and as a members of the work force have contributed greatly to our economy. By offering loans instead of financial aid such as scholarships, you are currently denying the undocumented students the chance for higher education. As the Honorable John Conyers Jr., a Representative in Congress from the State of Michigan, and Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, has stated, undocumented students “are the ones who first learn English. They are the ones who learn American history and culture from school and their friends. It is our history and culture that they think of as theirs. And they are the ones who help their parents navigate bureaucracies, health care, and jobs.” To them, America has been what they call home.

We want you to fulfill the promise that you originally made. You stated in your first public address since becoming UC President on October 30th that undocumented students “are students who deserve the opportunity to succeed and to thrive at UC.” In recognizing the right to higher education for underrepresented communities, we are demanding that the University of California maintains its commitment as a public institution that strengthens the academic achievement of students in communities throughout California. As the Office of the President manages the University’s public mission, you are directly accountable for the commitments made to California’s communities.

We stand in solidarity not only with undocumented APIs, but all undocumented students across the University of California. We demand that you, Janet Napolitano, redirect the \$5 million that you promised to dedicate to the undocumented community as scholarships to aid them in their pursuit of higher education.

Signed,
The Asian Pacific Coalition at UCLA

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