The current spotlight on the public's calls for immigration reform not only draws attention to issues being debated from coast to coast, but it also illuminates the concerns of many in our campus community and throughout our entire University of San Diego family. Here at USD we now redouble our long-standing support of comprehensive immigration reform, including the DREAM Act provision and a commitment to family reunification. We join in solidarity with those determined to ensure fair and equal treatment of undocumented youth in pursuit of the full measure of education and training on their path to citizenship.

As a Catholic university imbued with the values of Catholic social teaching, USD asserts the five tenets of the joint 2003 pastoral letter from the Catholic Bishops of Mexico and the United States:

- Persons have the right to find opportunities in their homeland.
- Persons have the right to migrate to support themselves and their families.
- Sovereign nations have the right to control their borders.
- Refugees and asylum seekers should be afforded protection.
- The human dignity and human rights of undocumented migrants should be respected.

These principles summon us to continue our efforts at USD to challenge the status quo in favor of comprehensive immigration reform that protects all students and their families; that supports the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act of 2013; and that reinforces our sustained commitment to ensuring that educational services and financial aid benefits are available to all our students, regardless of their legal status.

For years the University of San Diego has evidenced this commitment. Examples include:

- The University has always welcomed applications from undocumented students.
- University resources traditionally available to all students by referral, including undocumented students, continue to include those provided by Student Support Services.
- The Financial Aid Office does not take a student's legal status into account when making scholarship awards; however, undocumented students have received in the past, and continue to be eligible for, merit scholarships from USD.
- The university advocated for the successful passage of the California Dream Act, enabling undocumented students to receive Cal Grant scholarship aid for the first time in the upcoming academic year.
- USD maintains a strategic partnership with the Diocese of San Diego, the San Diego Organizing Project, and Catholic Charities of San Diego to help facilitate information sessions for legislative advocacy, for community organizing, and for immigrant processing.
- Several in our campus community have been working intentionally to safeguard the rights of those confronted by obstacles of discrimination due to personal circumstance and to advocate for the successful reform of our nation's discriminatory immigration policies.
○ In recent years and during the period of advocacy for the undocumented, President Mary Lyons served on the executive committee of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU) and as chair of the Boards of Directors for the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU) and the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU), organizations dedicated to the principles, among others, of access to education for all.

○ Carmen Vazquez, Vice President for Student Affairs, serves on an Advisory Council of a project on immigrant integration, sponsored by the Center for Migration Studies and the Catholic Legal Immigration Network.

The time to act is now. As we conclude L.I.F.E. Week 2013 at USD ("Living Is For Everyone"), we remind ourselves again of the sanctity of life, the dignity of the individual, and the human imperative to care for our world and for one another. Congress is completing its latest attempt at comprehensive, meaningful immigration reform within the next few days. We stand together as a campus community of students, faculty, staff, and administrators to urge our legislators to honor the dignity of the individual, respect the value of family, foster the cultivation of our national brain trust, and enable the realization of the American Dream for literally millions of undocumented parents and grandparents, professionals and students, laborers and entrepreneurs who seek a fair and accessible path to citizenship.

We invite you to join us in voicing your support and expressing your concern to our legislators. Support comprehensive immigration reform. Pass the DREAM Act. Keep America’s working families together. For more information and a simple online postcard that you can use to let your voice be heard in Washington, visit “Justice for Immigrants” on the Catholic Campaign for Immigrant Reform website at www.justiceforimmigrants.org.

Sincerely,

Mary E. Lyons
President

Msgr. Daniel J. Dillabough
Vice President, Mission and Ministry

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Vice President, University Relations

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