



A Statement from Leaders in Catholic Higher Education

Catholic education has been part of the fabric of American life for more than two centuries. Our colleges and universities share a long history of educating students from a diverse array of socioeconomic, geographical, and ethnic backgrounds, often welcoming those on society's margins, especially immigrants and underprivileged populations. Today, Catholic institutions of higher education continue this mission and legacy. Our college and university communities are home to students from around the world who seek to contribute to American society, to the life and mission of the Church, and to their own formation and growth by pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Many of us count among our students young men and women who are undocumented, their families having fled violence and instability. These students have met the criteria of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy, issued in 2012. We, the undersigned presidents of Catholic colleges and universities, express hope that the students in our communities who have qualified for DACA are able to continue their studies without interruption and that many more students in their situation will be welcome to contribute their talents to our campuses. Undocumented students need assistance in confronting legal and financial uncertainty and in managing the accompanying anxieties. We pledge to support these students – through our campus counseling and ministry support, through legal resources from those campuses with law schools and legal clinics, and through whatever other services we may have at our disposal.

When Pope Francis visited the United States last year he had this to say to the World Meeting of Families gathered in Philadelphia: “Among us today are members of America’s large Hispanic population, as well as representatives of recent immigrants to the United States. Many of you have emigrated (I greet you warmly!) to this country at great personal cost, in the hope of building a new life. Do not be discouraged by whatever hardships you face. I ask you not to forget that, like those who came here before you, you bring many gifts to this nation.” We are committed to educating these young people, brought to the United States by their parents, who come to our universities to build for themselves and us a brighter future.

Sr. Peg Albert, OP, Siena Heights University

Sr. Linda Bevilacqua, OP, Barry University

Nancy Blattner, Caldwell University

Drew Bogner, Molloy College

Philip L. Boroughs, SJ, College of the Holy Cross

Thomas Botzman, Misericordia University

Sr. Joanne Burrows, Clarke University

Noreen Carrocci, Newman University

Donna M. Carroll, Dominican University

Msgr. Franklyn Casale, St. Thomas University

Jan Cervelli, Saint Mary’s College (IN)

Francesco C. Cesareo, Assumption College

Arturo Chávez, Mexican American Catholic College
James E. Collins, Loras College
Eugene J. Cornacchia, Saint Peter's University
Br. F. Edward Coughlin, OFM, Siena College
Thomas Curran, SJ, Rockhurst University
Barbara Q. Decker, Mercy College of Health Sciences
Bassam M. Deeb, Trocaire College
John DeGioia, Georgetown University
John Denning, CSC, Stonehill College
James S. Dlugos, Saint Joseph's College of Maine
James A. Donahue, Saint Mary's College of California
Rev. Peter M. Donohue, OSA, Villanova University
Denise Doyle, University of the Incarnate Word
Sr. Janet Eisner, SND, Emmanuel College
Gabriel Esteban, Seton Hall University
Thomas M. Evans, Carroll College
Sr. R. Patricia Fadden, IHM, Immaculata University
Mary C. Finger, Seton Hill University
Rev. Paul J. Fitzgerald, SJ, University of San Francisco
John P. Fitzgibbons, SJ, Regis University
Scott Flanagan, Edgewood College
Thomas Flynn, Alvernia University
Thomas P. Foley, Mount Aloysius College
Michael Galligan-Stierle, Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
Thomas J. Gamble, Maria College
Antoine M. Garibaldi, University of Detroit Mercy
John Garvey, The Catholic University of America
Mary Ann Gawelek, Lourdes University

Colette Geary, The College of St. Scholastica
Conrado Gempesaw, St. John's University (NY)
Sr. Jane Gerety, RSM, Salve Regina University
Michael Graham, SJ, Xavier University (OH)
Michael A. Grandillo, Madonna University
Judith Maxwell Greig, Notre Dame de Namur University
Laurie Hamen, Mount Mercy University
Colleen M. Hanycz, La Salle University
James T. Harris III, University of San Diego
Antoinette M. Hays, Regis College
Michael Hemesath, Saint John's University (MN)
Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, Creighton University
Roy F. Heynderickx, Saint Martin's University
Mary Dana Hinton, College of Saint Benedict
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Arvid C. Johnson, University of St. Francis (IL)
Sr. Anne Kilbride, OP, Albertus Magnus College
Sr. M. Elise Kriss, University of Saint Francis (IN)
Lucas Lamadrid, Marymount California University
William P. Leahy, SJ, Boston College
Sr. Andrea Lee, IHM, Alverno College
Linda M. LeMura, Le Moyne College
William J. Lennox, Saint Leo University
Sr. Joan Lescinski, CSJ, St. Ambrose University
David J. Livingston, Lewis University
Daniel Lowery, Calumet College of St. Joseph

Thayne M. McCulloh, Gonzaga University
Ann McElaney-Johnson, Mount Saint Mary's University, Los Angeles
Sr. Maureen McGarrity, CSFN, Holy Family University
Patricia McGuire, Trinity Washington University
Joseph M. McShane, SJ, Fordham University
Joseph R. Marbach, Georgian Court University
George E. Martin, St. Edward's University
Diane E. Melby, Our Lady of the Lake University
Suzanne K. Mellon, Carlow University
Thomas Mengler, St. Mary's University (TX)
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John J. Neuhauser, Saint Michael's College
Joseph E. Nyre, Iona College
Sr. Mary Eileen O'Brien, OP, Dominican College
Brennan O'Donnell, Manhattan College
Kathleen Owens, Gwynedd Mercy University
Brother John Paige, CSC, Holy Cross College (IN)
Sr. Mary Persico, IHM, Marywood University
Fred P. Pestello, Saint Louis University
John Petillo, Sacred Heart University
Rev. Mark L. Poorman, CSC, University of Portland
J. Michael Pressimone, Fontbonne University
Anne M. Prisco, Felician University
Christopher P. Puto, Spring Hill College
Kevin P. Quinn, SJ, University of Scranton
Mark C. Reed, Saint Joseph's University
Mary Lou Retelle, Anna Maria College
ReBecca Roloff, St. Catherine University
Andrew P. Roth, St. Bonaventure University
Eileen Schwalbach, Mount Mary University
Matthew Shank, Marymount University
Brian J. Shanley, OP, Providence College

Michael Sheeran, SJ, Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Ronald A. Slepitz, Avila University
John Smarrelli Jr., Christian Brothers University
Timothy Law Snyder, Loyola Marymount University
Eric F. Spina, University of Dayton
Sr. Diane Steele, SCL, University of Saint Mary
Sr. Maryanne Stevens, RSM, College of Saint Mary
Helen J. Streubert, College of Saint Elizabeth
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Donald Taylor, Cabrini University
Timothy E. Trainor, Mount St. Mary's University (MD)
Sr. Carol Jean Vale, SSJ, Chestnut Hill College
Reynold Verret, Xavier University of Louisiana
Jeffrey P. von Arx, SJ, Fairfield University
Jeanie Watson, Holy Names University
Kevin Wm. Wildes, SJ, Loyola University New Orleans
H. James Williams, Mount St. Joseph University
Marylou Yam, Notre Dame of Maryland University
Ken Zirkle, Ancilla College