Pass the DREAM Act

Community colleges continue to advocate for the passage of the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. Despite longtime residence in the United States, many undocumented individuals face tremendous difficulties enrolling in or paying for college and finding employment. The DREAM Act would alleviate this situation by giving qualified undocumented students who arrived in the United States as minors a chance to earn legal status.

Versions of the DREAM Act have varied in their details over the years, but at its core it provides undocumented individuals, who were brought to this country at a young age and who have lived in the U.S. at least 5 years, a path to legal residency and eventual citizenship. That path requires completion of 2 years of higher education or military service. The DREAM Act also would repeal a provision of federal law that bars states from granting in-state tuition directly to undocumented students, although at least 18 states have circumvented this provision by extending in-state tuition to undocumented students based on factors other than residency (e.g., graduation from a high school within the state).

The Senate passed a comprehensive immigration reform bill in 2013, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act (S. 744). The bill included DREAM Act provisions, and was amended to give DREAM students access to the federal student loan program and Federal Work-Study. The House has not acted on S. 744, and earlier hopes that it would draft its own immigration reform legislation this year have dwindled considerably.

AACC Position on the DREAM Act:

- AACC strongly supports passage of the DREAM Act.