

## **Adelante Education Coalition Position Statement on Equal Access to Higher Education**

The Adelante Education Coalition seeks to create a supportive and welcoming community for Hispanic/Latino and migrant students and their families in North Carolina. Through collaborations with schools, community colleges, and universities, we raise awareness and rally support for improved educational opportunities for Hispanic/Latino students. The Adelante Education Coalition documents Hispanic/Latino and migrant students' educational experiences, develops resources for Spanish-speaking students, parents, and educators, works to promote equality, dignity, and respect for all Hispanic/Latino students within the school system, and strives to increase access to higher education for undocumented students.

We believe that North Carolina should integrate Hispanic/Latino and migrant youth into our communities, cultivate their talents, and enable them to become integrated, educated, and contributing members of our community.

### **FACTS**

- From 2002-2005, North Carolina's Hispanic/Latino student population rose 40%; more than 131,000 Hispanic/Latino students are currently enrolled in North Carolina public schools.
- Most Hispanic/Latino students in NC are bilingual and bicultural and have the potential to satisfy many of the state's essential job needs such as teachers, human service workers, and health care professionals
- Most Hispanic/Latino students in NC have been completely educated in the North Carolina school system, meaning that the state has already made a significant educational investment in each of these students.
- Making postsecondary education more accessible to resident students would provide greater monetary benefits for community colleges and the state that would accrue to the state's taxpayers from revenues saved in public welfare and revenues earned from an increased tax base.
- Increasing access to higher education for North Carolina's Hispanic/Latino students is beneficial to each individual, their family, and everybody living in North Carolina.
- In the last six years, bills to provide in-state tuition have been enacted in 8 states: California, Illinois, Oklahoma, New York, Texas, Utah, Kansas, and Washington.
- The NC Community College System's current enrollment policy allows each Community College the discretion to decide whether or not to admit undocumented students for courses that offer college credit. This is a confusing policy that is counter to its "open enrollment" policy.

The Adelante Education Coalition recommends the following:

- The NC General Assembly should adopt legislation that ensures high school graduates who are residents of NC and meet the academic and residency qualifications will have access to higher education at in-state tuition rates, regardless of their immigration status.
- The North Carolina Community College System should issue a system-wide open enrollment policy that allows all students, regardless of their immigration status, to enroll in courses that offer college credit.
- Congress should pass the National DREAM Act, which will allow undocumented college-bound students an opportunity to adjust their legal status while pursuing a higher education or serving in the U.S. military.

Adelante Education Coalition members include: Center for Participatory Change, Communities In Schools of NC, El Pueblo, NC Justice Center, NC Latino Coalition, NC Society of Hispanic Professionals, and Student Action with Farmworkers. Advisory members include: NC Center for International Understanding, College Foundation of NC and NC Migrant Education Program

*Fact Information Sources: National Immigration Law Center, N.C. DPI, U.S. Census, El Pueblo Inc.*