

May 14, 2015

University of St. Francis to host Sharing the Dream Conference High school, college counselors learn how to support undocumented students

JOLIET –High school and college professionals from throughout the state will come to the University of St. Francis (USF) on Wednesday, May 20 to learn how to support undocumented students.

The first Sharing the Dream Conference is expected to draw more than 350 attendees, according to Eric Ruiz, associate director of Admissions at USF, and one of the conference organizers.

“Undocumented students face many issues as they attempt to achieve the dream of a college education,” noted Ruiz. “There are substantial gaps in information and many barriers such as limited financial aid. Our hope for this conference is that everyone walks away knowing that there are resources for students.”

Support for undocumented students continues to grow, said Ruiz, who noted that the State of Illinois is addressing the issue with House of Representatives Bill 3528 that that allows these students to eligible for state college financial assistance.

Recognized as one of the nation’s leading experts on undocumented immigrant youth and young adults, Roberto Gonzalez, assistant professor of Education in the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University, will give a keynote address. During the past decade he has studied undocumented immigrant children as they transition to adolescence and young adulthood. His “West Coast Undocumented Young Adults Research Project in Los Angeles and Seattle” collected information on more than 300 undocumented young adults who have lived in the United States since childhood. This research has helped provide a better understanding of these students educational trajectories, how they come of age and how they engage in civic and political activity.

Gonzalez is engaged in two projects aimed at better understanding the effects of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. He is also working on a comparative study of immigrant youth of the United States and the United Kingdom.

The Sharing the Dream conference program will include a panel of “dreamer” students sharing their experiences. Break out educational sessions will include Understanding the Issues; How to Be an Effective Ally for Undocumented College and for High School Students; Parents as Allies in Pursuit of the Dream; and Paying for College.

Presenters include: Cindy Agustin, outreach coordinator for the National Immigrant Justice Center; Sioban Albiol, clinical instructor in Immigration Law and Mary Devona Stark, associate general counsel, at DePaul University in Chicago; Pablo Alvarez, counselor, and Aliza Gilbert, college counselor, at Highland Park High School; Laura Bohorquez, Dream Educational Empowerment Program (DEEP) coordinator, of United We Dream; Maria Bucio, director of LaCasa Student Housing and Resource Center, and Araceli Lucio, parent, of The Resurrection Project; Isabel Castro and Andrea Gonzalez, ISACorps representatives of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission; Gerald J. Cebrzynski, associate

vice president for Financial Aid at Lake Forest College; Adriana Esparza, Student Outreach & Recruitment specialist at Oakton Community College; Juan Gloria, founder of Familias Unidas Por la Educacion; Luke Kerber, Admissions counselor at Aurora University; Amy Moore, art teacher at Senn High School in Chicago; David Nissim-Sabat, coordinator of Student Services at Northeastern Illinois University; Rigo Padilla, Undocumented Students Support Services and College Support at Eric Solorio Academy High School in Chicago; Sadika Sulaiman Hara, director of Student Diversity and Multicultural Affairs, Sunshine Nakae, assistant dean for Admissions, Recruitment & Student Life, Stritch School of Medicine, Aurora Chang, assistant professor of Teaching and Learning; and Padraic Stanley, master of social work student, all at Loyola University Chicago; Michelle Roman-Garcia, director of Multicultural Student Affairs, and Martha Villegas Miranda, Latino Outreach and Retention specialist, at Joliet Junior College; and Elisabet Miramontes, admission counselor at the University of St. Francis.

The conference is sponsored by the Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling (IACAC) and the National Association for College Admissions (NACAC).

Conference attendance is by reservation only. For more information, contact Ruiz at (815) 740-5070.

The University of St. Francis, in Joliet, Ill., has 46,000 alumni throughout the country. USF serves 3,400 students nationwide, offering undergraduate, graduate and doctoral programs in arts and sciences, business, education, nursing, health care and social work. For information, call (800) 735-7500 or visit www.stfrancis.edu.

Media Inquiries:

Nancy Pohlman, Executive Director of Community Relations
(815) 740-3379 | npohlman@stfrancis.edu