

Emergency fund supports undocumented, international Tulane students

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Tulane is home to more than 1,600 international students and scholars, representing 89 different countries, as well as a DACA/undocumented community. The university is working to provide institutional support for these communities. (Photo by Bryan Tarnowski)

Tulane is home to more than 1,600 international students and scholars, representing 89 different countries, as well as a Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.

Campus organizations and offices, such as the [Undocumented Student Support Committee](#), [Office of International Students and Scholars](#), and [International Partners Outreach Group](#), are working with undergraduate and graduate student government to provide institutional support for these communities.

Some of the efforts in place include the [addition of an immigration program](#) through the Tulane University Legal Assistance Program earlier this year. More recently, the [Undocumented/International Student Emergency Fund](#), a newly established financial assistance program, surpassed its initial online fundraising goal of \$10,000 in two weeks. The crowdsourcing campaign is ongoing and will provide emergency assistance to students from these populations who are ineligible to secure loans in the United States.

Students like [Adaora Okoli](#), a public health student from Nigeria, benefit greatly from these efforts.

When Okoli arrived in New Orleans, everything seemed to be going according to plan. But when her sponsor stopped responding, she was left without a way to pay for tuition, housing or groceries.

“Sometimes, people come here without knowing what’s going to happen,” she said. “Sometimes their country is in a recession...sometimes the situation of things before you come to enroll in a school changes. That’s enough to get sponsors to say, ‘Ok, we’re sorry, but we’re not going to fund your education anymore.’”

One Tulane graduate student with DACA status came to the U.S. as a child and grew up in the states, but the United States government still recognizes her as a citizen of another country.

“Through careful budgeting, I’m able to pay for my education, but often it means I have to skip a meal, put off going to the doctor, or pass up extracurricular and professional opportunities,” said the student, who asked to remain anonymous. “Although my family has been supportive of my education, I come from a large, single-parent household. Receiving financial help from my family is rarely possible.”

Tulane’s Undocumented Student Support Committee is currently organizing opportunities to support and learn about DACA/undocumented communities. For more information on those opportunities visit tulane.edu/undocumented.