



Dream On

CSUMB Awakes to Dream Act Debate

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PHOTO PROVIDED BY HENRY HOUSTON

A few days before the bill's Oct. 10 deadline, Gov. Jerry Brown signed into law AB 131, the second portion of the California Dream Act (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors).

Although AB 130, the first portion of the act which allowed undocumented students to receive private financial aid, passed through Legislature and Gov. Brown's desk earlier in the year, the passing of AB 131 has brought the debate

onto California State University, Monterey Bay's (CSUMB) campus.

AB 131, the second portion of the Dream Act, requires public higher education institutions to establish paths to student aid programs for undocumented students, and will be enacted on Jan. 1, 2013.

California is the first state in the US to have such a law.

In protest to the law, Otter Republicans held a "bake sale," which was inspired by a similar one in San Francisco State several years ago.

The bake sale charged \$2 for a cupcake, and for "illegal immigrants," a cupcake was free.

Matt Bolner, who is a member of the Otter Republicans, said that citizens pay so much just so, in his words, "illegal immigrants" will take it away.

"It's not fair for some to take away when others put into it," Bolner said. Bolner added that it is unfair that they receive extra attention.

Just like any other college student, undocumented students, who migrated when they were minors, need to attend an accredited university and pass through the proper admission standards in order to participate in any financial aid program.

Ana Lopez, freshman, Psychology, vice-president of the CAMPer club at CSUMB and CAMP counselor disagrees about the stance that the Otter Republicans have taken in the Dream Act debate.

"[Otter Republicans] don't have the right resources; they're giving out bad information to the rest of the campus," Lopez said.

CAMPers is a club that has just recently sprung up. Through fundraising, the club plans to award undocumented students financial aid, which is allowed due to the first portion of the Dream Act, AB 130, which Gov. Brown signed.

"[Undocumented students] need more support," Lopez said. "They need a little bit more help if we want them to integrate into our society."

Although the bake sale occurred more than a week after Gov. Brown signed the Dream Act, it brought the debate to the attention of CSUMB's new coordinator of the Otter Cross Cultural Center, Leslie Grinner, who organized a "Round Table Discussion" to explore both sides of the debate, which was held on Oct. 24.

Although the discussion was in response to the Otter Republican bake sale, the club declined to help plan or participate in the discussion.

"There wasn't much time to respond. It was last minute," Travis Nelson, senior, Integrated Studies, and member of Otter

Republicans said.

Members of the Otter Republican club did attend and participated during the debate, after all, and their bake sale was a large portion of the debate.

Grinner began the discussion by reading the article the Monterey County Herald wrote about the bake sale.

“There have been extreme emotions on the issue,” Grinner said after reading the article. “Some folks thought it was discrimination, and someone from Marina started a petition on change.org.”

During the discussion, students, professors, and faculty-members spoke about the concerns they had about the school’s political rhetoric.

Professors during the debate asked to refrain from echoing the mainstream media portrayal of the immigration debate.

“We have access to the library and history books,” HCOM professor María Villaseñor said. Then students can “look at it in an enriched way; have a conversation in a way not using sound-bytes.”

One student felt that the Otter Republican’s approach to the Dream Act debate was targeting the migrant community.

However, Nelson wondered how the state could afford the added financial “burden” in respect to the budget constraints of higher education in California.

Looking at the economy in another way, Miguel Lopez, Liberal Studies professor, points out the Dream Act is an act of social justice.

“As such, we need to attend to the larger political struggle for dignity for Latinos, those who toil daily to put food on our tables, in our dining halls. Who work to clean our cities and this university every night,” Lopez said. “AB 131 says to me, we now extend our sincere thanks to the children of this labor pool by providing a small token of gratitude with access to financial aid. That for me is a form of justice — a means by which we, as a society, can in fact extend the idea of ‘life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,’ to the children whose parents have given so much to this nation through their labor.”

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