



NEW JERSEY

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## DACA Still Unresolved and Challenges in Decision Making Continue

March 5, 2018

[DACA Lives, but for How Long?](https://www.insidehighered.com/)

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**Monday, March 5, was supposed to be a last-ditch deadline for Congress to act if it wanted to keep the protections provided by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program in place. Two nationwide court injunctions blocking the Trump administration from ending DACA are temporarily keeping much of the program alive. With no legislative solution in sight, uncertainty prevails. The long-term prospects for the hundreds of thousands of young undocumented immigrants known as Dreamers who have benefited from the program still remain in limbo. (see more)**

To recap: DACA, established by former president Obama in 2012, offers temporary protection against deportation and also provides work authorization to a subset of young undocumented immigrants, including many current or former college students, who were brought to the U.S. as children. In September, the Trump administration [announced plans](#) to gradually end the program, arguing that the establishment of DACA represented an unconstitutional overreach of Obama's executive power, a conclusion [many legal scholars disagree with](#).

While it would not terminate existing grants of DACA status, which is valid for two years, the Trump administration said in September it would not accept renewal requests for individuals whose benefits were set to expire after March 5 -- today -- meaning that an ever-increasing number of DACA recipients would start to lose their protections and work

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authorization as early as tomorrow. Trump at the time said that Congress had six months to act to, in his words, “legalize DACA.”

It has not yet done so. Democrats in Congress forced two brief government shutdowns over the issue, but Congress subsequently passed a two-year budget bill that [included many Democratic priorities, but no solution on Dreamers](#). The Senate subsequently voted on three different bills to codify protections for Dreamers. [All of the bills failed](#).

President Trump’s own stance has also shifted. After initially indicating that he would sign whatever bill Congress brought him, Trump began to insist that legislation to protect Dreamers include concessions anathema to many Democrats in Congress, those being: \$25 billion for a southern border wall, the elimination of the diversity visa lottery program and new restrictions on family-based immigration.

All of that brings us to today and the question of what colleges can do to assist students with DACA status during this prolonged period of uncertainty. Many college presidents and higher education groups have been active in lobbying for a path to permanent residency or citizenship for these students, and concerns about the possible deportations of Dreamers in the months immediately following Trump's election spurred many colleges to [declare themselves "sanctuary campuses" or otherwise articulate commitments](#) that they or their police forces would not voluntarily cooperate with immigration enforcement (while leaving open the possibility that they could be compelled to do so).