



Student Assembly

Resolution 37: Protecting Immigrant Students

Abstract: A resolution calling on Cornell University to protect undocumented, DACA, international, refugee, and other immigrant Cornell community members through the implementation and protection of various programs, as well as through training.

Sponsored by: Adam Vinson '25, Simone Chan '25, Niles Hite '26, Saad Razzak '26, Sowad Ocean Karim '25, Ameera Aftab '26, Nicholas Maggard '25, Lydia Blum '27, David Suarez '27, Karys Everett '25, Rajat Acharjee '26, Zora deRham '27, Adriana Vink '27, Yihun Stith '26, Sara Almosawi '25, Jinzhou Wu '28, John Purcell '28, Ezra Galperin '27, Hasham Khan '26, Christian Flournoy '27, Luigi Berinde '26

Type of Action: Recommendation

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Current Status: Adopted by the Assembly, 23-0-3, 03/06/2025

Whereas, In the weeks following the 2025 United States Presidential inauguration, there have been several Executive Orders aimed to negatively impact the education of undocumented, Deferred Action Childhood Arrivals (DACA), international, refugee, and other immigrant members of the Cornell community.

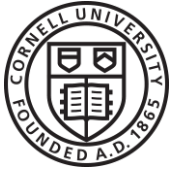
Whereas, Cornell University is located in Ithaca, New York, a designated [Sanctuary City](#), and Tompkins County, a designated [Sanctuary County](#).

Whereas, Cornell University's Administration sent a campus-wide email on January 28, 2025, with an additional email on February 21, 2025, stressing the University's commitment to continuing its support of all members of the Cornell community.

Whereas, The Welcome Corps on Campus (WCC), is an educational pathway initiative that enables U.S. colleges and universities to play a leading role in resettling refugee students. The WCC operates under the U.S. Department of State for refugees through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP).

Whereas, Participating WCC institutions are matched with refugees whose cases are already approved for resettlement under the USRAP, which allows refugees to enroll in an undergraduate program and obtain legal permanent residency in the United States.

Whereas, Students in WCC are eligible for federal aid and are permitted to work in the United States.



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Whereas, Refugee students who apply to the program will be simultaneously vetted for refugee admission to the U.S. and college/university admission. Students will arrive with refugee status and, therefore, be eligible for federal financial assistance/student aid programs.

Whereas, The institution will be required to submit a letter of support for the applicant. The institution (or PSG, if its members are not representing the institution) must demonstrate that the refugee's first 12 months of tuition and living expenses would be funded. This can include funding via federal financial aid or work-study, state financial aid, and other external sources.

Whereas, The WCC coalition will provide support in the form of identification and placement of refugee students, academic preparation of refugee students overseas, overseas travel and immigration processing, preparation and application training and support, fundraising efforts, implementation handbook and checklists, ongoing resources, training, and support in identifying and developing sustainable funding mechanisms.

Whereas, Cornell's Endowed and State Contract Colleges may serve as a strategic means to fund refugee students' educations. Therefore, to avoid depending primarily on institutional funds and tuition waivers, the availability of certain majors or academic programs for refugee students can be limited exclusively to state contract colleges.

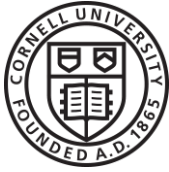
Whereas, There are two funding options for implementing WCC at Cornell.

Funding Option 1: Internal Remissions Tuition Remissions: If one Cornell University department each year agreed to waive tuition for one student's four-year education, a refugee student could be admitted to a new department on an annual rotational basis. This framework mirrors that of the Columbia University Scholarship for Displaced Students.

Funding Option 2: The Half-Quarter-Quarter Model Independent Donations: Donations from Cornell University alumni and other independent donors can create a 'migrant student fund' to cover 50% of the total scholarship, contributing \$176,300 every year.

Be it therefore resolved, Cornell University should actively be intent on protecting undocumented, DACA, international, refugee, and other immigrants within the Cornell community to the fullest extent.

Be it further resolved, If the University or a University official is required by law to give information to any external enforcement official (including ICE agents, FBI agents, or other state or local police), Cornell University should, to the fullest extent legally possible, provide prompt notification to individuals whose information is requested by external enforcement agencies.



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Be it further resolved, Cornell University implements a yearly mandatory “Know Your Rights,” training for all Cornell students during first-year orientation regarding protocols for what to do if Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or any external law enforcement official requests an affiliates’ information.

Be it further resolved, this training for students should be offered alongside the “Understanding Title IX and Related University Policies and Procedures,” “Mission Sustainability,” and “New Student Online Alcohol and Other Drug Education,” Canvas training modules.

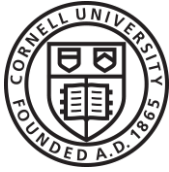
Be it further resolved, Cornell University implements a yearly mandatory “Know Your Rights,” training for all members of the Cornell University Police Department, Cornell University faculty, and staff, regarding protocols for what to do if ICE or any external law enforcement official requests an affiliate’s information.

Be it further resolved, through annual mandatory training of all faculty and staff, Cornell University must instruct members of the Cornell community that if any external law enforcement official arrives at a University office or calls, they are not required to do the following:

- I. answer questions about Cornell students, staff, and faculty, request credentials or identification of agent(s),
- II. grant permission to access Cornell records or to search Cornell premises without first consulting with the Cornell University Police Department and/or the Office of the General Counsel,
- III. “accept service” of any subpoena, warrant, or request from ICE or external law enforcement officials, as only the Cornell University Police Department and the Office of the General Counsel are authorized to review such documents.

Be it further resolved, Cornell University implements “Know Your Rights” training for all dormitory building Resident Advisors (RAs), Residential Housing Directors, and all staff members working within dorm buildings, instructing them on proper conduct during engagement with external law enforcement officials in Cornell dormitory buildings.

Be it further resolved, in the new training implemented for all members of the Cornell community, they should be taught to use the following language while interacting with external law enforcement officials: “I am not authorized to answer your question,” “I am not authorized to review legal documents,” “I have been instructed to call Cornell Police before you proceed,” and “I will call my supervisor now.”



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93 **Be it further resolved,** In the case where a member of the Cornell community is targeted for
94 deportation, Cornell University will commit to providing the Cornell community member free
95 legal immigration assistance.

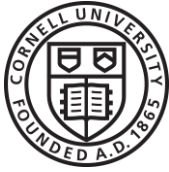
96 **Be it further resolved,** Cornell University must expand access to free legal services through
97 new and existing initiatives, including but not limited to: the University should fund a full-time
98 Clinical Teaching Fellow and/or a staff attorney in the 1L Immigration Law & Advocacy Clinic
99 at Cornell Law School to support the Cornell immigrant community. The University should
100 monitor the expanded capacity to assess whether the Clinical fellow and/or staff attorney is
101 meeting the representation needs of the most vulnerable immigrants at Cornell. Although the 1L
102 Immigration Law & Advocacy Clinic has provided significant services to date, as a one-semester
103 teaching clinic with just one faculty member, the 1L Clinic is structurally unable to provide the
104 volume of service the Cornell community needs and deserves. The University must also increase
105 funding for the Undocumented & DACA Student Support and First Generation & Low-Income
106 Student Support program through the University.

107 **Be it further resolved,** Cornell University must reaffirm its commitment to protect student
108 records and uphold the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

109 **Be it further resolved,** Cornell University must designate all religious spaces, including but not
110 limited to Anabel Taylor Hall and Sage Chapel, as spaces exempt from activity by ICE and other
111 external enforcement officials, as the Religious Freedom Reform Act prevents the government
112 from imposing substantial burdens on a person's religious practice.

113 **Be it further resolved,** Cornell University must ensure the continued existence of programs
114 through offices such as the First Generation & Low-Income Student Support, the Gender Equity
115 Resource Center, the Office of Spirituality and Meaning-Making, the Latinx Student
116 Empowerment Center, the Black Student Empowerment Center, Office of Academic Diversity
117 Initiatives, Asian and Pacific Islander Program Center, and others that provide resources
118 designated for students who have a vulnerable immigration status.

119 **Be it further resolved,** In the case that an international student breaks the Student Code of
120 Conduct in the process of demonstrating or advocating, under their First Amendment rights,
121 Cornell University should ensure that that student's punishment does not invoke or possibly
122 invoke a cancellation of their visa. This means the Office of Student Conduct and Community
123 Standards refraining from the harshest punishments, such as full academic suspensions or
124 temporary suspensions that extend past three weeks, as these sanctions lead to de-enrollment,
125 and thus the revocation of a student visa.



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Be it further resolved, In the case of a Cornell community member's visa being terminated for demonstrating or advocating, the university should provide the student support if requested by said student. This support must include:

- A. Finding the student qualified legal counsel.
- B. Assisting in gathering the necessary material required to appeal the visa cancellation.
- C. Lobbying the appropriate immigration authorities to reverse their visa cancellation.

Be it further resolved, In the case where an undocumented member of the Cornell community is charged with a non-violent crime in relation to a demonstration, Cornell University will ensure the administration and members of the Cornell University Police Department will not release the individual's immigration status or personal information publicly or to federal forces unless legally obligated.

Be it further resolved, In the case of faculty and staff who demonstrate or advocate, Cornell University pledges to provide legal counsel when requested in the case of legal persecution and must refrain from all retaliation, including termination of employment or threats of termination of employment.

Be it further resolved, Cornell University implements WCC at Cornell to improve opportunity and access for refugee students pursuing higher education at Cornell.

Be it finally resolved, Cornell University reaffirms its commitments to undocumented, DACA, international, refugee, and other immigrant members of the Cornell community.

Respectfully Submitted,

Adam Vinson '25

Executive Vice President of the Student Assembly

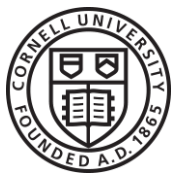
Simone Chan '25

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- 179 Freshman Representative, *Student Assembly*
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- 182 Ezra Galperin '27
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- 189 College of Arts & Sciences Representative, *Student Assembly*