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RWU President Donald J. Farish Joins Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration

Alliance backs policies to create welcoming environment on campuses for immigrant, undocumented and international students



December 19, 2017 | Edward Fitzpatrick

BRISTOL, R.I. – Roger Williams University President Donald J. Farish this week joined more than 160 college and university leaders in the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration.

Some 800,000 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, or "Dreamers," face an immediate threat of deportation if Congress fails to act. The alliance supports policies and practices that will create a welcoming environment for immigrant, undocumented and international students on American campuses. And it is dedicated to increasing public understanding of how immigration policies and practices impact students, campuses and communities.

"I join my colleagues in this alliance because many of us know from our own family histories that, although the United States is often described as a nation of immigrants, newly arrived immigrants were not always treated kindly in the past," Farish said. "But today, in a more enlightened era, surely it is right and proper that we welcome those new to our shores with open arms and a visible demonstration of support. Let us live up to our national motto: 'Out of many, one.' "

In its founding statement, the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration said, "We are a nation of immigrants. Our country has benefited significantly from the contributions that immigrants with drive, ambition and talent have made throughout our nation's history. Our country

advances when we remain true to the best of our heritage as a land of opportunity for those who dream of a better life for themselves and their children."

The alliance said that, "Undocumented immigrant students who have attended U.S. high schools are members of our communities deserving of dignity, respect and the opportunity to realize their full human potential. Undocumented immigrant students who are able to pursue their academic and professional dreams contribute to our communities and country and help meet the challenges that lie before us, just as generations of immigrants have done before them."

Gabriela Domenzain, director of the [Latino Policy Institute at RWU](#), said, "There isn't a sector of our society that is spared from our broken and inhumane immigration system, but there are some, like colleges and universities, that are working hard to defend new Americans. By joining the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, President Farish is demonstrating not only that he wants Dreamers and the undocumented population of Rhode Island to know that Roger Williams University is a welcoming community, but also that he's committed to working with other university presidents around the country to ensure all of our students can pursue their dreams."

Ame O. Lambert, RWU's chief diversity officer, said, "As an immigrant, I know how America becomes home to those from other places and how immigrants have long contributed to America's prosperity. I applaud this alliance and hope the expertise within the academy can help develop solutions that move us forward. Let's figure out how to tap the potential and the talent of DACA students, who are Americans in every sense of the word; of international students, who want to avail themselves of an excellent education; and of refugees and immigrants, who are seeking better opportunities for themselves and their families. They are a treasure we must not lose."

Farish is one of [165 college and university leaders](#) who have joined the alliance thus far, including the presidents of Brown University, Rhode Island College and the Rhode Island School of Design.

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