

**IN-STATE TUITION CONTINUED**

Gabriela Castillo, political science sophomore and vice president of CMSA, said she fears her 13-year-old brother would be one of many undocumented children to live in the shadow of the eradication of the DREAM Act.

"How do I explain that to him? He's been here since he was 4-years-old; he's never been anywhere else. Texas is his home," Castillo said. "How do I explain to him that college might be more expensive than it is now and that our family will not be able to afford it? It will prevent him from taking advantage of education. He's never done anything wrong."

Nery Guerrero, nutritional sciences junior and president of CMSA, said the movement against the in-state tuition law seems to be an unwarranted attack.

"It's not even a political issue, it's a humanitarian issue," Guerrero said. "They're attacking and generalizing the entire undocumented community, saying we shouldn't get an education. It's very important that Texas sees these faces and hears from them, because you are taking education from deserving minds."

Castillo said undocumented students receiving in-state tuition are required by the DREAM Act to sign an affidavit stating that they will apply for citizenship as soon as they are eligible.

"People think we're getting a free ride with in-state tuition, and we're not," Castillo said. "We have to promise to apply for citizenship as soon as we can."

House Bill 360, filed by Rep. Mark Keough (R-The Woodlands) is the bill CMSA members are concerned with. Also known as the Texas Fair Tuition Act, the bill states that any person filing for in-state tuition must show proof of citizenship or legal residency to be approved. This refutes the DREAM Act, which does not require students to be citizens at the time of application.

Melanie Garza, agricultural leadership and development junior and secretary of CMSA, said CMSA has teamed up with several organizations around the United States with the same goal through "United We Dream" — the largest immigrant youth-led organization in the nation advocating for fair treatment of immigrant youth.

Garza said CMSA officers engage frequently in conference calls and attend meetings with other organizations affiliated with United We Dream to discuss strategies, including engaging politicians on social media.

"Everyone has their affiliate leaders who target different areas like social media," Garza said. "We have people in Austin doing research right next to the capital about which politicians support us and who doesn't, and to the people who support us we tweet saying, 'Will you support us again?' and things like that."

Castillo said in addition to a collaborative effort on a nationwide level, CMSA is placing major focus on informing students at Texas A&M about the benefits of in-state tuition for undocumented students.

"In order for us to move effectively, we have to inform the uninformed and encourage our community," Castillo said. "By doing this, our community will feel like there's someone that supports them."

Guerrero said to provide this information, the CMSA will put on several events, including a professor's panel on Feb. 17 featuring professors who will advocate for the economic benefits of offering in-state tuition to undocumented students.

Castillo said she is appalled that politicians seem to be throwing around a topic of such importance.

"What upsets me most is the fact that such issues that can affect so deeply the lives of people is being used as a political issue that politicians can toss around as freely as they please," Castillo said. "They're using undocumented students and their life and their story for their own political fight."

**OLMD CONTINUED**

the interactions will include discussion on issues relevant to the universities, such as funding for higher education like the Competitive Knowledge Fund.

Interaction between legislators and students was one of the main messages of the day. Among A&M's 19 student visitors was Student Body President Kyle Kelly.

"There's been a trend toward bringing students to the Capitol for this day," Kelly said. "It started with A&M, they started to bring more students and UT began to pick up on it. When it comes down to it, it's about the students. It's about those being educated and those that are becoming active in institutions. It's a great way to raise awareness and to build relationships."

Kelly said one issue he wanted to address in funding was tuition and fees.

"We have specific talking points that our Association, Texas Exes and the administration has been working on for months," Kelly said. "They have to do with mainly funding. We saw a tuition and fee increase at A&M this year. It's been less of an increase than we've seen at other institutions in our state; which I think is extremely positive."

Kelly said Student Government Association representatives would like to see state funding levels similar to those before 2011.

"We want to keep tuition and fees and costs low for students," Kelly said. "When there's less state funding, the university has to pick up the bill. That falls on students and donors."

Kathryn Greenwade, vice president of



Jennifer Reiley — THE BATTALION

Executive director and CEO of Texas Exes Leslie Cedar, Chair of the Board of Directors in the Texas A&M Association of Former Students Bo Bradbury, Chair of the University of Texas Development Board Charles Matthews and Texas A&M Interim President Mark Hussey stand on the Senate floor during Wednesday's recognition of Orange and Maroon Legislative Day.

the Association of Former Students, said OMLD promotes awareness and communication between the flagship universities and legislators.

"We want to remind elected officials the important contributions that both universities make," Greenwade said. "We don't want them to be taken for granted nor have legislators forget the two gems Texas has in these universities."

On a day filled with news of national signing day, Kelly said it was nice to come together with a common purpose with students and alumni from UT.

"It's funny that this lands on Signing Day," Kelly said. "We've all been watching the feeds and the recruits that each of us are getting committed to A&M and UT. It's a fun day because we have a rivalry but then we've got a common goal as well."

**DREAM ACT CONTINUED**

lived in the state for three years and must sign documentation stating they are seeking legal residency.

The act was passed in 2001 with bipartisan support, making Texas the first state to pass a law relating to in-state tuition and undocumented students. However, since the signing of the law, Republican legislators have attempted to repeal the act. The current bill on file dealing with the DREAM Act is House Bill 360, filed in November by Republican Rep. Mark Keough. The bill, while not explicitly mentioning the DREAM Act, would effectively kill the law by requiring applicants for in-state tuition to have already become a citizen.

"Residents, who are unable to provide verifiable proof of citizenship or lawful residency

are prohibited from obtaining in-state tuition rates for any semesters until which time proof or verifiable status can be obtained," the bill reads.

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick has made it clear in a number of interviews that he is actively working to repeal the DREAM Act. Even if the bill by Keough passes the legislature, it must be approved by Gov. Greg Abbott. However, advocates of the DREAM Act shouldn't get their hopes up too high, as Abbott was quoted during his gubernatorial campaign saying he would be willing to sign any bill to repeal the law.

While he isn't against the act on principle, Abbott has concerns that the current act needs to be fixed. In an interview with KXAN television station in January, Abbott told reporters he believes the way the law is structured is 'flawed' and 'has to be fixed.'

However, the political

environment has changed since the days of 2001. Both houses of the Texas Legislature have a Republican majority, and anyone who has seen the most recent party platform objectives of the Republican Party won't be encouraged by what they have to say about the DREAM Act. It states that a goal is to stop in-state tuition for undocumented students.

If HB 360 is passed, the chances of the act coming back into law soon just doesn't seem likely. The bipartisanship that passed the DREAM Act bill is gone, and while reform may be an option, it will likely take some time for both sides of the political line to find a solution both can be happy with.

Advocates of the DREAM Act are making their support known. Rep. Rafael Anchia (D-Dallas) filed a house concurrent resolution listing the benefits that the DREAM Act has had so far for undocu-

mented students and for the state of Texas in general. In the resolution, Anchia lists several reasons, both economic and social, as to why the state legislature should uphold the DREAM Act.

"In the 2010 fiscal year, close to 16,500 undocumented, immigrant students qualified for in-state tuition, and the students themselves paid \$32.7 million in tuition and related expenses; were these students to be deprived of the incentives offered by the Texas DREAM Act, the loss to the Texas economy would be considerable," Anchia said in the resolution.

For now, advocates and opponents of the DREAM Act can communicate with their representatives and wait to see what the 84th Legislative Session has in store for higher education.

Jennifer Reiley is a communication senior and assistant managing editor for The Battalion.

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