

Memorandum to the Campus Community

Re: Cura Personalis for Undocumented Students on the Canisius College Campus

The theme for the season of Lent on the Canisius campus has been *cura personalis*. In a number of ways, most notably in our Ignatian Moment posted on the college's portal each day, we have explored what it means to practice *cura personalis* at Canisius.

As Holy Week begins, I would like to suggest – and authorize – another way in which we might demonstrate *cura personalis* on our campus. Recently, the Fairfield University Center for Faith and Public Life together with researchers from Loyola University Chicago and Santa Clara University, published a study detailing the legal, logistical, financial, and campus life challenges of undocumented students on our campuses. The study drew on surveys of faculty, staff and students from all 28 Jesuit colleges and universities coupled with personal interviews.

While it is perfectly legal for schools like Canisius to admit and graduate undocumented students, there appears to be widespread confusion about what we can and cannot do. The college application process alone, with its request for social security numbers and parent information, often acts as a deterrent to students seeking a college education. Once on our campuses, these students often live in the shadows and seek advice and counsel from a close circle of advisers from the ranks of the faculty and staff whom they come to trust. The advisers are uncertain about what they can or should do to help these students with academic and life issues. The report paints a difficult picture of the challenges these students face as they seek the dream of a college education.

After reading the Fairfield report, hearing a presentation from the researchers, and consulting with members of the college's senior administration, I agreed to sign on to a letter of support from the presidents of 25 of the 28 AJCU schools pledging our support for undocumented students on our campus. I was convinced that this was dictated by Catholic social teaching and our tradition as an American Jesuit university which, after all, was founded to educate an immigrant population here in Buffalo. The full report and the letter of support are at <http://www.fairfield.edu/immigrantstudent>.

To demonstrate our support more concretely, I am authorizing all employees of Canisius College to reach out to any undocumented students in our midst and offer them the *cura personalis* about which we speak so eloquently. If we discover systems, processes or requirements that conflict with our obligations to these students, please bring this to my attention or the attention of the appropriate vice president for remedial action.

To be sure, our support for undocumented students at Canisius is handicapped by the fact that the promise of a Canisius education is not possible for so many because federal and state financial aid is not available to them. We will continue to do what we can to offer financial aid from our own resources, but we need to continue our advocacy for the federal DREAM act and for New York legislation extending Tuition Assistance Program benefits to these students.