



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

# Immigration Response Team 2018-2019 Report

The Immigration Response Team (IRT) is a central source at the University of Minnesota for information on issues related to immigration. In this report, you will find information about some of the key issues and IRT services from the last year.

## Note from Director

Dear friends and colleagues,

Since the Immigration Response Team was formed two years ago, we have had the opportunity to learn about the breadth and depth of immigration-related issues and questions encountered by individuals and groups within the University community.

As expected, many of these questions arise from the frequent changes to immigration law and policy, many of which involve reversals of long-standing legal interpretations and practices. However, we've come to learn that immigration impacts members of the University community in ways that may not have been anticipated, and we hope that we have been a valuable resource in those circumstances as well.

As we begin our third year of work, we are energized by collaboration with the University of Minnesota community, and we hope to continue our work of clarifying, collaborating, and connecting immigrants and others with resources and information during these challenging times.

— Marissa Hill-Dongre  
Director of the Immigration  
Response Team

## Immigration Issues

### Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)

Several lawsuits were filed challenging the Trump administration's decision to end Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). A district judge issued a preliminary injunction requiring the federal government to continue DACA while it considered one of the cases. The Supreme Court declined to hear the case this term, so the injunction continues and students can renew their DACA status.

#### IRT Actions

- Administering the Dream Fund
- Creating opportunities for DACA and undocumented students to connect with and support each other in a social environment
- Helping departments answer questions related to the intersection of DACA and UMN policies (employment, admissions, etc.).

### Travel/Muslim Ban

In June 2018, the Supreme Court announced its 5-4 decision to uphold the Travel/Muslim Ban prohibiting entry to the U.S. for many individuals from Iran, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen along with certain officials and family members from Venezuela. The court had allowed the travel ban to go into effect while the justices deliberated on *Trump v. Hawaii*, and the decision meant it will remain indefinitely. The government set up a waiver process for the ban, but media reports state very few waivers have been granted under its rules.<sup>1</sup>

#### IRT Actions

- Addressing concerns about admitting students and inviting scholars from the listed countries
- Responding to questions about how the ban affects the visa application process for individuals from the listed countries
- Answering questions about travel for individuals from listed countries who have valid visas

### Changes to the Public Charge Test

The government announced a proposal to change the "public charge" test in immigration law to include non-cash-based programs (like SNAP and Housing Assistance). This test is meant to identify immigrants who are likely to rely on the government for financial support. The proposal caused concerns about a "chilling effect" that would scare immigrant families from accessing education, nutrition, and housing programs for their children and themselves. There was also concern that University research would be negatively affected.

#### IRT Actions

- Conducting a publicity campaign to encourage UMN departments, faculty, and staff to submit comment letters
- Co-hosting a public forum on the proposal with the Law School's Binger Center for New Americans

### Additional Policy Changes

- Temporary Protected Status and Deferred Enforced Departure
- Notices to Appear by USCIS
- Unlawful Presence

1 Torbati, Y. (2019, April 6). Only 6 percent of those subject to Trump travel ban granted U.S. waivers. Reuters.

# IRT Services

## The Dream Fund

The IRT created the Dream Fund scholarship in 2018 to ensure unexpected emergencies and immigration-related changes do not derail the academic dreams of immigrants at the UMN. Since the fund was created:

- 99 donors (primarily UMN students, staff, and faculty) have donated a total of \$25,281.
- 12 awards have been given totaling more than \$13,000.

## Consultations

One of the IRT's core services is offering consultations for individuals, committees, and departments. In our second year, IRT staff provided individual and group consultations on the following topics among others:

- Funding options for DACA students, when/if their DACA authorization expires or is canceled.
- Visa application/renewal questions for UMN faculty/staff/students/scholars, especially in light of rapidly changing relations between the U.S. and other countries.
- Study abroad complications due to immigration status.
- Options for admitting certain students and if their immigration status could impact their involvement.
- Personal questions from faculty and staff about their own (or a family member's) immigration status and how it affects applications to USCIS, travel, work, and more.
- Discussions with students working with the Aurora Center to sort through immigration issues that often intersect with sexual assault, relationship violence, or stalking.

## Presentations

In the IRT's first two years, staff gave a variety of presentations to interested University committees and departments. Additionally, they:

- Visited all UMN campuses and gave presentations about updates on immigration issues and offered individual consultations for students and faculty.
- Presented to multiple University Senate committees.
- Worked with student financial aid professionals and presented to Minnesota Financial Aid Administrators (MFAA) group on the intersection of immigration and financial aid rules.
- Presented to students participating in the "College in the Schools" program at the UMN about immigration and current events.

## Immigration Drop-In Hours

With the support of the Multicultural Center for Academic Excellence (MCAE), the IRT held drop-in hours for students every other week during the fall and spring semesters.

**"We are all full of questions; the IRT gives answers and lets us know that we are not alone. The IRT is our ally."**

**"It is extremely difficult to judge the weight of political and legal issues that are affecting our students without someone to put this into context that faculty and staff can understand. This team is a vital resource to our community."**

– Responses to 2019 IRT Survey

## About the Immigration Response Team

The IRT was charged by Provost Hanson in March 2017 to assist the UMN in responding to rapid changes in immigration policy and enforcement. It is supported by funding from the Provost's Office and administrative leadership from the Global Programs and Strategy Alliance. The IRT collaborates with:

- Binger Center for New Americans (Law School)
- Campus Climate and Office of Equity and Diversity
- Human Rights Program (CLA)
- Immigration History Research Center (CLA)
- Interdisciplinary Collaborative Workshop "Migration and Migrants in Terrifying Times" (CLA)
- International Student & Scholar Services (GPS)
- Multicultural Center for Academic Excellence (OED)

## Team

- **Marissa Hill-Dongre**, Director, devotes 50 percent of her time to IRT work and 50 percent as an Assistant Director for Employment-based Visas at International Student and Scholar Services. Marissa graduated from the UMN Law School in 2006 and is a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association.
- **Sandra Boone**, Head of Communications, devotes 40 percent of her time managing IRT communications and 60 percent as a Communications Specialist for the Global Programs and Strategy Alliance. Sandra is also enrolled in the Strategic Communication Master's in the UMN's Hubbard School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

## For More Information

- Review [immigration.umn.edu](http://immigration.umn.edu)
- Email [immigration@umn.edu](mailto:immigration@umn.edu)
- Subscribe for email updates at [z.umn.edu/irtupdate](http://z.umn.edu/irtupdate)