



**Christine Garcia, an assistant professor of English, reads a poem in Eastern Connecticut State University's Student Center during the DACA rally Tuesday.** Roxanne Pandolfi | Staff

# ECSU students rally for DACA



**Eastern junior Jennifer Zuniga, sophomore Vania Perez Gordillo, junior Leo Garcia and senior Britney Acevedo-Corona chant during the rally.** Roxanne Pandolfi | Staff

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**WILLIMANTIC** — Wearing buttons showing the migrating monarch butterfly, a group of immigrants and immigrant-supporters gathered Tuesday at Eastern Connecticut State University to rally for the continuation of immigrant protections.

A crowd of ralliers gathered at the Betty Tipton Room in the ECSU Student Center to show their support for undocumented immigrants, both at Eastern and in the Willimantic community.

Many of the immigrants, protected under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, have lived in the United States for the majority of their lives.

The so-called "Dreamers" rallied in response to President Donald Trump's efforts to end the Obama-era DACA program.



**Eastern senior Naomi Carranza speaks during the rally in front of ECSU's Webb Hall.** Roxanne Pandolfi | Staff

The U.S. Supreme Court's decision to end the program could come anytime in the next few months, according to Eastern Provost and Vice President William Salka.

Salka said it is likely the case will be lost and the DACA program will end.

"(ECSU President Elsa Núñez) was adamant that if that decision came down, we needed to be prepared to support not just our DACA students, but all of our undocumented students here on

campus," Salka said. "No matter what happens, Eastern will always support every undocumented student on this campus."

Back in November, Connecticut Attorney General William Tong visited the campus to hear from undocumented students at the start of the Supreme Court process.

Eastern is one of the universities that accepts DACA students through TheDream.US scholarship program.

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A crowd makes its way across campus for a DACA rally Tuesday at Eastern Connecticut State University. Roxanne Pandolffi | Staff

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Amid a backdrop of signs with phrases like “Stop playing politics with immigrant lives” and “No ban, no wall,” other speakers shared their stories and their support of undocumented immigrants.

“Today we are fighting for all immigrant lives,” said student Britney Acevedo-Corona. “Who are you fighting for?”

Acevedo-Corona is the president of Freedom at Eastern, a club that raises awareness about immigrant issues on campus and the group that held Tuesday’s event.

Windham Acting Mayor Thomas DeVivo said the town supports undocumented immigrants.

“I’m happy to say that we are a sanctuary town, we are a sanctuary state,” DeVivo

said. “On the local level, you are well supported.”

After the speeches, the group traveled across campus to further publicize its mission.

The ralliers recited call-and-response chants like “Undocumented, unafraid” and “Up up with liberation, down down with deportation” while marching from the Student Center to Webb Hall.

Once at Webb Hall, the speakers again told their stories, encouraged people to support undocumented immigrants and asked those who could vote to support politicians who defend immigrants.

They then marched back to the Student Center, where voter registration forms were available.

*Follow Claire Galvin on Twitter - @CGalvinTC.*



ECSU sophomore Melissa Rivas-Triana leads a chant in front of Webb Hall. Roxanne Pandolffi | Staff