

HOLA hosts silent protest in support of DREAM Act

Members rally in support of undocumented students' right to education

Teresa Linn

TCLINN@UNCA.EDU
STAFF WRITER

UNC Asheville students support a bill that would provide citizenship and education for undocumented high school graduates.

"I think this is very important," said **undocumented transfer student Loida Ginocchio-Silva**. "We cannot be a true community if members of our community aren't free and are experiencing injustice. I think that's very important for anyone to see."

The Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act, or DREAM Act, was up for a vote in legislation last week. Volker Frank, chair of the sociology department, said the act is important because of the bill's specific goals to help high school graduates who came to the United States before the age of 16.

"Minors are somewhat stuck," Frank said. "That's a problem because they go to school and they are, for all practical purposes, just like U.S. citizens. They have the language and the culture. They could constitute a good group that could be useful for the United States as a country, as an economy and as a society."

Ginocchio-Silva, a member of UNCA's Hispanic Outreach for Learning Awareness, passed out information on campus to promote the act. She also organized a silent protest downtown last Tuesday.

"I saw the urgency in doing it that day because the whole bill was up for a vote," she said. "It wasn't just HOLA. There were other members from the community. I have helped organize similar marches, and I wanted to bring that here to Asheville as well."

UNCA student and HOLA member **Amanda Tesh** said her experience in the protest was unique. She said she walked around downtown with other community members in caps and gowns and handed out papers rolled up



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UNCA student and HOLA member Amanda Tesh, second from right, participates in a silent protest through downtown that supported the DREAM Act, which provides access to education for undocumented students. Below, the students hold signs supporting students who were not born in the U.S.

"We cannot be a true community if members of our community aren't free."

— Loida Ginocchio-Silva,

undocumented transfer student



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