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Students take action to support undocumented peers in light of election results

Kristina Karisch



Leeks Lim/Daily Senior Staffer (https://dailynorthwestern.com/staff_name/leeks-lim/daily-senior-staffer/)

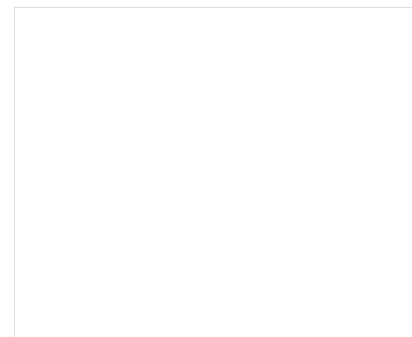
Student Action NU co-founder Scott Brown speaks at the group's meeting on Tuesday night. During the meeting, students expressed support for the Student Access Bill by calling state representatives and leaving voicemails encouraging them to vote in favor of the bill.

(https://dailynorthwestern.com/staff_name/kristina-karisch/), Reporter November 16, 2016

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Students expressed support for legislation that would allow undocumented students from Illinois to be eligible to receive financial aid and grants, calling

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state representatives during a Student Action NU meeting Tuesday.

Part of the group's higher education campaign, which lists demands for public higher education in Illinois, is supporting the Student Access Bill, said Medill senior Scott Brown, co-founder of Student Action NU. The campaign advocates for fully-funded public higher education in Illinois, which would undo recent state cuts to grants, such as the Monetary Award Program, Brown said.

To show support for the bill, which could be voted on as early as Wednesday in the Illinois Senate, students who attended the meeting called representatives and left scripted voicemails encouraging them to vote in favor of the bill.

Student Action NU aims to serve as a space for students who want to organize around social justice issues with an intersectional perspective. Group members met for the first time in October.

The group is affiliated with a student collective called Chicago Student Action, the student-led branch of The People's Lobby, a Chicago-based political organization. The collective has chapters at colleges across Illinois.

The meeting focused on the results of the presidential election, as well as ways to move forward and channel students' energy into organizing.

Weinberg senior Jackson Paller, the other co-founder of Student Action NU, said many students on campus "felt so much pain, so much anger, so much anguish" as a result of the election's outcome.

He added that although expressing these emotions is valid, now is the time to react by making change.

"I feel optimistic," Paller told The Daily, "but I still feel grounded in the fact that we got all these people here. The desire to be involved in something is clearly there, but the work has to be done."

Nicolas Wagner, a Bienen senior who attended the meeting, said he thinks it is important to participate in local movements, such as those sponsored by Student Action NU, to create change.

"We need to be organizing right now," Wagner told The Daily. "We need to keep the energy going, and we need a way to be involved and to be doing something and have an organization to work through."

Paller said the values President-elect Donald Trump represents did not emerge at the start of his campaign but have been around for years. He also said the status quo in U.S. politics has "failed" Americans for a long time and that Democrats pushed that status quo during the election.

Brianna Tong, an organizer with Chicago Student Action, encouraged the meeting's attendees to get "ready to fight for a vision of the world that works for us."

"It's the time to be fighting for local victories," Tong said. "We need to get organized ... and we need to use the people power that we build up."

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Northwestern (86%, 12 Votes)

Total Voters: **14**

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