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Can the DREAM Still Exist?

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Applying and being accepted to a college or university of their choice is a rite of passage and dream of high school seniors. For students who are immigrants and undocumented, the ability to attend college is a challenge made easier through the United We Dream organization and the DREAM Education Empowerment Program. When meeting with a group of students who depend on such programs and DREAM Act grants for support, the conversation about their education and future shifted from the application process to the events of the presidential election and, after the inauguration, to what the future may hold. The following is a three-stanza progression poem based on this discussion:

I DREAM of a better tomorrow,
brighter future,
a fresh start,
a college education,
being challenged by like-minded individuals,
finding others like me,
independence,
expanding my horizons,
and a better life.

I DREAM of no boundaries,
no walls,
not living in fear,
my family staying together in the U.S.,
finding my parents home tonight,
being able to walk freely without anxiety,
not looking over my shoulder,
trusting the police,
and not being reported,
deported.

I DREAM of our voices being heard,
positive political action,
unity,
a movement of activism,

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equality
 embracing diversity,
earning my college degree,
 supporting my family,
kindness,
 compassion,
humanity,
 freedom,
and hope.

Author Biography

Cheryl Burleigh is a research fellow, associate faculty, and faculty supervisor for the University of Phoenix. Dr. Burleigh is an advocate for educational change and awareness, empowering educators and administrators to support positive transformation within school systems. Her academic research interests include ethical decision-making, educational law, female students' empowerment in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), school leadership, educational equity, and LGBTQ issues. Dr. Burleigh has presented on science education curriculum and practices and educational leadership for school programs and administrators, state teacher associations, and national and international conferences, and on behalf of the National Air and Space Administration (NASA). She has won numerous grants and awards for curriculum and leadership development. Dr. Burleigh recently completed a series of observational studies of international education practices of economically disadvantaged and underserved students.