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Students rally for 'place to escape'

Protesters at CSULB demand resource center for those who're undocumented.

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BY ROXANA KOPETMAN / STAFF WRITER

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PHOTOS: SAM GANGWER, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Cal State Long Beach students observed International Workers' Day on Thursday by posing to administrators the same question that's posted on the Facebook page of the La Raza Student Association: "Where is ours?"

The group of about 70 students chose May Day to march to the administration building to demand a center for undocumented students like the new one at Cal State Fullerton. Some carried bullhorns and signs reading, "Dream Resource Center Now!" and "Chican@s support la causa!"

la causa!"

"Undocumented students lack support at times from administrators and staff," said senior Alex Reyes of Students for Quality Education.

"The creation of a center would streamline resources," said Reyes, who is a U.S. citizen. It would also provide students who are in the country illegally or who have temporary deferral from deportation "a place where they can escape some of the difficulties that they face," he said.



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Some of the students met briefly with interim president Don Para and were told they will have to wait until new CSULB president Jane Close Conoley begins in July before the issue can be discussed, Reyes said.

At Cal State Fullerton, the Titan Dreamers Resource Center, which opened April 23 and is the first in the CSU system, provides academic and emotional support, improved retention and graduation rates, referrals to financial assistance and a comforting environment where students from undocumented families can connect. There are at least two similar centers in the UC system - at Berkeley and Los Angeles.

Immigration reform and a halt to deportations were major themes in May Day events across Southern California.

In Los Angeles, thousands gathered downtown for the annual celebration of labor rights. A constant soundtrack of Aztec drums beat in the rhythm of Cumbia dance music. Demonstrators beseeching President Barack Obama for a change in immigration policy swapped stories and information about their unions.

Staff writer Alma Fausto contributed to this report.

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