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## Undocumented MIT Students Reject Anonymity of Status

*Sofia Campos, Jose Gomez and others publicly reveal their names on panel*

**Cambridge, MA** – Today, inspired by the documentary film *Underwater Dreams*, Sofia Campos, Jose Gomez, Paulo Heredia and Marco Aguilar stepped in front of the MIT community to tell their stories as undocumented immigrants in the United States and at MIT.

Campos and Gomez are the founders of DreaMIT, a new student group on campus which aims to bring together the school's undocumented students to have support and allies as they face unique challenges at MIT.

Campos came to the United States from Lima, Peru when she was just six years old and was raised in Los Angeles, California. She did not know that she was undocumented until she began to apply for college. While at UCLA, she became active in the immigration reform movement and brought that passion with her to MIT.

“Being undocumented can be an invisible part of our identity. If I choose not to say it, then no one but me has to acknowledge it. Coming out as Undocumented and Unafraid gives us the power to change things for the better,” Campos said. “1,100 people are deported every day. That's a lot of families separated, fathers and mothers locked up, young people taken 'back' to a place they may not know. Some of them have been my friends, and that could be me or my family. That's why I choose to speak up about being undocumented.”

Gomez grew up in McAllen, TX, a town near Nuevo Leon, Mexico, where he was born. Living undocumented in a border town, Gomez faced innumerable challenges, including constant concerns about money and restricted movement.

“As a child I worried about the same things as everyone else: school, friends and my soccer team, but I also had to worry about money and deportation. As I grew up, I began to worry about going to college: how could I possibly pay for it and how would I get there? As an undocumented student, there were no options for financial assistance and inland checkpoints trapped me in McAllen,” said Gomez. “Having overcome each of those challenges, I am faced with more at MIT. After I graduate, will I be able to work as the aerospace engineer I will be trained to be or will my lack of documentation continue to threaten my dreams? This is why I am a member of DreaMIT and I chose to tell my story today.”

Although Gomez and Campos both currently have DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), this is a precarious and temporary designation, subject to renewal every two years and only in effect for the duration of President Obama's term. The challenges they continue to face are great, and one of their top goals is to win the legislative fight for the expansion and permanent implementation of DACA.

Gomez and Campos, along with the other members of DreaMIT, want to join hands with the Dreamers featured in the film, acknowledging the talent and capability of those students (and millions of others like them) that have been largely denied educational opportunities and consequently have not realized their full potential. They hope to inspire other undocumented students who have had the opportunity to attend a first-rate American college to step forward and publically tell their stories as well.

**About *Underwater Dreams*:** The film, directed by Mary Mazzio, tells the story of four undocumented students at Carl Hayden High School in Phoenix, AZ who entered a sophisticated underwater robotics competition. Facing off against engineering powerhouses, including MIT, the students did the unthinkable and won the competition.