



Committing to the Success of Undocumented Students at Cal Poly Pomona

Norma León
Thavery Lay-Bounpraseuth
Lorena Márquez
Norma Salcedo
Dalia Garcia
Jose M. Aguilar-Hernandez
Diana Ascencio
Karen Romero
Mecir Ureta

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Introduction

Undocumented students are identified as one of the most vulnerable student populations by the U.S. Department of Education (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). The report, *Resource Guide: Supporting Undocumented Youth*, states that out of the estimated 65,000 undocumented youth who graduate from high school every year (a 28% lower rate than their peers), only 5-10% pursue a college degree, and far fewer are estimated to graduate from college. Therefore, when undocumented students set foot at Cal Poly Pomona, we understand that their position as incoming college students is unique and isolated; they are likely to experience many barriers, and they are at high risk of stopping out before completing their degree.

To highlight the challenges faced by undocumented students in college and the need to focus attention on serving them, the *Harvard Educational Review* dedicated its Fall 2015 volume to research addressing undocumented immigrant topics and the experiences of undocumented college students in particular. The publication began with a revealing forward that advocates for undocumented immigrant issues to be addressed as human rights issues (Waters, 2015). While undocumented immigrants integrate and contribute to U.S. society on a daily basis, Waters highlights the dire challenges faced by immigrant families, including the constant threat of deportation, working under substandard conditions, being ineligible for nonemergency health care and many other government services. The areas where their experiences encroach upon human rights as laid out by the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, according to Waters, are:

“... the right of families to stay together (Article 16), the right to be treated equally before the law (Article 7), the right to work and to be paid fairly (Article 23), the right to political participation (Article 21).” (Waters, 2015, p. 305)

Contrary to some of the rhetoric on undocumented immigration, unauthorized immigrants contribute more to U.S. society collectively than they take (Gardner, Johnson, & Wiehe, 2015). The estimated 11.4 million undocumented immigrants in the nation are projected to contribute \$11.84 billion in state and local taxes (\$3.2 billion in California alone). In other words, undocumented immigrants support state economies through taxation but are ineligible for basic services supported by this revenue.

Despite the challenges, undocumented college students demonstrate resilience in their ability to succeed and their desire to become contributing members of society. Those who beat the odds and forge their path into higher education prove that they are able to accomplish their goals, especially when they are able to combine their personal strengths with social support (Perez, Espinoza, Ramos, Coronado, & Cortes, 2009).

As an institution of higher education that values social responsibility, it is important for Cal Poly Pomona to understand the experiences faced by undocumented students as they navigate the K-12 system and when entering college, and how these experiences impact their college journey. Living in constant risk of being deported while being a college student threatens their livelihood and families, and cannot be separated from their college experience.

These circumstances are what led the Undocumented Student Support and Advocacy Committee (USSAC) to evaluate the ways Cal Poly Pomona serves and supports undocumented students.

This report presents the following information:

- Background information about national and state laws to provide an understanding of the legal progression of services allowed and restricted for undocumented youth historically (it is important to note that laws which have blocked services for undocumented students have existed through the years, that restrictions placed on undocumented students and their families have been significant and consistent),
- How Cal Poly Pomona has served undocumented students,
- Undocumented student perspectives on the barriers they face and what their needs are from their own perspective, as well as their needs according to research dedicated to exploring this issue,
- Undocumented student needs from on-campus advocates, and
- Recommendations that, when implemented, will lead to opportunities to align policies, procedures, and services to offer undocumented students equitable opportunities for academic success, including a solid sense of belonging and support to nurture their agency in the pursuit of a better future.

Background

Definition of terms

There are many terms and acronyms that are used in relationship to immigrants and undocumented students on college campuses. Definitions are provided in the table below to clarify these terms, as they will be presented later in this report:

Table 1. Definition of terms used in relation to immigrants and undocumented students in college campuses.

Term	Definition
Undocumented	Individuals who do not have legal residency in the U.S.; aspiring citizens who came to the U.S. without documentation or have overstayed their visa status
Dreamers	Undocumented youth who desire a college education, professional advancement, and civic engagement
AB 540	Assembly Bill 540 (effective January 2002), a California law that provides qualified students a waiver of the non-resident tuition requirements AB 540 does not provide eligibility for federal financial aid, nor does it lead to a path to legal residency
AB 540 students	Students who have met the AB 540 criteria and therefore are admitted to the university with approved AB 540 status

AB 130	Assembly Bill 130 (effective January 1, 2012), a California law that allows AB 540 qualified students to apply for scholarships derived from non-state funds, such as private scholarships
AB 131	Assembly Bill 131 (effective January 1, 2013), a California law, allowing AB 540 qualified students to apply for state financial aid
DACA	Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (announced June 15, 2012; effective August 15, 2012), a federal executive order that grants immigration relief to eligible undocumented immigrants; DACA does not provide a path to lawful immigration or citizenship; it allows people to apply for employment authorization (for a “work permit”)
DACAmented students	Students who have gone through the DACA process and have been approved
DREAMers Ally Network	A group of students, staff and faculty on campus who have completed training on undocumented student laws, rights, and needs, and have self-identified as allies to undocumented students to assist and support them through their educational journey
DEPIE	Demanda Estudiantil Para Igualdad Educativa (now the Student Demand for Equality in Education, SDEE): Undocumented support group for students by students at Cal Poly Pomona established in 2006 to serve as a means of emotional, moral, and financial support for anyone who identifies as undocumented, AB540, DACAmented, etc.

National and state history related to undocumented students

Immigration is a complicated matter in the U.S., particularly when it comes to undocumented immigration. It is estimated that there are 11.2 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. today (Waters, 2015). Of these immigrants, the U.S. Department of Education and Educators for Fair Consideration estimate that approximately 65,000 undocumented youth graduate from high school every year (Eusebio & Mendoza, 2015; U.S. Department of Education, 2015). While this seems like a large number, only 54% of them have a high school diploma compared to 82% of their U.S. born peers. Furthermore, only between 5-10% of undocumented students continue on to higher education, and it is estimated that a lower percentage actually earn their degree.

According to Passel & Cohn (in Canedo Sanchez & So, 2015), “California has the largest number of undocumented students graduating from high school annually” (p. 469). Therefore, California is instrumental in developing awareness and pushing forth support for undocumented students and their families. California is one of a handful of states in the U.S. to provide support to undocumented youth at the higher education level. With the passing of AB 540, AB 130, and AB 131, qualifying undocumented students have been relieved of significant financial burdens in the state. However, undocumented students still face challenges at college campuses, as well as in familial and personal contexts. While undocumented students have

some legislative relief, much of it is temporary and subject to change at any time, resulting in constant uncertainty about their personal, educational, financial, and professional prospects.

Laws impacting education privileges for undocumented students

To understand access to higher education for undocumented students, and services that are available, a historical progression of laws is provided below. These laws marked the path and influenced the experiences of students throughout the past three decades.

Table 2. Timeline of legal actions impacting undocumented students.

Year	Description
1982 – <i>Plyer vs. Doe</i>	The U.S. Supreme Court decision ruled that all students, including undocumented students, have the right to a public school education in grades K-12 (Ruling against a law proposed in Texas).
1986 – <i>Leticia A. vs. the UC Regents and CSU Board of Trustees</i>	This case required the UC and CSU to stop the practice of requiring documentation and proof of US citizenship/permanent residency when defining status of residency for tuition purposes between 1986-1991 in the UC system and between 1986-1995 in the CSU system; students who met state residency requirements were charged resident tuition fees and were given financial aid offered by the school, local and state governments.
1991 – <i>Bradford vs. the UC Regents</i>	David Paul Bradford claimed that the University policy resulting from the <i>Leticia A.</i> case was in direct violation with federal responsibility; he stated that charging undocumented students regular instate tuition was against the laws regulating immigration. He won the case, and undocumented students lost their right to receive state resident tuition and financial aid in the UC and CSU school system.
1996 – <i>'Illegal' Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act</i>	These laws prohibited immigrant students from accessing education at college or university unless a U.S. citizen was eligible for the same benefit. Any state that provided in-state tuition to undocumented immigrants had to also provide in-state tuition to out-of-state residents (both permanent-residents and citizens); this of course was not in the best interest of the State government.
2001 – <i>AB 540</i> (in California)	Governor Gray Davis signed AB 540, authored by Marco Antonio Firebaugh (Southeast LA County State Assembly member). This bill allows undocumented students who attend a California high school and receive their diploma or GED to pay regular in-state tuition.
2011 – <i>California Dream Act</i>	Proposed by Assemblyman Gil Cedillo, first as SB 160 and later as two separate bills, these laws were passed in 2011, and took effect in 2012 and 2013: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AB 130: allows undocumented students access to privately funded scholarships and grants • AB 131: allows undocumented students who are eligible to pay in-state tuition fees through AB 540 criteria to apply for state financial aid

CSU support for undocumented students

The CSU Academic Senate passed a resolution in May 1993 titled, *Protection of Educational Access for Undocumented Aliens* (AS-2158-93/AA - May 6-7,1993; see Appendix A). The resolution urged the CSU Academic Senate, the CSU Chancellor, and the California Legislature to “oppose any legislation that would deny educational access at all levels to undocumented aliens solely on the basis of their undocumented status...” (p. 1).

California’s AB 540, which was passed eight years after this resolution, echoed and reinforced the sentiments of the CSU Academic Senate. Once AB 540 was implemented, it sparked a series of actions in how the CSU responded to the needs of undocumented students.

A significant number of community colleges and universities across the state of California now provide services for undocumented students. Of particular interest to USSAC, in relation to Cal Poly Pomona, are the southern California CSU institutions that have allocated resources to serve and support undocumented students. Below is a table that provides information for our local CSU sister campuses in terms of what they currently provide to assist undocumented students.

Table 3. Southern California CSU undocumented student resources.

Institution	Dedicated Staff	Type of Center	Department	Funding
Cal State Fullerton	Coordinator and student staff	Resource Center	Student Affairs	Through student government; no amount identified
Cal State Long Beach	Coordinator and 2 student assistants	Office	Student Affairs	\$90,000 including salary
Cal State Northridge	Coordinator and 8 student interns	Office	EOP – Academic Affairs	Campus quality fee (3-year) \$99,000
Cal State Los Angeles	Coordinator/Academic Counselor and Peer Mentors/Advisors	Resource Center	Student Affairs	Private funding; \$1.6 million
Cal State San Bernardino	Coordinator and student staff	Resource Center	Student Affairs	Requested \$60,000

Note: This information was gathered by calling each campus and speaking with personnel coordinating services for undocumented students, and through the Cal State L.A. Public Affairs website.

Cal Poly Pomona history in support of undocumented students

Cal Poly Pomona has established processes to provide undocumented students access to the university and financial support in compliance with state regulations. Below is a timeline delineating Cal Poly Pomona’s commitment to supporting undocumented students.

Table 4. Timeline of actions and activities undertaken by students, staff, administration, and organizations in support of undocumented students at Cal Poly Pomona.

Timeframe	Actions and Activities
1998	The Hispanic Alumni Chapter (now the Latino Professionals Alumni Chapter: LPAC) pursued offering scholarships to undocumented students through University Foundation Services arguing that the funds were private dollars and should go to whomever the donors intended. Foundation Services eventually approved the use of student ID numbers versus social security numbers as a way of tracking their funds, thus, making the Hilda L. Solis Scholarship available for undocumented students.
1999	Staff from the Admissions Office and the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) participated in early trainings related to AB 540 prior to its implementation in 2001; EOP began admitting undocumented students offering them limited services in line with state and federal laws; Mery Hernandez, Outreach Counselor for EOP, worked with and helped undocumented students with searching for resources and organizing to support each other.
Spring 2006	Student Ricardo Ortega, Ethnic and Women’s Studies major and member of the Mexican American Student Association (MASA), fundraised and offered the first Dream Scholarship to an undocumented student at Cal Poly Pomona. Having seen his fellow undocumented peers struggle to complete their education because of lack of financial support, Ortega decided to do something about the matter and fundraised with his family to establish the Dream Scholarship for undocumented students through MASA.
Summer 2006	After discussions with and recommendations from active undocumented students, President Ortiz appointed Mery Hernandez as the official university liaison for undocumented students, on a partial time basis (15% of her time); Hernandez supported undocumented students in their efforts to establish the student organization called: Demanda Estudiantil Para Igualdad Educational (DEPIE; acronym which translates to “on our feet” and name which translates to Student Demand for Equality in Education).
Winter 2007	President Ortiz established the Dream Scholarship fund through Foundation Services, to which he provided a monthly donation; this scholarship was available specifically for undocumented students. Other scholarships available for undocumented students, though not exclusively, came from the LPAC (as mentioned above), which offered the Hilda L. Solis Scholarship, and from the Latino Faculty Staff and Student Association (LFSSA).

2009	The César E. Chávez Center for Higher Education (CECCHE) and the leadership of La Union council, which represents over 20 Latinx/Chicanx student organizations on campus, began fundraising for the Dream Scholarship through the annual Día de los Muertos and Quermés events. Dr. Gilbert Cadena, professor in the Ethnic and Women Studies Department, coordinated Día de los Muertos with Lorena Márquez, the Coordinator of CECCHE.
2010-2011	Greek Council selected the Dreamers Scholarship as their philanthropy and fundraised around \$12,000, which provided funds for a number of scholarships. Around this same time, Greek Quarterly hosted an undocumented student story telling event to bring awareness to the campus about undocumented student experiences.
Fall 2012	DEPIE, the César E. Chávez Center for Higher Education, and the ASI Multicultural Council (MCC) Senator from student government started the DREAMers Ally Network; the network's purpose is to create safe zones on campus and educate Dreamers and allies on legislation impacting undocumented students, and student rights. To date, the network has trained over 300 students, faculty, and staff across campus; these individuals make a commitment to be allies to undocumented students to help them succeed, and placards are offered to members to display around their offices so that undocumented students can identify them as allies.
2012	ASI formally drops the word "illegal" from any reference to undocumented students on the campus through a formal student government resolution (SR 2012-13:02, "Resolution to Drop the "I" Word).
2012	The Coordinators of the César E. Chávez Center for Higher Education (CECCHE), Lorena Márquez, and the Asian & Pacific Islander Student Center, Thavery Lay-Bounpraseuth, continued the DREAMers Ally Network trainings and responded to undocumented students' questions, concerns, and crises, offering them support, guidance and resources.
Spring 2013	Kimberly Aramburo, Kellogg Honors College and undocumented student, and Dr. Suketu Bhavsar, Director of the Kellogg Honors College, published an article titled, "Undocumented in Honors," in the Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council, highlighting the challenges faced by high-achieving undocumented students and recommending ways in which honors programs can "broaden their opportunities both in and after their participation in your honors program" (Aramburo & Bhavsar, 2013).
May 2013	Norma León, Coordinator of Educational Assessment and Transition, was assigned as the new university liaison for undocumented students (for 10% of her time); Norma joined Lorena and Thavery, and created the Undocumented Student Support and Advocacy Committee (USSAC). As a team, they identified key departments on campus that would likely work with undocumented students and formed the Undocumented Students Liaisons Council, composed of assigned department liaisons for undocumented students for each department.

	<p>The purpose of this council is to review laws and protocols to make sure liaisons are informed and can share information back to their departments, so that the campus as a whole, and each department specifically, is following state laws, and providing undocumented students with supportive and effective services.</p>
2014 - 2015	<p>Additional members joined USSAC and have contributed to the efforts of the committee; Norma Salcedo joined in Summer 2014; Dalia Garcia, Diana Ascencio, Karen Romero, Mecir Ureta and Dr. Jose M. Aguilar-Hernandez joined in Fall 2015. For titles, departments, and organizations they represent, please see Appendix B.</p> <p>In the year 2014-2015 specifically at Cal Poly Pomona, slightly more than \$2.7 was awarded in Dream Act funding. In Fall 2015, of the 550 new and continuing AB 540 students, 73% received financial aid. While students are receiving financial assistance, more funding is needed to support additional new and continuing students. As the population continues to grow, the funding allocated needs to align with that growth.</p>

Summary of campus organizations that have provided support to undocumented students in the last 10 years

- Asian and Pacific Islander Student Center (APISC)
- Associated Students, Incorporated (ASI)
- Cesar E. Chavez Center for Higher Education (CECCH)
- Division of Student Affairs (DSA)
- Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)
- Ethnic and Women’s Studies Department (EWS)
- Financial Aid and Scholarships (FAS)
- Greek Council
- Latino Faculty Staff and Student Association (LFSSA)
- Latino Professionals Alumni Chapter (LPAC)
- La Union Council
- Mexican American Student Association (MASA)
- Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan (MEChA)
- Multi-Cultural Council (MCC)
- Office of Student Life and Cultural Centers (OSLCC)
- Student Demand for Equality in Education (SDEE)
- University Housing Services (UHS)

Data on undocumented students at Cal Poly Pomona

There are approximately 550 enrolled students at Cal Poly Pomona who are approved under the AB 540 affidavit on campus. Most of these students are undocumented. However, the exact number of undocumented students at Cal Poly Pomona is unknown. While students who apply for the AB 540 residency waiver can be accounted for, there are undocumented students who are not eligible for the waiver and knowingly do not apply. Therefore, a higher number of undocumented students is estimated to be on campus than those who meet the AB 540 criteria. The demographics breakdown of AB 540 students is roughly as follows:

Table 5. Ethnic breakdown of AB 540 students on campus.

Ethnicity	Quantity	Percentage
Asian	112	20%
Black/African American	2	00.4%
Hispanic/Latino	422	77%
White	4	01%
Not specified	10	02%

Table 6. Student type breakdown of AB 540 students on campus.

Student Level	Quantity	Percentage
Undergraduate	536	97%
Graduate/Credential	14	3%

Table 7. Biological gender breakdown of AB 540 students on campus.

Gender	Quantity	Percentage
Female	239	43%
Male	311	57%

Summary of university support and services provided to undocumented students

Since the implementation of mandatory laws that provide both admission and financial assistance to undocumented students, Cal Poly Pomona provides the following for undocumented students:

- The university has an assigned liaison to undocumented students on a minimal time basis (10%).
- The Undocumented Student Support and Advocacy Committee (USSAC), a group that started with four staff and now has nine members, leads the DREAMers Ally Network trainings and presents to the campus community about legislation, the rights and experiences of undocumented students, and how we can serve them better as a campus.
- USSAC also works with various departments on campus to identify department liaisons that could be key contacts to help undocumented students in each department.

- USSAC maintains a website with information and resources specifically geared to undocumented students, and sends communication to DREAMers Ally Network members on upcoming events and legislation updates.
- The office of Admissions and Outreach processes the AB 540 affidavits every year during the admission period and determines eligibility.
- The Financial Aid and Scholarships office processes the California Dream Applications every year to determine state financial awards for undocumented students.
- A university staff or faculty member serves as the organization advisor for the DEPIE every year.

Undocumented Student Feedback and Needs

USSAC has collected information from undocumented students to assess their needs, from their own perspective, through a focus group and by gathering information about students' lived experiences. Also, USSAC has worked closely with student leaders from this student population who provided their insights from both personal experience as well as from their interactions with other undocumented students. Students also provided information about what they see as their needs as undocumented students to be able to persist and graduate. Below is a summary of findings based on the information gathered.

Student feedback

In winter of 2015, the CECCHE produced a report from a focus group conducted in December 2014 by a CECCHE graduate intern. The purpose of the focus group was to: 1. "Understand the challenges and barriers that undocumented students face," 2. "Identify additional support and resources for undocumented students," and 3. "Measure the need for a DREAM Resource Center at Cal Poly Pomona." Five students participated in a focus group that lasted one hour. See Appendix C for the full report of the focus group, including methodology and excerpts from transcripts.

Since May of 2013, staff and student leaders have received anecdotal information from undocumented students, describing some of the challenges they face and resources they need. These stories and experiences were incorporated into USSAC's conversations while compiling this report. The information was collected through one-on-one conversations, small group meetings, small gatherings, email, and phone communication.

The purpose of the focus group and other means through which student feedback was collected was to investigate factors impacting undocumented student success and identify student needs. A summary developed by undocumented students is presented below in an integrated form broken down into four areas that students deemed important.

Academics barriers

Undocumented students face multiple academic stresses and barriers not only because they are First Generation (classified as first generation in their *immediate* family to attend college by the CSU), but because they are also the first person in their *extended* family to attend college. Navigating college is a new endeavor where there are few others like them, and finding

supportive, safe spaces can be challenging. Once in college, students do not have the resources to ensure that they persist through college graduation.

Undocumented students are often restricted from attending conferences, field-trips to federal sites like Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), or participating in research that is federally funded (such as the McNair Scholars Program) because legal residency is required. Students are also challenged when their academic program requires them to complete an internship or work hours related to their major to get class credit or fulfill a section of their curriculum plan. Internships and jobs require permission to work and legal documents, which is a restriction for undocumented students. This sets a limitation to the “learn by doing” model that CPP prides itself in. Furthermore, undocumented students reach a dead-end after graduation. They are often not able to secure jobs or apply to graduate school because of financial barriers, including lack of financial assistance, or their programs of interest only accept U.S. Permanent Residents or Citizens.

In the classroom, undocumented students often face discrimination when professors or classmates use derogatory language toward undocumented population. Professors and peers who do this make it uncomfortable for undocumented students who feel threatened and unable to focus on the classroom material.

In general, students feel that the Ethnic and Women Studies (EWS) department is welcoming to them as undocumented students. Through addressing critical social issues related to race, class, gender, sexuality, and citizenship, faculty in EWS have expressed how the experience of undocumented immigrants should be looked at with a critical eye, where their contributions to our society are acknowledged. In general, through their discipline’s foci, EWS faculty’s academic teachings have provided undocumented students with validation and empowerment.

Financial barriers

Financially, undocumented students do not receive enough financial aid when compared to their low-income peers with legal status to cover college expenses. Undocumented students receive financial assistance to cover only their tuition expenses while their peers receive financial assistance to cover tuition expenses, fees, books, room and board, depending on their Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and living arrangements. This sets undocumented students at a disadvantage.

Financial resources are often very limited in undocumented students’ households and students feel a strong need and responsibility to provide as much as they can to their families’ income, making college their second priority, not because of lack of interest, but because of need. This often means they will obtain a job, likely carrying long hours and earning less than minimum wage. Often, the lack of financial resources leads to undocumented students dropping out of school (in agreement with findings from Negrón-Gonzales, 2015).

In addition, not all students are eligible to apply for DACA, placing them at a higher disadvantage since they cannot obtain a work permit or a social security number, which is necessary for employment. For students who do qualify for DACA, many cannot afford the application fee of \$465 and therefore do not apply immediately. Overall, whether a student is granted DACA privileges or not, they end up working a low-wage job that does not provide sufficient resources to cover additional school and living expenses.

Commuting is also an immense challenge for students because money is needed for gas, car maintenance, and the parking permit. For those students that live outside the local service area, this becomes a challenge when they have to commute for long periods of time every day. Living on campus is not an option for undocumented students because financial aid only covers their tuition and fees, and housing expenses need to come out of pocket.

Private or on-campus scholarships can be a source of income, but only when legal residency or U.S. citizenship are not required. Most scholarships require legal state or legal status, which makes the list of available scholarships for undocumented students more limited than that available for their peers.

Social barriers

Undocumented students sometimes deal with discrimination and stigma from their peers, faculty and staff. Coming out as an undocumented student is a source of fear, especially when trying to engage in certain social activities, such as going out with friends to public venues or events where an ID is required for entrance or service.

Although there is a policy for “zero tolerance for threats or acts of violence against members of the campus community” at Cal Poly Pomona (Cal Poly Pomona Policies, 2002), some clubs or organizations still consciously and unconsciously discriminate against undocumented students, according to our undocumented students on campus.

Personal barriers

Confidentiality is crucial for undocumented students, especially when they decide to come out to peers, faculty, or staff on campus. At times students receive direct threats from people that have negative views about their legal status. Even when students feel the need to come out as undocumented, they have a hard time doing so because there is limited staff support, especially under crises situations (such as family deportations).

Implications

After considering all the student barriers mentioned above, students identified the need for culturally competent faculty and staff that know the unique needs of undocumented students. Further, USSAC finds that undocumented students need specialized advising and counseling, not only in academics, but also for emotional, social, and financial matters.

Additionally, students need access to information about campus and community resources that are specifically available for them. Workshops, trainings, and information on scholarships, Financial Aid, DACA applications, traveling abroad, tax preparation, professional development, national resources, laws and legal services, and job opportunities are of great need. These resources need to be available and accessible for undocumented students.

Feedback and Needs for Serving Undocumented Students from the Advocate Perspective

USSAC members have been working with undocumented students individually and in groups at Cal Poly Pomona for a few years now. The committee identified challenges currently faced at Cal Poly Pomona by undocumented students through: interactions with students, educational trainings provided to the campus community (DREAMers Ally Network trainings), and assessing available resources on and off campus for undocumented students. USSAC provides a summary of needs from the advocate perspective below.

Challenges for serving undocumented students

Lack of resources is a challenge if the campus hopes to continue services currently provided by USSAC and other services needed. Funding is needed for full-time staff, equipment, training materials, and resources.

Lack of time from USSAC members and other DREAMers Ally Network members who are interested in helping this cause is a challenge as well. Campus advocates have their own job duties and responsibilities, and activities related to serving undocumented students or providing educational trainings become the last priority for many of them. Therefore, these activities move along slowly, and not at the rate needed to be effective when assisting undocumented students and creating awareness on campus.

Related to the point above, while there is one staff member officially assigned to assist undocumented students, this assignment is only for 10% of their time. Other USSAC members who work with this initiative are only informally assigned to dedicate time to it, again, leaving the matter of serving undocumented students as a low priority on campus.

The departure of staff, faculty, and students who have been involved and have taken the lead with some of the initiatives related to serving undocumented students is a great challenge. Through this process, resources and community connections are lost, educational endeavors need to start anew, and historical documentation may be incomplete.

Not everyone on campus is supportive of providing services and resources to undocumented students because of their own personal beliefs on the matter. Therefore, this presents a challenge for advocates dealing with negative comments and feedback. Due to the lack of a public institutional stance on this matter, advocates face greater challenges in doing their work to assist undocumented students as they face opposition.

Finally, the lack of undocumented student narratives and inclusive language limits visibility of undocumented students on campus and creates an environment that may not appear welcoming and supportive to undocumented students. Not everyone is familiar or knowledgeable about undocumented students on campus, including their experiences, related laws, student rights, and needs. This contributes to students' limited sense of belonging on campus and their fragile internal beliefs about their prospective success.

Needs for serving undocumented students on campus

USSAC identifies the following student needs that the campus should provide to support undocumented students. These needs are:

- Funding for staff, resources, equipment, support materials, and supplies
- A full-time coordinator who can dedicate their whole time and attention to matters relating to undocumented students
- Trainings and workshops for undocumented students
- Educational trainings for the campus community
- Office space
- Outreach activities

Risks of not responding to undocumented student needs at CPP

Being unresponsive to undocumented student needs while other state and national higher education institutions, including within the CSU system, are taking the lead in addressing the needs of undocumented students, portrays Cal Poly Pomona as an institution that is not committed to the student success of all students. Cal Poly Pomona needs to move beyond merely reacting to state and federal laws that mandate services, and become proactive in serving undocumented students. Being proactive can only strengthen the commitment it expresses in helping all admitted students succeed.

Undocumented students are a unique population with vast needs and vulnerabilities, as verified by the U.S. Department of Education (2015). Special focus and resources need to be allocated to serve these students to lessen the low attendance, persistence, and graduation rates that seem to mark this student population.

Recommendations

Based on our evaluation of student and advocate feedback, observed undocumented student needs, and needs identified in research, USSAC would like to forward the following recommendations for serving and supporting undocumented students at Cal Poly Pomona to minimize barriers and facilitate their success:

1. Allocate funding to provide services and support for undocumented students on campus.
2. Hire a full-time Coordinator of Undocumented Student Services (see Appendix D for suggested duties and responsibilities to be included in the coordinator's job description).
3. Establish and maintain a Dream Center for undocumented students.
4. Require that campus employees participate in trainings related to the unique needs of undocumented students.
5. Assign a university task force or advisory committee to support the coordinator and move along initiatives related to undocumented students.

Below is a table that provides suggested annual funding based on the identified needs described above plus what USSAC believes would provide adequate support for a coordinator and the work that is to be accomplished.

Table 8. Funding requirements.

Funding Item	Yearly Allocation
Undocumented Students Services Coordinator (full-time)	\$45,000 – 60,000
Student Assistants (2 part-time)	\$19,200
Office furniture (desk, chair, other)	\$5,000
Office equipment (computer, printer, other)	\$2,500
Equipment for student use (computer, printer, other)	\$2,000
DREAMers Ally Trainings (handouts, lunch, other)	\$800
Workshops and supplies (handouts, tools, assessments, other)	\$1000
Total	\$75,500 – 90,500

The full-time coordinator would keep up to date with the undocumented student movement, the laws, and the literature (there is plenty of research being done on this topic nationwide). Also, this person would join organizations that provide support for undocumented students (such as NASPA’s Undocumented Student Support Knowledge Community, which has an interest group dedicated to undocumented students), and attend related state and nationwide conferences and join related initiatives. The coordinator would also reach out to the local community to seek individuals and organizations willing to provide services and resources to support students, such as legal or tax services, among other support. Direct services that the coordinator could provide would be to develop and present workshops to students on topics that they have identified a need for (see Student needs section above), develop a more useful and dynamic website, respond to students directly and in a timely manner, and be a resource for students and student activities on campus.

Ideally, the campus should provide a space for the coordinator to work from and for students to gather and interact, support one another and their families, and have equipment available for them to access information (e.g., computer, printer, etc.). USSAC feels that a Dream Center would provide students with a sense of belonging, and a space to engage with each other, be active, and develop supportive networks. A Dream Center would be a physical and safe space where students can gather and access resources, where students and their families can receive staff and peer support, a space that clearly affirms and supports students’ experiences, connects them to resources, and acts as a public demonstration of support. All goals which are recommended by the U.S. Department of Education (2015).

The campus also needs to make a solid commitment to undocumented students’ success by encouraging awareness and support from the campus community at large. The training of all campus employees on the unique needs of undocumented students will provide additional support, a welcoming environment, and sensitivity to undocumented students’ concerns.

Finally, USSAC envisions a university task force or advisory committee composed of faculty, staff, and students, who would move along initiatives (inter-divisional if possible) and who lead efforts to increase and adapt support services for undocumented students as the laws

and the campus climate change. This group would support the work of the coordinator and also be a public statement that serving undocumented students is everyone's responsibility at the institution, and not just the coordinator's or other advocates.'

Conclusion

In recent years, undocumented students in California have experienced a positive trend as laws have been passed that help them afford college, from not having to pay out-of-state tuition to being able to receive state Financial Aid, and being able to take certifying exams in certain professional areas. In the UC and CSU systems in particular, students have seen growth in the support services provided by the campuses in the form of student services personnel or support centers. However, significant and unique challenges still hinder undocumented student success.

Cal Poly Pomona has been increasingly providing support and services to undocumented students. There are, however, areas in which the campus can do more to meet the needs of undocumented students. The campus can provide undocumented students with confidential and safe spaces, dedicated support staff, and resources to deal with crises situations. In addition, the campus can support educational programming so that all students have equal support toward graduation. Such resources have been established in other CSU campuses and Cal Poly Pomona can join its sister campuses in these endeavors.

USSAC acknowledges that Cal Poly Pomona, including administration and staff, has taken important strides in attempting to meet undocumented student needs on campus and looks forward to continuing its work for the support and success of these students.

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Appendix A

CSU Academic Senate Resolution

Protection of Educational Access for Undocumented Aliens

AS-2158-93/AA - May 6-7,1993

WHEREAS, There is proposed legislation aimed at persecuting one of the most fragile populations, undocumented schoolchildren, rather than at investing in the future of the state's own best interests by providing for their education; and

WHEREAS, While parents may take several years to have their case processed through an often bewildering set of hearings and bureaucratic procedures, dependent children would be marginalized and their eventual inclusion in the educational system would be accompanied by the unwarranted personal and social cost of their being out of step with other categories of students their own age; and

WHEREAS, The United States has historically welcomed people from around the world who suffer persecution for their political beliefs, for their personal dreams, and for their intellectual nonconformism; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Supreme Court decided in 1982 (*Plyer v. Doe*) that such laws are unconstitutional and not in the public interest, declaring that by "denying [undocumented children] a basic education, we deny them the ability to live within the structure of our civic institutions, and foreclose any realistic possibility that they will contribute in even the smallest way to the progress of the nation;" and

WHEREAS, It is inappropriate for administrators and instructors in institutions at any level to be de facto agents of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, a role that would be forced upon them by some of the currently proposed legislation; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Academic Senate of the California State University oppose any legislation that would deny education to undocumented aliens solely on the basis of their undocumented status and without reference to the length of time that such persons have spent in California or to their intentions to remain in the state; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Academic Senate CSU urge the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees to oppose any legislation that would deny educational access at all levels to undocumented aliens solely on the basis of their undocumented status and without reference to the length of time that such persons have spent in California or to their intentions to remain in the state; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Academic Senate CSU urge the State Legislature to refrain from adopting any legislation that would deny educational access to undocumented aliens solely on the basis of their undocumented status and without reference to the length of time that such persons have spent in California or to their intentions to remain in the state.

APPROVED - May 7, 1993

**Non-Resident Tuition For Students
Who Are Undocumented Aliens**

AS-2449-95/Executive Committee - January 19-20, 1995

RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate of the California State University urge the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees, while they comply with the court ruling on the case referred to as "Leticia A," take whatever steps are possible to minimize the effect of compliance on those current students who might be affected by the imposition of non-resident tuition.

APPROVED WITHOUT DISSENT -- January 19-20, 1995

Appendix B

Undocumented Student Support and Advocacy Committee (USSAC):

- Norma León, Coordinator of Educational Assessment & Transition, assigned University Liaison for Undocumented Students
Student Support and Equity Programs (SSEP)
- Lorena Márquez, Coordinator, César E. Chávez Center for Higher Education
Office of Student Life and Cultural Centers (OSLCC)
- Thavery Lay-Bounpraseuth, Coordinator, Asian & Pacific Islander Student Center
Office of Student Life and Cultural Centers (OSLCC)
- Norma Salcedo, Residence Life Coordinator
University Housing Services (UHS)
- Dalia Garcia, Scholarships Coordinator
Financial Aid and Scholarships (FAS)
- Jose M. Aguilar Hernandez, Assistant Professor
Ethnic and Women Studies (EWS)
- Diana Ascencio, Vice President
Associated Students Incorporated (ASI)
- Karen Romero, Senator at Large
Associated Students Incorporated (ASI)
- Mecir Ureta, President and Representative to USSAC
Student Demand for Equality in Education (SDEE)

Adopted committee philosophy: Each student admitted to Cal Poly Pomona, by virtue of their admission, must receive a full commitment from the institution to: 1) address their needs as a special student population with unique challenges, and 2) provide them with necessary tools and resources that will support their success through graduation.

Appendix C

Undocumented Students Focus Group



Assessment Report

Undocumented Students at Cal Poly Pomona: Measuring the Need for a DREAM Resource Center

Assessment Type: *Needs Assessment*

Date of Assessment Implementation: December 5, 2014

Date of Report: January 18, 2015

Purpose of Assessment:

The following assessment examines the experiences, challenges, and needs of undocumented students at Cal Poly Pomona in effort to develop a DREAM Resource Center on campus.

Division Learning Outcomes

- Diversity & Global Consciousness
- Social & Civic Engagement

Targeted Learning Outcomes

- To understand the challenges and barriers that undocumented students face.
- To identify additional support and resources for undocumented students.
- To measure the need for a DREAM Resource Center at Cal Poly Pomona.

Assessment Methodology

The following assessment was conducted through a one hour focus group. Participants were asked the following qualitative open-ended questions:

1. What is your current perception of Cal Poly Pomona's current services/resources and support for undocumented students?
2. What resources have you used to support your goal of completing a bachelor's degree?
3. What motivates you to get your undergraduate degree?
4. What does your support network look like?
5. What are some of the challenges that interfere with your educational goals?
 - a. How do you cope with those challenges?
6. How can Cal Poly Pomona better serve you?
7. How would a DREAM Resource Center benefit you?

Results

A total of five undocumented students participated in the focus group. The names used in the following results are pseudonyms.

Outcome #1: To understand the challenges and barriers that undocumented students face.

- **Lack of Awareness**

- At Cal Poly Pomona, there is a lack of direction and promotion of available resources for undocumented students. The focus group reiterated that there is also an absence of knowledge and awareness of the undocumented community among staff, faculty, and peers. The creation of D.E.P.I.E. and the DREAMer's Ally Network, as well as the existence of an AB 540 Liaison has provided invaluable support and information. However, the majority of the students stressed the difficulty in initially finding these resources when they started their education at Cal Poly Pomona.

Samantha, a transfer student who participated in the Polytransfer program, stated: "...I didn't really know where to look...I thought I would get resources from them, but even they didn't mention anything about AB 540..."

As an entering freshman, Kacey commented on the day she went to go get her Bronco Access Card: "...when I went to go get my ID it wasn't accepted because it wasn't what they considered a government issued ID, although it is issued by the government and so I couldn't get my ID that day...I missed out on certain opportunities because I wasn't able to provide my ID. I think that was the worst."

The César E. Chávez Center for Higher Education continues to be a primary visible source of information and support for undocumented students. The Center has guided and directed students to other available resources on campus.

- **Overcoming Fear**

- The inherent fear of paying for tuition, providing for one's family and confronting corruptive lawyers have proved to be some of the numerous obstacles that undocumented students have had to face. The focus group recognized this fear as the origin of the stress they encounter daily.

After a discussion about U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Desiree expressed her fear: "...if you do something wrong, you feel like they might then deport you."

Jackie acknowledged: "...there's that fear that it's a policy, it can go away. What if I graduate and they completely say this is illegal and against the constitution?"

The focus group communicated that ever since the initiation of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) in 2012, the struggles and obstacles have diminished greatly.

In regards to DACA, Briana stated: "It kinda takes a weight off your shoulders and makes you a little bit like everyone else."

Outcome #2: To identify additional support and resources for undocumented students.

- **Isolation to Inclusivity**

- At times, the lack of awareness and knowledge has created negative experiences for undocumented students at Cal Poly Pomona. The focus group emphasized their feelings of isolation and loneliness on campus.

When Samantha started her first few weeks at Cal Poly Pomona, she had a difficult time transitioning to campus life: "...when I got here I was like 'I don't think this an AB 540 friendly campus.'"

After a difficult time trying to find her niche on campus, Jackie stated: "It got me thinking 'Am I the only undocumented student here?' I felt alone."

For these students, Cal Poly Pomona's undocumented student support and outreach proved to be a disappointing first impression. Their hope is that the institution can be more open and direct with the available resources on campus.

- **Building Trust**

- Disclosing one's status has proved to be a difficult process for many undocumented students. Majority of the students in the focus group expressed feeling hesitant in opening up to faculty, staff, and peers.

Briana commented: "I also think though that it's a lack of openness. Like not a lot of people are willing to be like 'oh yes I am undocumented' by the way."

Developing trust and rapport with students can decrease their anxiety or fear. The focus group agreed that the participating in the DREAMer's Ally Network is a step towards building trust.

Outcome #3: To measure the need for a DREAM Resource Center at Cal Poly Pomona.

- **Creating a Safe Space**

- A DREAM Resource Center would provide undocumented students a safe space to disclose their status, create a network of support with other students, and find the information they need efficiently.

Kacey stated: “I think until this day I always mention this, Cal Poly is walking along a great path trying to get educated about the undocumented community and for that I am really thankful. I just think that being able to have a location where you can go and get that information-because if I didn’t know D.E.P.I.E. I wouldn’t know where else to go-and so I think that’s the most important. Ya, that space where you can go and ask questions, a resource center basically...once you create that safe space; it’s easier for me to go to you.”

The students in the focus group emphasized that their transition from high school to college was extremely overwhelming. If a resource center was available at the time they entered Cal Poly Pomona, their transition and experiences so far as an undocumented student would have been much easier.

- **Improving Visibility**

- The existence of a DREAM Resource Center would not only provide a visible space and environment for undocumented students, but it would create a clear and compelling message throughout the campus.

For Jackie, a center would symbolize the message: “You matter, you’re here, and you can go to college.”

Briana stated: “I find encouragement to be more open about it.”

A center would represent the University’s priority in providing effective and quality services for current and prospective undocumented students.

Conclusion

The lack of awareness and knowledge of resources is the most significant barrier that undocumented students face at Cal Poly Pomona. The stories and experiences that were shared in the focus group reflect the issues of loneliness, fear, and aimlessness. The creation of a DREAM Resource Center would provide a visible safe space for undocumented students, as well as a beacon of hope and support as they pursue higher education.

Implications for Practice

These results may be helpful in improving the current and future available resources for undocumented students. Promoting direct outreach, open communication, and knowledge of resources to the campus community can provide better foundation for undocumented students to succeed.

Appendix D

Coordinator of Undocumented Student Services Duties and Responsibilities

- Have a protocol set for responding to student crises, which can happen any day, any time
- Provide ongoing training for campus employees on state and federal laws that the institution must comply with related to servicing undocumented students as part of the state and CSU system
- Provide educational workshops/conferences for the campus to create awareness of undocumented students' rights and needs, and how to be a supportive ally for this group of students
- Provide workshops for undocumented students so that they learn about Cal Poly Pomona's efforts to support them throughout their education, such as financial aid and scholarship opportunities (Dream Act specific), internship opportunities, DACA application and requirements, information on student rights, campus resources, new laws, etc.)
- Develop an undocumented student awareness campaign that develops resource guides, fact sheets, and updates the undocumented student website in a timely manner, including the development of multi-language outreach materials
- Distribute the Dreamers Ally Network safe zone placard to all new members of the Dreamers Ally Network; keep network members informed about changes in policies and laws; bring network members together when necessary to provide support for students
- Advocate for services on campus to be undocumented student sensitive and friendly; propose changes to campus procedures that support undocumented students in their educational journey (e.g., recommend changes to procedures that require social security numbers to require Bronco ID numbers)
- Strengthen working relationships with other institutions to share information about and enhance programs and services offered to undocumented students; attend conferences and seminars on undocumented student research and findings to bring that knowledge to campus services
- Develop relationships with individuals in the surrounding community that can serve as resources to students (e.g., immigration lawyers that can help in deportation crisis situations, 24/7 access to shelter)
- Collaborate with programs that prepare students for graduate school and ensure their services are open for undocumented students
- Promote a sense of belonging (through inclusive language, advocacy, welcoming environment) for students and families
- Increase visibility of undocumented students – advocate for the inclusion of undocumented students in the campus narrative (e.g., in orientation, recruitment presentations, etc.)

- Work with various key departments on campus through the Undocumented Students Liaisons Council to review their policies and procedures on a regular basis and stay updated with new related laws
- Improve the processing of the California Non-Resident Tuition Exemption Form (known as the AB 540 affidavit). Establish an appeal process for students who are denied.