

Undocumented Students and Higher Education in Washington: Barriers and Opportunities

Introduction

During the past several years, College Spark grantees and Trustees raised concerns about the education outcomes of undocumented students in Washington State. Many grantees serving low-income students do not require United States citizenship as a criterion for programs. However, some grantee program staff feel especially limited in their capacity to support undocumented students in preparing for and succeeding in college. Other grantees developed innovative ways of supporting undocumented students and are eager to share their strategies with others. During the 2008 and 2009 advocacy agenda discussions, a handful of Trustees suggested undocumented students as an area of exploration.






For these reasons, College Spark hired an Intern from the University of Washington Evans School of Public Affairs Master Degree Program. The focus of the work was to understand pending legislation, to research the issues faced by undocumented students through interviews with students and program staff, and to interview foundation staff to learn more about what other foundations are doing to advance education outcomes for undocumented students. Findings from this research are provided in this report.

Executive Summary

Undocumented students are individuals who entered the country illegally, usually at a young age. A majority of undocumented students consider America to be home. Under current laws these individuals do not have a path for citizenship. Since many consider themselves American, returning to their country of origin is difficult because the language, culture, and people are unfamiliar.




Undocumented students participate in the K-12 education system. They are active in their communities, star athletes, and honor students. Despite being active in the K-12 school system, most undocumented students do not pursue higher education. Federal laws do not prevent undocumented students from entering colleges and universities. However, undocumented students do not qualify for federal and state financial aid, many scholarships, and most federally financed programs. Even after successfully completing their degrees, undocumented students cannot legally work.

Undocumented students face barriers, legal and otherwise, to higher education. The barriers include

-  Financial insufficiency
-  Lack of support before high school graduation
-  Parental opposition
-  Psychological
-  Lack of support after high school graduation

Few (if any) programs exist nationwide that specifically help undocumented students. However, there are programs throughout Washington State that do not require Social Security Numbers for participation and welcome undocumented students. The programs are found in K-12 schools, public and private four-year schools, community colleges, and non-profit organizations.

Objective

-  **To define the barriers undocumented students face to higher education**
-  **To understand current programs in Washington that assist undocumented students**
-  **To identify funding opportunities that help undocumented students succeed in higher-education**

Background

Who are “undocumented students”?

Undocumented students are born outside the United States and legally should not be in the country. A majority of undocumented students are brought into the United States at a young age by their parents and therefore the decision to enter the United States is generally made by the parents. Since most arrive as babies or children, America is the only home they know.

Individuals are granted education through high school graduation in the United States. Therefore, undocumented students are an active part of the public school system. They include leaders in their classes, honors students, and active in their communities. Many of the undocumented students interviewed for the purpose of this research spoke without a trace of an accent. The number of undocumented students is unknown, however there are estimates. The College Board estimates roughly two million undocumented students in the United States.¹ Another source estimates that 65,000 undocumented students graduate from high school each

¹ www.professionals.collegeboard.com/profdownload/young-lives-on-hold-summary-cb.pdf

year in the United States.² Roughly 7,000 to 13,000 undocumented students enroll in higher education institutions nationally. Institutions do not track the number of undocumented students enrolled on campuses and the exact number of undocumented students remains unknown. The National Association for College Admission Counseling did a survey in 2007 that found 60% of four-year higher education institutes received applications from undocumented students.³ However, many institutions do not separate undocumented students from documented students in the application process and the percent is likely higher than 60%. There is not an estimate of the number of undocumented students that graduate from colleges and universities.

The number of undocumented students in Washington is also unknown. In 2005 Jeffrey Passel, Senior Research Associate at the Pew Hispanic Center estimated that Washington had 200,000 to 250,000 undocumented individuals. In the same report, Passel estimated that roughly 17% of undocumented individuals nationwide are under the age of 18.⁴ Based on this estimate, *34,000-42,500 undocumented individuals under the age of 18 live in Washington State.*⁵

Policy at the federal level

No law specifically prevents undocumented students from attending colleges or universities. However, they are ineligible for many services.

- Loans. Social Security Numbers are required for most loans and therefore the students and their parents have a difficult time borrowing money.
- Federal financial aid. Undocumented students cannot apply for federally subsidized loans, work study, or teaching assistant positions.
- Programs that are funded with federal money. For example, TRIO⁶ and The College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP)⁷ are federally funded programs. TRIO is a set of college access and retention programs to help students from disadvantaged backgrounds obtain degrees. What began as three programs (“trio”) now is eight programs including Upward Bound, Talent Search, Student Support Services, Educational Opportunity Centers, Training Program for Federal TRIO Staff, the Roland E. McNair Post-baccalaureate Achievement Program, Upward Bound Math/Science, and Veterans Upward Bound. CAMP assists students who are from migratory families enrolled in their first year of undergraduate studies.

² Diaz-Strong, Daysi, Christina Gomez, Maria Luna-Duarte, and Erica Meiners. "Dreams Deferred and Dreams Denied." *Academe* 96.3 (2010). Web. 14 June 2010

³ <http://www.nacacnet.org/PublicationsResources/Research/Reports/Documents/UndocumentedStudents.pdf>

⁴ Passel, J.S. "Estimates of the size and characteristics of the undocumented population." Pew Hispanic Center. 2005

⁵ Nerini, Tom. "Learning from the Shadows" 2008.

⁶ www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html

⁷ www2.ed.gov/programs/camp/index.html

If undocumented students pursue higher education, their college or university experience is different from their peers. Study abroad opportunities are impossible because reentering the country is difficult. Internships are many times out of reach because the student does not have a Social Security card. Many majors require students study abroad and complete internships during their schooling. It would be difficult for undocumented students to complete degrees with these requirements. Even with postsecondary degrees, undocumented students remain unable to legally obtain a job in this country.

The DREAM Act

The Development, Relief and Education of Alien Minors Act (DREAM Act) is current bipartisan federal legislation introduced in March 2009. If passed, the DREAM Act will provide certain undocumented students a path to citizenship. To qualify for benefits under the DREAM Act the undocumented student must

- graduate from a United States high school or receive a GED,
- be accepted into an institution of higher education,
- be of good moral character,
- have arrived in the United States before their 16th birthday, and
- continuously live in the United States for at least five years prior to the bill's enactment.

If the undocumented student meets the requirements of the DREAM Act, he or she qualifies for a conditional permanent resident status. This status allows the student to work and obtain most federal and state financial aid for six years. If the undocumented student receives his or her higher-education degree during the six year period, an unrestricted permanent residency status is granted. The student can therefore legally obtain employment in the United States. The DREAM Act does have strong support including

- President Obama
- 40 cosponsors in the Senate, including both Washington State Senators Maria Cantwell and Parry Murray⁸
- 128 cosponsors in the House of Representatives, including Washington State representatives Rick Larsen [02], Jim McDermott [07], and Adam Smith [09]⁹
- Presidents from colleges and universities throughout the country, including Eastern Washington University president Rodolfo Arevalo
- CEOs, including the CEOs of Microsoft, American Express Company, Pfizer, Macy's, Morgan Stanley, and Citigroup
- Many state and local governments, including Governor Christine Gregoire

Despite the support, most individuals are not optimistic the DREAM Act will pass this year.

⁸ rs9.loc.gov

⁹ rs9.loc.gov

Policy in Washington State

House Bill 1079 Instate tuition

In 2003, Governor Locke signed House Bill 1079 allowing undocumented students to pay in-state tuition in the State of Washington. To be eligible for in-state tuition, a student must meet the following requirements:

- live in Washington State for three years immediately before receiving a high school diploma,
- graduate from a Washington State high school,
- sign the affidavit stating they will file to adjust their status as soon as possible, and
- acceptance into a public college in Washington.

Washington is among ten states that allow undocumented students to pay in-state tuition. Estimates are unavailable for the number of undocumented students attending Washington colleges or universities because no formal tally exists. After the student signs the affidavit, it is filed with his or her paperwork. The closest record that some colleges have is an unofficial “tally-mark” system counting the number of undocumented students that enroll. Even the employees that work with these students rarely offer estimates of the number undocumented students because many do not discuss the student’s legal status. Lack of statistics and records regarding undocumented students in higher education remains a limitation in offering assistance. Despite the bill that makes undocumented students eligible for in-state tuition, individuals interviewed do agree that

- undocumented students have low high school graduation rates
- undocumented students infrequently enter into postsecondary education
- undocumented students rarely graduate with postsecondary degrees

House Bill 1706 State Need Grant

In January 2009, Representative David Quall (Mt. Vernon) introduced a bill to allow undocumented students to be eligible for state-funded financial aid. Currently three other states (California, Oklahoma, and Texas) allow their students to obtain state aid. House Bill 1706 did not pass in 2009, and Ricardo Sanchez, founder and current director of the Latino/a Educational Achievement Project (LEAP)¹⁰, believes the budget deficit and election season will prevent the bill from passing during the upcoming legislative session.

¹⁰ www.leapwa.org

Undocumented Students and College Spark Supported Programs

While undocumented students participate in some of the programs that receive funding from College Spark, undocumented students do not qualify for many of the state and federally funded programs and resources available to other students. A Social Security Number is required for the following programs and resources:

- HECB College Bound Scholarship.¹¹ Low-income students in the 7th and 8th grade can sign up to receive annual college tuition after high school. Students do not need to be US citizens when signing up for the scholarship. At high school graduation, they must provide Social Security Numbers to receive the scholarship. Under current federal policy, it is almost impossible that the students will become citizens between 7th grade and 12th grade.
- TRIO.¹² Undocumented students cannot benefit from programs that are funded with TRIO funds which include many of the student support services on campuses and universities. TRIO also supports Upward Bound programs and Talent Search.
- College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP).¹³ CAMP provides financial and academic support to first year student that come from migrant families. Undocumented students are unable to participate in CAMP because they are not US citizens or permanent residents.

Barriers

Undocumented students face multiple barriers to higher education. Legal barriers do exist and, without legislative changes, cannot be changed. There are other, non-legal barriers to overcome as well. Together the barriers, legal and otherwise, help to explain the complex reasons behind the low rate of undocumented students seeking postsecondary degrees.

Barrier #1: Financial insufficiency

Higher education is expensive and undocumented students do not have access to many of the resources other students have to pay the bill.

- Difficulty borrowing money. Students legally do not qualify for state or federal loans. Without a Social Security Number, it is difficult for students to borrow money from banks.

¹¹ www.hecb.wa.gov/paying/waaidprgm/CollegeBoundScholarship

¹² www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index

¹³ www2.ed.gov/programs/camp/index

- Cannot receive financial aid. Undocumented students cannot work in work study positions or as teaching assistants. They cannot seek any scholarships that are funded with state or federal money.
- Few opportunities for steady employment. Any employment undocumented students do seek is illegal. Employers that do hire undocumented individuals sometimes pay them less than minimum wage and provide working conditions that are not ideal. According to the individuals that work closely with undocumented students and their families, work is not steady and they can be fired easily. Most of the employers that do hire undocumented workers do not allow them to work part-time to better accommodate their studies.
- Limited scholarships. Undocumented students can seek private scholarships that do not require Social Security Numbers. However, most scholarships do require Social Security Numbers. There are few (if any) scholarships just for undocumented students.
- Financial priorities. In addition to the expenses other students incur, many undocumented students have to contribute to their family's income or send money to support relatives in their home country.
- Non-tuition expenses. Going to a college or university includes expenses beyond tuition. For example, transportation. In Washington state, undocumented students can obtain a driver's license. However, many do not have access to a car. Higher education also requires books, fees, and supplies. If the student does not live near the institution, he or she will have to find somewhere else to live near campus. Legally they can live in the dormitories (at residential campuses) but doing so is expensive, and many landlords require Social Security Numbers for credit checks.

Barrier #2 Lack of support before high school graduation

Academic advisors and career counselors in high schools have the responsibility to provide all students with clear information regarding postsecondary education. Recruitment officers from colleges and universities are responsible to communicate a clear picture of the institution they represent. The individuals interviewed suggest possible reasons why the information is not properly communicated.

- Over-worked counselors and advisors. The recent fiscal difficulties decreased the number of academic and career counselors across Washington high schools. It is difficult for students to get one-on-one time with advisors. Since undocumented students have unique circumstances, classroom-wide advising is less likely to be helpful.
- Lack of training and resources. Academic advisors and career counselors are not trained in the options undocumented students have after high school. Few printed resources exist for undocumented students, advisors, and counselors. While there are individuals at colleges and universities that are knowledgeable on the issues undocumented students face and willing to support such students, there is not a clear way to connect students, or high school faculty and staff to such individuals.

- Recruitment staff from colleges and universities. Individuals that recruit students to institutions of higher education often do not understand the specific implications of being undocumented. If recruiters are unable to identify the differences between undocumented students and the rest of the student body, they cannot effectively communicate how the differences will be minimized at their college or university.
- Few mentors and role models. Mentors can be teachers, school staff, members of the community, or fellow students. The best mentors for students are individuals that are in similar situations and are successful despite hardships. Undocumented students will not find successful undocumented adults at school since legal status is necessary to work at a school. Older students can also be mentors. Since there are already very few undocumented students in higher education, it is unlikely that a younger student will be able to find an older undocumented student in higher education to be a mentor. Some schools do have employees that are very supportive and understanding of the undocumented student's needs. Currently, there are not enough of these supportive adults.

Barrier #3: Parental opposition

The attitude of the parent is a determinant of the child pursuing higher education. Undocumented students are more likely to seek higher education if their parents encourage them to do so. While some parents of undocumented students are supportive of their children attending higher education, others are indifferent or unsupportive of their child's higher education.

- Fear of deportation. The parents of undocumented students live in constant fear of deportation and family separation. Resulting from this fear is lack of trust. Parents do not want their children to draw attention to themselves and applying for college and universities requires that forms be filled with personal information. If parents tell their children to keep their status a secret out of fear, school officials cannot identify these students to help them.
- The goal may be limited to high school graduation. The parents of undocumented students come to the United States to give their children a better education than they received. Most of these parents did not graduate from high school. When the focus is that the child graduate high school, the options beyond high school may not be adequately explored.
- Poverty. Many parents of undocumented students struggle to provide for their families. The parents may see it as necessary that their child work to support the family as soon as possible. The parents are constantly in survival mode, concerned with day to day expenses. For some undocumented students pursuing higher education can be seen as selfish and unwilling to help their family.
- Fear of the unknown. Parents are not informed on the basic college and university formalities. Since it is rare that other people in their communities successfully received higher education degrees, they cannot turn to family and friends to answer basic

questions. If they do not see other people from their community enter college or universities, they may not even know it is an option for their children.

- Differing school norms. School in the United States is different from school in the parent's home country. Parents tend to be involved in their child's education more in the United States. While it is encouraged in the United States to develop a relationship with the child's teachers, in many other countries this is not the norm. Without active involvement from the parent, teachers may assume the parent does not care about their child's education. Assuming indifference to education can be hurtful to a child's success.
- Language barriers. The parents of undocumented students typically do not speak fluent English. Schools do provide translators for important meetings and forms in different languages. If the parents are not confident in their English, they might be reluctant to call the school with problems or questions.

Barrier #4: Psychological

Some of the undocumented students interviewed for this paper expressed remarkable resilience, determination, and optimism when talking about their education experience and goals. However, in many cases, undocumented students' experiences change the way they see themselves. This could be a onetime traumatic event or an everyday occurrence.

- Painful memories. The undocumented student may be reliving the days spent crossing the border into the United States. Crossing the border was likely a scary experience. Undocumented students also have to deal with upsetting events like divorce, domestic violence, and deaths. For the undocumented student it is more common that violence goes unreported because legal status and fear of police. Few (if any) support groups exist for undocumented students to help them get past these painful experiences.
- Hiding their real self. Many undocumented students do not share their status. This is based on the fear of deportation or being treated differently. Living in constant fear and hiding their status creates stress on the students. If a student is worried about their legal status becoming public, he/she has a hard time concentrating on school.
- Hopelessness. The reality is that with current laws undocumented students cannot legally work regardless of their education level. Undocumented students may realize this as early as middle school and quickly stop caring about school.
- Feeling different. Interviews from undocumented students stress how different they felt when their friends began applying for college. They felt left out, discouraged, angry, and isolated. Being referred to as "undocumented," "illegal," or "alien" creates separation from their peers.

Barrier #5: Lack support after high school graduation

Higher education requires adjustments. The classroom learning in colleges and universities is different from classrooms in high school. Students in higher education need to take responsibility for themselves in ways that they did not have to in high school. First-year

students experience challenging situations and have questions regarding their education. Undocumented students find it difficult to have their questions answered. There are few college retention programs that target undocumented students and address their specific needs.

- Unqualified to participate in programs. Many programs that assist students in colleges and universities are funded with federal money and therefore require participants are citizens or permanent residents.
- Unique situations. Undocumented students, generally, are Latino/a and socio-economically disadvantaged. However, the undocumented student may not feel like they belong in student groups that cater to these circumstances. It is rare that a student group or student service exists based around the needs of undocumented students.
- Unclear of which employees are sympathetic of their situation. Many higher education institutions have employees that work with a certain demographic of student. However, it cannot be assumed that employees that work with Latino/a students or employees that work with low-socioeconomic status students are knowledgeable in the issues specific to undocumented students. Most school websites do not clearly state who undocumented students can contact. Who they should talk to is primarily learned by word of mouth or just by chance.

Overcoming Barriers

Organizations do not exist in Washington with the mission to assist undocumented students in higher education. Many programs *do* exist that do not require Social Security Numbers and welcome undocumented students to benefits from their services. The programs are run by non-profits, K-12 schools, and higher education institutes. The programs are successful in helping students overcome at least one category of barriers to higher education. The individuals contacted for this report from the organizations discussed can be found at the end of the report in “contacts for organizations overcoming barriers” on page 13.

General trends exist among organizations that assist undocumented students in Washington.

- No clear policy on disclosure of legal status. For the respect of the undocumented students and their families, many organizations feel it unnecessary to require the student reveal their status. Other organizations encourage students to notify staff if they are undocumented so that the students can be better served.
- Building trust. Programs work on building trust among students and staff. The individuals interviewed believe trust with undocumented students is a vital component in a successful outcome.
- Broader demographic served. In Washington, undocumented students generally fit into the Latino/a and low socio-economic demographic. Therefore, many of the programs they are a part of have been designed to assist these demographics.

- Student empowerment. Many programs are designed to be led by students with an adult in a “behind the scene” role.
- Comprehensive approach. Programs generally offer many services such as tutoring, mentoring, cultural development, and career counseling.
- Mentoring. Organizations recognize that undocumented students do not have the support to pursue higher education. Programs are attempting to fill this void by providing younger undocumented students with mentors.

Overcoming Barrier #1: Financial insufficiency

Without passage of the DREAM Act or similar legislation, undocumented students will face financial difficulties. This is the grim reality of the current laws. The only way to assist undocumented students financially is through legislative change or private scholarships. The following organizations are highlighted to show the ways undocumented students find the money to go to colleges and universities. There are additional organizations that help students find scholarships and inform the public about the DREAM Act, however, the focus is on local Washington based organizations.

- Scholarship Junkies. Scholarship Junkies is an online “how-to” guide for scholarships. A unique feature is that students searching for scholarships are able to connect with students who have won scholarships. Staff and volunteers at Scholarship Junkies also do outreach with seminars to students and parents about funding higher education. Scholarship Junkies does help undocumented students and is willing to counsel the students one-on-one to address their unique circumstances.
- LEAPwa (Latino/a Educational Achievement Project). LEAPwa’s mission is to improve the academic achievements of Latino students in Washington State. LEAPwa’s past and current work is advocating for policy change at the state and federal level. Currently, LEAPwa is focusing on changing the law to allow students to be eligible for Washington State need grants and passage of the Dream Act at the Federal Level. LEAPwa’s strategy is two-fold: Advocate in Olympia and empower students to be their own advocates. LEAPwa sponsors leadership forums and workshops with undocumented students to teach students how to disseminate information throughout their community to better education citizens about undocumented students.
- Financial Aid Offices. Employees in financial aid offices at colleges and universities work to help students fund their education. The Financial Aid Office at Washington State University has a position called “bilingual financial aid counselor” who is the primary contact for Spanish speaking parents and students. It is clear this position exists on the website with the employees contact information. The website also provides information relevant only to undocumented students. There is contact information of two employees for undocumented students to contact for more information. The Financial Aid Offices at other universities and colleges do not have as clear or concise information for undocumented students.

- Washington Dream Act Coalition. The youth-led, grassroots movement works to raise awareness for passage of the DREAM Act. The group is in the process of starting a program called HB-1079 Project. The Project is to compile a binder specifically to assist undocumented students when applying for college. The information in the binder will include allies and support groups in Washington, scholarship information, and information about public and private colleges in Washington. The binder will be distributed to all public schools in Washington.

Overcoming barrier #2: Lack of support before high school graduation

Organizations that help undocumented high school students can be found in high schools, higher education centers, and non-profit organizations. The organizations listed below are willing and capable of assisting undocumented students. Many of the organizations have compiled a list of resources that program staff can use when helping undocumented students.

- Seattle Education Access. College Spark Washington awarded Seattle Education Access funds in the past. The organization has a College Success Program that assists students in the transition into community colleges by combining financial and social support. Seattle Education Access does not ask individuals about legal status. If a student does disclose that they are undocumented, the organization can be advocates for them, especially during the college application process.
- CAN (College Access Now). Funding from College Spark Washington assists CAN in its work in Seattle Public Schools. The organization currently works in three Seattle high schools offering college-qualified, economically disadvantaged students tutoring, advising, and college visits. CAN does assist undocumented students and encourages disclosure of legal status so the student can be better served. Since CAN began in 2005, it has served only a small number of undocumented students.
- GEAR-UP (Gain Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs). College Spark Washington has supported several GEAR-UP throughout Washington State. GEAR-UP is federally funded source that provides grants for high-poverty middle and high schools. The goal of the program is to increase the number of low-income students who enter and succeed in post secondary education. GEAR-UP offers a broad number of programs including: tutoring, mentoring, college and career planning, financial aid, summer programs, college visits, and teaching training. The program does not ask for student documentation and therefore they do qualify to participate. Undocumented students cannot be awarded any scholarships or financial aid benefits associated with GEAR-UP. An undocumented student interviewed attributed her interest and success in college to the GEAR-UP program in her high school.
- Proyecto Saber. The in-school program is in collaboration with participating schools and non-profit organizations El Centro de la Raza, Consejo, and Seamar. If students choose to participate in this elective class, they will receive tutoring, access to career development workshops, and culturally focused events. Parents are frequently invited to participate in events that Proyecto Saber sponsors, increasing parent involvement.

The program is open to Latino/a students and undocumented students commonly do participate. The class is currently offered at Chief Sealth High School, Ballard High School, and Denny Middle School.

- LSU (Latinos Standup! Movement). High school clubs are an important arena for students dealing with similar issues to come together and make positive changes. LSU is a club at Global Connections High School in the Highline school district. Their mission is to motivate Latino/a students to pursue higher education through college awareness and leadership activities. Members work as a group to use community resources and their own voices. A majority of LSU participants are undocumented. The members involve their parents in many events.
- El Centro de la Raza “College Readiness” Program – The non-profit has a variety of services for members of the Latino community. The College Readiness Program helps Latino youth set goals about their future and then provides help to meet those goals. Students get one-on-one attention with everything from tutoring to assistance applying for college. El Centro de la Raza is a co-partner with Proyecto Saber, going into the schools to better assist students.
- MAP. MAP is a program run by the YMCA of Snohomish County. The program’s mission is “to motivate and support students of color and immigrant students to achieve higher educational and career goals.” The program began in 2001 and currently serves 11 sites in Marysville, Mukilteo, Monroe, and Everett school districts. MAP is an after school program that provides participants with tutoring, mentoring, case management, monthly field trips, and career planning.
- Bridges Project. This mentor program is associated with Central Washington University (CWU) and a College Spark grantee. Students from CWU travel to school districts across the state to inspire underrepresented youth to pursue higher education. The Bridges Program connects high school students with CWU students for mentoring, field trips, homework help, and recreational activities. Many times they are able to connect undocumented high school students with undocumented students at CWU.
- UW DREAM Project. The program is an outreach program to help first-generation and low-income high school students with the college admissions process. College Spark has funded UW DREAM Project in the past. University of Washington students meet with high school students to help them prepare for SAT/ACT tests, research scholarships, visit colleges, apply to colleges, apply for scholarships, and provide the encouragement the high school student needs. All students involved in the UW DREAM Project are also eligible for scholarships to the University of Washington.

Overcoming Barrier #3: Parental Opposition

The parent plays an important role in his or her child’s education. Since a majority of the undocumented students in Washington are from Spanish-speaking countries, the programs highlighted below conduct their programs in Spanish and English.

- **Padres Promotores de Campaña Quetzal.** The program serves Latino/a parents to help them understand the education system. The curriculum includes topics such as graduation requirements, college costs, scholarships and issues specific to undocumented students. Parents attend monthly talks, in Spanish, where they can learn about these topics. After attending the classes, the parents are encouraged to make presentations to other parents in their community.
- **College welcome programs.** Parents need to understand the basics of what their child will encounter at college. Heritage University welcomes parents at the beginning of the year with free dinner and a parent panel. Most colleges and universities have parent orientation but very few address the specific needs of undocumented parents.
- **El Centro de la Raza “Parent Involvement in Education” program.** Parents are encouraged to attend workshops to learn about the American school system and ways they can support their child. Parents can also seek help on an individual basis with the case managers for specific questions and assistance.

Overcoming Barrier #4: Psychological

In Washington, few organizations currently have the capacity to help undocumented students overcome the psychological barriers to higher education. To help undocumented students with these barriers, the organization should have staff that focus on children, teens, and young adults. The staff should also be familiar with the Latino/a culture.

- **Consejo.** The organization offers a wide variety of behavioral health services to members of the Latino/a community. There are programs specifically designed for Latino/a youth. Employees are prepared to counsel youth on a wide variety of mental health issues. Individual therapy and group therapy is available. Consejo also has an annual Latino Youth Leadership Conference to offer Latino/a youth workshops by community leaders, artists, and professionals.

Overcoming Barrier #5: Lack support after high school graduation

It is especially hard for undocumented students in colleges and universities because they are unable to participate in programs that require Social Security Numbers. There are offices on campuses that are able to support undocumented students. The success of the office varies from school to school. The offices highlighted here are offices that have taken helping undocumented students a step further than other colleges and universities.

- **University and college offices for minority students and diversity.** Colleges and universities have different names for these offices but similar purposes. These offices strive to assist minority students with resources to help them achieve their full potential in higher education. For example, at Washington State University the Office of Multicultural Student Services has a Chicana/o Latino/a Student Center to best serve student of that background.

- Admissions. The office of admissions staff can be helpful for undocumented students. At the University of Washington, the admissions staff is trained in the specific issues undocumented students face. They can direct the students to other resources on campus for additional assistance.
- Student groups. There are many student groups on college campuses that can offer undocumented students emotional and academic support. Moveimiento Estudiantil Chicana/o de Aztlan (MEChA) is a national political and social action student group that focuses on deconstructing all forms of oppression through education, political, and social action. The Chicano Latino Student Alliance is an umbrella of all Chicana/o Latina/o organizations at Washington State University.

Funding trends

Generally, foundations do not prioritize funding programs for undocumented students. Foundations do prioritize other issues, such as education or immigration rights, from which undocumented students benefit. Nationwide, there are few (if any) organizations with the primary mission to help undocumented students in higher education. The foundations that offer direct scholarships to students do not have a set policy on Social Security Numbers. For example, some of the scholarships from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation require Social Security Numbers while other scholarships do not. Since little research has been done about undocumented student in higher education, many foundations are financing research that focuses on undocumented students. For example the Ford Foundation and Lumina Foundation for Education currently are funding such research. Further explanation research being funded by the Ford Foundation and Lumina is listed below. The foundations funding this research may see undocumented students as a possible area for future funding initiatives.

Examples of policies of foundations:

- Marguerite Casey Foundation.¹⁴ Funding recommendations are outlined by the “2008 Equal Voice for America’s Families” campaign. One of the recommendations outlined in this campaign is immigration reform and within that is “Support Immigrant Children – The Dream Act.” Some of the organizations that currently receive funding are immigrant rights groups and many of these groups work to provide immigrants (including undocumented students) access to higher education. The Marguerite Casey Foundation’s primary concern is building strong families, and the Board sees the current immigration laws as tearing families apart.
- Latino Community Fund.¹⁵ This group is made of individuals who combine individual contributions to provide funding. The Latino Community Fund works to improve the

¹⁴ Interview with Peter Bloch Garcia, Program Officer

¹⁵ Interview with Peter Bloch Garcia, Board Member

lives of Latinos by strengthening innovative programs in health, education, community, and economic development. Assisting undocumented students is a priority but they are currently limited financially.

- Kresge Foundation.¹⁶ While education is a priority at the Kresge Foundation, the education needs of undocumented students are not currently prioritized. Proposals to specifically target undocumented students have not been discussed; however, they would not be opposed to looking further into the topic.
- Washington Apple Education Foundation.¹⁷ Based in Eastern Washington, the organization awards grants to school and community programs that assist farm worker families achieve scholastic success. They also have scholarships that do not require Social Security Numbers. Currently, the foundation does not focus specifically on making undocumented students college ready.
- Ford Foundation.¹⁸ Educational Opportunities and Scholarship is one of the social justice issues on which the Ford Foundation is focusing. The goal is to ultimately improve disadvantaged people's access to higher education. In this year's grant cycle, the Ford Foundation awarded Fairfield University a two-year \$200,000 grant to lead a national study of undocumented immigrant students of Jesuit universities. The study will consider the best strategies to support undocumented students throughout their college careers.
- Lumina Foundation.¹⁹ A priority at Lumina is serving the 21st century student. Increasing the numbers of immigrant students in higher education (both documented and undocumented) is necessary to meet Lumina's "Big Goal" of increasing the number of Americans with high-quality degrees by 20% by 2025. Lumina is currently funding research on immigrant students and in early 2011 plans a meeting to develop a concrete plan to help immigrant students.

Next steps

Some of the programs funded by College support undocumented students. K-12 based programs that are available to all students, like Navigation 101, reach all students regardless of their citizenship status. A significant number of other K-12, community-based, and higher-education based programs receiving College Spark funding do not require documentation for participation and serve at least some undocumented students.

College Spark can continue to support undocumented students by not excluding programs that serve undocumented students from funding eligibility. The foundation could go a step further

¹⁶ E-mail with Caroline Altman Smith, Program Officer

¹⁷ E-mail with Jennifer Witherbee, Executive Director

¹⁸ www.fordfoundation.org/grants/grantdetails?grantid=79990

¹⁹ <http://www.luminafoundation.org/>

and state in the Community Grants RFP that citizenship need not be a criterion for the participants of programs that receive funding.

While programs receiving College Spark funding may assist a small number of undocumented students, it is clear that legislative changes must be made in order to improve the higher education outcomes of large numbers of undocumented students in higher education. Although College Spark is prohibited from specifically engaging in lobbying activities, there are ways to support grantees' advocacy efforts. For example, supporting youth-led groups that increase awareness throughout the community. Through these youth-led groups, participants develop leadership skills, form mentoring relationships, and provide general public proof that they value a chance for an education. Partnering with youth-led groups does have risks. First, the young leaders do not have much experience in social and political change or leadership. Second, youth-led groups tend to have frequent turn-over as they graduate from school. This limits the number of years one individual can be leaders of an organization. Risks can be minimized with the support of adults in "behind the scene" roles. For example, currently LEAPwa works with the Latinos Standup Movement. LEAPwa offers leadership training and resources for the youth led Latinos Standup Movement.

College Spark could encourage organizations that provide students scholarships not to require Social Security Numbers on the application. College Spark could also increase awareness of the resources that are available to undocumented students. A possible partner in this effort could be the Washington Dream Act Coalition who is currently developing HB-1079 Project binders to be distributed to high schools. The information in the binder will be specific to undocumented students, including allies and support groups in Washington, scholarship information, and information about public and private colleges in Washington.

Organization Contacts, References, Interviews

Contacts for organizations overcoming barriers:

- Scholarship Junkies: www.scholarshipmillionaire.wordpress.com
Sam Lim, Founder
- LEAPwa: www.leapwa.org
Ricardo Sanchez, Founder & Director
- WSU Financial Aid: www.finaid.wsu.edu/1079.html
Marcela Pattinson, Bilingual Financial Aid Counselor
- Washington Dream Act Coalition. www.wdac.info/home
- Seattle Education Access: www.seattleeducationaccess.org
Polly Trout, Advocacy & Outreach Director
- College Access Now: www.collegeaccessnow.org
Jennie Flaming, Program Director
- GEAR-UP: www.gearup.wa.gov
Kelly Keeney, Higher Education Coordinating Board
- Proyecto Saber: www.seattleschools.org/schools/chiefsealth/proyecto/index;
www.ballardbeavers.org/School%20Site/Proyecto%20Saber/index;
www.seattleschools.org/schools/denny/proyecto/proyecto%20main
Roberta Lindeman, Proyecto Saber Teacher at Chief Sealth
- Latinos Standup! Movement: www.hsd401.org/ourschools/highschools/global/clubsorganizations
Jill Weseman – LSU staff coordinator
- El Centro de la Raza: <http://www.elcentrodelaraza.com/>
Belinda Zintzún, College Readiness Program and Parent Involvement Coordinator
- YMCA's MAP Program: www.ymca-snoco.org/teens/map.ashx?p=460
JJ Frank, MAP Director
- Bridges Project: www.cwu.edu/~bridges/BridgesWebsite/aboutus.
Lois Breedlove & Veronica Gomez Vilchis, former Bridges coordinators
- Heritage University: www.heritage.edu/
Dr. Kathleen Ross, SNJM, President Emeritus
- UW Dream Project: www.depts.washington.edu/uwdrmprj
Sam Lim, former UW Dream Project class leader; Grant Twitchell, UW Dream Project developer
- Padres Promotores de Campaña Quetzal: www.elianamedina.com/quetzal/
Analía Bertoni, Padres Promotores program coordinator
- Consejo: <http://consejocounseling.org/services/youth>
- WSU Chicano/Latino Student Center: <http://chilatcenter.wsu.edu/Default.asp>
- UW admissions: <http://www.washington.edu/discover/admissions>
Grant Twitchell, Admissions Counselor
- MECha: <http://www.nationalmecha.org/>
- Chicano Latino Student Alliance: www.chilatcenter.wsu.edu/default.asp?PageID=2081

Interviews: In-person, phone, and e-mail

- Bergman, Sue – AVID Washington State Director

- Bertoni, Analía - Campaña Quetzal Padres Promotores program coordinator
 - Breedlove, Lois – Chair of the Communications Department at Central Washington University; Former Bridges Coordinator
 - Estrado, Josue – CAMP Director at Washington State University
 - Flaming, Jennie - Program Director of College Access Now
 - Frank, JJ – YMCA MAP Director
 - Gaeta, Cristina – Office of Multicultural Recruitment and Retention at University of Washington; former director of CAMP at Washington State University; involved in LEAPwa
 - Garcia, Peter Bloch – Program officer at Marguerite Casey Foundation; Board member of Latino Community Fund
 - Hubert, Mike – Navigation Program Supervisor at the Office of the Superintendent
 - Keeney, Kelly - GEAR-UP contact at Higher Education Coordinating Board
 - Lim, Sam – Founder of Scholarship Junkies; Former student UW Dream Project leader
 - Lindeman, Roberta – Proyecto Saber teacher at Chief Sealth High School
 - Mattfeld, Christine – Seattle Schools
 - Patterson, Marcela – Bilingual Financial Aid Counselor at Washington State University
 - Marcela Pattinson, Bilingual Financial Aid Counselor
 - Ross, Kathleen, SNJM – Founder and President Emeritus of Heritage University
 - Sanchez, Richardo – Founder and director of LEAPwa; Former associate director in academic affairs for the Higher Education Coordinating Board
 - Sheridan-Ayala, Siovhán – Immigration lawyer
 - Smith, Caroline Altman - Program Officer at Kresge Foundation
 - Trout, Polly – Director of advocacy and outreach at Seattle Education Access
 - Twitchell, Grant – Admissions Counselor at University of Washington, UW Dream Project developer
 - Vilchis, Veronica Gomez – Former Bridges Coordinator at Central Washington University
 - Witherbee, Jennifer – Executive Director of Washington Apple Education Foundation
 - Wittenberg, Jennifer – Former staff advisor to Latinos Stand Up Movement
- *Note: I have not included the names of any undocumented students interviewed. The students interviewed were high school students, four-year university students at public and private institutions, community college students, individuals with degrees and individuals who have left school.

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