

Barriers for Undocumented Latino/a Students in Higher Education

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative research was to explore barriers that Latino/s undocumented student's face when pursuing a college degree. The complexities these students experience from applying to college, receiving aid to fund their education, and campus involvement were examined through the narratives of three students who are enrolled at a public, four-year institution in Southern California. Additionally, two faculty members and four staff members were interviewed to gain insight into the stories undocumented students share with them during their educational experience. The data collected in this study provides researchers with a glimpse into the lives of the student's "living in the shadows" as one participant describes, during their college endeavors. The study uncovered several factors that were critical to these students' college experiences: admissions, financial aid, social support and campus involvement. In addition students, faculty, and staff offer suggestions on how institutions and educators can provide support for undocumented students.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background Information

Known as the land of opportunity, the United States has attracted people to come to this country, both legally and illegally. They wished to provide their families and generations with a better life than the one they were currently living. Nonetheless, those who enter the country illegally face unexpected challenges resulting in stagnation in the pursuit of their American dream.

A fast growing population in the U.S. are Latinos. According to the 2010 census, there are 50.5 million Hispanics in the United States making them the largest minority group in the nation (Passel, Cohen & Lopez 2011). With the continued growth of this population, it is projected that by the year 2050, 26% of the U.S. population will be Latinos (CNN, 2015). This growth is significant for America as Latinos will represent its future. This group wants what all Americans want: quality education, economic opportunity, affordable homes, strong and safe communities, good government and access to health care. Unfortunately, Latinos lag behind other groups in these areas. It is imperative with the growth of this population to invest resources to bridge the gaps between deficit areas. Education is the key to the future well-being of the Latino/a Community (Abalos, 2007).

An education past secondary schooling increases these chances (Collegeboard, 2013). In comparison to past decades, a college degree is weighed more heavily than a high school degree. A high school diploma creates fewer opportunities for those entering the labor market (Gonzalez, 2009) therefore making higher education necessary for social mobility. A college education is a prerequisite for a “secure lifestyle and significantly improves the probabilities of employment and a stable career with a positive earnings trajectory. It also provides tools that help people to

live healthier and more satisfying lives, to participate actively in civil society, and to create opportunities for their children” (Collegeboard, 2013). Nonetheless, pursuing a higher education is not easily accessible to everyone. Social, economic and political factors prevent individuals from obtaining a college degree particularly in the Latino/a population (Zarate & Burciaga, 2010).

Despite the fast growing number of Latinos in the nation, there is a wide gap in college enrollment for Latino/a students compared to White students (Zarate & Burciaga, 2010). An emerging issue is the growing undocumented population among Latino/a students who cannot access higher education for various reasons. According to Passel (2003), there are an estimated 80,000 identified undocumented alien children who have lived in the United States for 5 or more years who have reached the age of 18. Of those children, an estimated 65,000 graduate from high school. Furthermore, an estimated college enrollment in California for undocumented students amounts ranges between 7,000-13,000 young people who lived in the U.S five years or longer (Passel, 2003). These students are ill equipped to pursue the education process and more so when it is time to apply for college. The process of applying to college for undocumented students is fraught with pitfalls. Deficiency of information, educational support and lack of funding are but a few complex factors that hinder Latino/a students from successfully going to or completing college.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of undocumented Latino/a students in higher education. The study aims to develop a greater understanding of barriers this population faces during their college experience. Because of the fast increasing population of

Latino/a students, it is important to understand the fears, struggles and setbacks to student success. By exploring their experiences and examining their barriers using a qualitative approach and involving students, staff and faculty, we can better understand the hurdles of undocumented students. With this understanding educators can implement programs and find resources that will support and enhance the college experience of these students.

Research Questions

In efforts to address the needs of undocumented Latino/a students pursuing a college degree my research question is “What are the barriers undocumented Latino/a students face when pursuing an undergraduate degree at a four year university”? The following are areas of investigation that greatly impact undocumented students:

- a.) What barriers do undocumented Latino/a students face when applying to a four-year university?
- b.) What barriers do undocumented Latino/a students face when accessing financial aid?
- c.) What barriers do undocumented Latino/a students face when utilizing student services on campus?
- d.) What barriers do undocumented Latino/a students face when socializing with peers and personnel on a college campus?

The following chapter reviews the literature that has been conducted on undocumented Latino/a students in their pursuit of a college degree. The information will highlight related issues that undocumented students face as they attend a four year university and hardships they face as they go through the college experience.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Undocumented Latino/a Students in Higher Education

Latino/a students who pursue a postsecondary education represent a very small proportion of students enrolled in college (Contreras, 2009; Zarate & Burciaga, 2010). The imbalance is most evident among undocumented Latino/a students for whom college may seem unattainable due to various factors. Although these students desire to continue their education after high school, their legal status hinders their secondary education goals (Perez, 2010). Undocumented students must face the most difficult challenge associated with their status upon high school graduation when educational expenses make college inaccessible (Abrego, 2006).

A fast growing group of undocumented students in the United States are Latinos. Research suggests that a significant issue in college access is the growing number of undocumented Latino/a students in higher education (Zarate & Burciaga, 2010). Latinos are the “largest non-white ethnic group in the United States, estimated to comprise of 15.4 percent of the population, and are growing at a much faster rate than the rest of the nation” as well as the most underrepresented racial groups in higher education (Zarate & Burciaga, 2010, p. 25).

The United States is by far the world’s leader as the destination for immigrants, including unauthorized immigrants (Passel & Cohn, 2009). In 2011, there were 11.1 million unauthorized immigrants of which three-quarters (76%) of the nation’s unauthorized immigrant population are Hispanics (Passel & Cohn, 2009). According to Passel (2003), each year there are an estimated 80,000 identified undocumented alien children who have reached the age of eighteen and have lived for five years or longer in the United States. Of those children, an estimated 65,000 graduate from high school (Passel, 2003). These children are brought to this country and raised here most of their lives; nonetheless they have limited opportunities compared to their U.S born

counterparts (Abrego, 2006; Abrego & Gonzalez, 2010; Contreras, 2009). They struggle for the opportunity through complex webs of social, cultural, political, and policy contexts (Perez, 2009). When they graduate from high school and are ready to embark on their future endeavors, they are seldom able to go on to college and cannot legally work in this country (Gonzales, 2009). Although they can legally attend most colleges, they are not able to receive most forms of financial aid resulting in barriers to pursue a higher education (Chavez et al., 2007; Frum, 2007; Gilroy, 2015; Gonzalez, 2009; Olivas, 2009; Perez et al., 2010; Perez et al., 2009; Zarate & Burciaga, 2010). It is important to consider how their undocumented status affects their available path to socioeconomic mobility and therefore their incorporation patterns in this society (Abrego, 2006).

Latino/a Critical Race Theory

This study utilizes Latino/a Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) framework to examine the unique experiences of undocumented Latino/a student's experiences in higher education. LatCrit is a branch from the work of Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT in education is a framework that can be used to theorize, examine and challenge the ways race and racism implicitly and explicitly impact on social structures, practices and discourses. Moreover, "it refutes dominant ideology and White privilege while validating and centering the experiences of People of Color" (Yosso, 2005, p.74). LatCrit theory extends critical race discussions to address the layers of racialized subordination that comprise Latino/a experiences. LatCrit scholars assert that "racism, sexism, and classism are experienced amidst other layers of subordination based on immigration status, sexuality, culture, language, phenotype, accent and surname" (Yosso, 2005, p. 72) Within the field of education, LatCrit theory is an appropriate theoretical lens to examine racialized

experiences of undocumented Latino/a students. More importantly, it brings the intersectionality of race and other forms of oppression, such as immigration status to the forefront (Perez & Malagon, 2007). A LatCrit framework exposes how immigration status affects the educational experiences of Latino/a undocumented students in college. According to Muñoz (2013), undocumented immigrants have been historically and systematically positioned as subordinates in the U.S context. This treatment has spread into higher education as reflected by passing policies, which intentionally limit undocumented immigrants' access to higher education, thus impeding economic, social, and political mobility. The body of research that is based on Lat/Crit which investigates the barriers of undocumented students in higher education. Applying for college, financial constraints, and social interactions for undocumented students are viewed through the lenses of LatCrit.

Applying for College

For undocumented Latino students who aim to go to college, challenges to reaching this goal begin early on (Chavez, et al., 2007). Geographically, these students are amongst the working poor and live in de facto segregated areas of dense poverty; thus their communities are typically affected with low-performing schools, high rates of crime, and few opportunities for their residents (Abrego & Gonzalez, 2010). In effect, the low quality of education and low socioeconomic status of urban low-income neighborhoods cumulatively deter the academic progression of the children, shaping their future life chances (Abrego & Gonzalez, 2010).

In order to be college ready, students must be prepared with high quality instruction, rigorous coursework, and college-related information and guidance (Chavez, et al., 2007). This population lacks the adequate fundamental resources compared to their counterparts. Because

many of these students are first generation to go to college, they depend on early education to prepare them to move forward to higher education. Low-income Latino/a immigrant children “experience schooling in ways that largely prohibit their access to higher education” (Chavez, et al., 2007, p. 256). Additionally, many times they are not prepared with the prerequisites needed to succeed in college (Chavez et al., 2007; Zarate & Burciaga, 2010). Many Latinos are products of under-funded, under-staffed and under-performing high schools, and as such have not had an adequate preparation for college work (Fry, 2002). The lack of preparation results in the low numbers of Latino/a students going to college.

As the first in their families to pursue higher education, they lack the invaluable support systems at home that most American college students take for granted. According to Perez et al. (2009), having a supporting environment creates an advantage for these students. Personal environment influences academic success and when resources are available to these students, academic performance is generally positive (Perez, et al., 2009). The U.S. Census in 2000 indicated that for every 100 Chicano/a students who enter elementary school, 46 will graduate from high school, eight will go on to earn a Bachelor’s degree, two will earn a graduate or professional degree and less than one will earn a doctorate degree. This reality shows the difficulty that Latinos face in higher education and it is more prominent in undocumented Latino/a students because they must overcome all the challenges noted and several more because of their legal status.

Abrego (2006) discussed the expressed frustrations undocumented youth feel due to their undocumented status. Upon learning that their undocumented status can limit their future, these students often struggle with the contradictions. In most cases, they have been in the United States since childhood and have assimilated as much as their legal resident peers. The academic

experiences and expectations have been the same, but upon graduation, the options for undocumented students are greatly reduced (Abrego, 2006). The legal status of undocumented students hinders their motivation to do well in high school in order to go to college upon graduation (Abrego, 2006). Most high school students pursue rigorous course loads or care about their grades because it helps them get into college; however, many undocumented students do not see college as a possibility so often they don't have the same priorities (Gilbert, 2014). In many cases students may lose hope and motivation to go to college and do not bother to apply because they know they cannot afford college even if they were admitted. Others who decide to apply, settle for a community college because it is more affordable, with hopes to one day transfer to a university (Abrego, 2006).

Financial Constraints

Barriers to education of undocumented Latino/a students have an extensive history. Laws and policies limiting undocumented individuals have long existed. Prior to the Supreme Court Case *Plyer v. Doe* in 1982, undocumented students were denied a K-12 education. After the court ruling, it was found that undocumented immigrant children are able to attend K-12 and receive a free public education. Once these students graduate from high school, the limitations of their legal status become more acute and barriers multiply. This is because despite the existence of federal laws that outline the eligibility of undocumented students to a free public education, there is no clear policy about what to do with undocumented students after high school (Abrego & Gonzalez, 2010). Although *Plyer v. Doe* has barred public schools from excluding undocumented students from receiving a K-12 education, they are still excluded from other public services. In 1996, Congress passed the Illegal Reform and Immigration

Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) that relates to undocumented students accessing higher education. IIRIRA prohibits anyone who is not lawfully present in the U.S from receiving any benefits in higher education (Frum, 2007), however, the law allows each state to provide state or local public benefit. PRWORA on the other hand, prohibits anyone who is not a qualified alien to be eligible for any federal public benefit. One critical service that these students are denied is federal financial aid which is comprised of grants and student loans to pay for college. Many states also limit the ability for undocumented students to receive financial aid. Although there have been significant changes in some states, the access to services becomes a road block for undocumented students wishing to complete a college degree. This is important to consider because without financial aid, these students are not able to pay for and attend a college or university.

Accessing financial aid is an important factor for Latino/a students entering higher education; nonetheless there is an underutilization of federal financial aid among Latinos (Zarate & Burciaga, 2010). There are a limited number of available scholarships and some aid at a handful of private colleges, but scholarships are too few and tuition at private schools is often expensive. The rising tuition rates and high overall cost of postsecondary education are daunting, if not prohibitive, to most families. Without financial assistance, only a small fraction of undocumented high school graduates move on to institutions of higher learning (Abrego & Gonzalez, 2010). Misunderstanding of financial aid information such as policies and procedures can affect the ability for students to apply and receive aid. As a result, lack of funding can jeopardize a student's ability to go to college and they may miss out on certain information due to the lack of knowledge (Zarate & Burciaga, 2010). In addition to confronting the obstacles

Latino/a students face, undocumented Latino/a students experience not having access to services due to their legal status. For Latinos, finding money to subsidize their education is a determining factor to accessing higher education (Gilroy, 2015). In states that offer financial aid to these students, completing the financial aid application can be difficult. Prospective students do not always understand the information that is requested from them (Gilroy, 2015).

The enacted policy of IIRIRA restricting access to public and economic benefits, including financial aid to undocumented students, leaves students to figure out whether they will afford college. Although there are state laws such as Assembly Bill 540 (AB540) in California which allow undocumented students to pay in-state tuition, it is not enough to afford college because they are restricted from further financial aid such as federal funds. (Chavez, et al., 2007). Even with AB540 in place, undocumented students are not made well aware of how the law works and how they are able apply for in-state tuition (Chavez, et al., 2007). In addition, the lack of information about what resources are available to them makes it much more difficult to look for the help they can get.

Perez, Cortes, Ramos and Coronado's (2010) qualitative research examines the perceptions of the limitations undocumented students face when wanting to continue their education once graduated from high school. Despite the opportunity of receiving a free public primary and secondary education that resulted from the *Plyer v. Doe* court case, their equal access to education ends when they graduate from high school. Undocumented students are unable to pursue a higher education due to their legal status. Federal laws and limited resources result in significant hurdles in their educational trajectories because of the lack of help they can receive (Perez, et al., 2010). Their dreams, hopes and aspirations are put on hold because of the difficulties presented to them. Aside from the external setback, these students face internal

emotions as a result of their experiences. Not only do they experience discrimination, fear of deportation, and anti-immigrant sentiments but “these individuals are scorned by extra layers of systematic barriers that prevent them from enjoying all of the social and financial benefits that society has in place for legalized individuals and American citizens” (Perez, et al., 2010, p. 38). Fear and anxiety are worries these students may have when they face what comes along with their legal status. According to Perez et al. (2010) “the dehumanizing episodes these students experience and the overwhelming exposure to rejection often contribute to a great sense of insecurity” (p. 38).

Social Interactions for Undocumented Students

Beyond the struggles of applying for college and financial hardships, undocumented students have a difficult time with their experiences in college due to their undocumented status (Stebbleton & Aleixo, 2015). Socializing with peers and institution agents is important as it is part of the development of a student (Chang, 2005); nonetheless, it is not common for undocumented students to engage because of the fear of “being discovered” (Stebbleton & Aleixo, 2015). Undocumented students do not feel the same level of comfort compared to their documented peers when in college (Stebbleton & Aleixo, 2015; Torres & Wicks-Asburn, 2014). These students often times must negotiate belonging, exclusion, discrimination, and racial and cultural differences (Torres & Wicks-Asburn, 2014). In addition, they feel a sense of not belonging because they cannot enjoy or access all the things that U.S citizens and residents can access. They also do not feel that they are part of their home country because they have not lived there (Torres & Wicks-Asburn, 2014). Many have internalized the US values and expectations that equate academic success to economic rewards and stability (Abrego, 2006). These students, also

known as the 1.5 generation can have a difficult time assimilating and building relationships with their peers (Abrego, 2006; Gonzalez, 2007). They are not of the first generation since they did not choose to migrate, but neither do they belong to the second generation because they were not born in the U.S. and spent part of their childhood outside the United States (Gonzalez, 2007).

Building relationships with peers and institution agents does not come easy to undocumented students. Not only are they forced to be aware of economic limitations but they also have to be concerned about documentation problems and feelings associated with their status (Abrego, 2006). Abrego (2006) found that students express difficulty and embarrassment associated with being undocumented. Stableton and Alexo (2015) found that emotions such as sadness, isolation, exclusion, loss and separation are felt by these students creates a barrier to connection to the campus. They also discuss the challenges of deciding whom to trust or not trust with their personal stories, including their undocumented status. In addition, feelings of anxiety and fear are present which potentially limits their involvement with the campus (Stableton and Aleixo, 2015). Students noted that there are often restrictions of what you can say to others and it is difficult to know where instructors and advisors often stand on immigration status. Students who share their personal information and disclose their undocumented status may choose to share with those who have shared characteristics (Stableton and Aleixo, 2015).

The concerns with structural and legal barriers affect students' behavior and decisions regarding their education (Abrego, 2006). Lack of involvement on campus also goes back to the limitations students face due to their legal status because they are not able to take advantage of specific opportunities. Stableton and Alexo (2015) discussed the barriers undocumented students experienced that prevented them from fully participating in the college experience. Their legal status prevents them from engaging in educational practices and learning opportunities such as

research, study-abroad, and travels for conferences with faculty. (Stableton and Aleixo, 2015).

The inability to engage in these activities creates feelings of marginalization and can limit their college experience.

Conclusion

Undocumented students who do pursue a college education face numerous barriers. They are the most vulnerable student population within the Latino/a college population because of their status, both as resident and as students (Contreras, 2009). Outside of the school setting, family circumstances may pressure students to contribute financially, while household arrangements make studying at home difficult. Because they cannot access most forms of financial aid, the burden of paying school tuition and fees often falls on students and their families (Abrego & Gonzalez, 2010). Students from 1.5 generation often feel “in-between” identities because they grow up in the United States and become accustomed to the culture but nonetheless they are limited to their opportunities due to their legal status. Their limitations are more prominent when they graduate from high school and wish to pursue higher education. The inability to apply for most forms of financial aid poses a barrier to going to college as in many cases they are not able to afford college expenses. Students who do go to college experience face further limitations when they are unable to take advantage of specific opportunities such as studying abroad or conducting research.

The issues regarding undocumented individuals and their rights has been a long battle. Although some states have moved forward with assisting this population in the realms of higher education, others still pose barriers to these students to obtaining a college degree. Research has shown that the number of undocumented Latinos is likely to grow. It is inevitable that

undocumented children will go through our educational system for K-12 and potentially attend college. Although there are laws that limit what we can do for these students, higher education institutions can find different ways to assist these students and help them with their educational endeavors. Because of the diversity of student demographics, establishing support programs, resources and access is significant. Support programs and resources for these students are important to their success in the college experience and completion of a college degree. It is very important that institutions of higher education continue to support these students who play an important role in our society.

Chapter III: Methodology

Introduction

A fast growing group in higher education are Latino/a students. According to Zarate and Burciaga (2010), Latino/a students comprise of 15.4 percent of the population and the number is increasing at a fast rate. Additionally, this group is the most underrepresented racial group in higher education (Zarate & Burciaga, 2010). Research suggests that Latino/a students face many obstacles to obtaining a baccalaureate degree. Undocumented Latino/a students must face additional barriers when trying to obtain a college degree. Their legal status presents additional hardships they must overcome. A study to examine barriers undocumented Latino/a students face when pursuing a college degree provided information necessary to understand what they go through and to find ways to help them during their college endeavors. This study focused on understanding barriers undocumented Latino/a students face when trying to access an undergraduate degree. The research used qualitative research interview method to evaluate emotions of participants. Qualitative research was selected in order to have an in-depth conversation with participants where they can verbally express their emotions with open-ended questions as opposed to a written survey instrument. In addition, this research designs helped the researcher understand the central phenomenon of the problem (Creswell, 2014). This information examined personal experiences and could assist educational institutions better understand these student's struggles and potentially find ways to help them reach their goal of obtaining a college degree.

The Study

This study was guided by the following question: what are the barriers undocumented Latino/a students face when pursuing an undergraduate degree at a four year university? The following are areas of investigation that greatly impact undocumented students:

- a.) What barriers do undocumented Latino/a students face when applying to a four-year university?
- b.) What barriers do undocumented students face when accessing financial aid?
- c.) What barriers do undocumented students face when utilizing student services on campus?
- d.) What barriers do undocumented students face when socializing with peers and personnel on a college campus?

By examining the experiences of Latino/a undocumented students who are currently attending a four year university, we can identify and enhance retention and support services.

Demographics

The university is a public four-year institution located in southern California. It is known as a Hispanic Serving Institution (National Survey of Student Engagement, 2014) comprised of 36% Hispanics as of fall 2013. Additionally, the institution has a student club/organization created for DREAMer students which strives for undocumented representation within societal institutions building but not limited to educational, cultural, social, political, and better economic representation of the undocumented community. They create opportunities for financial aid for undocumented students via fundraising and donations. Given that this club is intended to help and support undocumented students, participants were recruited by reaching out to the Club

president and explaining my research. I also utilized snowball sampling by asking for referrals to increase the number of participants in the study. Staff and faculty members were selected by the researcher according to personal contacts from the university as well as individuals recommended by student participants.

Procedure

Participants were selected from a convenience sample recruited using email communication to various individuals and the institution's student organization. The researcher also asked email recipients to forward information to other students who met the criteria of being undocumented. The email invited students, staff and faculty to participate in a research that focused on the educational barriers that undocumented students face when accessing a college degree.

Participants

A total of nine individuals participated in this study. Three first-generation college undergraduate students, two faculty members and four staff members. The grade level for each student differed; there was a second, third, and fourth year student. Two of the student participants were female and one was male. They each started college as first-time freshman at the university. The two faculty members interviewed are highly involved with undocumented students. The staff members selected also have a role with working with this population. Two staff members work in the Financial Aid & Scholarships office, one staff member works in the Admissions & Recruitment office and the fourth staff member works in the Academic Advising office.

Instrument

Participants in the study received interview questions orally by the researcher. Qualitative interview method was selected because this research design helps the researcher understand the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). The researcher was able to see the participant and observe any emotions, expressions or gestures they made. The interview consisted of open-ended questions that asked student participants to share their experience as students and staff and faculty to share their involvement with the students. The purpose was to understand barriers undocumented Latino/a students face when obtaining a college degree. The interview took between 20 to 45 minutes to complete.

Analysis

Interviews were recorded using a voice recorder and later transcribed. The researcher conducted a preliminary analysis of the data to obtain a general sense of the data and jotted down notes on expressions and observations that were observed during the interview. The data was then coded and organized into themes. According to Creswell (2014), codes are used in order to develop descriptions of people and places and are also used to develop themes that present a broader abstraction than codes. The researcher identified major themes from data results and minor themes to identify the barriers for undocumented Latino/a students.

Conclusion

Participants in this study included nine participants: three undergraduate students, two faculty members and four staff members. A qualitative interview design was used to collect data from participants. The sample size was purposeful sample as participants were selected by

visiting the student club on campus. The campus was selected due to the demographic of students. The university is as a Hispanic Serving Institution and represents 36 % of Latinos as of fall 2013.

The results from the study adds to the literature about barriers undocumented Latino/a students face in higher education. Specifically, it focused on the barriers undocumented Latino/a students faced when trying to access a college degree. This study can potentially provide data for higher education institutions to have an understanding of what the undocumented experience and to provide help at an institutional level for this population.

Chapter IV: Results

Findings

Latino/a students in college are the fastest growing group in higher education (Passel, Cohen & Lopez 2011). Amongst this group, are undocumented students who continue their postsecondary education and pursue a college education. Despite their resiliency and dedication, they are the most vulnerable student population and face numerous barriers in their path to a college degree (Contreras, 2009). From applying to college, funding their education and being involved in campus life, undocumented students' college experiences are filled with challenges due to their legal status. It is important to understand their experiences in order to help support and enhance their opportunities.

To examine barriers Latino/a undocumented students face when pursuing a college degree, the researcher utilized a qualitative approach for the exploratory study. An interview guide was used to obtain in-depth information on the personal experiences of undocumented students pursuing their college degree at a public, state funded, four-year institution. A total of three students were interviewed. *Vanessa* is a fourth-year student and started at the university as a first-time freshman. She lives locally and commutes to school. *Ramon* is a second-year student and also started as a first-time freshman. He also lives locally and is a commuter student. *Regina* started as a first-time fresh and moved from northern California to pursue her college degree. Two faculty members, *Professor Lopez* and *Professor Diaz* participated in the study. *Professor Diaz* is a Communications professor and *Professor Lopez* is a Chicano/a Studies professor. Lastly, four staff members who work directly with undocumented students were interviewed to gain a perspective on their interactions with students. Carlos helps students in the Financial Aid Office. Isabella works in the Admissions office and Sofia is an Academic Advisor. Latino/a

Critical Race Theory (Lat/Crit) is used to examine the experiences of undocumented Latino/a students. Lat/Crit is used in education to theorize, examine and challenge the ways race and racism implicitly and explicitly impact social structures, practices, and discourses (Yosso, 2005). The following themes were found as a result of the interviews: *“coming out” stage, undocumented youth and education, funding my education, campus involvement, and creating a safe space*. The themes identified are based on the foundation of LatCrit.

“Coming out” Stage

The realization of being undocumented can be a difficult one, especially once the person is at an age to understand the implications of that status. For the students in this study, all didn't understand what it meant to be undocumented until they were in high school. It was during the time they were applying for colleges and filling out financial aid forms that the realities of their legal status began to occur to them. The “coming out” stage as one of the professors implied, can be a difficult stage as students will soon enter the world after graduation from high school. “Undocumented students don't understand the repercussions or the consequences. They don't understand that they are not eligible for certain things as other students” –Professor Lopez. *Professor Lopez* shared that many of his students recall that high school was when they found out their status while applying for schools and financial aid.

When asked about the time in their life they found out about their undocumented status and how it affected their future goals, all students responded that they understood the limitations when they had to apply for college. “[Being undocumented] wasn't a problem until I started applying for financial aid and I wanted to get a job. I found out that I couldn't get the same

financial aid as my friends did. That's when I realized what being an undocumented student was like". –*Ramon*

Vanessa found out her status at the age of ten. Her parents decided to tell her at a young age so she could begin understanding her situation and prepare for her future. She also didn't understand what it meant until she was told she could not apply for federal financial aid, "I didn't feel bad, I just had to look at it different". *Vanessa* had to reframe her perception about her situation and find ways to make her dream of going to college a reality.

Regina, on the other hand, had a difficult time accepting her situation. She was in eleventh grade in high school when she was applying for scholarships and found out. Her mother explained she didn't have one because she was undocumented, "It destroyed my whole motivation to go to college. During that semester, my grades went down really bad." Nonetheless, the participants did not let their legal status become an impediment to pursuing a college education and are now students at a four-year institution.

Undocumented Youth and Education

Research suggests that few undocumented Latino/a students go to college for various reasons whether it be a lack of money, information, or resources (Abrego, 2006; Abrego & Gonzalez, 2010; Contreras, 2009, Perez, 2009). Although these barriers are true for the participants interviewed, they all agreed that going to college would increase their opportunity for a better life. They received support and encouragement from their parents and family. *Vanessa* stated that her father always instilled the value of education and encouraged her to go to college "no matter what". *Ramon* shared the same sentiment about his parent's encouraging him to continue his education after high school. *Regina* was self-motivated to go to college, and once

she found out she was undocumented, her legal status became a motivation to pursue a college degree. She has older siblings who got married and had kids right out of high school and she did not want that to be the case for her, “I knew that the only way that I was going to be able to be successful was to go to college.”

Aside from family support, the students indicated they had someone else help them with their college going endeavors. They each had individuals at their high school help them with the process. *Vanessa* shared that her high school was very supportive of her goals and counselors and encouraged her to apply to colleges regardless of her legal status. Her school counselor provided her with information about scholarships regardless of legal status. Counselors played an important role in the participants going to college. They found different resources to support them. *Regina*'s counselor introduced her to former high school students who were undocumented and went to college once they graduated. He had the students talk to her and share their story to encourage her pursuing her goal of attending college. Those students attend UC Santa Barbara and this became a motivation for *Regina*. They shared with her resources such as workshops they attended that helped DREAMers (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) go to college.

Staff and faculty participants shared the importance of undocumented students having someone to help and guide them with the college going. Students often have to deal with the fear of their legal status and disclosing it to someone can be intimidating, “Knowing how to navigate the system is very difficult. Especially when we're told not to tell anybody about our status. You're told not to tell to anybody about status, and finding help can be very difficult. Many people believe that college isn't for them. I think that's part of why we see the really poor statistics.” - Professor Diaz.

Professor Lopez shared that fear is often an impediment for students to go to college and succeed,

“I think the main challenge is that they're afraid to come. They're afraid to share their information. I think that's the biggest obstacle. They're afraid to disclose their status to anybody. That's probably the biggest barrier I see. I probably don't know a lot of them who are because they would never admit to that. They would never disclose. I can understand why. They may be fearful. They want to stay in the shadows. That's a really big issue.”

As a result, students may not make it to a college campus, and if they do, their pursuit of a college degree can be difficult.

The three students interviewed shared that they reached out to services that helped them with the college process. They took advantage of workshops offered to them to get the necessary information needed to make their transition to a four-year university. *Ramon* was part of the Migrant Education Program. Migrant education programs are designed to strengthen the school, community and family experiences of children and their families (Department of Education, 2016). He also attended workshops that provide information to help pay for college expenses such as Cash for College. Although he had a language barrier, it did not stop him from pursuing his goal to go to college. *Vanessa's* high school counselors provided information to students who are undocumented, “I had a lot of options and I didn't feel like I had limitations because I had so much information from other people.” *Regina* was a part of the AVID program, Advancement via Individual Determination. This program prepares students for college readiness and success. The mission is to “close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and

success in a global society” (AVID, 2016). She was part of AVID from seventh grade until her senior year in high school and this helped her receive information to go to college.

A common struggle undocumented students face when applying to college is knowing what the appropriate documents are to submit to the university, in particular forms related to determining in-state tuition. Undocumented students are considered nonresidents and need to pay out of state tuition which is significantly higher than in-state tuition. If eligible for AB540 status in California, they can pay in-state tuition, making costs more affordable. It exempts the payment of non-resident tuition for certain nonresident students who have attended high school in California and received a high school diploma or its equivalent. AB540 is significant for undocumented students otherwise they would have to pay out of state tuition which is a much higher cost for their education (Ally Training Project, Inc. (n.d.). *Isabella* shared that students who are undocumented often fear disclosing any information because they do not want to jeopardize themselves or their family in any way. She also shared that before DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), many students would call the office instead of emailing information because email provided a written communication. A common misconception when applying to college is that undocumented students believe they have to submit a separate college application as they do the financial aid application. Admissions officers often reassure the process to apply is the same as for other students. All three student participants stated that submitting paperwork was a confusing process and can be overwhelming when it comes to disclosing their status. *Vanessa* shared that she “freaked out” when the University asked for nonresident paperwork. “As a first-time college student you freak out and get all these announcements saying you’re a nonresident, you’re this and you’re that, you have to submit this and you don’t know... It was a lot of figuring out versus a straight guidelines.”

Funding My Education

Limited access to funding was common amongst all participants. Students shared the struggle they face when it comes to paying for college. Staff and faculty echoed that funding is often a common conversation they have with undocumented students. Finding ways to pay for college tuition and associated costs is one of the most important indicators whether these students will attend college. Due to limited financial aid options available, many of them will not go to college if they cannot receive any help. “Money is always an issue for these students, even before coming to college. These students do not have the same family support as other students do. Many times their parents are also undocumented and are trying to find a job themselves to support their families.”- Professor Diaz. The limitations of money is the same for the types of financial aid these students can receive. They can only apply for state aid through the California Dream Application and scholarships. Undocumented students are not eligible to apply for FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) to receive federal aid.

Students demonstrated feelings of frustration due to the financial limitations they are presented with. *Vanessa* said it upsets her that she was raised in the United States since she was 3 months old, yet she does not have the same access as her other peers. She grew up in this country and considers the United States her home; nonetheless she can't access the same things. *Ramon* expressed feelings of discouragement at the thought of not being able to fund his education. His family is low income and he was not financially prepared to go to college and it is a problem. Despite the limitations, *Ramon* and *Vanessa* have found different ways to fund their education. Applying for scholarships is another way the participants pay for college. They mentioned they work to help pay for school, however the types of jobs that they have are labor intensive and are paid for “under the table” because they do not have a valid social security to work. *Ramon* works

weekend jobs doing landscaping while *Regina* would work in the swap meet before she obtained DACA and now is able to work legally. Both *Regina* and *Vanessa* are student assistants at the university and are able to obtain a workers permit due to DACA. This has given them the opportunity to work part-time on campus and gain work experience in a higher education setting.

Having limited access to different types of financial aid hinders student's experience when trying to obtain a college degree. The California Dream application only gives students a Cal Grant which is for tuition expenses only, leaving all other educational expenses the responsibility of students and their families. They must seek alternative modes of funding through scholarships which they must self-seek and apply for independently. *Professor Diaz* stated that finding and securing private scholarships is one of the biggest barriers because it directly affects their academics, "getting [assistance] to apply for [scholarships] is huge because... finding out about them is one thing but actually applying and following through is a whole other process". He also mentioned that students who may be in need don't always follow through with applying for scholarships because of the lack of knowledge and help.

School choice is limited for undocumented students because they cannot afford to pay expenses, including on-campus housing. *Regina* was not able to afford living on campus and feels that she was not able to get a holistic college experience as her peers did. "I really wanted to live on campus to get the whole college experience... I [am not] able to actually enjoy the college culture"- *Regina*. *Vanessa* and *Ramon* both chose their school because it was closest to home and the commute was not very far. *Vanessa* said that she didn't mind going close to home for her undergraduate degree in order to avoid accruing debt. She plans to attend her dream school, UC Berkley, for graduate school and knows that she will have to borrow loans to pay for costs. Staying local helps her alleviate loan debt as an undergraduate student and enter debt-free

for her post-baccalaureate education. *Regina*'s first college choice was a private school but she could not attend for financial reasons aside from the school not accepting undocumented students.

Faculty and staff shared similar sentiments about limited options for funding. They find lack of available financial aid makes it difficult to support their students. Financial concerns are amongst the top concerns for this population of students and from a faculty and staff point they feel as if they are not able fully help students. Carlos said that not having enough information about financial aid is the most difficult part of his job and seeing students drop out of college is not easy, "It's hard for a staff member, even as a friend, to show them what their resources [are] because it's so limited. I think my interaction with them would be to motivate them to keep on going, because I know they've been through a lot." Despite the limited options, faculty and staff show support through providing students with any financial opportunity that is presented and they make themselves available to help them in any matter, "They know that I am always here to review their [scholarship] application or need [letter of recommendation]." - Carlos.

Campus Involvement

Student Services

Undocumented students pay tuition and fees as all other matriculated students at their university; however, they do not experience the same opportunities as their counterparts. While other students are able to take advantage of services such as Study Abroad, internships, and student employment, undocumented students are not always able to be a part of those activities. Due to their legal status, they are not able to leave the country to Study Abroad because they do not have the proper documentation to travel. One of university's missions is to graduate students

with multicultural and international perspective and they encourage students to travel abroad and gain an international perspective. However, due to their legal status, undocumented students are not able to travel outside the U.S., thus limiting their access to study abroad. *Professor Lopez* shared that a barrier that these students face is not being able to access study abroad services, “That’s an issue right now. In fact, international programs does not have the resources [and] the skills. I don't know the training to advise these students of how to do it especially if they're DACA.” He mentioned that there is a program which may be able to help students study abroad, however, “there are processes in other campuses where there actually are ways to do it, but we're not there yet.”- Professor Lopez

Regina shared that studying abroad is something she would have loved to experience but she can’t travel outside of the U.S. She tried researching the criteria for the program that allows undocumented students to travel abroad but was not able to obtain the necessary information. Allies on campus are working with the International Programs and the Mexican Consulate to obtain information about the program so students may take advantage of this option.

Undocumented students are not able to be employed on campus as student assistants if they do not have a valid social security number. Depending on the type of internship, they may be limited to participate because some organizations require a valid social security number as well. *Professor Lopez* encourages students to engage in undergraduate academic research conferences; however, his students who are undocumented are not able to attend because they fear to travel and get exposed at a checkpoint. “Students feel that they are cheated out of their education because they couldn’t participate in undergraduate research programs that require them to travel.”

When asked if they use any student services on campus, all three students indicated they are part of the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP). EOP provides college access to underserved, first generation college students. The goal of the program is to provide the tools that will help them succeed in college and ultimately graduate. Aside from the services they receive, which includes a scholarship, they have found the personnel to be individuals whom they trust and can depend on. The counselors for the program have become a strong resource for them and find the support they need, “My counselors give me so much information. They know they have a couple of undocumented students in the program so they make sure that when they do have scholarships, they send out for everyone, so that's helpful”- *Ramon*. They shared the sentiment about having someone to trust and confide in at EOP program. They feel comfortable asking for help and support in the EOP program. *Regina* shared that students who are selected to be part of EOP have to partake in a Summer Bridge Program, an orientation the summer before they begin their freshman semester, where they live on campus for a week. She said it was the best week of her life because she felt “very privileged”.

Students expressed interest in continuing their education after completing their undergraduate degree and wish to pursue a graduate degree. One of the barriers they face is the lack of resources and information about graduate school for undocumented students. *Regina* is actively researching graduate school options and attending workshops but is not receiving the information she is hoping for. “I went to some grad workshops that we had here and they weren't useful...It becomes very tedious so being able to have workshops that are focused on undocumented students and our process... would be extremely helpful”. *Vanessa* agreed that information for undocumented students is not readily available and may discourage students to continue their education. She mentioned that fear is sometimes felt because there is little

guidance on the admissions application and financial aid. *Professor Lopez* tries to meet with students to answer questions and discuss their options, “I try to guide them and nurture their academic pursuits by giving them options that they may have, [however] they don’t have many [funding] options”. Funding continues to be a barrier in their education and more so in graduate school because they cannot get financial aid from a Cal Grant and tuition prices are higher than an undergraduate education.

Creating a Safe Space

Living in Fear:

Student participants in this study have demonstrated resilience during their educational endeavors. They strive to do well in college and obtain their college degree. Although they continue to work hard to achieve their goals, they have the feeling of living in fear and are skeptical to trust others about their status. They confirmed that they all have someone on campus that they trust and can ask for help in any given situation. They have a few people they have shared their status with but don’t share it with many. Since they are a part of EOP, they have all disclosed their story and status to their counselor. Vanessa stated that she is cautious of whom she tells her status to because she does not want to engage in any confrontation due to different views and opinions, “I don’t want to deal with [people] saying stereotypical comments to me, but I am not afraid of my status [because] I know that there’s going to be help for us.” Sofia said that although she has students who can trust her about their status, she hears about others wanting to remain “invisible” and not identify themselves. They feel safe keeping quiet and it is their way of staying safe, “they don’t feel confident to share their story and want to stay in the shadows... For those that do, that are comfortable I think it’s taken a long process for them to come to that. It’s

taken a lot of confidence, feeling safe, the feeling like they're going to be supported if they tell somebody especially a professor or a staff person. I think it's just disclosing their status, it's a big challenge.”- Professor Lopez. *Professor Lopez* also stated that those who are open about their status are students who are upperclassmen such as juniors and seniors because they have “tested the waters” of whom they can trust.

Aside from the fear of disclosing their own status, students are fearful about sharing their parent’s status and jeopardizing their family. Isabella shared that oftentimes undocumented students are reluctant to give any identifying information about their family because of the fear that their information will be disclosed to outside entities. They are very cautious and discreet to share information and try to share information verbally rather than in writing such as email.

Professor Diaz described fear as traumatic because they are constantly worrying about their legal status being discovered.

Regina said that the fear of her status has influenced her to be involved and very aware of politics as a way of survival, “Being undocumented, I've learned that knowing politics is a way of survival for undocumented students. We don't know politics because we want to or because it may be interesting to us, it's just a way of survival. A lot of the times being undocumented, you don't have that free time to be in recreational kind of clubs. Of course, I would love to join the soccer club because I used to play. The time is so limited when you're undocumented that it's very hard.” She also mentioned that she has a difficult time trusting “people of power” who hold high positions such as vice presidents and deans, “Those are a little bit more difficult to trust because I know that they have to stand on a certain position because of their job. It’s more difficult to trust people in higher positions”.

Moving Forward

In spite of the fear and uncertainty undocumented students face, they remain hopeful that their university is moving in the right direction to serve them. They all remained positive about their journey and have plans to continue their education once they graduate. When asked how the campus can provide them with support to assure their success, they provided suggestions that would help them and future generations to come.

Physical Space

A physical space was mentioned in most responses. Students want a centralized, private, safe space where they can go and not have to worry about disclosing their status. This space is ideally a center where it is dedicated to undocumented students and provides resources, information and support to them. *Professor Lopez* stated that creating a DREAM center for students would not only create a space for students but also publicly state that their institution supports undocumented students and cares about their success, “It would be a location to create allies to support our DREAMers.”

Their university recently opened a Multicultural DREAMer Center that is open to all students and aims to support inclusivity and multiculturalism. Although the students, faculty and staff appreciate the current space, they would like to have a space that is exclusively for undocumented students because not all feel that they can fully disclose their status, “You have to create privacy as part of the center. If you don't, then there's no confidence that they feel like they can disclose who they are... They feel like they can't go and get help if needed. But this DREAMer center should be open to everybody so that staff should be able to help anybody who comes in regardless of if they're DREAMers or not. That's a point because we need to cultivate

allies. That's part of what it means to be an ally. Go to these places and get help.”- Professor Lopez

Information About Resources

Students expressed frustration with the lack of resources and information available to undocumented students. *Regina* shared her experience of having to be bounced around from department to department to find answers, “It’s confusing enough having to do this alone and even more so when you are told go to different departments to find the answers you need”.

Professor Lopez, along with colleagues on campus, have been working on a website that contains centralized information on different resources. Funding information such as financial aid information would also be available on the website so students can apply.

Professional Training

Professors and staff shared an interest about having campus-wide training to become informed on how to help undocumented students, “It would help us better prepare as professionals to help them with what they need”- Carlos. There are currently optional ally trainings, but are not required. Sofia recommended that all students should also be involved so there can be campus-wide awareness and peer to peer support, “Eventually anybody who works with students should be going to workshops or trainings of some kind. Ideally I'd love to force everybody who works with students to take some kind of cultural sensitivity class/workshop of some kind because that's a whole other issue too”. Not having appropriate training makes it difficult to support undocumented students. Professor Diaz also believes training should be required to bring awareness to the campus community, “I think ally training isn't just something

that should be supplementary, but required. With the ally training, what happens is that we inform people about what students can access... That's something that our school needs to pivot, moving away from being like an ivory tower, but working with community.” Educating the campus community about the different types of students who attend can help facilitate a supportive community. Carlos believes that having this type of training will allow us to be empathetic towards others and see what their struggles are, “I've never been undocumented, or anything like that. The best thing I can do is, just, take trainings, be more aware, listen to more of what their needs and wants are. Try to see how you can be of a service to them.”

Conclusion

Despite the presence of significant barriers, undocumented students in the study have high aspirations and have demonstrated resiliency. They faced challenges through the admissions process and continue to face financial hardships; nonetheless they continue to strive and reach their goal of a college degree. They are all aware of the limitations they face due to their legal status but continue to take advantage of what they can. There are staff and faculty on campus who have shown them support that aids in their college endeavors. They strive to be allies and become mentors to their students in order to support them while they complete their degree. *Regina, Vanessa* and *Ramon* remain hopeful for a promising future and plan to continue their post baccalaureate education.

Chapter V: Conclusion

Discussion

This research focused on the barriers Latino/a undocumented students face when pursuing a college education. The question to be answered was, “What are the barriers undocumented Latino/a students face when pursuing an undergraduate degree and a four year university?” The following are areas of investigation that greatly impact undocumented students: What barriers do undocumented Latino/a students face when applying to a four-year university? What barriers do undocumented students face when accessing financial aid? What barriers do undocumented students face when utilizing student services on campus? What barriers do undocumented students face when socializing with peers and personnel on a college campus? Nine qualitative interviews were conducted to determine the barriers undocumented Latino/a students face. Three participants were undergraduate students, four were staff and two were faculty at a public, state funded, four-year institution.

The qualitative data collected in this study provides researchers with a glimpse into the lives of the students “living in the shadows” as one participant describes it, during their college endeavors. The study uncovered several factors that were critical to these students college experience: admissions, financial aid, social support and campus involvement. Although students had difficulty understanding the admissions and matriculation process to their institution, they did not give up on pursuing their dreams of going to a four-year university. They had support from family as well as high school counselors who helped guide them with the admissions process. A significant finding in the research was the timing of when students understand the implications of their legal status. High school is when students are either applying to colleges or ready to get a job following graduation. The students interviewed did not understand what it meant to be undocumented until they were told what their limitations were. One barrier they

have faced since they started their college endeavors has been funding. They are limited to the types of financial aid they can receive due to their legal status. They do not qualify for federal financial aid and can only apply for state aid. In order to help subsidize college expenses, they must seek scholarships, although that process can be confusing because each scholarship may have different application criteria. Lack of funding was a reason why the students decided to attend their school. It was the closest campus to home and they can commute to save money on housing costs. One participant felt she was cheated out of her educational experience because she was not able to experience living in the dorms due to lack of funding.

Campus involvement is also jeopardized due to legal status. Undocumented students are not able to study abroad because they cannot leave the country. Participants expressed interest and desire to gain international perspective by studying abroad, nonetheless, they were not able to because they cannot travel outside the U.S. Traveling to different cities also poses a threat for undocumented students because of potential checkpoints. One of the professors shared that he encourages his students to participate in conferences or undergraduate research programs that require them to travel. Certain internships are denied to students if they do not have a valid social security card. They are limited to the types of opportunities they can engage in because of their legal status.

Trusting others on campus about their legal status was also an area of concern for undocumented students. Although they each have at least one person whom they trusted about their undocumented status, students are cautious about who they trust. A professor best explained this by saying they stay in the shadows and will not be involved nor open about themselves to not attract any attention to them or their families. One student said she does not trust faculty or staff who hold administrative titles because she is fearful they will have to report information

due to their position. The rank of an individual is significant in gaining the trust of these students.

Students would like to see more support from their campus for undocumented students. They shared that having a physical space is important because it gives them a place where they can feel safe. They also suggested that there be more clear information about resources that they can benefit from, in particular financial aid information. Information on graduate school is also important because the participants in the study all wish to pursue a post-baccalaureate degree.

Implications for practice and/or policy

Findings from this study revealed that Latino/a undocumented students encounter barriers in the areas of admissions, financial aid, social support and campus involvement. The student participants have demonstrated resiliency while in obtaining a college degree. They are faced with limitations in finding opportunities, nonetheless, they continue striving to achieve their goals. The information that was shared by students, faculty and staff can be used to design and implement programs and find resources that can assist undocumented students complete their college degree. In addition, institutions can support students who wish to continue their post-baccalaureate education by giving them information on how to navigate their transition such as admission requirements, financial aid sources, and program information.

A limitation of this study was the small sample size. Only three students were interviewed, which limits the findings. Also, participants were from the same university rather than different institutions. Interviewing a larger population from different campuses may produce stronger data, and additional themes.

Future Research

The study will contribute to the existing body of literature regarding undocumented students pursuing a post-secondary education. This study specifically focused on the admissions process, financial aid, social support and campus involvement. Future research can focus on other areas of college life and research barriers that are encountered in these different areas. Additionally, students who transferred to a four year institution from a community college can be interviewed to gain a perspective on their trajectory to a college degree. Interviews for this study were conducted several weeks before the 2016 presidential election. Given the results of the new President for the United States and laws he wants to impose, specifically related to undocumented students, future research can investigate the hopes and fears of undocumented students, additional problems they may encounter, as well as their desire and resilience in obtaining a college degree.

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*Appendix A***Interview Questions- Student**

- 1.) How long have you been enrolled in college?
- 2.) What motivated you to go to college?
- 3.) Did you start [name of school] as a first-time freshman or transfer student? Why?
- 4.) At what point in your life did you find out you were undocumented and how did it affect your future goals and dreams?
- 5.) When did you know you wanted to go to college?
- 6.) Is there anyone who influenced you to go to college?
- 7.) What type of guidance and resources did you have to apply for college?
- 8.) What struggles did you encounter when you applied to college?
- 9.) What kind of financial aid do you apply for?
- 10.) What kind of financial aid do you receive?
- 11.) What other methods do you use to subsidize your college expenses?
- 12.) How did you feel when you first learned about your limitations for applying for financial aid?
- 13.) What student services on campus do you utilize?
- 14.) Which clubs and organizations are you a part of?
- 15.) Is there anyone on campus that you feel safe to speak to about your status?
- 16.) Is there anyone on campus that you trust to speak to about your background?
- 17.) Is there anyone on campus that you trust to ask for help given any situation?
- 18.) Do you have any suggestions on how the campus can provide you with additional support to assure your success?

*Appendix B***Interview Questions- Staff/Faculty**

- 1.) In what ways do you work with or interact with undocumented students?
- 2.) What are challenges that undocumented students face when they visit _____*?
* Department will be according to where staff/faculty member work (i.e. financial aid)
- 3.) According to your interactions with undocumented students, what are barriers they face when trying to obtain a college degree?
- 4.) How do you facilitate an environment that allows undocumented students to trust you about their status and their struggles?
- 5.) What resources and/or information do you provide to undocumented students that allows them to be successful during their college experience?
- 6.) Do you have any suggestions how our University can be more effective to support undocumented students?