

UCLA

UCLA Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Undocumented Students, Institutional Allies, and Transformative Resistance: An Institutional Case Study

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4qm4k0h1>

Author

Chen, Angela Chuan-Ru

Publication Date

2013

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Undocumented Students, Institutional Allies,
and Transformative Resistance:
An Institutional Case Study

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Education

by

Angela Chuan-Ru Chen

2013

© Copyright by

Angela Chuan-Ru Chen

2013

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Undocumented Students,
Institutional Allies, and Transformative Resistance:
An Institutional Case Study

by

Angela Chuan-Ru Chen

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2013

Professor Robert A. Rhoads, Chair

This study focuses on the capacity of colleges and universities to minimize educational inequalities experienced by undocumented students. It analyzes the role of student activism in prompting institutional accountability and successful practices used by institutional allies, such as faculty and administrators, in order to create a model for improving undocumented student success. My research and writing is centered in critical pedagogy, critical race theory, and feminist frameworks. These theoretical perspectives provide the lens to analyze interviewees' understanding of educational disparities and their sense of agency to maintain and/or resist existing institutional structures. This lens offers a framework to analyze the disenfranchised educational experiences of undocumented students and to examine their counter narratives within the larger social, economic, historical, and political contexts to understand external factors

that shape discriminatory institutional practices. In-dept interviews were gathered from 23 institutional allies who shared their experiences working with undocumented students and also from 21 undocumented students regarding their experiences navigating the institution. Interviews with students illuminate their challenges and perspectives on efforts made by institutional allies. The findings indicate that institutions, given the discretion they have within legal boundaries, do act on behalf of undocumented students; however, a gap remains between student need and institutional resources. In addition, the study suggests institutional and legislative policy changes that would enhance the success of undocumented students in gaining access to and persisting through higher education.

The dissertation of Angela Chuan-Ru Chen is approved.

Mitchell J. Chang

David M. Hernández

Jane E. Pizzolato

Robert A. Rhoads, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2013

To my mother.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	13
CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE.....	37
CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY	48
CHAPTER FIVE: IMMIGRATION NARRATIVES AND CHALLENGES FACING UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS AT SRU	70
CHAPTER SIX: INSTITUTIONAL ALLIES.....	128
CHAPTER SEVEN: CALL TO ACTION	165
APPENDIXES: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL.....	188
REFERENCES	192

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Age Upon Entry into the United States of Undocumented Student Respondents57, 71
Table 2 Departments and Participants Serving as Institutional Allies62

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Defining the Concepts of Resistance40
Figure 2 Country of Birth of the National Unauthorized Immigrant Population 201059

Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful and indebted to the students and institutional allies who participated in this study. This study would not have been possible without your courage to take action and to allow me to share your inspiring narratives.

I would like to give special thanks to my dissertation committee, Robert A. Rhoads, Mitchell J. Chang, Jane E. Pizzolato, and David M. Hernández, for their suggestions for improvement, mentorship, and support for research on undocumented student experiences. I would like to thank Rob in particular for being an encouraging advisor, who has spent countless hours meeting with me to refine my research and to incorporate theory into my analysis. I also want to thank Mitch for serving as my M.A. advisor, checking in to see how life is going, and asking critical questions about the significance of my work. I would like to thank Jane and David for your endless support in the dissertation process and preparing me for the transition into my professional role. I would also like to thank the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies for providing a supportive departmental environment and to Amy Gershon and all of the friendly and helpful staff in the Office of Student Services for making sure everything went smoothly.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Alfred Herrera, Santiago Bernal, Kent Wong, Janna Shadduck-Hernandez, Glenn Omatsu, and John Delloro, for advocating for immigrant communities on so many fronts. I am deeply grateful to have mentorship from these individuals who nurtured my research interest and connected me to the students, institutional allies, and communities that were central to the immigrant rights movement. I am grateful to have learned from these mentors the essence of being an activist educator. I want to thank Alfred in particular for providing the space and time I needed to heal from my own experience of being undocumented and the loss of dear friends in the movement.

I am grateful that my research was informed, challenged and enriched by a community of scholars who examine immigrant experiences. I am especially thankful to William Perez, Roberto Gonzales, Leisy Abrego, Abel Valenzuela Jr., Tam Tran, Tracy Buenavista, Matt Madera, Jill Koyama, Mathu Subramanian, Sam Museus, Laura Enriquez, Michelle Espino, Susana Muñoz, Richard Cortes, Ana Soltero Lopez, Argelia Lara, Jaime L. Del Razo, Angelo Mathay, Jordan Gonzales, Fabiola Inzunza, Matias Ramos, Gabriel Chaparro, Chiara Paz, Cyndi Bendezu, Betsy Estudillo, Carlos Salinas, Mariana Zamboni, and Nancy Guarneros for sharing with me your insights and helpful criticisms.

I would also like to thank Rachel Fretz for mentoring me in the writing process and helping me cope with the stress of the dissertation process.

I would also like to thank UCLA and community-based organizations that have provided research, support, and safe spaces for undocumented students: UCLA Center for Community College Partnerships, UCLA Labor Center, UCLA Center for Community Learning, UCLA Bruin Resource Center, Improving Dreams, Equality, Access and Success at UCLA, Wesley Foundation, Dream Resource Center, Asian Pacific American Legal Center, Educators for Fair Consideration, Asian Students Promoting Immigrant Rights through Education, Graduates

Reaching a Dream Deferred, API Equality, National America Taiwanese Women's Association, and Scholarships A-Z.

As I begin the next chapter of my life, I am thankful to Vice Chancellor Janina Montero, Suzanne Seplow, and Paolo Velasco for the opportunity to put my research into practice as the Undocumented Student Program Coordinator at the UCLA Bruin Resource Center. I am grateful for this opportunity to continue my service to UCLA and realize several of the policy and practice implications outlined in this study. I am grateful to work with the Undocumented Student Program team who is dedicated to providing support to undocumented students through advocacy, empowerment, and community building.

To all my friends from school, Dimpal Jain, Tracy Buenavista, Iris Lucero, Ifeoma Amah, Erica Yamamura, Arshad Ali, Satish Kunisi, Alfredo Huante, Erica Morales, Alice Ho, Oscar Cerna, Jenee Slocum, Chiara Paz, Ed Ryan, Christina Chin, Noriko Milman, Daniel Liou, Denise Pacheco, David Maldonado, and Llanet Martin, thank you for not letting me give up and sharing with me the skills I needed to survive as a 1.5 generation, female, immigrant graduate student of color.

I would like to give special thanks to the AAP & CCCP Family: Chely Gonzalez, Robert Rodriguez, Fernando Mejia, Asena Taione-Filihia, Elvia Zepeda, Frank Castorena Jr., and to all my STEP Kids. Thank you for cheering me on and allowing me the opportunity to develop my pedagogy with amazing AAP students. It is an absolute honor to work with students from community colleges, share their joy of getting accepted into UCLA, seeing them develop into mentors and continue on to graduate school. I feel so privileged to have shared in these journeys with brilliant hearts and minds.

My career in higher education would not have been possible without caring mentors from UC Irvine. I am grateful to Randy Lewis, Jill Halvaks, Anna Gonzalez, Sunny Lee, Sally Peterson, Steve Tajiri, Marti Barmore, Edgar Dormitorio, Mary Ho, and Angel Roque who guided me into graduate school and planted the seed in me to become an educator. I am grateful to my UC Irvine family who continues to check in on me at NASPA and on facebook.

I owe my persistence to my partner, Kuni Kondo, who always supported me in this process with such love and kindness. He taught me to have patience with myself. I owe my sanity to my sisters, Clarissa Castillo, Lily Chowana-Bandhu, Laarni Cutidioc, Peggy Chuang, and Sarah Ishida who believed in me during moments when I doubted myself. Thank you for being a phone call, email, or happy hour away. Lastly, I owe my deepest appreciation to my grandmother and father who have never wavered in their belief in me and my research. My family reminds me of my roots and that I have a responsibility to the communities from which I come from.

ANGELA CHUAN-RU CHEN

EDUCATION

- 2013 Ph.D. Education, University of California, Los Angeles
Emphasis in Higher Education and Organizational Change
- 2005 M.A. Education, University of California, Los Angeles
- 2000 B.A. Cognitive Psychology, University of California, Irvine
Minor Business Management

HONORS/AWARDS

- 2010 Graduate Fellowship, UCLA Department of Education
- 2010 Research Grant, UC Center for New Racial Studies
- 2008 Project ADVANCE, UCLA Dept of Education
- 2008 Research Grant in Ethnic Studies, UCLA Institute of American Culture
- 2006 Graduate Summer Research Mentorship, UCLA Graduate Division
- 2003 Graduate Fellowship, UCI Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs

PUBLICATIONS

- Chen, A. C. (Forthcoming). Navigating Institutional Structures: The Politics of Supporting Undocumented Students in Higher Education. In J.P. Koyama & M. Subramanian (Eds.), *Education in a World of Migration: Implications for Policy and Practice*.
- Buenavista, T. L. & Chen, A. C. (2013). Intersections and crossroads: A case study of an undocumented Asian American student. In S. D. Museus, D. Maramba & R. Teranishi (Eds.), *Asian Americans in Higher Education*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.
- Chen, A. C. & Buenavista, T. L. (2012). Breaking the Silence: Remembering Tam Tran the scholar. In F. Inzuza (Ed.), *Undocumented and Unafraid: Tam Tran, Cinthya Felix, and the Immigrant Youth Movement*. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Labor Center.
- Chen, A. C. (2012). Undocumented students. In J. A. Banks (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Diversity in Education*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Chen, A. C. & Herrera, A. (2010). Strategies to support undocumented students. *Transitions*, 5(2),3-11.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Chen, A., Matera, M., & Munoz, S. (2012, March). Institutional and State Support for Undocumented Students. Presentation at the annual national meeting for the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, Phoenix, AZ.
- Chen, A. C., & Buenavista, T. L. (2010, April). Asian (American) Undocumented Immigrant Experiences: Highlighting the Parallels between “Model Minority” and Undocumented Student Discourse. Paper presented at the annual national meeting of the American

Educational Research Association, Denver, CO.

Chen, A. C. (2010, March). Institutional Ally and Advocacy Training Initiative: Improving Undocumented Student Success. Presentation at the annual national meeting of National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, Chicago, IL.

Chen, A. C. Rhoads, R. A., Collins, C., Liu, A., & Yeung, F. P. (2009, November). Building Globally Engaged Universities to Meet the Needs of the 21st Century. Panel presented at the annual Comparative and International Educational Society, Los Angeles, CA.

Chen, A. C., Buenavista, T. L., & Tran, T. (2009, April). Underground Undergrads: Uncovering the Experiences of Asian American College Students. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Asian American Studies, Honolulu, HI.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 01/10-03/10 Teaching Associate and Reader
Graduate School of Education and Information Studies
University of California, Los Angeles
Winter 2010 EDU 419C: Introduction to Research in Student Affairs
- 05/09-08/09 Program Educator
Center for Community College Partnerships and Summer Sessions
University of California, Los Angeles
Summer 09 Summer Transfer Enrichment Program
- 09/06-06/08 Teaching Associate and Civic Engagement Minor Coordinator
Civic Engagement Minor, Division of Undergraduate Education
University of California, Los Angeles
Fall 2006 through Spring 2008
CE 195: Community or Corporate Internships in Civic Engagement
- 01/07-03/07 Reader and Peer Mentor
Department of Asian American Studies
University of California, Los Angeles
Winter 2007 AAS 119: Asian American and Pacific Islander Labor Issues

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- 2009-2011 Graduate Student Researcher, UCLA Academic Advancement Program
2004-2006 Graduate Student Researcher, UCLA Center for Community Learning
2003-2004 Graduate Research Assistant, UCLA Higher Education Research Institute
2001-2003 Research Assistant, National Institute of Child and Health Development

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Everybody is kind of scared to touch this issue. And you still wonder why. Because it's the site, this political debate at the institutional level. We are the site of political debates. . . . So, on the one hand, we have the real tragedy of students: the real precarious existence of undocumented students, the sheer numbers, and really how little institutional support there is. On the other hand, we have this political debate that has colored the so-called "access" to scarce resources.

In this opening quote from my study, "Gabriel," a professor at a research university in California called "Sunny Research University" (SRU)¹, captures both the challenges and consequences that confront the effort to build institutional support for undocumented students in higher education. The challenges are that discrimination rooted in xenophobia and racism inform educational practices in the U.S., resulting in the reluctance of colleges and universities to fully embrace undocumented students as members of the institution. These forms of discrimination shape the boundaries of citizenship and inclusion, and consequently determine the students' entry points into higher education. Contrary to an idealized notion of education as the great equalizer, educational systems "may in fact contribute to the creation and maintenance of a division between 'us' and 'them'" (Hjerim, 2001 p. 37). Exclusionary practices in higher education are legitimized by laws that not only deny students financial aid, but also help "sustain a climate of antipathy and suspicion toward undocumented students and immigrants of color" (Rincón, 2008, p. 62). Furthermore, laws exist that criminalize those who hire, house, aid, transport, or educate undocumented immigrants (Rincón, 2008; Vargas, 2012), which magnifies

¹ Pseudonyms were assigned to the names of campus and study respondents to maintain confidentiality. Identifiers such as gender, major, and department may also be switched in the reporting of this data. The names of the participants were removed or modified in the reporting of the data to further ensure anonymity.

the actual or perceived constraints of providing the undocumented with postsecondary educational benefits.

With the aforementioned in mind, this study seeks to explore the efforts of undocumented students and allies at SRU to challenge institutional policies and practices that fail to support the educational and academic experiences of undocumented college students. This study aims to understand the experiences of undocumented students, the experiences of institutional allies, and the partnership between them in addressing exclusionary policies and practices targeting these students. The research examines the capacity for institutional allies to resist the marginalization of undocumented students that is arguably rooted in xenophobia and racism. This study found that institutional allies partnered with undocumented students to leverage their professional roles and networks in creative ways to institutionalize resources that better supports these students. Furthermore, this research highlights often overlooked institutional practices that are relatively independent from government regulations, as well as the often clandestine subculture created by ally educators who support undocumented students.

Ambiguity and Contradictions

The debate over educational access has become increasingly central to preserving boundaries of citizenship—particularly as citizenship increasingly determines one’s ability to “accumulate capital and social prestige in the global arena” (Ong, 1999, p.6). Although immigration is under federal jurisdiction, the debate over immigrant rights has steadily shifted from federal lawmakers to state and local actors, including the right to higher education (NFHEPG, 2012). Without clarification of existing federal provisions or congressional actions for comprehensive immigration reform, state lawmakers and institutional leaders use local

discretion when interpreting and enacting federal laws. The actions of educational leaders are often ambiguous as they juggle compliance with legal mandates and attempts to meet the needs of undocumented students.

This ambiguity was evident at SRU, where the campus president maintained disparate positions on legislative reform and institutional change. The SRU president was sympathetic to the plight of its undocumented student population and joined fellow university presidents in their public support for the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act, or DREAM Act as it is more commonly known; the act is a decade-old immigration bill expected to provide a pathway to citizenship for approximately 38 percent of the undocumented youth population.² Unfortunately, the president's enthusiasm did not carry over to institutional practices. For example, he was much less outspoken in making systemic changes at the institutional level. Although his political stance made him an ally to those in the immigrant rights movement, he simultaneously demonstrated reservations in offering tangible resources to improve undocumented student success at SRU.

The consequences of such contradictions are evident in the precarious existence of undocumented students in higher education (Abrego, 2006; Abrego & Gonzales, 2010; Albrecht, 2007; Lopez, 2010; Perez, 2009; Perez and Cortes, 2011; Rincón, 2008). Although most institutions do not explicitly ban undocumented students from attendance, the lack of financial

² DREAM Act is a bipartisan bill that would provide undocumented youths a path to citizenship on the condition that they entered the United States before the age of sixteen, complete two years of college or serve in the U.S. military, and maintain good moral character. "While slightly more than 2.1 million youth and young adults could be eligible to apply for legal status under the legislation, historical trends indicate that far fewer are likely to actually gain permanent (or even conditional) status, due primarily to the bill's education attainment requirements. [The Migration Policy Institute estimates] that roughly 38 percent of potential beneficiaries—825,000 people—would likely obtain permanent legal status through the DREAM Act's education and military routes while as many as 62 percent would likely fail to do so" (Batalova & McHugh, 2010, p.1). Thus, educational access is expected to greatly determine the efficacy of the DREAM Act in providing a realistic path to citizenship for undocumented youth.

aid (Oliverrez, 2006), an overwhelming degree of psychological distress imposed by their status (Perez & Cortes, 2011), and inadequate institutional resources (Albrecht, 2007) deter many of these students from getting a college degree.

The Context for Undocumented Students

Studies have shown that undocumented students have diminished opportunities for postsecondary education, both in enrollment numbers and in the quality of their experience (Abrego & Gonzales 2010; Perez, 2009; Perez & Cortes, 2011; Lopez, 2010). At the national level, 65,000 undocumented youth graduate from high school each year, but only approximately 26 percent of graduates matriculate into higher education (Fortuny, Capps, & Passel, 2007). Compared to the national average of 70 percent for U.S.-born high school graduates who matriculate into college, this rate is dismal (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Undocumented students constitute less than one percent of the two million undergraduates enrolled nationally (U.S. Department of Education, 2009), and those who matriculate are disproportionately enrolled in community colleges as a cost-saving strategy (Albrecht, 2007; Oliverrez, 2006).

This study took place in California, the state that receives the highest number of undocumented immigrants in the United States (Fortuny, Capps, & Passel, 2007). Twenty-four percent of the total undocumented population resides in California, which is an estimated 2.4 million people (Fortuny, Capps, & Passel, 2007). Furthermore, 40 percent of the total undocumented youth population resides in California (Passel, 2003). In 2001, California enacted Assembly Bill 540, which is a law that exempts students, including undocumented students, who meet certain eligibility requirements from paying out-of-state tuition at California public colleges

and universities. This act alleviates a portion of the cost of public postsecondary education, however, students are still required to pay in-state tuition without public aid. Furthermore, the educational needs of undocumented students are not limited to monetary factors. This study attempts to demonstrate the exclusionary policies and practices that contribute to educational disparities these students experience at the postsecondary level.

Undocumented students' access to postsecondary educational benefits is highly regulated by federal and state mandates. These students are eligible to apply for and enroll in public postsecondary institutions in California and may qualify for in-state tuition if they meet residency requirements outlined in Assembly Bill 540 (AB 540)³. However, they have limited access to public aid, loans, and other forms of financial support. The University of California Office of the President (2012) outlines the state mandates that regulate access to financial resources.

The Federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, [made undocumented students] ineligible to receive any aid from the Federal government, such as Pell Grants and Federal student loans....Second, since the enactment of anti-terrorism legislation known as the Patriot Act of 2001, undocumented students also cannot obtain private education loans from commercial lenders because they have difficulty authenticating their identity. Third, a 1990 California court decision under *Bradford v. Regents*, found that undocumented students cannot establish California residency under California law. Lastly, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA) bars states from extending benefits on the basis of residency (e.g. residence classifications for tuition purposes) to undocumented students unless the same benefit is offered to all U.S. citizens regardless of their residency. (pp.1-2)

³ California's Assembly Bill 540 passed on October 12, 2001 by Governor Gray Davis. The bill allows undocumented students to qualify for in-state tuition in the state's public higher education institutions, if they (1) attended a California high school for 3 or more academic years; (2) received a GED or an equivalent; (3) registered or be currently enrolled at an accredited public institution of higher education in California; and (4) filed an affidavit with the individual institutions, stating that the student has filed an application to legalize his or her immigration status, or will file an application as soon as he or she is eligible to do so (California State Assembly Bill 540).

These governmental policies work cumulatively to restrict undocumented students' access to financial resources. Given that 66 percent of all undergraduates in the U.S. rely on some form of financial aid (U.S. Department of Education, 2009), the inability to receive aid makes it financially unfeasible for most undocumented students to pursue higher education. This hardship was also the main challenge to students' persistence in higher education (Albrecht, 2007; Rincon 2008). To finance their education, undocumented students relied on a small number of competitive private scholarships, money from friends and family, and income from unauthorized employment (Buenvista & Tran, 2010). In many cases, the students depend solely on their income to cover educational costs and, as a result, may have taken frequent academic leaves to save money to pay for the next term (Buenvista & Tran, 2010).

High school and college personnel, though well intentioned, may be unprepared to address complications associated with a lack of documentation during the college-choice process and after students matriculated into college. Their support also proved to be the exception within institutions that were largely unaware of the experiences of undocumented students.

Oliveres's (2006) study on undocumented high school students demonstrated the need for school-based support in the college-choice process. Her study data indicated that undocumented high school students need additional academic preparation, well-informed school-based adults who can provide college-related guidance relevant to students' immigration status, and a college-going culture. Albrecht (2007) found similar inadequacies at the postsecondary level. She concluded that university administrators had a limited understanding of the needs of undocumented students. Seven of the nine administrators in her study "had not previously thought about undocumented students in their professional capacity" (p. 142). Students in her

study stressed the need for accessible information, designated personnel to help them navigate the institution, and legal services to counsel them on immigration status.

Feranchak's (2007) study offered some insight for these oversights. In her national study on the attitudes of higher education leaders regarding the appropriateness of providing educational benefits to undocumented students, her data revealed significant discrepancies among the respondents. The study suggested that supportive higher education leaders were more likely to be Asian or Latino, to identify with the Democratic Party, to work at a four-year institution, and to be located in California. The varying levels of support by educational leaders may possibly explain why it is difficult for higher education to work uniformly in the treatment of undocumented students. Taken together, there is significant inaction by institutions and limited evidence to suggest institutionalized support for undocumented students in higher education.

Overview of the Study

While it is essential that institutional leaders and scholarship on undocumented immigrants continue to call attention to the need for legislative reform for more equitable access to education (Abrego & Gonzales 2010; Perez, 2009; Perez & Cortes, 2011; Rincón, 2008), it is also critical to investigate the impact of institutional policy and practice in perpetuating educational inequity. This study is interested in how institutional actors attempt to maintain the “delicate balance between the quasi-enforcement role required by federal regulations and the helping role that is basic to the relationship between educators and students” (Badgar & Yale-Loehr, 2002, p. 1). Related to this inequity is *reproduction theory*, a branch of critical social thought which argues that educational institutions are sites of social reproduction in which

hegemonic agendas are inherently embedded in educational policy and practice (Giroux, 2001). Using this theoretical framework, I posit that the marginalization of undocumented students in higher education is a reflection of the discrimination directed at undocumented immigrants; thus, support for undocumented students is fundamentally political in nature, even at the institutional level. By examining how SRU negotiates the contentious relationship between citizenship and educational access and how ambiguously the institution embraces undocumented students as part of the campus community, this study aims to identify areas in which institutional policy and practice could foster greater inclusion. Based on an analysis of the action of supportive administrators and instructors at SRU, my findings point to next steps institutions might take in resolving the marginalized experiences of undocumented students.

This study focuses on the efforts of undocumented students to impact the inequitable institutional context in which they find themselves situated. I utilize theories of agency and resistance from critical social thought to examine their experience. In particular, I examine the role of student visibility and activism in prompting institutional allies to act in support of undocumented students. Additionally, I focus on the role of SRU institutional allies who, as faculty members and administrators with a managerial or instructional role, had at least some awareness of undocumented students and demonstrated a history of advocacy on their behalf at the institutional level. Contrary to other change agents in the movement, (students, community members, and legislators who called for institutional change from the periphery), these faculty and administrators were entrenched in shaping priorities and carrying out the vision of the institution. Central to my analysis of the allies' role as change agents is the tension of changing a structure which the allies helped create and sustain. The study's findings discuss the students'

and allies' understanding of educational disparities and their sense of agency (Freire, 2002) to maintain, resist, and transform institutional structures.

The following research questions frame my study of how undocumented students and their institutional allies worked to improve undocumented student success in higher education.

1. What institutional challenges do undocumented students face at Sunny Research University?
2. In what ways do undocumented students address institutional practices and policies that disadvantage their academic pursuits?
3. In what ways are institutional allies engaged in supporting the efforts of undocumented students?
4. What are the institutional factors that impact the advocacy work of undocumented student and institutional allies?
5. How do undocumented students perceive the role of institutional allies in support of their higher education access, opportunities, and outcomes?

To address these research questions I call upon qualitative methodology, drawing a great deal from strategies related to ethnography, including extensive participant observation. The study was conducted at Sunny Research University (SRU), a public research university in California. I chose SRU as a research site for this study because it has a history of institutional support for undocumented students and one of the highest enrollments⁴ of undocumented students in public research universities. I collected the data from over four years of participant observation (2007-2011), during which I participated in undocumented student group events and activities (including group meetings, fundraisers, rallies, and meetings with university

⁴ The central office of Sunny Research University issues an annual report on the enrollment figure of AB540 recipients within the university system. To maintain the anonymity of the institution, the name of the report cannot be revealed in this reporting of the data.

administrators), conducted interviews, and served as a community advocate for immigrant students.

Definition of Terms

- Institutional actor – is an individual who is employed by the institution to fulfill the institution’s mission of teaching, service, and/or research. Individuals who fit within these criteria will most likely be student affairs or academic affairs professionals and faculty members.
- Institutional ally – 1) is an institutional actor who is aware of the challenges experienced by undocumented students and has a documented history of advocating for greater access and retention of undocumented students within their professional setting.
- Documented immigrants – include U.S. citizens, legal permanent residents, refugees and asylees, temporary legal residents, and naturalized citizens.
- Non-immigrant – person who is permitted to enter the U.S. for a specific limited period of time, and is given a temporary visa (e.g., students, tourists, diplomats) with an expiration date. For example, an international student who is residing in the U.S. on a student visa would be considered a non-immigrant.
- Undocumented immigrant – includes persons who entered the U.S. without legal immigration status or who stayed after the period they were authorized to be here. In many cases, an undocumented person does not have employment authorization (cannot work lawfully) and may be deported if discovered by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), a branch of the Department of Homeland Security.
- Citizen – is a person born in the United States or a person who became naturalized.

Significance of the Study

Immigrant rights will be the central civil and human rights issue that will define this generation of youth. Due to the controversial debate on immigration, undocumented students represent one of the most vulnerable subset of youth in regards to college access and retention. The primary objective of this study is to engage postsecondary educators and practitioners in successful practices and available resources for supporting undocumented students. A secondary objective is to create a model or action plan that can be implemented on college campuses. This study highlights the laws that impinge upon undocumented students in their pursuit of higher education, the policies and practices that contribute to their academic experience, and the process in which they stepped out of invisibility to call for greater institutional accountability. This study also provides an intimate look at what institutional actors can do to support these students. This study offers recommendations on how to create a welcoming and inclusive campus environment for undocumented immigrant students, increase faculty and staff knowledge about the needs, concerns, and issues of undocumented immigrant students, and build a network of campus allies.

Organization of Chapters

This dissertation is divided into seven chapters. The introduction provides an overview of the study. Chapter two provides a literature review unfolding the magnitude and complexity of international migration, the legal framework underpinning the issue of undocumented immigration in the United States, especially as they relate to undocumented students. Chapter three describes the theoretical framework that informed the data collection and data analysis methodology used in this study. Chapter four is an overview of qualitative methodology used in this study. Chapter five presents the major challenges and experiences by undocumented students

in higher education and their process of revealing their status and engaging in student activism. Chapter six discusses the role of institutional allies in cultivating a more receptive environment for undocumented students, highlighting the political nature of advocating for the educational rights of undocumented immigrants. Chapter seven concludes with implications for practice, policy, and research that aim to improve undocumented student success in postsecondary education. It also makes recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature on the institutional response to undocumented students illustrates the ambivalence on the appropriateness of providing the means for undocumented students to fully participate in higher education. This ambivalent stance is a result of complex circumstances and is manifested in a lack of commitment to educating undocumented students. This issue “can neither be told nor understood apart from its context—the historical, social, economic, and political circumstances surrounding the debate” (Ricón, 2008, p.3). Thus, this literature review provides a glimpse of the multiple layers surrounding this issue. This section will begin with a brief overview of the demographics of undocumented immigrants in the United States and changing ideologies on immigration. This is followed by a discussion on seminal legal court cases and state and federal policies relevant to undocumented students in California. Lastly, I provide a discussion on recent literature that sheds light on the experiences of undocumented college students and the role of institutions.

The Demographics of Undocumented Immigrants in the US

As of 2005, the number of people living outside their country of birth is unprecedented, owing much to an increasingly interconnected global environment (Global Migration Group, 2010; United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], 2006). There are a total of 191 million international migrants and they “would now constitute the world’s fifth most populous country if they all lived in the same place” (UNFPA, 2006, p.6). They are a diverse group including migrant workers, refugee and asylum seekers, and smuggled and trafficked involuntary migrants.

“While for many the migration process is an empowering experience, the reality for some is one of exploitation and abuse, either limited to the migration journey or experienced while in the country of destination” (Global Migration Group, 2010, p.1). In 2010, the Global Migration Group, an umbrella organization of 14 agencies, including the United Nations, World Bank, and the International Labour Organization, declared their concern for human rights violations of international migrants in the host country. As we witness such high rates of people moving across international borders, there appears to be an “‘asymmetry’ of the globalization process; the fact that goods, capital, services, information and ideas are allowed to flow increasingly freely across international borders, while people are still confronted with a wide range of official controls” (UNFPA, 2006, p.9). The group wanted to ensure that “policies toward migration should not be based on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance” (p.4).

The growing presence of immigrants in the United States is a growing public concern because since 1990, over 90 percent of those who migrated moved to industrialized countries and of those industrialized countries, the United States receives the highest percentage of international migrants (UNFPA, 2006). By 2004, 35.7 million people in the United States were foreign-born, which is approximately 12 percent of the total population (Van Hook, Bean, Passel, 2005).

As of 2011, there were 11.5 million undocumented immigrants living in the U.S. (Hoefler, Rytina, Baker, 2012). Legally defined, an undocumented immigrant is a foreign national who entered without inspection or with fraudulent documents; or entered as documented nonimmigrant but then overstayed the terms of her or his visa. Statistics shows that not all undocumented immigrants enter unlawfully, in fact visa overstayers account for 25 to 40 percent of undocumented immigrants (Passel, 2003). Undocumented immigrants represent a significant

segment of the US foreign-born population. One-third of the nation's immigrants are undocumented (Fortunty, Capps, Passel, 2007). California is the largest receiving state with over 2.6 million undocumented immigrants, representing nearly a quarter of the nations total undocumented population (Passel & Cohn, 2011).

Contrary to previous waves of immigrants, recent immigrants are mainly from Latin American and Asian countries and many are undocumented (Passel & Cohn, 2011). Approximately 30 percent emigrated from Mexico, 20 percent from other Latin American countries, 11 percent from Asia, 4 percent from Europe and Canada, 4 percent from Africa and other countries. While this data reports their region of birth, it does not account for the complexity of immigration in the current era. For example, these statistics do not capture a small number of Asian immigrants who emigrate from Latin American countries.

Included in the undocumented population are a growing number of undocumented students who are moving through the educational pipeline into higher education. According to a report issued by the Bell Policy Center, there are 1.7 million undocumented immigrants under 18 years of age living in the United States and 1.3 million of the minors have lived in the U.S. for 5 or more years (Protopsaltis, 2005). Each year, approximately 80,000 undocumented youth turn 18 years of age, 65,000 graduate from high school, and 7,000 to 13,000 continue on to pursue postsecondary education (Protopsaltis, 2005). The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that as of 2000, 40 percent of all undocumented minors live in California and they account for approximately 5,000 college students in California's postsecondary education system (Passel, 2003).

The Political Context of Immigration

Current immigration policies create second- and third-class citizens within American society. According to historian Mae Ngai (2003), the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act of 1942 coined the term illegal alien and its representation as a central problem in U.S. immigration policy. This act first established “numerical limits on immigration and a global racial and national hierarchy that favored some immigrants over others” (p.3). This resulted in increased immigration surveillance based on ethnic and racial desirability—favoring those with financial, racial, and educational appeal. Consequently, these discriminatory practices shape present day “ideas and practices about citizenship, race, and the nation-state” (p.3). Although immigration quota is no longer in place, its remnants lead to the continued marginalization of undocumented immigrants. She argues that contemporary experiences of undocumented immigrants should be understood in the context of a “caste” system in which social forces positioned them into “the lower strata of the workforce” and “unambiguously situated outside the boundaries of formal membership and social legitimacy” (p.2).

What Ngai argues was evident in 2010, when Arizona passed legislation to aggressively push undocumented immigrants out (Hing, 2010)). Kris Kobach, Kansas Secretary of State, and former immigration advisor to Presidential Candidate Mitt Romney, is the policymaker behind Arizona’s and a number Arizona copycat anti-immigrant bills that aimed to drive undocumented immigrants out through a model referred to as attrition through enforcement. The goal of this model is to make day-to-day life so harsh that undocumented immigrants will self-deport (Hing, 2010). On April 30, 2010, the most notorious of these bills, Arizona SB 1070, titled the Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act, passed the Arizona legislature and was signed by Governor Brewer. This bill allows " police officers to detain and arrest anyone they have “reasonable suspicion” to believe is in the country without papers. Those who are detained

and cannot provide proof of legal residence or citizenship could be charged with a misdemeanor. The bill also makes transporting and employing undocumented immigrants a crime (Hing, 2010).

In response to such provisions, several immigrant rights, civil rights, and faith-based organizations filed lawsuits to overturn these ordinances. The Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, the National Immigration Law Center, the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Coalition of Latino Clergy and Christian Leaders all filed lawsuits to challenge the law's "constitutionality on the grounds that the bill sanctions racial profiling" and that it "violates federal law by trying to enforce immigration laws on its own." (Hing, 2010). Days before the law was to take into effect, Arizona court issued an injunction preventing law enforcement from checking a person's immigration status. The constitutionality of this was finally decided in the Supreme Court in which they rejected most of its provisions citing conflicts with federal laws. However, it upheld the provision allowing Arizona law enforcement to check the immigration status of people they detained.

This landmark legislation has provoked other states to draft similar provisions. With no federal reform in sight, a number of states legislators felt compelled to address immigration at the local level. In the months following the passage of SB 1070, politicians in 21 states followed Arizona's lead to develop copycat versions of the bill (Wessler, 2010). "As of November 10, similar bills had been introduced in six state legislatures: South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Rhode Island, Michigan and Illinois." (NSLC, 2013). However, the motivation to detain and remove undocumented immigrant is more convoluted than what meets the eye. According to a National Public Radio investigation, extensive review of campaign finance, lobbying, and corporate records revealed that the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) and Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), "played a pivotal role in conceiving,

writing, and naming the law that would become SB 1070” (Wessler, 2010). The documents revealed that CCA executives believed that immigrant detention centers would generate profitable revenues. The report also identified “two of Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer’s lead staffers were formerly prison company lobbyists” (Wessler, 2010). Therefore, the issue of immigration must consider the hidden profits and political gains in order to fully expose those who benefit from such legislation.

In the days following the passage of SB 1070, I travelled to Arizona to stand with thousands who oppose the bill in a protest around Phoenix. The tension was palpable in the state, as children in K-12 were required to prove their immigration status to school officials. I later learned of educators who ensured safe passage of undocumented youth out of the state to more receptive areas in the country. Several of these students were left to their own devices to continue their education in the United States after their parents self-deported.

Since the data collection period for this study, the issue has gained greater momentum on the national platform. Immigration was a central concern in 2012 when it was “No longer a backburner issue” (Peoples & Kuhnenn, 2012) as both President Barak Obama and Republican candidate Mitt Romney aimed to secure the Latino vote by promoting their plan for immigration reform. Obama reinforced his support of undocumented youth when he announced on June 15, 2012 that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security would not deport undocumented youth who had lived in the U.S. for at least 5 years, demonstrated good moral character, and had earned a high school degree. Political analyst believed that Obama’s position on immigration got him the Latina/o and Asian vote he needed to win the election. “In retrospect, Kris Kobach was a phenomenal failure as an immigration adviser to Mitt Romney: Mitt Romney took his biggest unexpected hits with Latinos and Asians, both very pro-immigrant groups that were completely

turned off by the rhetoric on the Republican side about immigration” (Campbell, 2012). This oversight by the Republican Party has prompted greater bipartisan support for comprehensive immigration reform to provide pathways to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.

The discourse used to frame immigration within this national conversation is another factor to consider. Popular media contributes to the criminalization and “othering” of undocumented immigrants by using terms such as illegal alien, unauthorized immigrant, border control, war on terror, and amnesty. Furthermore, terms such as “temporary” and “guest” worker essentialize them as laborers, without human and civil rights in American society. These terms attach a stigma to undocumented immigrants, forcing many, including undocumented youth, to conceal their status. Their silence is perpetuated by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids on college campuses and the growing number of incidents of violence against immigrants. By condoning these acts of hostility in the eye of the law, it continues to justify unjustifiable acts committed against immigrants based the perception that they are workers and threats to national security and economic health.

Labor and immigration share an intimate relationship, reflecting the capitalist American context. Formal immigration channels favor wealthy and educated newcomers resulting in a vulnerable undocumented working class with limited immigration avenues. The existing immigration system is more consumed with holding undocumented immigrants accountable for their “illegal” actions without a critical analysis of the role the U.S. has played in international affairs or its dependence on cheap labor. According to Jefferies, the U.S. has engaged in disruptive foreign policies leaving rural populations abroad “unable to participate in their own economies” (Jefferies, 2008, p.21). This displacement of people is “creating a mobile workforce,

an army of available workers that has become an integral part of the U.S. economy” (Bacon, 2008, p. 67).

Similarly, undocumented students are constructed as *high-skilled-migrant workers* (Johnson & Reed, 2007; Gonzales, 2009), in the cost-benefit analysis on the appropriateness of providing them with higher education benefits and a pathway to citizenship. A great emphasis is placed on their economic contributions, as a valuable return to investing in their education. According to Guroff (2006), “When we talk about ‘our kids,’ we talk about investments...when we talk about ‘unauthorized immigrant kids,’ we talk about cost” (p. 1). Kobach, an out-spoken opponent against providing higher education benefits for undocumented students, is an example of Guroff’s point. Kobach (2006) argues that providing in-state tuition rates to “illegal aliens” is the same as a taxpayer-financed education. He also argues that such policies would encourage federal immigration violations and that it is unfair to lawful immigrants. Kobach uses a common legal argument that such benefits would violate Section 505 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA), which prohibits undocumented immigrants from accessing any postsecondary education benefit unless a U.S. citizen or national is eligible for the same benefit.

Proponents argue that the U.S. is the only home these students have ever known and they are here to stay, they can contribute to the country, especially to the U.S. economy, they should not be punished for their parents’ decisions, and lastly, withholding education from undocumented students does not resolve the larger immigration issues (Drachman, 2006). Ultimately, the controversy surrounding immigration will continue as more and more undocumented students graduate from high school and enter college. A resolution to this debate is beyond the scope of this study, however, it is evident that this is a timely matter for

postsecondary institutions and it is important to understand what changes are taking place or need to take place on college campuses.

Legislation and Policies Impacting Undocumented Students

In framing my study, it is important to examine the legislative context impacting undocumented students. Undocumented minors have the right to primary and secondary education, however, there is no existing federal provisions on the conditions for postsecondary education. In 1982, the Supreme Court case *Plyler v. Doe* reinstated the rights for undocumented students to public elementary and secondary education. The court ruling was based on the belief that all people, including undocumented immigrants, are protected under the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and that denying education to undocumented youth “imposes a lifetime hardship on a discrete class of children not accountable for their disabling status” (*Plyler v. Doe*, 1982). Although this ruling made clear that undocumented immigrants are entitled to a public K-12 education, “access to postsecondary education remains severely constrained by federal laws” (Drachman, 2006 p. 91). The limitations of *Plyler v. Doe* and the lack of explicit federal law on higher education led many states to determine for themselves the level of accessibility and affordability to higher education for undocumented students (Biswas, 2005).

The spotlight soon turned to California, where higher education benefits for undocumented immigrants have been controversial for almost three decades. Since the 1970s, cases in California, as in other states, were primarily concerned with eligibility for in-state tuition rather than for admission. The consensus is that undocumented immigrants can apply and enroll in college, but how much should they pay is highly debated. Much of this debate dates back to

1983 when the California legislature amended its Educational Code to provide in-state tuition to non-citizen resident students, including undocumented students (Albrecht, 2007; Rincón, 2008). One year later, the State Attorney General limited this benefit to legal residents, stating that undocumented students cannot establish residency for tuition purposes.

Then in 1985, five undocumented students challenged the State Attorney's interpretation and filed suit against the University of California. This later became known as the Leticia "A" ruling, which struck down the residency provision in the California Educational Code and made undocumented students eligible for in-state tuition *and* financial aid (Albercht, 2007). As a result of this case, the University of California (UC) and the California State University (CSU) no longer required proof of U.S. citizenship or permanent residency when establishing state residency for tuition purposes. Under this ruling, any students enrolled at a UC campus (between the years 1986 – 1991) or at a CSU campus (between the years 1986 – 1995) were able to establish residency for tuition purposes by graduating from a California high school and by demonstrating intent to reside in California for more than a year and one day. Students who met these residency requirements qualified for state financial aid (Cal Grants) and in-state tuition fees.

However, the benefits of the Leticia A Ruling were short lived and the court ruling was overturned in 1992 as a result of Bradford v. UC Regents. A UC employee, Dennis Paul Bradford, sued UC Regents, "asking that the original residency statute be declared constitutional" (Olivérez, Chaves, Soriano, & Tierney, 2006, p.17). Even with several appeals, Bradford won the case and as a consequence, undocumented students attending the University of California, California State University, and California community colleges were charged out-of-state tuition and they lost eligibility to receive state financial aid.

In 1994, California remained a hostile environment for undocumented immigrants with the passage of Proposition 187, which was a ballot introduced initiative by Republican assemblyman Dick Mountjoy designed to prevent undocumented immigrants from accessing social services, health care, and public education. Certain segments of the California population, including large percentage of conservative Republicans supported this ballot that aimed to prohibit undocumented students from attending public colleges or universities by requiring “state and local agencies to report undocumented immigrants who tried to utilize public services” (Albrecht, 2007, p. 29). Governor Pete Wilson, a strong supporter of the proposition, argued that limited public resources should not be extended to undocumented immigrants. Civil rights groups such as the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund filed an injunction arguing that the proposition violated the premise of *Plyler v. Doe* by denying undocumented students’ access to primary and secondary education. Proposition 187 was later overturned by federal courts, however it reinforced the anti-immigrant movement and influenced the writing of a federal law called the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA).

In 1996, the Clinton administration passed IRIRRA and it is considered one of the most recent piece of “thorough immigration reform” in recent history (Rincón, 2008). Section 505 is of particular relevance to postsecondary institutions. It directly addresses eligibility for postsecondary benefits for undocumented immigrants. Section 505, Limitation on Eligibility for Preferential Treatment of Aliens Not Lawfully Present on Basis of Residence for Higher Education Benefits, prohibits undocumented immigrants from accessing any post-secondary education benefit unless a citizen or national of the United States is eligible for the same benefit. “Although codified, federal regulations for Section 505 were never drafted. The lack of federal regulations resulted in the provision being interpreted by individual states and institutions of

higher education” (Albrecht, 2007, p. 30). Varying interpretations have resulted in discrepant policies at the institutional, state, and national level. Feranchak’s (2007) dissertation research demonstrates variance across institutional types. The results of her study “suggested that leaders at 2-year colleges were less supportive of education benefits for undocumented immigrants than leaders at 4-year colleges and universities” (Feranchak, 2007, p. 100).

During the turn of the millennium, California Assembly successfully passed a bill making undocumented students eligible for in-state tuition. Assembly Bill 540 (AB 540) became effective on October 12, 2001 after the bill was signed by then Governor Gray Davis. The bill’s singular provision was to allow students who meet certain criteria to pay in-state tuition. AB 540 is not an immigration policy, meaning it does not change a student’s immigration status, make a student eligible for any government aid, nor does it provide a pathway to citizenship. The controversy continues in a current lawsuit by out-of-state students arguing that AB 540 discriminates against U.S. citizens in favor of undocumented students.

This historical discussion demonstrates the ceaseless debate that has resulted in volatile state policies that create a level of uncertainty for students, especially when campuses are unaware of or slow to adopt favorable policies and practices. While some cases advanced civil rights, immigrant rights, and educational rights, others reflected anti-immigrant sentiment. Institutions are required to change policies and practices according to the legal climate with students often caught in the middle.

As a result of vague federal policies and the growing number of undocumented students graduating from high schools, many states are “assessing and revising their policies related to access and affordability of higher education for undocumented students” (Biswas, 2005, p. 1). Since 2001, over 30 states proposed legislation to reduce this financial burden. Twelve states,

including California, Connecticut, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, and Washington, have passed legislation providing in-state tuition to undocumented students. The criteria used to determine eligibility for in-state tuition are primarily modeled after Texas and, therefore, are similar across the ten states. In order to qualify for in-state tuition, most legislation across the nation requires attendance at a state high school from two to four years, completion of a high school diploma or GED in the state, enrollment in a public postsecondary institution, and the filing of an affidavit stating intent to gain residency status and become a U.S. citizen (Biswas, 2005).

Legislation across the country use similar criteria to determine eligibility, although some states use a slightly different framework in providing in-state tuition. One framework redefines *residency* for the purpose of tuition and the other is an *exemption* from paying non-resident tuition. While none of the enacted policies have reverted, in-state tuition for undocumented students remains a contested benefit that has faced public backlash, including high profile lawsuits in California, Kansas and New York. In 2008, out-of-state students and families challenged California AB 540 stating they should not pay out-of-state tuition while undocumented students were able to pay in-state tuition. In 2010, the case was decided by the California Supreme Court, which unanimously upheld AB 540 concluding that AB 540 was an exemption from paying in-state tuition based on high school attendance in California, rather than legal residency status. Thus the argument on residency was unfounded. (Terkel, 2010).

In 2011, Governor Jerry Brown passed the California Dream Act, which consists of two bills, Assembly Bill 130 and 131. Assembly Bill 130 went into effect in January 2012, allowing AB 540 eligible students to receive private institutional scholarships from California public postsecondary institutions. Assembly Bill 131 went into effect in January 2013, allowing

students to qualify for institutional and Cal Grants at California public colleges and universities.

California has a history of being a forerunner in addressing immigrant and educational rights. Due to the “size of the California postsecondary educational system and the geographic location of the state, California’s policies and related legal decisions have a disproportionately heavy impact on the national undocumented alien population” (Olivas, 1995, p.1024). Thus the manner in which California’s legal and educational system responds to these issues can set a precedent across the country.

The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM Act) is bipartisan legislation that will provide a pathway to citizenship for undocumented students. Since 2001, several versions of the DREAM Act have been introduced in the Senate and the House of Representatives, either as independent bills or as part of the proposed comprehensive immigration act (UCLA Labor Cener, 2008). All variations of the DREAM Act provide a path to citizenship for undocumented youth. The DREAM Act would allow undocumented students to qualify for six years of *conditional* legal residency upon high school graduation if they were brought to the United States before they turned 16 and resided in the United States for at least five years before the passage of the act; can demonstrate good moral character; and had been admitted to an institution of higher education in the United States. Those who qualify for conditional legal residency would be eligible for a driver’s license, legal employment, federal work-study programs, loans, and state-funded financial aid. During the six years of conditional legal residency, they must either complete at least two years toward a four-year degree or serve in the military for a minimum of two years. If they compete the educational requirements or military service within the six-year conditional residency period, they may then apply for *permanent* residency.

Some versions of the DREAM Act include a provision that would repeal Section 505 of the IIRIRA. The provision would allow states to determine state residency for the purpose of higher education benefits. After the 2012 presidential election, gaining strong support from both sides of the aisle, the future of the DREAM Act appears more promising. Proponents are hopeful that Obama's leadership will set a higher priority to allow undocumented youth the chance to adjust their status.

Since the educational system has not been successful at providing a pathway for undocumented students to higher education, a major concern is that undocumented students will turn to the military as the primary means to pursue a path to citizenship. This trend would heighten the existing trend for military recruiters to turn to communities of color and immigrants as a strategy to increase military enlistment. The true intention of the DREAM Act is questionable when the Secretary of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, has fully endorsed the legislation, emphasizing its potential to grant citizenship to those serving in the military. Critical educators contend that these trends run counter to the philosophies of equality. Furthermore, this act is a generational provision with no long-term applications. However, for many undocumented youth, the DREAM Act will resolve a major concern that there is currently no existing legalization process that acknowledges undocumented college students.

Undocumented Students in Higher Education

Undocumented college students experience a complex set of education, personal, and institutional barriers. Most undocumented students are students of color, from low-income backgrounds, and are the first of their family to attend a postsecondary institution (Abrego, 2006; Albrecht, 2007; Flores, 2007; Olivérez, 2006). In addition to the intersectionality of race, gender,

class, language, and other dimensions of identity, they are further marginalized by their immigration status. Orellana (2007) argues that “[c]itizenship and legal status factor directly into educational opportunities, as the recent surge of attention to undocumented college students have revealed” (p.2). This section demonstrates that the undocumented status factors directly into educational opportunities, human development, family and community processes, and racial formation.

Under current state and federal policies, undocumented students are eligible to apply for college admission and cannot be denied based on their immigration status; however, access to higher education remains out of reach for many undocumented students (Badger, Yale-Loehr, Vernon, & Schoonmaker, 2005; Abrego, 2006; and Olivérez, 2006). Although a combination of factors limits access to higher education for undocumented students, the lack of financial resources remains the most substantial consideration in the college-going process (Abrego, 2006; Albrecht, 2007; Flores, 2007). While there are similarities to the educational experiences of first-generation and low-income students, the following section will highlight factors unique to undocumented students.

In many states, undocumented students are ineligible for in-state tuition and financial aid as well as select student support services (Abrego, 2006; Feranchak, 2007; Olivérez, 2006). Furthermore, they are “denied access to loans, grants, and work study – the most common ways in which students pay for college” (Buenavista & Tran, 2010). According to Olivérez (2006), limited financial means is a common characteristic that restricts undocumented students’ access to higher education. In her dissertation study of college access, undocumented students made several financial and residency related considerations during the college application process and college choice process. Students in her study applied to less expensive institutions, and financial

barriers led them to attend a community college even after being admitted to a four-year institution. This demonstrates that “students’ low family income and ineligibility for government-sponsored financial aid combined to seriously impede their access to higher education” (Oliveréz, 2006, p.221). Even though participants in Oliveréz’ study were eligible for in-state tuition, they continued to experienced difficulties financing their education.

Their undocumented status and experience as first-generation college students contributed to a lack of college-related social capital. Olivérez (2006) determined that, although they may have encouraging parents who are aware that a college education would afford greater social mobility, their parents’ unfamiliarity with the educational system meant students had to obtain guidance from a network of teachers, counselors, and college representatives. In some cases the students received guidance late into high school and the information was incorrect or limited due to a lack of knowledge of resources available on the college application process for undocumented students. The lack of institutional commitment to providing this information to the undocumented created added barriers to student access.

Another deterrent is the lack of successful undocumented role models. Abrego (2006) used a sociological lens in her study on the effects of undocumented status on access to higher education and the development of human capital among undocumented youth. She found that “undocumented youth confront legal barriers and contradictions that often lower their aspirations and impeded education attainment” (p. 217). Their educational aspirations were highly influenced by the experiences of their undocumented older cousins and siblings who were unable to attend college or find legitimate employment. Similar to Olivérez’s finding, students in Abrego’s study chose to attend a community college even though they were academically competitive for a four-year institution. She also pointed to the tension that existed between the

students' internalized identity as a member in U.S. society and their legal identity that prevents them from full participation. "Ironically, their social incorporation sensitizes them further to the contradiction that, despite their academic success, they are barred from the opportunity to integrate legally, educationally, and economically in US society" (Abrego, 2006, p. 221). Abrego concluded that their undocumented status prevented them from legal and social incorporation in to the American institution.

Contradictions in the law and ambivalent educational policies are most evident once undocumented students matriculate into higher education. Institutions are, to some degree, enrolling students they have no intension of supporting, or even acknowledge. In this regard, many undocumented students exist in the shadows of the ivory tower. Consistent with issues of access, they experience financial, personal, and institutional circumstances that impinge on the student's decision and ability to persist.

Similar to issues of access, one of the main barriers to completing their education is the lack of monetary resources (Abrego, 2006; Albrecht, 2007; Flores, 2007; McGray, 2006; & Olivérez, 2006). They are ineligible for government aid, work-study, student loans, paid internships, and lawful employment. Undocumented students rely on a limited number of private funds and scholarships, money from friends and family, and income from unauthorized employment (Albrecht, 2007) to finance the cost of education. In a recent guide for AB 540 students, published by the University of Southern California Center for Higher Education and Policy Analysis (Olivérez, Chaves, Soriano, & Tierney, 2006), the authors recommend "creative" means to garner donations and funding (p. 25). This is evident with student groups that have held fundraisers, including garage sales, galas, and recycling programs. In many cases, undocumented students rely solely on their own income to cover educational costs, often

resulting in recurring leaves from school to work to save up enough money to pay for the next term and help sustain the family (Buena Vista & Tran, 2010), thus extending their time-to-degree.

Finding a job is further complicated by the lack of a social security number, driver's license, transportation, or work permit (Albrecht, 2007). Students were also turned away or denied access by institutional staff for failure to provide documentation, such as a social security number, driver's license or residency documentation. Ironically, school-issued identification cards are often the only form of formal identification they possess. Undocumented students face struggles beyond higher education. Many are "prevented from pursuing careers after graduation due to their inability to provide proper documentation," (Buena Vista and Tran, 2010). The inability to start a career or to prove their age makes them perpetual minors.

The barriers previously mentioned contribute to the lack of housing options on or near campus for many undocumented students. Understanding the challenges these students face in terms of the difficulties associated with housing has been greatly informed by qualitative understandings of their experiences. For example, an interview conducted through a national radio show, reveal some undocumented student lived in a "hobo mode" of sleeping in public areas on campus and using campus facilities to shower and store food. As the country endures more economic challenges, institutions may likely encounter more homeless students, including undocumented students who are already financially burdened.

As the example of the student in the previous paragraph implies, being an undocumented student also has psychological implications. Their psychological stress is exacerbated by campus personnel who are unfamiliar with policies regarding undocumented students (Perez & Cortes, 2011). Campus personnel may not be knowledgeable about current legislation, such as AB 540, and subsequently may turn students away for not complying with campus policies. The overall

lack of commitment by campuses to serve AB 540 students contributes to a hostile and difficult institutional environment.

A comprehensive college experience allows students to learn and develop outside the boundaries of a classroom setting. A culmination of having to protect their identity and the lack of official identification prevents undocumented students from participating in a wide range of curricular and co-curricular activities (Albrecht, 2007). Without travel documents, such as a passport or identification card, many are unable to participate in conferences, field trips, research colloquiums, or study abroad programs. Since many are ineligible for legal employment, they also miss opportunities to gain work experience prior to graduating from college by not being able to accept paid internships or on-campus student employment. The nuance of not having official identification also limits their ability to take graduate school exams, such as the GRE, MCAT, GAMT, and LSAT. This contributes to the uncertainties after graduation.

The negative experiences of being undocumented contribute to psychological distress as some may feel a sense of hopelessness, shame, and fear. “Undocumented students, however, are often confronted on a daily basis with the issue of how to survive in a society that restricts access to their basic needs” (Albrecht, 2007, p. 9), including institutional deterrents that consist of insensitive, rude and demeaning institutional actors. Although this emotional distress hinders a student’s development, it has also compelled many undocumented students and their allies to support and advocate for one another. A peer support network is an example of student empowerment. Many campuses today have student-initiated groups that are committed to advocating for greater access and equity for undocumented students. Campus groups are highly diversified in their types of lobbying activities, including meeting with local, state, and national government officials, speaking to the press (including minority media outlets), partnering with

local chambers of commerce, participating in marches and rallies, organizing hearings and teach-ins, and organizing letter writing campaigns. Students raise awareness at the local level and collaborate with undocumented students and allies across the state and the nation as a collective voice for greater immigrant rights. These groups provide a “safe zone” to “give [the students] the strength to challenge the social stigma and anti-immigrant sentiment” (Briones, Cruz, Diaz, Duarte, Espinoza, Fonseca, Lopez, et al., 2007, p. 86). Examples of student activism and civic engagement around the issue of undocumented students are also found on the Internet. The Internet provides the medium for a national dialogue and it allows undocumented people to participate without disclosing their identity.

Students have found additional means to empower themselves through a self-determined identity. An example is the emerging AB 540 identity. According to members of Students Informing Now (S.I.N), the group “allows its members to construct political identities as AB 540 students” (Briones, Cruz, Diaz, Duarte, Espinoza, Fonseca, Lopez, et al., 2007, p. 85). Since the majority of undocumented students qualify for AB 540, many identify with this term. In some cases, AB 540 is used as an adjective that allows students to share their circumstances with administrators and students without fully disclosing their undocumented status. This practice empowers students to seek and receive student support services and to be more vocal and public about their educational needs. Many AB 540 students are cognizant of the educational pipeline and offer mentorship and guidance to undocumented high school students.

Furthermore, access to post-secondary education benefits for undocumented student is a salient issue to Asian American and Latino communities. Approximately 8.2 million undocumented immigrants, or 80 percent, are from Latin American countries and 1.2 million, or 12 percent, are from Asian countries (Fortuny, Capps, & Passel, 2007). According to the

University of California Office of the President (2012), Latino students represent the largest group of undocumented students on University of California campuses with 45 to 52 percent, followed by Asian students at 40-44 percent.

The current understanding of access and retention challenges faced by undocumented students centralizes Latina/o students. Although there is evidence to suggest Asian American students represent a significant segment of the undocumented student population (Gonzales, 2009; National Korean American Service and Educational Consortium & Korean Resource Center, 2008; University of California Office of the President, 2012), they lack visibility on many college campuses. This study will highlight the value of a race conscious discourse to address lack of visibility for certain racial groups, including the level of disclosure from students themselves, the institutional perception, and the cultural influences associated with being undocumented. Buenavista and Tran (2010) suggests that cultural and racial differences of undocumented students impact the level of visibility on college campus as well as the level of perceived needs.

Institutional Response

The previous section provides an extensive description of the challenges and barriers faced by undocumented students. It is imperative to discuss these issues in a holistic manner in order to critically analyze the institutional response that is the focus of this study. As this section will demonstrate, there is an insubstantial amount of literature on the role of the institution. Furthermore, the current understanding on institutional response is primarily based on studies that focus on student experiences. Therefore, this study will add to the literature by specifically focusing on institutional actors and context, in addition to the student experience.

In Feranchak's (2007) study of higher education leaders' attitudes toward the appropriateness of providing educational benefits to undocumented students revealed that there are discrepant attitudes based on state, institutional type, race, and political affiliation. The study was conducted in nine states that provided in-state tuition to undocumented students and nine states that charged out-of-state tuition. Survey data was collected from 384 institutional leaders from two-year and four-year institutions.

The study suggested that participants in California were more supportive of education benefits for undocumented immigrants than in other states. Also, contrary to a previous report portraying supportive community colleges (Biswas, 2005), this study revealed "leaders at two-year colleges were less supportive of educational benefits for undocumented immigrants than leaders at four-year colleges and universities" (p.100). This is of particular concern since many undocumented students are limited to community colleges due to financial concerns. When race is considered, Asian and Latino higher education leaders showed more supportive attitudes when compared to African American and White participants. Finally, the study found that Democrats were more supportive of providing educational benefits to undocumented immigrants. This study provides several factors to consider in understanding how participants, in this proposed study, interact with the institutional structures, policies, and practices in addressing undocumented student retention.

In terms of access, Olivérez' (2006) study demonstrated that undocumented students rely on a network of teachers, counselors, and college representatives for most of their college-related social capital. However, there is little empirical data on the role of college administrators in assisting this group of high school students during the college-going process. Furthermore, there is no evidence to suggest that undocumented students are supported after matriculation into

higher education. Albrecht's (2007) study concluded that university administrators had a limited understanding of the challenges and service needs of the undocumented student population. In fact, seven of the nine participants "had not previously thought about undocumented students in their professional capacity" (p. 142). Although this study took place at a public university in Texas, the first state to offer in-state tuition and financial aid to undocumented students, the participants perceived a lack of awareness of this student population in their department and by the university's upper-administration. Participants in her study included administrators from career services, academic advising, study abroad, financial aid, international student services, and the vice presidents office. Albrecht's (2007) study demonstrated the need for relevant student services, such as legal services, accessible information, and designated personnel to help undocumented students. She also highlighted the importance of including university administrators in the discourse on the education of undocumented students because there is a lack of awareness within the higher education community.

This study is an extension of Albrecht's study by continuing the discussion on institutional response. However, this qualitative study incorporates several key modifications. The most significant difference of my study is the opportunity to explore the perspectives of institutional allies, defined as faculty, student affairs, and academic affairs administrators who have had a proven history of advocating for greater access and retention of undocumented students within their professional setting. This study will also look at the broader higher education community by exploring the potential role of faculty members and academic affairs professionals in shaping the educational experiences of undocumented students. This qualitative research highlights the challenges of undocumented student and the experiences of institutional actors. The following chapter is an overview of the theoretical framework used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

My research and writing is centered in critical pedagogy, critical race theory, and feminist frameworks. These theoretical perspectives provide the lens to analyze interviewees' understanding of educational disparities and their sense of agency to maintain and/or resist existing institutional structures. This lens offers a framework to analyze the disenfranchised educational experiences of undocumented students and to examine their counter narratives within the larger social, economic, historical, and political contexts to understand external factors that shape discriminatory institutional practices. It also serves as the lens to understand the role of institutional allies in their partnership and support for undocumented students.

Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy became more popular in the 1980s as a radical model for advancing a humanizing and emancipatory culture of schooling (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003, p. 10). "Critical theorists begin with the premise that men and women are essentially unfree and inhabit a world rife with contradictions and asymmetries of power and privilege" (McLaren, 2003, p. 69). Based on this assertion, critical educators are not only committed to social justice within schools, "but the transformation of those structures and conditions within society that function to thwart the democratic participation of all people" (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003, p. 2). In this context, modern education is concerned with reproducing a capitalist social order, one that exploits those who are most politically, socially, and economically vulnerable (Braa & Callero, 2006). While schools are considered sites of social reproduction, they are also significant sites

with potential for empowerment and social transformation.

This study incorporates critical theory as an explicit framework to analyze educational structures, particularly those that marginalize individuals and groups. Critical pedagogy provides a framework to examine the guise of neutral and apolitical educational practices. Student support structures, including academic and student affairs, are traditionally viewed as apolitical areas of the institution engaged in equitable practices that respond to student needs. However, a critical analysis of the impact of state and federal policies reveals that this is not the case for undocumented students. Undocumented students cannot fully participate in higher education due to hostile political, social, economical, and historical conditions around their immigration status. In this manner, institutions participate in class perpetuation by positioning select groups, such as U.S. citizens and legal residents, with greater advantages that replicate the privileges of the dominant class (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003).

Praxis. An integral aspect of critical pedagogy is the idea of praxis, as defined by Freire (2002). Praxis is a process that involves action and reflection in a symbiotic relationship, where one consistently shapes and informs the other. Freire argues that transformative praxis must be informed by *conscientizacao* (critical consciousness), which refers to an awareness gained by “learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppression elements of reality,” (Freire, 2002, p. 35). Critical pedagogues urge students and educators to engage in praxis by developing a critical consciousness and the agency to challenge existing power structures.

Using the concept of praxis, this study seeks to demonstrate that the practice of working for and with undocumented students cannot be devoid a theoretical underpinning. This study makes meaning of the work by institutional allies by examining the motivation and reasoning

behind their participation. The idea of praxis has raised some questions for this study to consider: why do the institutional actors studied, engage in advocacy work with undocumented students, given that their participation can be potentially harmful to their professions? How do they negotiate the legal parameters set forth by the institutions around undocumented students? What is their definition of social justice and how does their work reinforce or contradict this definition? To what degree are they able to create transformative change? Included in praxis is the act of resistance, which I will discuss in the following section.

Theory of Resistance. According to Giroux (2001), “[a theory of resistance] provides new theoretical leverage for understanding the complex ways in which subordinate groups experience educational failure, and directs attention to new ways of thinking about and restructuring modes of critical pedagogy” (p, 107). This perspective complicates the reasons why “subordinate groups consistently fail within the educational system” (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003, p. 14). In addition to Giroux’s work, I incorporate a useful model by Solórzano and Bernal (2001) that is based on “based on an adaptation of Henry Giroux’s notion of resistance” (p. 316). According to Solórzano and Bernal (2001), there are four forms of resistance based on two intersecting dimensions: (a) level of critique of social oppression and (b) level of motivation for social justice. The four types of resistance behavior are depicted in Figure 1. “The distinction between the four behaviors is not static or rigid, and neither are these behaviors inclusive of all types of oppositional behavior” (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001, p. 317). The four forms of resistance are: reactionary behavior, self-defeating resistance, conformist resistance, and transformative resistance. Following, I provide a brief definition of each and offer an example of how institutional actors may engage in resistant behaviors toward institutional authority in working with undocumented students.

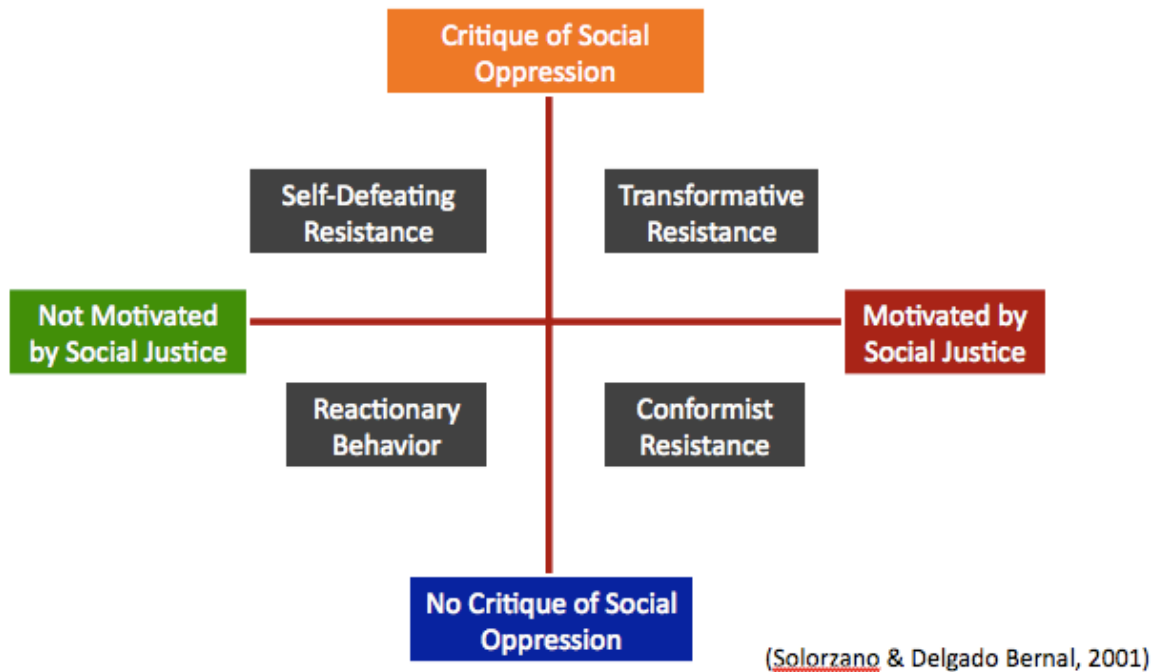


Figure 1: Defining the Concepts of Resistance

Reactionary behavior is not a form of resistance because the individual lacks both a critique of both her/his social oppression and the motivation for social justice. An example of reactionary behavior can be drawn from the current literature on the institutional response to serving undocumented students. The current literature describes an overall lack of commitment by campuses to serve the unique needs of undocumented students (Feranchak, 2007). In many cases, institutions lack knowledge on procedures and regulations to adequately support undocumented students. Thus they are reacting to undocumented students showing up at their offices with little knowledge of the issues at hand. This lack of commitment may lead to insensitive or rude attitudes toward these students. For example, students are often turned away or denied access for failure to provide unnecessary documentation such as a social security number, driver’s license /or residency documentation, even when those documents are not

necessary for students to access the services they are requesting.

Self-defeating resistance represents the “traditional” notion of resistance. This form of resistance refers to individuals “who may have some critique of their oppressive social conditions but are not motivated by an interest in social justice” (Solórzano and Bernal, 2001, p. 317). This usually describes students who “drop-out” of school. An example of this category of resistance, are mentors and or counselors who encourage undocumented high school students to pursue community college or no higher education at all due to limited resources or the lack of perceived student support at four-year institutions. This form of resistance may be problematic given that many undocumented students are discouraged from pursuing higher education, especially at a four-year institution, due to financial barriers (Abrego, 2006; Albrecht, 2007).

Conformist resistance is the third type of resistance. Resistance behavior defined in this quadrant has no critique of social oppression but are motivated by social justice. Institutional actors who act according to this category are likely to be concerned with the plight of undocumented students as a whole and are motivated to find ways to accommodate their needs within the existing structures. For example, institutional practitioners in Albrecht’s (2007) study categorized undocumented students as international or as racially underrepresented students as a means to better address their needs. However, this practice severely overlooks the unique positionality of the students’ undocumented status, thus marginalizing them within these groups.

Transformative resistance refers to resistant behavior guided by a critique of social oppression and a motivation for social justice. “With a deeper level of understanding and a social justice orientation, transformative resistance offers the greatest possibility for social change” (Solórzano & Delgado, 2001, p. 319). This type of resistance differs from the previous three because it does not legitimize or strengthen the structures of oppression. Institutional actors

committed to transformative resistance engage in work within their professions that challenges current policies to address inequitable structures and policies. This form of resistance involves non-compliance with exclusionary institutional policies.

I focus on the notion of transformative resistance in my conceptual framework on transformative institutional praxis based on both Giroux's theory of resistance and Solórzano and Bernal's model. However, transformative institutional praxis goes beyond resistance and incorporates additional principles to reflect the complexities of the role of the participants included in this study.

Critical Race Theory

The early origins of critical race theory (CRT) began in the mid-1970s as a movement in law by a "collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism and power" (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001). CRT emerged out the raced-based critique of critical legal studies and the deep discontent with the slow progress toward social justice through civil rights liberal discourse. The theory gained momentum as legal scholars, such as Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado, and Kimberle Crenshaw, saw the need to address race and racism as they relate to law, particularly to critical legal studies (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Tate, 1997).

According to CRT, race is significant in any consideration of American life (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001). Race and racism are salient in normal aspects that permeate multiple segments of who "we" are (Solórzano, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Solórzano and Yosso (2001) define race and racial stereotype as socially constructed ideas used by a group, believed to be superior, in order to dominate the other group and commit racist behaviors. According to Ladson-Billings

(1998), the subordination of people of color is achieved by the belief that that whiteness represents the norm. The inferiority paradigm or the deficit model in schooling justifies racist schooling practices that hold students and communities of color solely accountable for the lack of academic success, thus alleviating teachers and schools from instructional and structural reform.

In Solórzano and Yosso's (2001) work on applying CRT to teacher education, they outlined five tenets that inform the perspectives, research methods, and pedagogy of critical race theory: 1) centrality and intersectionality, 2) challenge to dominant ideology, 3) commitment to social justice, 4) centrality of experiential knowledge, and 5) interdisciplinary perspective.

The first tenet argues for the centrality and intersectionality of race and racism and maintains that racism, sexism, classism, and other forms subordination play a central role in educational practices. According to Tate (1997), traditional educational research primarily focuses on class and gender paradigms without the significance of race. Race remains untheorized and has been excluded from the analysis of educational and social inequality (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). The intersectionality of identity is critical, given though studies have shown that while class and gender correlate with certain educational inequalities, they cannot account for all variances in educational attainment, as demonstrated in cases where both class and gender are held constant (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

This tenet is particularly relevant to understanding and humanizing undocumented student experiences, given that many are students of color from low-income families with diverse immigrant experiences (Abrego, 2006; Albrecht, 2007; Gonzales, 2009). These students must address the circumstances of their immigration status in addition to the intersectionality of race, gender, class, language, and other dimensions of identity. Although current research on

undocumented students explicitly focuses on describing Latina/o student experiences (Abrego, 2006; Albrecht, 2007; Flores, 2007; Seif, 2004), many lack a theoretical analysis that examines the intersectionality of immigrant identity and race in a social, historical, and political context. Using this tenet, this study questions the degree of awareness by transformative agents of the intersectionality of student identity when thinking of what services are relevant and accessible to undocumented students. Furthermore, this tenet highlights the transformative agents' awareness of their own marginalization at the institutional level as an undocumented student advocate.

The second tenet stresses the challenge to dominant ideology regarding culture and intelligence, language, and capability through research, pedagogy, and praxis. The call to challenge dominant ideology is based on the premise that it serves the interests of the dominant culture, which operates under the guise of neutrality that conceals the structural/institutional racism that has been fabricated into the student assessment, schooling practices, and institutional structure.

Traditional notions of student and academic affairs appear apolitical, however, this is not the case for undocumented students whose educational inequality is facilitated and justified by federal and state laws. Anti-immigrant policies prevent undocumented students from accessing financial aid and other student support services, making them a vulnerable student population (Badger & Yale-Loehr, 2002; Olivérez, 2006).

While education was—and can continue to be—a tool to perpetuate the oppression and the marginalization of people of color, it also has the potential to empower learners, transform power relations, and address race and racism in the classroom and in the broader society. Using this tenet, this study examines the role of transformative agents and the degree to which they are able to challenge traditional notions of student and academic affairs to meet educational

challenges experienced by undocumented students.

The third tenet centers on a commitment to social justice through a liberatory framework that seeks to eliminate all forms of oppression, including those found within the educational environment. CRT is committed to social justice in research, pedagogy, and practice. This study has theoretical, pedagogical, and practical contributions that strive for greater social justice in educational practices. The findings from this research provide a conceptual framework for transformative institutional praxis and practical recommendations for student programs and support services to achieve greater educational equity for all students, including undocumented students.

The fourth tenet focuses on the centrality of experiential knowledge, which seeks to deconstruct oppressive structures and legitimize the experiences of people of color through personal storytelling, narratives, counterstories, revisionist histories, and fiction. Borrowed from the idea of legal interdeterminacy, CRT rejects the notion of a single truth. Using the narrative technique of CRT, this study centralizes the voices and experiences of educators and practitioners, who experience a degree of marginalization in their work as undocumented student advocates. The qualitative methods used in this study provide the capacity to understand the complexities of how they make meaning of events and situations and how their understandings impact their behavior.

Finally, the fifth CRT tenet stresses interdisciplinary perspectives in analyzing race and racism. CRT draws from critical legal studies, radical feminism, liberalism, poststructuralism, and several related movements for a more holistic understanding of racial matters (Tate, 1997; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). CRT research insists on both a contextual and historical analysis on race and racism (Solórzano, 1998). Consistent with this tenet, my theoretical positioning of

transformative institutional praxis relies on multiple frameworks, including critical race theory, critical pedagogy, and feminist theory, in order to disentangle the multiple layers of being a transformative agent.

Feminist Theory

Contemporary feminist theory is characterized by a fragmented movement that reflects the diversity of feminist struggles. Feminist theory and practice challenge patriarchal structures, rhetoric, discourse, and inquiry that exclude experiences of women, often rendering them silent or mute. The first wave of feminism, spanning from 1830 to 1920, was concerned with gaining greater civil rights for women, including the right to vote. The second wave began in the 1960s, during a time when women had greater access to higher education and professions previously limited to men. While early feminist theory was limited to the struggle against a one-dimensional perspective that privileges men, the third wave of feminism is concerned with a “multifaceted exploration of the contingencies of gendered identities” (Kemp & Squires, 1997, p. 6), which seeks greater inclusion of those on the margins of the feminist movement, such as women of color and women from working-class backgrounds. Feminism centralized the experiences of those marginalized, particularly women, and is committed to “political change, to politically motivated research, and politically engaged theory” (Kemp & Squires, 1997, p. 6).

According to Harding, (1987) feminist research seeks to inquire and address social problems from a marginalized perspective to adequately counter andocentric perspectives in social science research. She argues that traditional social science “ask only those questions...men want answered” (p.6). Since problems defined by men do not necessarily advance the social conditions of women, consumers and participants of social science inquiry

should question the ways in which “problems” are defined and the methods, methodology, and epistemology used to “resolve” these “problems.” Feminist approaches disrupt male, western, and the dominant agenda by constructing an alternative measure of social realities that is grounded in anti-patriarchal roots.

According to Harding (1987), research from a marginalized perspective is essential in re-defining or identifying new inquiry that has the potential to create social change. A marginalized perspective is located in the researcher and in the participants of the study. Feminist inquiry “insists that the inquirer herself/himself be placed in the same critical plane as the overt subject matter,” (p. 9). In other words, my perspective as a researcher shapes my research questions and the methods, methodology, and epistemology used to guide this study. Therefore, my subjectivity must be made known along with the subjectivity of the participants. Feminist inquiry emphasizes marginalized experiences as the authentic voice, arguing that “it is *women* who should be expected to be able to reveal *for the first time* what women’s experiences are” (Harding, 1987, p. 7). Institutional practitioners selected for this study are arguably a marginalized population on their campuses and the higher education community at large. Their commitment to providing educational benefits for undocumented students is often a contested practice in the larger higher education landscape (Fernachak, 2007). This study employs a bottom- up approach (Harding, 1987), by promoting a social justice agenda that seeks to expand the work of transformative institutional practitioners. Therefore, increasing an awareness and explicitness of subjectivity increases the authenticity and accuracy of the observation and insight.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

My research approach aims to understand (1) the experiences of undocumented students, (2) the experiences of institutional allies, and (3) the partnership between undocumented students and institutional allies in addressing exclusionary educational practices targeting these students. To understand the nature and significance of this relationship, this study required exploratory techniques and in-depth analysis of why and how these two groups have collaborated in trying to reach this common goal. Qualitative methodology provided me with the research methods to delve into how these two groups make meaning of the xenophobia on campus, of each other's roles, and of the institutional context of their struggle. Furthermore, I am interested in the conflicting agendas and perspectives that are inherent in the disparate positionalities of undocumented students and their institutional allies—distinct because of their roles at the institution (student vs. employee) and their immigration status.

This chapter provides a description of the research methods and design used to address my research questions. I begin with an overview of the study and research questions guiding this project. Next, I provide a discussion of the background for the study, including a description of the study site. This is followed by a discussion of the sampling procedure and demographic information for the two samples in this study: undocumented students and institutional allies. I then provide a review of the data collection methods, followed by an explanation of the data analysis. Finally, I discuss validity issues associated with this study design.

Overview of the Study

The following research questions frame my study of how undocumented student and their institutional allies worked to improve undocumented student success in higher education.

1. What institutional challenges are undocumented students facing at Sunny Research University?
2. In what ways do undocumented students address institutional practices and policies that disadvantage their academic pursuits?
3. Are there any institutional allies engaged in supporting the efforts of undocumented students?
4. What are the institutional factors that impact the advocacy work of undocumented student and institutional allies?
5. How do undocumented students perceive the role of institutional allies in support of their higher education access, opportunities, and outcomes?

This qualitative study was conducted at Sunny Research University (SRU), a pseudonym for a public research university in California. I chose SRU as a research site for this study for its growing level of institutional support for undocumented students and for its highest enrollments of undocumented students in public research universities. My data was informed by over four years of being immersed at this research university site, conducting interviews, engaging in participant observation, and serving as an advocate for immigrant students. My years of active participation in campus activities afforded me greater familiarity with the participants and the challenges they faced in the context of their day-to-day lives. This understanding of institutional context was achieved by interviewing a purposefully selected group of institutional allies and undocumented students, along with a review of institutional policy and an extended period of participant observation. To recruit participants, I used reputational sampling, a process of asking

a key informant to refer others who met selection criteria to the study (Merriam, 2009). I conducted in-depth interviews with 23 institutional allies who shared their experiences about working with undocumented students; I also interviewed 21 undocumented students, who shared their experiences of navigating the institution. The sample of institutional allies included nine employees (administrators and staff) from academic affairs, six from student affairs, two from general administration, and five faculty members. Student participants included in the study were working toward a degree from the institution and self-identified as undocumented. The student sample includes seven transfer students and fourteen freshmen entrant students from Latina/o and Asian backgrounds; race was a factor for analysis but was not a sampling criterion for either sample.

Background of the Study

I selected my site after reviewing three potential sites for this study. I spent several months investigating potential sites before narrowing the selection down to three suitable sites. To gain a better understanding of the sites, I made multiple visits to three institutions: a community college, a comprehensive university, and a research university. Due to the sensitivity of this issue, building trust with potential participants was an essential and a time-consuming part of the research process. I made frequent visits to each campus to meet with potential informants, attend undocumented student-related campus activities, and gather information on the types of support offered by the institution. I narrowed my selection to these three institutions because each established distinct forms of institutional support. For instance, the community college offered a book-lending program and a counseling hotline for undocumented students. The comprehensive university offered a professional development program for faculty and staff to

learn about the needs, concerns, and issues of undocumented students. Those who completed the program could then set up “safe zones” around campus, indicating their status as allies to undocumented students. Finally, the research university offered a private scholarship that was established by faculty members and administrators. They organized a letter writing campaign and raised thousands in private scholarships for undocumented students. While my initial plan was to research all three institutions in anticipation of not having a sizeable number of participants for this study, I later decided to focus on one site after I received over 40 willing participants at the first of three research sites for this study, Sunny Research University (SRU). I plan to build on this study by conducting future research at the two remaining sites to draw comparisons between institutional types.

Sunny Research University (SRU) is a public research university located in a metropolitan area in California. It is considered a well-established research institution that belongs to a system of research universities across the state. At the time of the study this particular SRU campus served nearly 30,000 undergraduate students and offered more than 100 majors in academic areas, including humanities, arts, science, engineering, and film. During the 2008-09 academic year, SRU enrolled over 70 AB 540 undocumented students⁵. Although SRU was situated in a state with a large undocumented immigrant population (Passel, 2005), undocumented students constituted less than 1 percent of the total undergraduate population. SRU consistently maintained one of the highest enrollments of undocumented students in comparison to peer institutions. I found SRU to be a promising site for understanding the experiences of undocumented students because of its sizeable enrollment numbers and visibility of

⁵ The central office of Sunny Research University issues an annual report on the enrollment figure of AB540 recipients within the university system. To maintain the anonymity of the institution, the name of the report cannot be revealed in the reporting of this data.

undocumented students on campus. This high enrollment rate could be due in part to the large local immigrant community and in part due to its reputation as one of the campuses more friendly to undocumented students.

In addition, SRU was one of the first institutions in the nation to formally establish a student support and advocacy group. The undocumented student group, DREAMERS, had roughly 50 active members during the period of my observation. Not all members were undocumented, however; in fact several were U.S. citizens, permanent residents, and various visa holders. A handful of documented students had taken on leadership roles in the organization, which proved to be helpful for the group, especially when it came to tasks that could potentially put undocumented students at risk of violating laws. Although the group formed around issues of immigration, personal status was rarely discussed during group discussions; therefore, I learned of students' backgrounds through one-on-one conversations or during public speeches when students "came out" about their immigration background. Furthermore, it was difficult for certain members to attend meetings and events. Some members had work and familial obligations or lengthy commutes from home that conflicted with meeting times.

Through the years undocumented students had established a considerable presence at SRU, occupying several spaces on campus. DREAMERS was assigned office space in an area that housed other community-oriented and activist student groups on campus, which allowed groups with similar interests to interact. Each group had an assigned area with a few desks, chairs, computers, and limited storage. The DREAMERS office was usually busy with members during most of my visits. It was an area where members performed administrative tasks and stored group belongings. The office area and communal areas in the building also served as social gathering places where students dropped in and out, ate meals, worked on the computer, and

spent time between classes. In addition, DREAMERS also used a conference room for their weekly general members' meetings. The weekly meetings were held throughout the year and lasted roughly two hours. Members used this time to update each other on recent campus and community events, educated members on policies and legislation, shared access and retention strategies, provided social and emotional support, and mobilized members around key institutional and political issues. In addition to these two spaces, undocumented students were also involved in a variety of projects on campus. DREAMERS often partnered with departments that shared a common interest in promoting immigrant rights, particularly with departments that had a relationship with immigrant and working class communities. These partnerships were primarily project-based, such as research, community building, and political advocacy.

Furthermore, undocumented students regularly held demonstrations in public areas on campus. Although undocumented immigrants are a relatively clandestine population in US society (Passel, 2005), certain undocumented students were exceptionally public about their status and presence at SRU. They frequently gave testimonials on their immigration experience at public events, such as rallies, teach-ins, and marches. The group was also committed to several large-scale community events throughout the year, including a fundraiser, a high school outreach summit, and a conference for local high school and college counselors.

Although they were highly involved and active on campus, few lived in university housing. According to my observation and interview data, the majority commuted from home as a cost-saving strategy; thus, there were only a handful of student whose families lived beyond a 25 mile radius from SRU. Additionally, several members of DREAMERS rented a nearby residence together, which functioned like a co-op housing, where members rotated in and out of the unit, maintaining a consistent flow of DREAMERS at the rental. This residence offered students a

more affordable option than living in residence halls and also served as a social gathering place for the group.

Looking more closely at undocumented students, SRU reports the racial distribution of the total AB 540 undocumented student population across all campuses of the research university system but did not have a campus-by-campus breakdown. Their system records indicate that approximately 48 percent of students were Latina/o, 45 percent Asian, 2 percent White, 2 percent unknown, and less than 1 percent was African. Since the racial distribution for SRU itself was not available, I could not draw a comparison between the racial distribution of my sample to the SRU campus population of undocumented students. Throughout my study, Latina/o undocumented students appeared to be more involved in the activities mentioned above. There were usually less than a handful of students from other racial backgrounds. Of the students I interviewed, Asian students were more likely than Latina/o students to discuss their involvement in student groups that did not center on immigration, such as those that focused on religious, racial, and academics interests.

Beyond these descriptions, there was scant demographic or statistical data about the undocumented students' academic welfare. The statistical data I obtained on undocumented students at SRU was limited to undocumented students who qualified for in-state tuition under AB 540, not including those ineligible for in-state tuition. This omission from the report was largely due to the purpose of the reporting, which was to make public the fiscal impact of the AB 540 bill on tuition revenue⁶.

Another challenge was the categorization of the data. Demographic information was either

⁶ According to the report, tuition exemptions awarded to AB 540 students in the system of SRU campuses totaled \$35 million. Undocumented students constituted 21% of AB 540 recipients, while U.S. citizens and permanent residents made up 78% of AB 540 recipients.

aggregated with documented students or aggregated into a system-wide statistic, again, making it impossible to tease out information pertaining to my research sample. In addition, SRU maintained the minimum data sets on the undocumented student population in an effort to protect students' privacy. However, this practice made it difficult to draw comparisons between the populations of undocumented students to their peers. Furthermore, the existing data is characterized by a lack information on students' academic background and progress. For instance, I could not find information about students' grade point average, distribution of majors, class standing, time-to-degree, transfer or freshmen entrant status, or enrollment status (part- or full time).

In addition to student activism, faculty members and administrators were also involved in addressing the treatment of undocumented students at SRU. This group of institutional allies formed an "unofficial" undocumented student task force, with representatives from DREAMERS. There were approximately 60 listed allies at SRU in the ally directory, and roughly half were actively involved. Most active allies had academic and student affairs responsibilities. Institutional allies gathered every two to three months to update the group on resources available to undocumented students through their respective departments and to address certain institutional challenges. Furthermore, the network allowed allies and undocumented students to become more visible to one another. The group dynamic allowed for increased communication among members, which lead to more opportunities for collaboration and reduced redundancy in the services provided. Faculty mostly engaged students in the classroom or in research facilities.

Spread out across campus, institutional allies were more likely to work independently from the larger ally group, using the ally meeting to update each other on the progress being made on

their individual projects. Other than intermittent ally meetings, institutional allies primarily worked on the issue with people from their respective units. These small groups collaborated with community partners and undocumented students to fundraise, organize events, or mobilize around immigration. Allies would occasionally attend DREAMERS meetings to communicate with the general members. A disadvantage to having allies spread across campus was that there was no central place where students could gather information. Often students were sent from office to office to get their questions answered. Also, allies were disproportionately located in certain academic disciplines, such as social sciences and humanities. It also appeared allies more likely came from departments that served a higher number of students of color, low-income, first-generation students.

In addition to physical spaces, both institutional allies and undocumented students were increasingly using social media to communicate and share ideas because it provided them with a medium that reached a wide audience and maintained a certain level of anonymity. Many participants in this study initially learned about DREAMERS and AB 540 through online research prior to attending SRU. As an organizing tool, DREAMERS often used social media to promote events, such as rallies and fundraisers. Institutional allies also used social media as an advertising tool to attract students to events and to offer services provided, such as workshops and scholarship opportunities.

Participants and Sampling Method

Interviews data gathered from a purposeful sample of 23 institutional allies who shared their experiences about working with undocumented students and from a sample of 21 undocumented students who shared their experiences in navigating the institution. I engaged

both institutional allies and undocumented students as both a researcher and participant of the group—an approach that helped me gain access, but also created a level of uncertainty in my role. This study includes two samples.

Undocumented Students Sample. Undocumented student participants included in the study were undergraduate students who were working toward a bachelor degree from SRU and who had self-identified as undocumented students. Over the course of the 2009-2010 academic-year, 21 students were interviewed for this study. Students were recruited in several ways. I met several students through my involvement in DREAMERS and asked these students personally to participate in the study. I also made an announcement about the study during a general members’ meeting. Students were asked to contact me by email if they were interested in participating in a one-on-one interview. I followed up with interested participants and conducted open-ended interviews with students on their immigration background and college experiences.

The average age of my participants was 22 at the time of the interview, with a range from 20 to 25 years old. The age upon arrival in the U.S. varied from two months old to seventeen years old, with the average being 8.4 years old. At the time of the study interview, the sample had on average been in the U.S. for 14 years. With the exception of one student who arrived during his sophomore year in high school, the remaining sample arrived in the United States prior to ninth grade. See table 1 for age of entry to the United States.

Table 1 Age Upon Entry into the United States of Undocumented Student Respondents

Years of Age Upon Entry	Number of Students
0-5	8
6-10	6
10-14	7
15-18	1

There were 10 male students and 11 female students in the study, including 15 Latina/o students and 6 Asian students. Students who self identified as Hispanic, Latina/o, Mexican, Mexican-American, Mexicano, and Mestizo were categorized as Latina/o students. Students who self identified as Chinese, Korean, Indonesian, and Mongolian were categorized as Asian students. Latino students were primarily recruited from the undocumented student organization on campus while Asian students were primarily recruited through snowball sampling because they were less involved with DREAMERS at the time of my data collection. All student participants reported an annual household income of less than \$45,000: six reported less than \$15,000, twelve reported between \$15,000 and \$30,000, and three reported between \$30,000 to \$45,000.

Of the 21 students, 11 were first-generation college students. Their average number of years in higher education was 3.7, ranging from 1 to 6 years. Seven transferred from a California community college, and 14 were freshmen entrant students at SRU. The average estimated time-to-degree for the total sample was 4.8 years, ranging from 4 to 8 years. The average estimated time-to-degree is 4.6 years for freshmen entrant students and 5.3 for transfer students. Twelve students studied in social science and humanities majors. Nine majored in life sciences, physical sciences, and engineering. Three students were double-majors, which is why there is a higher number of majors reported than are the number of students.

Geographic Diversity. Although students in this study shared a similar immigration status, few followed the same paths that led them to SRU. Geographically, student respondents emigrated from three countries in Asia and seven countries in Latin America. Out of 21 students in the sample, 11 students emigrated from Mexico, 2 from Guatemala, and 1 each from

Argentina, Columbia, Indonesia, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, and South Korea. Figure 4.1 lists the percentages of students from the students’ countries of origin. The ratio of Mexican-born students in the study sample reflects the national statistics of Mexican-born undocumented immigrants, representing approximately 50 percent of the total population. The ratio for the country of birth of the rest of the sample varies from the national data. The remaining 47 percent of the study sample belonged to minority groups in the total undocumented population. Ten out of 21 of the respondents were born in countries that constituted from 1 percent to 3 percent of the total undocumented population. Thus, the study sample is more diverse or more representative of the total undocumented immigrant population in the United States.

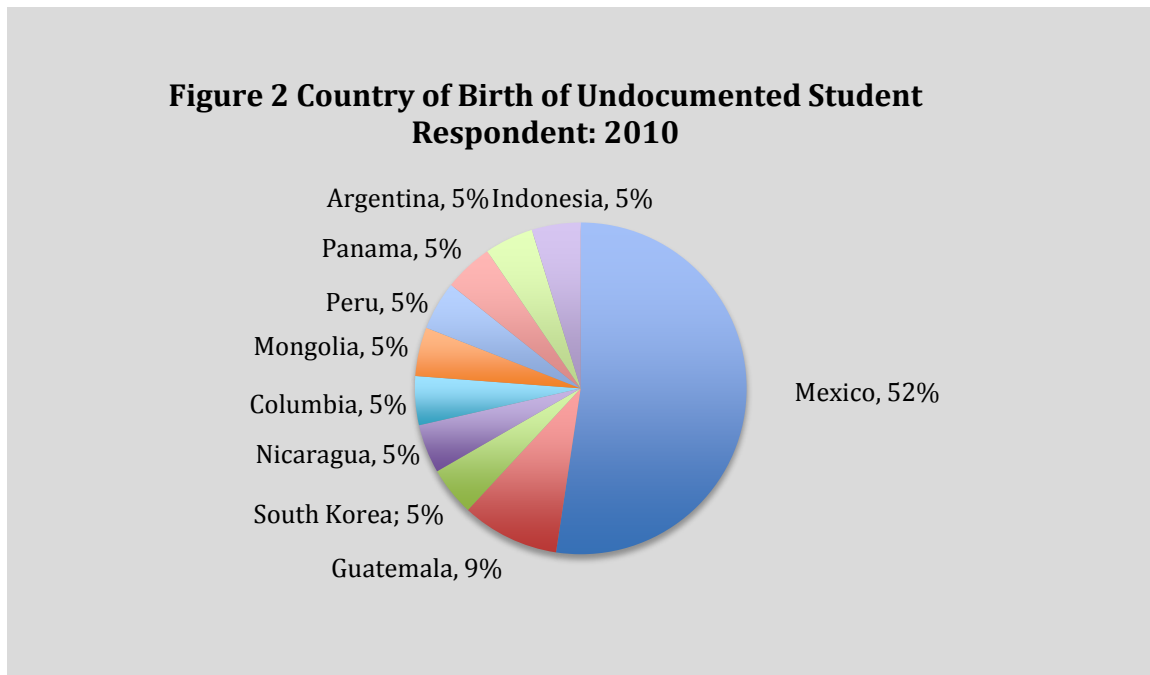


Figure 2 Country of Birth of the National Unauthorized Immigrant Population 2010

* “Unauthorized” is an interchangeable term for “undocumented”

When examining the country of birth of undocumented immigrants, it is important to note the non-linear process of immigration. This aspect of immigration is often negated in existing quantitative data on undocumented immigrants, which often does not capture the experiences of immigrant families that settle in multiple countries prior to arriving in the U.S. It is of concern that the country of birth is often used as a proxy for identifiers such as race, ethnicity, and nationality. Although this proxy is useful in certain cases, it also minimizes the diversity of undocumented immigrants. Thus, as this study shows, the racial and ethnic identities of some student respondents do not correspond with the students' country of birth. For instance, a student in the study explained: "Even though my citizenship and my place of birth is Guatemala, my family is originally from El Salvador. [My family] immigrated to Guatemala in the 1980s during the civil war in El Salvador, and I was born there." This student later traveled through Mexico and entered the United States at the Mexican border. Thus, stating this participant's country of birth or country of emigration would not actually reflect his nationality or ethnicity.

Institutional Allies Sample. This study focuses on SRU institutional allies who, as faculty members and administrators with a managerial or instructional role, had at least some awareness of undocumented students and demonstrated a history of advocacy on their behalf at the institutional level. Contrary to other change agents in the movement (students, community members, and legislators who called for institutional change from the periphery), these faculty and administrators were entrenched in shaping priorities and carrying out the vision of the institution. Central to my analysis of those allies' role as change agents is a concept stated by Giroux (2001), "Any critical theory both defines and is defined by the problems posed by the contexts it attempts to address" (p. xx). This reciprocal relationship exists within a structure the allies helped create and sustain. The study's findings discuss their understanding of educational

disparities and their sense of agency (Freire, 2002) to maintain, resist, and transform institutional structures.

Institutional allies were primarily recruited from academic affairs units, student affairs units, and faculty in various departments. Through my involvement in campus activities and participant observation at various campus events related to undocumented students, I became acquainted with many institutional allies who were receptive to undocumented students. However, due to the sensitivity of the issue and the invisibility of the larger ally community, I relied on a key informant who has established relationships with allies to announce my study. I relied on reputational sampling (Neuman, 1997), a purposeful sampling strategy that allows the researcher to ask experts in a field to provide recommendations for data collection. I was able to recruit a substantial number of faculty and administrators with the help of a reputable and committed informant. A high-ranking administrator at SRU who was well known for his advocacy for underrepresented students, my informant was also one of the few administrators who had been quite public about his support for undocumented students in his professional role as a college administrator. In fact, I learned about his support from a talk he had given to counselors on the subject. During our initial meeting, I described to him my experience as a former undocumented student and my desire to understand how colleges can better serve this population. In response, he shared with me his years of experience in working with undocumented students and the network of faculty and administrators who shared in this effort at SRU. After this preliminary discussion, he offered to help me recruit participants. In return, he asked for my help in planning meetings with institutional allies and for access to the findings I collected from this study for future training purposes at the institution.

My informant helped recruit institutional allies by sending an email announcement to potential participants to introduce the study. Potential participants were asked to contact me by email if they were interested in participating in a one-on-one interview. I followed up with interested participants and conducted open-ended interviews with them on their work with undocumented students. To recruit additional participants, I employed a snowball sampling technique (Merriam, 2009) at the end of each interview by asking participants to refer colleagues who shared similar experiences of supporting undocumented students. I also consulted with student participants to identify key institutional allies they believed were helpful to their experience at SRU. Many of the referrals were already included in the study.

While several allies became involved in community organizations to further their advocacy work with undocumented students, I included one participant who worked primarily as a community-based organizer affiliated with SRU. This individual served as a liaison between the community-based organization and the institution and is not a paid university employee. This organizer was included in the study because of his role of serving SRU students and his capacity to support students through services often not provided at SRU.

Table 2 Departments and Participants Serving as Institutional Allies

Department or Unit*	Number of Participant
Academic Affairs	10
Student Affairs	7
Faculty	5
Administration	2
Community-Based Organization	1

*Institutional allies may work in and represent multiple departments and units on campus.

Data Collection

I collected data over four years of participant observation (2007-2011), during which I participated in undocumented student group events and activities (including group meetings, fundraisers, rallies, and meetings with university administrators) and during interviews with undocumented students and institutional allies. I conducted in-depth interviews with 23 institutional allies, who shared their involvement on undocumented student related issues; I also interviewed 21 undocumented students, who shared the impact of their status on their college experience.

Interview Procedures. With the exception of three students who participated in a pilot focus group discussion, the remaining participants completed one-on-one recorded interviews with the researcher. I conducted all interviews between 2009 and 2011 after receiving and renewing Internal Review Board approval. I began each interview with a review of the participant consent form and asked each participant for permission to record our conversation. I met with most allies in their offices or a private meeting room in their departments. I explained the purpose of the study and noted that there were five open-ended questions about their work with undocumented students. Allies were asked to discuss how they became involved in supporting undocumented students, what they saw as the current challenges facing this population at SRU, what they felt are key characteristics to being an ally, how the institution may or may not have addressed the needs of these students, and whether they could offer any recommendations for SRU to better serve undocumented students. From these five general questions, I asked follow-up questions to better understand and expand their responses.

I followed similar interview protocols with the sample of undocumented students. I began by reviewing the consent forms and asked for their permission to record our conversation. I

initially planned small focus groups with two or three students, in the hopes of engaging in a discussion with student participants. However, my pilot focus group proved to be challenging in finding a convenient time when several students could meet together. Because most participants commuted to campus, worked, or had familial responsibilities, it was difficult for the group to find a time when several students could be available for the focus group. At this point, I decided to change my research protocol to one-on-one interviews. I met privately with students in borrowed offices. I explained the purpose of the study and explained that I would be asking five general open-ended questions about their immigration background and their experiences in higher education. Students were asked to discuss what they saw as the top issues impacting undocumented students at SRU, how they addressed these challenges, if and how SRU had served undocumented students, what recommendations they had for SRU, and what they felt were the essential characteristics of an ally. From these five general questions, I would ask follow-up questions to better understand and expand their responses. The use of open-ended questions allowed for unanticipated themes to emerge. In addition to learning about how these two groups perceived the state of undocumented students at SRU, a prominent point made by both the allies and students was the role of student organizing in changing the level of receptivity and support of undocumented students at SRU.

Throughout the interview I was aware of the sensitivity of this issue. As a former undocumented immigrant, I know how difficult it is for me to talk about my situation. As an insider undocumented student, not only do I have empathy for the experiences of these students, but I also have a nuanced understanding of how they perceive the world, how they talk about their experiences, and in what context they can and will reveal themselves. This understanding allowed me to create the rapport and the type of questions relevant to this topic and at times to

listen in ways that allowed the students to speak about their previously unspoken traumatic experiences. With institutional allies, I could approach them with appreciation and understanding for the struggles and efforts they have made for this often hidden community. This allowed me not only to ask the more obvious questions about their public activities, but also to pursue and recognize the more subtle ways they support undocumented students.

Participant Observation. In addition to interview data, which was gathered over four years of participant observation, I relied on observational notes and memos collected from 2007 to 2011 regarding participant observation at undocumented student activities. This allowed me regular interactions with several participants in the study in various campus and community settings. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2003) participant observation occurs when "a researcher enters the world of the people he or she plans to study, gets to know them and earns their trust, and systematically keeps a detailed written record of what is heard and observed" (p. 2). By regularly attending the ally meetings (which met once every two to three months) and the DREAMERS meetings (which met once a week), and their respective events, I was supplementing my interview data with my participant observation. Events occurred approximately once every two weeks during the four years of participant observation. Activities took place on and off campus, including events such as rallies, teach-ins, fundraisers, workshops, and social gatherings.

I began to attend ally meetings when they first began in early 2009. I took comprehensive field notes and actively participated in discussions and events. I was interested in what issues were being addressed by the group and the ways in which they were being dealt with. In several cases, I was able to witness how the group addressed a problem from beginning to end, which gave me greater insight into institutional politics, infrastructure, and the historical factors that

shaped recent problems. In addition to observing their problem-solving process, I was interested in seeing who was represented at the meetings, what the roles were of each participant, and how members interacted with one another. My recognized role for the group was to develop and maintain a directory of institutional allies.

Since 2008, I began regular attendance at weekly DREAMERS meetings. I found it difficult to establish initial contact with DREAMERS. The group made it a top priority to maintain a safe meeting space; thus, the time and location of the meetings were not announced to the general public. I emailed the group's general email address for meeting information with no reply. I later learned about the meeting time and location by speaking with a member of the group after a public teach-in on campus. I participated in the meetings as a general member, engaging in icebreakers, group activities, and socials. I also volunteered at campus and community events, mostly helping members set-up or do other miscellaneous tasks. I was open about the topic of my research and my experience as a former undocumented student.

There were two unexpected data collection methods that arose during my study. One was the occasional car ride with students and the use of social networking sites. Using these two forms of interaction was vital in building rapport and trust with student participants. First, I often carpooled with students to events because it was difficult for some students to travel to and from late night off-campus events since many relied on public transportation. I drove a small-sized sports utility vehicle that seated five with room for backpacks and other belongings so I often picked students up from school to attend events and dropped them off at home or at a transportation hub, such as a main train or bus station. The car turned out to be the place where I got to know several students in this study. Contrary to more formal interactions during campus events, club meetings, or interviews, the car proved to be a more neutral place where all of us

could be more relaxed. During car rides we caught up on each other's day, listened to music, and talked about recent events on campus. Furthermore, I gained a more holistic understanding of the students' immigration backgrounds, familial circumstances, and the challenges they faced outside of their academics—all of which shaped their academic experiences. These opportunities allowed us to get to know each other more personally. Often when students were alone with me, they would share more personal details about themselves. I cheered them on for their accomplishments and goals and listened to their worries for themselves, their families, and their friends. In an effort to respect their privacy, I have omitted the details of these conversations in the reporting of this study. However, the personal stories they shared with me informed my interview questions and the personal context for data analysis. The second useful method to gain greater access to student and ally participants was the use of social media sites. Participants provided me access to their profiles, which allowed me to contact them to set up interviews. I also gained access to the DREAMERS group page that informed me of their events and activities.

Data Analysis

I transcribed and analyzed the data throughout the duration of the study, allowing for on-going adjustments to the data collection process as different themes and patterns emerged (Maxwell, 1996). I transcribed all interviews and observation notes using Transcriva, a transcription software program available for Macintosh computers (Bartas Technologies, 2009). I also collected over three hundred event programs, flyers, images, meeting notes, and emails related to undocumented students at SRU. In addition to transcriptions, I wrote memos while conducting data analysis to facilitate analytical thinking. I used both hand coding and data

analysis software to code the transcriptions. In my initial review of the transcripts, I used hand codes on paper printouts. I then used HyperRESEARCH (ResearchWare, Inc, 2010), a data analysis software, to code for themes. I used several methods to categorize and contextualize the data for this study. Categorizing analysis involves separating the data into “discrete elements for easy comparison within and between categories” (Maxwell, 1996, p.78), and contextual analysis attempts to understand the data by identifying relationships that “connect statements and events within a context into a coherent whole” (Maxwell, 1996, p79). These two approaches helped me examine findings from each sample and draw comparisons between groups.

For accuracy and consistency, I triangulated my data, comparing the data gathered from interview transcriptions of institutional allies to field notes, transcriptions of student responses, informal conversations, and institutional documents. Member checking also enhanced this study by providing opportunities for participants to submit alternative explanations and critique the inquiry for negative evidence.

Concluding Remarks and Validity Issues

The use of qualitative methods was central to illuminating the participants’ experiences and making visible the institutional structures that contributed to participants’ experiences.

In profiling Sunny Research University (SRU) it was evident that there was a substantial level of activism by undocumented students and institutional allies. With the assistance of a reputable informant, I was able to access the concealed network of institutional allies who have privately supported undocumented students. I chose two populations in order to understand the partnership between undocumented students and institutional allies in addressing exclusionary practices targeting undocumented students at SRU. This comparison offered additional insight into their

partnership and the capacity for institutional actors to respond to the underserved student population. I selected both transfer and direct-entry undocumented students from Latina/o and Asian racial backgrounds, as well as a variety of majors and immigration circumstances. Institutional allies in this study also represented a variety of roles on campus: 10 from student affairs, 7 from academic affairs officers, 5 faculty members, 2 from administration, and 1 community-based organizer. Study participants consisted of a unique sample that had rarely been studied together. Through interviews and participant observation, I was able to learn about the work students and allies put into creating resources and the breadth of activities involved. I conducted this data analysis through hand coding, which provided several passes at the data and allowed me to form a tactile relationship with the findings. In addition, I made sure to triangulate my data through various methods and sources of collection. Finally, this study utilized member checks to assure the validity of the study. Member checks were conducted with the participants by providing them with their transcripts and also sharing with them my interpretation of the data.

The following chapter begins the first of two findings chapters. The chapters are organized according to the two research samples: undocumented students and institutional allies. Chapter 5 details the students' immigration background and the ways they took action to improve their educational conditions. Chapter 6 brings to light the ways in which institutional allies responded to student activism and partnered with undocumented students to improve conditions at SRU.

CHAPTER FIVE:
IMMIGRATION NARRATIVES AND THE CHALLENGES FACING
UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS AT SRU

This chapter begins by highlighting the immigration narratives of undocumented students included in this study to understand their diverse migration experiences and immigrant identities. The following section discusses the most substantial consideration and barrier for undocumented students in terms of access, retention, and an enriching postsecondary experience. Concluding with the emotional toll of these experiences and their motivation to step out of invisibility to call for greater institutional accountability.

Undocumented Student Immigrant Background

This section aims to tease out some of the complexities in the lived experiences of the 21 undocumented students in this study. There is no cookie-cutter mold that can account for the variety in their narratives. This discussion aims to broaden the scope of our understanding of undocumented students, steering away from a Latino-centric discourse to include the voices of both undocumented Asian and Latino students. Incorporating elements of Critical Theory, Critical Race Theory, and Feminist Theory, this study aims to highlight aspects of racial and ethnic differences among respondents, in part tied to their marginalized status as undocumented. By drawing greater attention to the diversity of undocumented students, these narratives add layers to the one-dimensional portrayal of undocumented immigrants in the United States.

The Sins of the Parents? Scholars, educators, politicians, and the students in this study agree that the decision to immigrate to the United States was largely made by the parents or guardians of undocumented students. My data indicates that most of the students in this study

were too young to understand the circumstances of their immigration or to have a say in the family’s decision to immigrate (See Table 1 for Age Upon Entry). The age upon arrival ranged from two months old to seventeen years old, with the average being 8.4 years old. When students were asked about their immigration background, they recounted childhood memories or stories told to them by their relatives. The majority of the students were unaware of their parents’ decisions to move to the United States until after they arrived in the country or shortly before their departure.

Table 1 Age Upon Entry into the United States of Undocumented Student Respondents

Years of Age Upon Entry	Number of Students
0-5	8
6-10	6
10-14	7
15-18	1

Establishing the fact that undocumented students were children at the time they were brought into the United States by their parents is critical in supporting their innocence in an immigration framework that criminalizes individuals for undocumented residence. This premise was key in the Supreme Court case *Plyler v. Doe* that struck down a Texas statute to charge undocumented students tuition in K-12 education. Justice Brennan’s majority opinion stated that denying undocumented youth education would impose a “lifetime hardship on a discrete class of children not accountable for their disabling status” (*Plyler v. Doe*, 1982). The arguments made in *Plyler v. Doe* and subsequent pro-immigrant legislation were intended to place blame elsewhere and not to punish undocumented youth for the behaviors of their parents. Deductively, the blame

lands solely on the parents' shoulders, with little discussion of larger societal factors that led immigrants to displace themselves and their children from their home country. As Motomura explained (2007), "it seems unjust to disadvantage children, who in this conceptual framework are not only the unintended victims of choices made by their parents, but also [of] the policies adopted by the U.S. government" (p. 23).

Car Ride with a Coyote. Separation from immediate family members is common among transitional families. Seven out of 21 students in this study discussed extended separation from one or more immediate family members as a result of the family's migration process. While a few students in this study were able to reunite with parents or siblings within a few months of separation, others experienced long-term and even indefinite severance due to difficulty with money and immigration documentation, thus making it difficult to emigrate remaining family members. Students often became teary-eyed and emotional when discussing the hardships of being separated from their loved ones. In some cases, the emotional distress associated with family separation impacted familial relationships and academic performance.

Albert was one of the students who experienced temporary separation from his parents at a young age. Albert's family moved in a "stepwise" process, which has been described as follows: "Historically, the pattern has been of the father going ahead, establishing himself while sending remittances home, and then bringing the wife and children as soon as it was financially possible" (Suárez-Orozco, Bang, & Kim, 2011, p.223). In Albert's case, his father and uncle were first to emigrate from Mexico to the U.S. to start a business. After a year of separation, Albert and his two younger siblings were sent by their mother in Mexico to reunite with Albert's father in the U.S. Albert was just 7 years old, his brother 5, and sister 2 at the time his parents decided make this move. His mother was the last to join the family a few years later.

The children's journey began when their grandmother dropped them off at a border transition home. According to Albert's experience, it appeared to be a place where travelers waited to connect with a coyote, a guide-for-hire who facilitates the migration of people across the U.S. border without detection by immigration agents. Albert explained his experience:

My grandma was saying that they were going to meet some family members that I've never met before. And I thought that was so weird. So I kept questioning her on the way. [laughing]. Who are these family members? How come I've never heard of them before? I've always been that kind of kid right? So yeah, she made up this whole story so I would stop asking questions. At that point we had reached this little house right before the border. My grandma said, "Well, I have to go take care of some stuff and I'll be back." So she left. I was completely confused at that point. But all I do remember is that my brother and my little sister were with me. I was the oldest one and there was a bunch of older individuals there. My brother is a year younger than me....so naturally I felt like I had to protect them. So I had them close to me at all times. We ended up spending three days there. [People running the house] wanted us to sleep in a room and I was like "No, we're sleeping in the living room. I choose the couch and I didn't let anyone get in there—that was our couch. And I told the lady, in Spanish, cause at that moment I didn't know English, "We're going to sleep here." So I said it in a way that they wouldn't touch my little brother and sister. Which is really interesting, I remember that picture clearly, you know? It was a really creepy moment in my life.

During those few days, Albert was unclear about why he and his siblings were there, where their parents were, and how they were going to get out of there. The children eventually connected with a coyote who took him and his siblings in a car ride across the border. Although Albert did not understand it at the time, he later realized that his parents were emigrating the family in phases. He recounts his relief upon seeing his father.

So when I saw my dad I was really happy. It was behind this store. I could swear it was a Ralph's [chain supermarket] but I don't recall correctly. But I remember there was a dumpster there. And my dad was in a blue teal-ish car. I hate teal by the way. So when I saw him [it was] a couple weeks before my birthday. So we went to a McDonalds. And in Mexico, going to a McDonalds was a status thing. People from lower or middle class went to McDonalds. Poor people didn't go to McDonalds. So we never went to McDonalds. [chuckles] So we went to McDonalds for an interesting experience. So yeah, that was basically my transition to the United States in a nutshell.

Albert was light-hearted in his interviews, and he recounted these memories in great detail with laughter and sarcasm. His meal at McDonalds was a highlight and turning point in his childhood. It was evident that this was a difficult journey for him and that these experiences may have solidified his relationship with his family. According to Suárez-Orozco, Bang & Kim (2011), youth whose family separated during migration were more likely to experience anxiety and depression and face challenges during both separation and unification. Although Albert never faulted his parents for the separation, he did admit to a volatile relationship with his parents at times and said that he continued to play a parental role to his younger siblings.

The Long Journey Alone. In comparison to other student respondents, Michael, a Salvadorian immigrant, experienced one of the longest separations from family members seen in this study. During the 1990s, Michael's family escaped the Salvadorian civil war to Guatemala, where he and his brother were born. For reasons Michael did not share with me during the interview, the boys lost track of their parents at a young age and were taken in by his grandmother, who later left him and his brother in the care of alternating extended family members when she immigrated to California. These recurring events of abandonment built a degree of resentment in Michael toward his family. He explained his process of working through these emotions as a young adult.

I think I was very bitter when I was younger because the situation is already very bad in terms of living status in Guatemala. There's a lot of poverty, and there's a lot of crime in certain areas—not all the country, but I happened to grow up in that area. There was a lot of poverty, a lot of crime so I thought it was a pretty messed up situation, and I used to blame it on my parents—their irresponsibility of leaving me alone and everything. So, I was pretty bitter. But then I grew and I got older; I started thinking more and trying to understand all the reasons. Now, I guess, I'm okay.

Growing up with unstable guardianship in an impoverished area of Guatemala, Michael received informal elementary education through regular visits with a retired teacher in town. He and his

brother would regularly visit the teacher at his home to receive lessons and snacks. Feeling like he had limited opportunities in Guatemala and after nearly a decade of separation from his parents, Michael decided to travel through Mexico to the United States to reunite with his mother and grandmother in California. To continue his education after leaving Guatemala, Michael read books along his travels to the United States: “So I was always reading on the way over here.”

When I asked him about the reunion with his family, he explained the complicated family dynamic.

My father, I never met him. He left us after my brother was born and I was five. Then my mom disappeared, and I didn't know of her until I came to America and I found out I had a little sister. I met my mother and I met, pretty much, my grandma because when my grandma left I didn't have a memory of her. I guess just pictures or whatever because I was little still. I was still forming my first memories and everything so I pretty much met my grandma when I came here. And [I met] my sister, a couple of my aunts, and my mom. .

Michael appeared distant from his family and made many life decisions on his own. Although he had experienced extraordinary hardships leading up to his experience in college, he was also one of the most optimistic students in the study. He compared his life experiences to that of a rollercoaster ride: “Sometimes you're on top and sometimes you're at the bottom. I feel I'm on the top right now and I was at the bottom a couple years ago. You never know when you're going to be on top and when you're going to be at the bottom. So just enjoy the ride.”

Family Separation during Adulthood. In contrast to previous examples of separation during childhood, Alice was separated from her father when he was detained during her sophomore year of college—a devastating shock to a family that highly prized family unity. Alice intently stated that: “we always moved together. That was my mom's biggest thing—to not leave us [the children] behind. She didn't want to leave us behind so we were always in groups—we moved together.” Her family decided the best and perhaps only strategy to stay together was to

travel in stages, which took them years to arrive in the United States. They traveled across Mexico in stages to arrive at the border and waited to obtain U.S. tourist visas for the entire family. But despite their methodological efforts to stay together, Alice's father was abruptly removed during an early morning visit from authorities after immigration agents discovered that her father's visa had expired.

He was detained for three months up in [a detention center]. It was a very hard time [crying]. And I think that, that's when everything just went down the drain because I had this very fake view of what I could do. I was very confident and then this happened, and it was the very first time I realized how exposed we are—how delicate our situation is because it was all gone in a matter of days.

This experience left Alice feeling disempowered and forced her to reprioritize her academics and her role as a daughter.

And so, I think it was then that I started questioning my ability to do things. I was not as confident. I didn't know what to do. It has taken me a long time to come to terms with that. I've tried to be this strong one for my mom. I always tried to be, and she has the greatest expectations of my sister and me. You know? It took me a long time to accept the fact that I don't have to be perfect for her. But to get to that point, I had to go through so much personal and internal struggle, to be OK with what I did with myself.

Alice explained that her father's detention was so devastating that the family has not yet talked openly about the events.

The Sudden Move. Although students such as Albert and Michael traveled to the United States without their parents, it was more common for students to immigrate as a family unit, particularly for families with greater financial resources. Prior to arriving in the U.S., Sarah grew up in what she described as a middle-class upbringing in South America. She and her mother were the first in their family to visit the U.S, where they stayed with relatives in southern California and toured local attractions such as Disneyland. When the fun ended, they returned to South America. However, the trip appeared to have had planted a seed in Sarah's mother. After

their short visit, Sarah mother quickly and unexpectedly planned for the family's return to the U.S.

And then all of a sudden, our family came back.—my parents, me, my sister, and my brother. [My parents] said it was “very all of a sudden.” They hadn't planned it. My mom came back [from the first trip] with an idea and my dad just kind of followed. So we moved in with my aunt [and her husband] in 1996. Then we got our own apartment nearby. I went to school. I was in ESL classes, which I don't really remember ‘cause we got out of there pretty quickly ‘cause I had been taking English in Peru. I was pretty normal. I never thought I was undocumented because we came over on a plane. I mean people don't really think about visas and stuff unless the people are actually doing it, like my parents.

Sarah and her family became undocumented when they overstayed the time allotted for their tourist visas. According to Sarah, her mother was the sole decision maker in their “sudden” move to the United States. Although the move was unplanned, several factors eased their transition. First, her parents’ ability to get tourist visas for the entire family was perhaps the most critical factor in keeping their family intact during their emigration process. Second, they had the financial means to pay for visas, which Sarah acknowledged were “expensive.” Third, their relatives living in the U.S. offered Sarah’s family valuable social capital. As an established resident in California, her aunt helped them settle into their new environment and provided Sarah’s family with temporary housing. Fourth, Sarah’s English language lessons in Peru allowed her to maintain her academic progress by merging into an English curriculum shortly after arrival. This is in contrast to the majority of immigrant students, who fall behind academically due to language barriers. While these factors may have mitigated the hardships of migration, their undocumented status still threatens their ability to survive in the U.S.

As these narratives demonstrate, the immigration process becomes more difficult under volatile and hostile conditions, especially when problems with money and documentation compound the challenges of moving to a new country. Family separation is particularly difficult

when the terms of the separation are unclear and the time apart takes away from parents' ability to watch their children grow up and for children to form secure bonds with their parents. Family separation takes an emotional toll on students, which can result in academic challenges. While there are a few immigration policies that allow immigration for family unity, these laws, along with other immigration laws, are becoming more stringent, making it difficult for immigrants to qualify for the terms of the application.

Varied Immigration Circumstances

In addition to their varied migration experiences, undocumented students also demonstrated variety in their entry to the country and in the circumstances of becoming undocumented. Of the 21 students, 11 students shared with me how they became undocumented. Due to the sensitivity of the matter, my questions about their immigration history were open-ended—allowing students to decide the degree of exposure. The process of becoming undocumented may have added legal consequences, in addition to their undocumented status; thus, I rarely asked direct questions about the legal circumstances of their status or their lack of documentation. Nearly half of the respondents did not disclose this information with me during the interview process. Of the 11 who did, 7 indicated they were *visa overstayers*, defined by Passel (2005) as “persons admitted on temporary visas who either stay beyond the expiration of their visas or otherwise violate their terms of admission” (p.9), and 4 entered through the Mexico-U.S. border without inspection by border control. The Pew Hispanic Center (2005) estimated that 20 percent to 40 percent of the total undocumented immigrant population consists of *visa overstayers*. In the following section, I want to expand on these two categories of undocumented status and discuss some nuanced ways students in this study fell into

undocumented status, including (1) application errors and aging out of the immigration application process, (2) expired and un-renewable work visas, and (3) borderland experiences.

Application Errors and “Aging Out”. Under the Child Status Protection Act, parents can include unmarried children under the age of 21 as beneficiaries in an adjustment of status application. Faith’s father, a citizen of the United States, did just that and petitioned for her and the rest of her family. However, Faith was not able to adjust her status through her father’s petition due to a technical error.

Well, I was brought to this country when I was two years old. Unfortunately, I have been undocumented since then. My family background is complicated. I am the only person in my family that is undocumented. So, when my father became a US citizen there was an error and so I was left out of the process. And when I found out something could have been done, I had already aged out.

Missing paperwork from her father’s application caused Faith to remain the only undocumented member in her family. During the application review process, the immigration agent was unable to locate the original paperwork indicating Faith was to be included in the in the petition. Consequently, she was excluded from the application and became the only undocumented member of her family. Because Faith and her immigration attorney did not know of any immediate means to rectify the oversight, she exceeded the age limit of 21 and “aged out” of the process. Faith sought legal counsel to advocate for her case, but her status remained in limbo for nearly two decades because there were no clear ways to rectify the missing paperwork or decide whether she would still qualify under her father’s petition since she is now over 21 years old. Due to the delayed process and review time by USCIS for immigration applications and the time required by parents to become eligible to apply for permanent residency, children over 21 are excluded from the application if they have exceeded the age limit for parental petitions. This is one cause for the growing number of mixed-status families in the U.S., which

are composed of at least one immediate family member (a sibling or parent) who is not a legal resident of the country. Faith's status added challenges as she began the college-going process. Faith credited her parents for putting her on the "college track," but she also expressed their limited support in her decision to attend college. "I'm not sure if they were aware of the obstacles I would face as an undocumented student, or I'm not sure that they fully realize the mistakes that had been made in terms of my status and their effects on me."

Expired and Un-Renewable Work Visas. Contrary to most of the respondents, who fell into undocumented status immediately or shortly upon arrival, Dennis was as a legal resident in the United States for nine years prior to becoming undocumented at about age 20. Dennis's father moved the family to the U.S. from South Korea to work as a pastor on a temporary nonimmigrant religious worker visa (R-1 Visa). According to the USCIS website (2012), "R-1 worker's spouse and unmarried children under the age of 21 may be eligible for R-2 classification. The dependents of an R-1 worker may not accept employment while in the United States in R-2 status." As an unmarried child under the age of 21, Dennis qualified for a R-2 or dependant visa because of his father's religious work visa. However, this meant that Dennis's immigration status was contingent on his father's employment, and thus his immigration standing was vulnerable to his father's work-related changes.

My dad was working at a church, and the main pastor hired my dad, saying, "You can teach the [Asian] part of the church." So my dad was hired as a legal pastor and he signed all the contracts saying he will get X amount of dollars per month....The main pastor who actually hired him left and went to another church. Right before he did, he actually said, "I actually can't pay you that X amount that we agreed upon because we are low on budget." So my dad said "No we need to keep getting the checks and give it to INS." So INS knows that he is working there legally.

In order for Dennis's father to keep a steady paycheck on the church's shrinking budget, Dennis's father offered to take on added responsibilities, offering the main pastor to "work as a

janitor for you so you can pay [the same amount] to me.” However, immigration services took notice of this change when they found the titles pastor and custodian next to Dennis’s father’s name on the church website. United States Customs and Immigration Services (USCIS) issued Dennis’s father a letter stating that, under the terms of a religious visa, visa holders are entitled to work religious jobs, such as pastors but not as custodians. Dennis’s father went to seek help from the church pastor but got little support.

So my dad went to the new pastor, but the new pastor wouldn't write a letter saying the situation that happened because he said he [didn't] want to lie to the USCIS saying that [the custodial role] was like a voluntary thing. So it got really complicated, and we never sent the letter back and the visa expired and we just got a letter from them saying “Get the heck out of this country”. So ever since then, it's been a very unfortunate story.

In Dennis’s family’s case, a cut to the church’s budget became the deciding factor between maintaining the life they had always known in the United States and deportation to a country Dennis hardly remembers. After this change in Dennis’s status, his college experience changed dramatically. Dennis lost his driving privileges, opportunities for public scholarships and financial support from his family to pay for housing near school. Above all, it was difficult for Dennis to imagine what opportunities he could have after graduation.

Border Life and Student Visas. Prior to immigrating to the United States, Anita and her family belonged to the established Chinese immigrant communities in Mexico. Her grandfather emigrated from China to Mexico long before Anita was born.

My grandpa [was the first to immigrate to Mexico] and then he brought my mom and my two uncles. My mom and my uncle were planning on crossing over to the United States even before I was born. But then that decision for my mom was canceled because my dad was coming from China. So he got here and eventually they got married so my mom never came to the United States.

Anita’s parents put off their move to the United States because they started a family. First Anita was born, then her sister and brother. For reasons Anita did not share with me, the family

was undocumented during their initial years in Mexico but was later able to adjust their status.

After they established residency in Mexico, Anita's mother obtained a work visa that allowed her daily travel between Mexico and the U.S., while her father worked near their hometown. Anita, similar to her mother's borderland experience of traveling across the border on a daily basis, did the same for school.

I've been studying in the United States since third grade. From third grade to eighth grade, I was an international student because [these two towns] are border towns. So I use to live in Mexicali and just cross over to [the United States] to study and then go back home. So that's why I had a student visa, and that visa expired during my junior year, although I was living [in the U.S.] already. .

Anita's student visa allowed her a great level of fluidity across the Mexico-U.S. border. She moved seamlessly between the two countries, and that helped her transition into her permanent stay in the U.S. However, her student visa proved to be a challenge when she applied for college. Her expired student visa status made it difficult for her to qualify for in-state tuition under the provisions of California Assembly Bill 540 (AB 540). The bill restricts benefits to non-immigrant visa holders, such as those with a student visa. Thus, her expired student visa placed her in an ambiguous category. After much effort and coordination with campus personnel, she was finally able to establish her undocumented status and qualify for in-state tuition.

Mixed-Status Family Dynamics. Seven out of 21 students in the study belonged to mixed-status families; in which case students had at least one immediate family member, such as a sibling or parent, who was a U.S. citizen. Approximately 41 percent of all undocumented immigrants in the United States belong to mixed-status families (Fortuny, Capps, & Passel, 2007) According to Fortuny, Capps, and Passel (2007):

These mixed-status families pose special concerns for various social policies since some family members are U.S. citizens and have the same eligibility for government programs as other citizens, while other members—usually the adults and older siblings—are unauthorized. Since unauthorized parents are potentially subject to being reported and

deported, they may be reluctant to approach the government for needed services, even when their children need services and are eligible for them (p. 14).

Not only do the authors call for greater attention to the larger social implications of undocumented immigration, but they also blur the line between documented and undocumented communities. These statistics reinforce the reality that undocumented immigrants are a part of the social fabric of American family life—making it difficult to distinguish the difference between “us” and “them.”

Arturo was one of the seven students who belonged to a mixed-status family. He and his parents are undocumented while the rest of his younger siblings were citizens who were born in the United States. Arturo’s parents often stressed the hardships of Arturo’s college experience to his younger siblings. He recounted the unique pressure from his mixed-status family dynamic.

I feel that as much as they talk about it, it must be about teaching my siblings hard work and all those other things they want to see in my siblings. I feel like it's sort of like a downer for them. Like [my parents are] saying, “Your oldest brother, who you look up to, has it really hard, so I want you to do even better.” I see that they're really pushing themselves to get into some of those really tough schools and they're really amazing people, and I hope they notice that. But they're doing a lot more hard work than was asked of me in high school. As much as I let my parents talk about that, I still feel a lot of regret that I don't butt in and say something about it. “You're saying a little too much and not giving my siblings enough credit. You say I have it hard but we don't need to talk about it like repeatedly”.

Arturo felt that his parents made an example of him for his younger siblings by lauding him for his academic success despite a disadvantaged immigration status. Although Arturo wanted to discourage his parents from using him as a benchmark to put added pressure on his siblings, he also added to his siblings’ pressure by conveying to them that he was “really comfortable in college.” Arturo explained the image he wanted to portray, “I really hope that I set that example for my siblings that they can still work hard, get good grades, and get all that high esteem that I received, but still have a life of their own and do what they like.” This

contradiction in not wanting to be a model student and his desire to portray academic success was described in Albrecht's (2007) study on undocumented students in college. She described the added pressure students had to be a role model to younger siblings and to prove their ability in college. Perhaps Arturo felt that he had to cooperate with his parents. This made it difficult for him to seek support from his parents and younger siblings. It also isolated him in terms of his academic experience.

The narratives of these students are largely rendered invisible in the national discourse on immigration reform. Opponents of immigrant rights promote stereotypical depictions that demonize undocumented people and overlook the structures that create the circumstances through which immigrants fall into undocumented status. In such context, becoming undocumented would be construed as a "personal choice" by immigrants who choose to act in defiance of law and order. The insights of these students force us to look more deeply at the realities of immigration to the United States. In sum, these students paint a more complicated story. One which helps us understand the logic behind their decisions and also the structural circumstances that lead them to those decisions. In what follows, I shift from focusing on their background to exploring their experiences in higher education, and most specifically, at SRU.

Challenges Facing Undocumented Students at SRU

The passage of California Assembly Bill 540 (AB 540) in 2001 opened a pathway for a new wave of undocumented students into public postsecondary institutions. The bill made college more accessible by allowing qualified undocumented students to pay in-state tuition. Furthermore, the bill provided more than monetary benefits; it also established a degree of rightful presence of undocumented students in higher education.

By fall 2002, Sunny Research University had admitted its first cohort of AB 540 undocumented students. A handful of these students participated in a summer student diversity program and had disclosed their status to select counselors and administrators who were part of the program staff. The students spoke privately with individual allies to explain the challenges they had experienced as undocumented students. These institutional allies realized they were working with seven or eight undocumented students on a one-on-one basis and had wanted to put these students in touch with one another to create community and a collective student voice. This initial gesture would turn out to be the beginning of the partnership between undocumented students and institutional allies.

Their partnership formally began with an open meeting between the program staff at the student diversity program and undocumented students to talk about how administrators might better support student experiences at SRU. Alejandro, one of the coordinating administrators recalled the event.

We were shocked when the day of the meeting came and the time and instead of the eight to ten people about 40 people came in. They just kept coming and coming and coming. And we were actually pleased and shocked because we realized that there were a lot more students than we thought there might be.

Because there was no mechanism in place at SRU to identify undocumented students, it was always a challenge to gage the precise number of undocumented students enrolled. He added,

But, in addition, there were a lot of people in that room who were not undocumented but they were friends of these students who came and said “I’m here to support” whoever it was that they were there with. And we realized at that point how important that person became as an ally and how important it was for us to make sure that we included students or people that help students in that situation.

From early on, documented student allies were an active piece of undocumented student activism, particularly in tasks that require documentation, such as driving to events or engaging in certain forms of civil disobedience. Furthermore, students can shift along the documentation

spectrum because immigration status is fluid. Students could adjust their status, either from undocumented to documented or the other way around. As the meeting progressed, Alejandro realized the extent of student challenges.

It actually ended up being a two to three hour meeting. It was when we were going around the room and talking about who they were and what their challenges were that we realized that this was huge. This was something that we needed to do something about. That it was not just a fact that students needed a little support. It really was about that students needed a place to go to, a place to talk, people to talk to. And we had to figure out whatever we could do to support students, knowing that our hands were tied when it came to the financial aid piece of it. But realizing that there was so much more that we could do to help their experiences. So we agreed to meet on a regular basis and met a few more times with them.

After this first initial meeting, Alejandro and other administrators involved realized how “deep” some of the issues were at SRU and decided to organize a follow-up discussion with students and top administrators. “We had to make sure that the people who could make those changes would hear the stories of the students” and “that they had to actually hear from the students what it was like.” They brought in the heads of student affairs, residential life, and academic affairs to meet with three to four student representatives. The goal of the meeting was to introduce the students and the newly established student group, DREAMERS, to key administrators on campus. Alejandro continued,

It was probably one of the most powerful meeting ever. Because the students told their own stories but also the stories of other students and talked about how they were treated as students here, how staff treated them, how some people made them feel like second and third class citizens, how people would out them and say “You're an illegal Alien.” in front of others, or how at the [student health center] they were required to show driver's license when they don't have one and when nobody else was asked to do the same and how they were just treated across the campus in various areas.

Although this meeting took place seven years prior to my data collection, those who participated considered it a catalyst for campus administrators to start developing an awareness of and advocating for undocumented students. Faith, a long-time undocumented student activist

who was present at the meeting, described it as a seminal point in the partnership between undocumented students and institutional allies.

We read a list of our needs out loud to them...that was the first meeting where administrators came into the picture officially. Because I'm sure there was administrative support before then but not an official proclamation of an alliance or something.

For Faith, it was a turning point in which students were formally acknowledged by the institution. Julia, who oversaw the academic affairs division, also recalled her impression of that meeting with students:

Clearly, they had identified a series of issues that they felt needed to be addressed. So what we did was we went around the room and they kind of told their story. Which, to me, was just amazing because they really did have fascinating stories. And then they talked about some of the challenges. Most of the challenges didn't relate to academics, per say, which was my interest. But they related to what they considered to be, in many ways, mistreatment and felt that if the campus understood that they were undocumented students and that if we could do some things that would make it easier for them, then at least they would have a slightly easier time.

This initial meeting resonated with Julia because it was her first opportunity to learn about the challenges facing undocumented students.

At the time of my data collection, the working relationship between undocumented students and institutional allies had been on-going for seven years. While it started modestly with students listing a number of challenges and needs to well-intentioned administrators, their partnership has evolved into a much more complex set of interactions due to the political, structural, and organizational challenges they have faced in their attempts to institutionalize support for such a controversial student population. In the years between the first meeting to the point of my data collection, both students and allies learned that issues of access and equity are difficult to achieve for a student population that is deemed outside the law. To understand the

problems at hand, the following is a discussion of the challenges faced by undocumented students at SRU, from both student and ally perspectives.

Limited Access to Higher Education. Students in this study felt restricted in their college choice process to a limited number of institutions due to affordability, proximity to home, and the level of receptivity to undocumented immigrants. According to Passel (2005), only 50 percent of undocumented students complete high school each year, and of these 65,000 high school graduates, only 50 percent will pursue postsecondary education and approximately 5,000 were enrolled in colleges in California. Based on Passel's estimations, approximately 9 percent of undocumented students in the state are enrolled in public research universities. At SRU, undocumented students constituted less than 1 percent of the total student population. According to Abrego (2007), because undocumented youth were "not eligible for most scholarships or loans, few can afford to attend even community colleges; a four-year degree is virtually unattainable" (p.223). Thus, the narratives collected in this study were drawn from a select group of undocumented students who were studying in a predominantly inaccessible sector of higher education. My findings indicate that they experienced similar documentation challenges discussed in existing literature and that they had to rely on a combination of resources to minimize those challenges, such as school-based and community-based resources, encouraging peer mentors, and private scholarships. Furthermore, their level of access to higher education should not be based on their numerical enrollment alone. Findings indicating undocumented student have access to SRU does not guarantee that they will have an equally meaningful educational experience that is comparable to the experiences of documented peers.

Learning about Their Status during the College Application Process. For most students in this study, the impairments associated with their status became more apparent when they came

of age. For this sample, their status became more of an issue as they navigated through the college choice process. While a few students in this study were conscious of the challenges of being undocumented from an early age, the majority described feeling on a par with their peers until they began to explore options after high school.

In high school, my immigration status wasn't such problem. [If my status was an issue] I could just say, "I can't make it to this field trip. I'm sorry. I have to be somewhere." But then when it came to applying for college, I didn't realize the situation it would put me in.

In Arturo's college application process he realized he could not talk his way out of revealing this status as he had in his K-12 experience. Similarly for Yasmine, her immigration status was becoming a central issue to address in her college application process.

It was really a difficult decision, deciding which college to go to. I remember the last year of high school. I didn't really understand my situation. I always knew I was a little different but I didn't know why until pretty much senior year in high school when everything became clear to me. My mom told me "Yes, you might not be able to go to college." That really hit me hard.

The limitations of their status became more apparent to the students due to a significant shift in their legal context, which changed when they exited high school and entered adult society. Once undocumented immigrants exit public K-12 education, they are subjected to similar forms of discrimination experienced by adult undocumented immigrants. At this point, these students transition out of the educational access described by *Plyler v. Doe* and enter into a legal context that severely restricts their access to postsecondary education. Roberto Gonzales (2011), in his sociological study of 150 undocumented youth, found that there are "specific and complex ways in which legal status intervenes in their coming of age" (p. 603). He found:

This collision among contexts makes for a turbulent transition and has profound implications for identity formation, friendship patterns, aspirations and expectations, and social and economic mobility. Undocumented children move from protected to unprotected, from inclusion to exclusion, from de facto legal to illegal. In the process, they must learn to be illegal, a transformation that involves the almost complete retooling of daily routines, survival skills, aspirations, and social patterns. (Gonzales, 2011)

For students such as Arturo and Yasmine, part of their transition into the new legal context was a reassessment of their college resources, which was a critical point when students need accessible, transparent, and accurate college-going advising.

Access to College-Going Guidance. Students in this study reported limited college advising that specifically addressed their undocumented status. This is consistent with Oliverez's (2006) study on undocumented high school students that demonstrated the need for school-based support in the college-choice process. Her study had shown that high school and college personnel, though well intentioned, were not necessarily prepared to address the complications associated with undocumented status during the college-choice process. Her findings indicated that undocumented high school students needed additional academic preparation, well-informed school-based adults who can provide college-related guidance relevant to students' immigration status, and a college-going culture.

Similarity to Oliverez's findings, students in this study reported being introduced to college-going resources by their high school counselors but relied on personal research to find additional information and resources. According to Yasmine, the internet supplemented the limited information she learned from her counselor.

In high school there weren't many resources. I had to do all my research online by myself. There was one counselor who addressed this issue, but she was the only counselor. And the only reason I knew was because we would have a weekly bulletin for all the students throughout the school and [the counselor] wrote one sentence—something about undocumented students. I don't quite remember. If you needed resources or something to contact her. And that's the only resource I had other than the internet.

Online information on in-state tuition policies, undocumented student organizations, and community-based workshops and scholarships were helpful in guiding students through the college application process. Furthermore, the web provided students an anonymous way to

search for information. Another student supplemented the information she received from her high school counselor with information from her state assemblymen.

I don't think, even through the whole college application process, I never had a complete grasp of what it would actually take to stay in college. So, I never actually visualized myself in college even though I was on that college track. It was a pretty complicated process, applying to the UCs, I applied to Cal States and many many private schools. I made a lot of phone calls to see what kind of support I would receive at different institutions. Fortunately, I had a very good college counselor in high school who sort of told me about AB540 and my options. And back then Marco Firebaugh was still alive and his office sent me a lot of information.

High school counselors are critical in introducing students to relevant college-going resources. In addition to limited college advising was the issue of misinformation. Faith encountered discouraging admissions representatives who irresponsibly denied her admissions.

So the admissions officer just plainly told me “You know, we're a legal institution but you're not so there's nothing we can do.” And as a high school senior that was, you know, shocking that someone would tell me that. But it gave me a big reality check. And so, I sort of- I'm not going to say I gave up hope, but like I became cynical about the process and I sort of went through the motions.

Faith nearly gave up on the rest of her college application process after being told she was ineligible for admissions. According to Samuel it was necessary to “address the fear that higher education is not an option for undocumented students. I mean there's a lot of misinformation, from the very basics, like public institutions do not take any undocumented students. So even from that the very basics.”

The Community College Route. Seven out of 21 students in this study transferred from a local community college to SRU due to affordability, work school balance, and proximity to home. For Arturo, community college was the most affordable way to a bachelor granting institution.

I didn't realize that most private schools are really expensive and it was just so hard to get a scholarship so I decided to go to community college. It wasn't right away. I was really disappointed cause my dream was to go to a 4-year right away. ...Being at community

college, I was really insecure and I think part of that was from not being able to go from high school to university. I failed myself in some way. But I think for me the most impossible goal was to getting into SRU....So I had some money. I came to SRU. I paid for it myself. My scholarship took a long time getting here. I barely made my payments on time the second quarter....So it was really scary actually being here after I had so much wanted to be here. I think the younger I was, the bigger my dreams were, and the older I was, the more responsibilities I had and the more weight I had on my shoulders, and the different choices I had to make.

His sound financial decision to attend a community college made him feel “insecure” and that he “failed” himself in some way. His decision to attend community college added another dimension to his identity. Interestingly, there was a discrepancy between the stigmatization he internalized as a community college student and his experience as a student there. He noted that community college was where he found meaningful communal support. In fact, he returned to his community college to find work and a sense of community after he had transferred to SRU. He continued,

I'm going back to my community college. I was hesitant to do that because I had it in my mind that once you leave community college, you shouldn't go back. You're at the newer, bigger, more prestigious, 4-year university. But I did. And I have friends there and I knew who to talk to, to set up flyers and could help me advertise my tutoring.

As with most transfer students in this study, they were largely satisfied with their community college experience, but felt frustrated with their limited postsecondary options coming out of high school.

Institutional allies also recognized the community college pathway was an essential option for undocumented students. In Samuel's outreach to community college students, he noted that,

A lot of AB540 undocumented students do take the transfer route and they go to community college as their first point of entrance into higher education. So we do have a lot of students who are part of our programs who are undocumented and took that route because it would be cheaper to pay rather than to go into 4-5 years into a bachelor granting institutions.

Allies such as Samuel emphasized the importance of strengthening the bridge between community college to a bachelor-granting institution as a way to continue the pipeline for underrepresented students, including undocumented students. Interestingly, the issue of community college is where this data shows the greatest discrepancy between student and ally responses. Some students viewed it as a highly undesirable option, and it was also difficult for counselors to recommend the community college route to students. For example, Sarah, a direct-entry student at SRU, recalled her experience with her high school counselor.

I went to talk to a counselor and then when my mom told him that I didn't have papers he basically advised us to just go to community college cause anything else wasn't going to be possible.

This interaction left her feeling pessimistic about their postsecondary options. Sarah felt tracked into the community college path after revealing her status to her high school counselor, advice that she saw as inconsistent with her academic competitiveness for direct-entry into selective universities. She concluded that that her status was the cause for the cooling out effect (Clark, 1960).

There were allies in this study who believed strongly in the benefits of community college and recognized that advising students in that direction could have an unintentional and discouraging impact. Allies were perplexed by how they should discuss this college option with undocumented high school students without steering students' away from their dreams. The following two allies, Harry and Evelyn, expressed the dilemma they experienced in advising students in the college choice process.

I find it's the toughest thing to deal with because you can't deal with someone that is thinking with their heart. And I've talked to valedictorians and if you tell them to go to community college it's not something they would want to do or something that their families wants them to do. But the reality is that it's an option and that's what I want students to understand—that it's an option. In my opinion, at this time, it's the best option, no matter what money you got, unless you have a full ride somewhere.

Harry acknowledged that there were a number of students who received a full ride to private schools or from private donors. He felt that those examples were rare and created unrealistic expectations of financial support for students. He added,

We have a couple of people that are AB540 that are going to be going to Princeton or Yale. We have some of those, but there aren't that many. So they should understand the educational system and community college is part of the strategy as well. Understanding what it cost. Understanding the savings.

Harry highly encouraged students to consider the transfer route because he witnessed several students drop out of SRU because of the cost of tuition.

But some people are offended and that's why I'm saying that it's the hardest conversation you could ever have. Because I think people feel that they are being offended because of their academic accomplishments. That's not what this is. It's just understanding your situation and understanding that there are other ways of getting to your goal.

Another counselor, Evelyn, felt sympathetic to the parents of undocumented students who were determined to enroll at SRU regardless of the cost on their families. She expressed her frustration with students who were unwilling to consider alternatives.

I have met a lot of freshmen that are very stubborn, which is good and bad...After the student leaves the room and I have the opportunity to talk to their parents, their parents tell me, "We don't have money, my son, doesn't have the documents." My heart gets broken because I spoke with the child, the student. So stubborn. "I'm going to SRU regardless." But the student doesn't know the sacrifices that the parents have to make—the sadness that you see in the parents' faces. "We cannot afford this."

Evelyn continued on to describe another parent meeting regarding a student who was adamant to attend a private college.

One student I met three weeks ago was going to go to [a private college nearby]. [...] When she left the room and I had the opportunity to talk to the parents and they said, "We don't have the money, my daughter is undocumented." I was like, what is this student doing? I wanted to shake her hard. Like what are you doing? Go to community college for two years, work, save your money and hopefully you can come here or go to [another state school]. You don't need to go to [a private school]. Yeah, [the private school] said they would give you half of the tuition, half of the tuition is \$40,000 per year so sometimes the students are a little bit irrational at that level. Some ok? So I feel really

sad. I almost cried when the mom was crying. She said, “How can I tell my daughter that she cannot go when we don't have the money.” [...] I was really upset. But the student didn't want to hear about the opportunity to go to community college for two years. I felt very sad for the parents because I'm a parent and I know it's hard.

These ally counselors struggled with how to help undocumented students reach their college aspirations in a legal context that severely restricts these students' postsecondary options. They found it difficult to recommend community college without cooling students out in the early stages of their college choice process. Moreover, an important discussion that cannot be fully explored in this dissertation is the academic benefit and stigmatization associated with attending a community college (Handel, 2007). Unfortunately, community college students are often stigmatized as less academically competitive in comparison to those students attending a bachelor-granting institution. In addition, budget cuts and high enrollment rates at local community colleges pose added challenges to community colleges to preparing students to become transfer-ready. However, these real and perceived consequences of going to a community college often overshadow the benefits of community college, particularly the financial benefits as noted by these counselors. Regardless of whether students recognize the benefits of attending a community college, they feel academically and personally invalidated when counselors advise them according to their immigration status and economic means. For that reason, Harry recognized that his advice “offends students' academic sense of self.” Therefore, the xenophobic context impaired the ability or willingness of academic counselors to adequately advise students in a manner that reflects students' academic performance.

Peer Role Models and Direct Entry to Four-Year Institutions. Fourteen out of twenty-one students were freshmen direct entrants, defined as those who entered SRU directly after high school. These students relied on private scholarship, work, and familial support to cover the costs of attendance. A factor that appeared to influence these students' ability or decision to enter a

bachelor-granting institution directly after high school was their contact with undocumented peer role models at SRU.

Due to the limited school-based college guidance for students revealed in this study, students relied on older peers models as the sole reference point in guiding them to find college options available to them. This study demonstrates that undocumented peer role models can have an encouraging impact on the college choice process of aspiring youth. Existing research noted that witnessing older undocumented peers struggle in college or experience limited job opportunities to put their degrees to use lowered aspirations of younger students (Abrego, 2006; Perez 2009). According to Abrego (2006), undocumented students can be highly deterred from academic interests “with proof that nothing they deem worthwhile awaits them after high school” (p.222).

On the other end of the spectrum, my findings indicate that peer role models had a positive influence on the academic aspiration of undocumented youth. Several students in this study attributed their decision to attend SRU to encouraging older role models. These respondents felt motivated and informed by older peers who shone a light on the puzzling high school to college transition. As one student described, “I don't think I was aware what I had to do, like the channels that I had to go through, who to talk to, or how I was going to enroll.” Thus, this student based her initial decision to attend a local community college because “It was cheap and it was close to home.” But later she changed her mind after meeting an undocumented student from SRU who encouraged her to attend a freshmen recruitment event and informed her of the resources available at SRU for undocumented students. The mentorship of older peers and the connection with a supportive network of undocumented students weighed heavily on the college choice process for the following three students.

We met people from DREAMERS who sort of told us “Hey we're here, you can be here too.” So that just changed everything for me and that's how my selection was immediately SRU. Even though I never even gave it much thought. I didn't think I'd come to SRU. I sort of saw it as a safety school where it was just in the background. But SRU jumped up back to number one. .

I started doing research and not only AB-540 but SRU and also DREAMERS folk and that's when I realized that SRU was probably a very supportive campus when it comes to undocumented students. So I told my mom about this so she was like “Oh. Okay”.

I had already decided that I'm not going to SRU. I can't [afford it]. [That changed after I attended a] college fair. There were some people from DREAMERS tabling and DREAMERS is the student group here at SRU, and so that's where I met [member of DREAMERS] He was there tabling that day, I remember him. I came up to him and I told him “Oh, well, I was accepted to SRU” and I started talking to him and he was like, “Well you should be at [recruitment day]. You know, you should go.”

These students felt more confident in their ability to succeed at SRU once they learned that students with similar challenges were attending SRU.

Alternative Networks of Support. Because students in this study encountered inconsistent and limited school-based college counseling, students supplemented it with online resources and what they described as serendipitous support from helpful educators or undocumented peers. Much of the assistance they received was largely unexpected, such as speaking with a friend's father or meeting fellow undocumented students at a college fair. For instance, Alice felt it was fate that brought her to SRU. “I think it was meant to be because at the college fair there were some people from DREAMERS tabling and DREAMERS is the student group here at SRU and that's where I met [my peer mentor].” Another student, Nelly, felt lucky to have had a chance meeting with a SRU employee who connected her to another employee who introduced her to resources that helped put her on the path to SRU. Nelly never fully considered SRU as a viable option, even though she was a high-achieving student in high school who received a 4.4 grade point average, ranked thirteenth in her class, was a top athlete, and participated in academic decathlon. She had to pay for school herself and thought it was “too expensive.” After much

consideration, she chose to attend a more affordable state college until her chance meeting with an unlikely source of support.

A kid that I coached, his father supposedly worked at SRU. I didn't know. I was working with my mom at the ice cream truck and he's asked "Well how's your school?" ... I was so depressed and I told him "I'm undocumented." He said "Well, I work at SRU," and I said, "Whoa, you do? That's crazy. How can you work at SRU and never told me?" He told me he knew this person that can probably help me out. "At least talk to you." And I'm like "Oh my god, my lifesaver."

Through this connection, Nelly was connected to Samuel, an institutional ally at SRU who supported Nelly through her college choice process. He had worked with others in her situation and recommended that she start by attending local community college and then transfer to SRU. Nelly resisted this option at first. She explained to me that although she appreciated her community college experience, her initial reaction was 'What no. I'm not going to go to El Camino, I've worked so hard.' She explained that she did not want to be looked down upon, "you know, the stigma." However, she agreed to attend after Samuel offered to mentor her through her community college and transfer process. He offered her participation in academic programs at SRU that would facilitate her access to SRU. In the two years between high school and SRU, she enrolled at a community college, worked full-time at a restaurant, and got the academic preparation she needed to become a competitive transfer applicant. "In two years I came here." She refers to these two individuals as her "lifesavers" and "guardian angel" because she felt that their support was not only helpful, but also far removed from her formal educational setting and because they expanded her possibilities for college.

The College Choice

Proximity, cost, and receptivity were central factors in the college choice process for the

undocumented students in my study. For example, Yasmine, an out-of-town student, struggled with her decision attend SRU, which was nearly 400 miles away from home or a local institution in her hometown.

I really wanted to go to SRU, but I knew transportation would be an issue 'cause I knew I would never be able to take the plane, I would have to have someone drive me, or I'd have to take the bus. My mom knew how I really wanted to go to SRU but she also wanted me to be near home just because it's a lot safer and easier than [living hundreds of miles away from home].

Yasmine's parents lived across the state and her mom preferred that Yasmine attend a college close to home to avoid the potential risk of having to show proof of identification at the airport for her commute to college. Unlike documented students who can take a plane ride home, Yasmine and her family worried about being detained by immigration agents at the airport. This was a realistic concern for undocumented students, given that another student from this study was detained at an airport for a flight across the country.

But then I started doing my own research and not only on AB 540 but SRU and also the DREAMERS folks and that's when I realized that SRU was probably a very supportive campus when it comes to undocumented students. So I told my mom about this so she was like "Oh. Okay." In the end, I decided that I shouldn't be afraid of all these—I don't want that to stop me so I decided okay I'll go to SRU. To make it back and forth, I'll bus I'll do it. And then, the good thing though is that my parents are able to drive, they were able to get a number but they're still undocumented. So they could drive me back and forth. But not so often.

For Yasmine, the perceived receptivity to undocumented students at SRU, outweighed the 18-hour round-trip drive to campus.

So I decided to come here and actually the first was hard. It was hard because I was so far away from home. And then I would watch people take the plane and they would ask me "Oh there's the cheap plane tickets. Did you get any?" I'm like "Oh. I don't know. I just didn't want to."

In her college choice process, she concluded that the amount of peer support from DREAMERS and the level of receptivity were most important in her college experience. However, as Yasmine

noted, the level of support was limited to DREAMERS, and she still felt isolated among her university peers.

Students learned early on during their college choice process that they might have a difficult and confusing path to college—with detours and derailments. Due to the limited amount of school-based support, students search for alternative resources for college-going information, such as online forums and peer mentorship. As the counselors in this study pointed out, they want to support undocumented students toward the most do-able path to college and that could conflict with students' academic aspirations of attending a bachelor granting or private institution. According to Abrego (2006) this derailment to their academic goals not only interrupts them academically but also their membership in society. “Ironically, their social incorporation sensitizes them further to the contradiction that, despite their academic success, they are barred from the opportunity to integrate legally, educationally, and economically in US society” (Abrego, 2006, p. 221). However, faced with these challenges, students in this study have decided to pursue higher education. In fact, students such as Yasmine refused to let her status define her. “In the end, I decided that I shouldn't be afraid of all these –I don't want that to stop me so I decided okay I'll go to SRU.”

Retention and Academic Challenges at Sunny Research University

After students enter the university, they enter a new set of challenges to persist through college as undocumented students. Many of the challenges build on one another and stem from multiple factors, such as legislation, institutional culture and infrastructure, and a lack of awareness and resources. Unfortunately, data shows that retention challenges often had a synergistic impact of building on one another.

Financial Challenges. The most central barrier is financial in nature. Federal and state governments determine the criteria that control which students may attend public education and who may receive financial aid. Although the federal government does not bar enrollment of undocumented students, it explicitly excludes them from receiving federal, state, and local benefits for postsecondary education in several pieces of legislation: Title IV of the Higher Education Act, PRWORA⁷, and IIRIRA⁸ (Drachman, 2006).

The most explicit, yet vague, provision regarding higher education is Section 505 of IIRIRA, which states that undocumented immigrants “shall not be eligible on the basis of residence within a State for any postsecondary education benefit unless a citizen or national of the United States is eligible for such a benefit without regard to whether the citizen or national is such a resident” (IIRIRA, 1996). One key point of contention was what constituted a “postsecondary educational benefit” that could be awarded by the state and by individual campuses. The vagueness allowed for discretionary interpretations by university officials, and consequently local institutions interpreted these laws in a wide range of ways. In practice the term “postsecondary educational benefits” could refer to a number of things beyond federal financial aid; thus several resources at SRU came into question, including scholarships collected from student tuition, scholarships funded by private donors, and even participation in federally funded academic programs. A scholarship coordinator noted the perpetual change in practice, “I’ve seen the gradual enforcement of [the residency requirement]. [In the past] our scholarship application forms did not have that citizenship question.” These changes steadily evolved into an all-encompassing ban on any form of financial awards offered by SRU. This practice became

⁷ Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA)

⁸ Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA)

one of the most pervasive constraints hampering allies in their work with undocumented students. Ellen, Larry, and Kris, expressed their certainty of this practice.

The bottom line is we can't give any financial resources, any benefit to undocumented students. Period. In terms of stipends, scholarships, financial aid and things that are at the heart of how you can stay a student in California, those resources are not available to [undocumented students] through us because we are a state entity. The school, being a state school, cannot take any money it has and distribute it to the students cause they're considered to be state funds. Cannot have a donor give us money for the students cause the minute we touch it, it's un-givable.

We don't act as any branch of law enforcement. The flip side of that is that we always have to be careful to follow federal law and state law. And federal law does constrain our ability, as an institution, to provide any state money in terms of financial support of undocumented students.

Many allies echoed similar hard-line approaches on restrictions to providing financial support, which posed a significant financial barrier for undocumented students to pay for college.

Several allies felt paralyzed by such policies, especially since many acknowledged that the “single greatest challenge that undocumented students in this campus face was financial.”

While AB 540 goes a long way towards providing undocumented students with an opportunity to at least pay in-state fees, it doesn't help pay those in-state fees, which, as everybody knows, have gone up substantially.

Undoubtedly, these policies have austere and stressful consequences on students who were already living on limited financial means. My data indicates that 19 of 21 respondents said that financial difficulty was a top concern to their ability to persist through SRU. Although all respondents qualified for in-state tuition, their inability to receive financial aid still proved to be a challenge, especially with steep tuition increases during my data collection period. Out of 21 student respondents, 18 self-identified as low or working class, with an annual family income ranging from \$15,000 to \$30,000. Eight students attended part time or took leaves during their undergraduate experience. In addition, they experienced a number of money-related problems,

such as housing, being able to cover school-related expenses, and food. Limited financial means created a ripple affect, beginning with academic performance to living arrangements.

Well the main one is financial. We don't get any financial aid from the government, so we just have to always seek out financial resources, like private scholarships, donors, sponsors, working to pay for school. I think that is one of the biggest one, cause then that ties all to the second, which is commuting. We all commute from very far places. Some of us have cars, some of us don't. We use the bus pretty much the majority of us. I would say that the third would be the stress. I think this is tied up to everything. I mean you worry about money, you worry about commuting, you worry about food, you worry about your classes. I mean some of us take four classes. We're barely surviving.

Evelyn, an academic affairs administrator, offered an insightful understanding of the complex the ways tuition hikes negatively impacted the undocumented students she knew well. She was one of the few “safe” professors and counselors to whom students felt comfortable in revealing their status. Evelyn explained the layers of systemic barriers that impact student performance.

It's very, very sad because as tuition [has gone] up, students are faced with the fact that they don't have money. They have to work, but it's “under the table.” So they don't get benefits. They only get paid very minimum, and sometimes not even the minimum wage. They don't have enough money to pay their tuition.

What Evelyn described were the layers of hardships students experienced. In addition to having to work “under the table,” many students felt they had to choose between buying food or buying books because their money was so limited. In fact, one student was happy and proud of the fact that he got decent grades even though he did not buy any of the required texts for the class.

Evelyn continued,

Most of the time, they are part [of] this fee reduction plan, which is two classes per quarter. They take fewer classes than the normal student. Therefore, it takes them longer to graduate. And at the same time most of them commute, and that affects their academic performance. Sometimes, the students are able to pay full tuition, and they stay here for the whole quarter. Or they take a quarter off to work. Or, they are able to raise funds, and then they come back the following quarter.

In addition, Evelyn described the multiple strategies undocumented students used to pay for school: balancing work and school, taking alternating leaves to save money, living at home, and commuting hours on public transportation, and organizing personal fundraisers.

So we can see that their GPA is lower than the normal student, but it's not because they are not smart. They are very smart, but there are other factors that affect their academic performance. They commute, they have to work, and they don't get paid enough. They also have to help their families with the money that they make, so it does affect their performance.

Thus, financial challenges had a domino effect on the students that took attention away from school and negatively impacted their academic performance, including a low grade point average and delayed time to complete their degrees. Evelyn attributed students' lower academic performance to barriers unrelated to their academic ability, emphasizing external factors out of students' control. She expressed the frustration she felt, not only as their counselor, but also as an immigrant and a parent with college-aged children. Through her tenure as an administrator, she developed personal relationships with students; inviting them and their families to her home and becoming friends. She was initially concerned with academic issues, but through time she developed a more holistic understanding of the impact of undocumented status on these students' well-being, including mental and physical health, aspirations after college, relationships with their families, and living situations. Evelyn's positionality as an immigrant, a parent, and an administrator heightened her awareness and concern, thus influencing her holistic approach to guiding undocumented students.

Part-Time Status. Because most undocumented students found it difficult to pay full tuition on a consistent basis, it was common for students to take regular leaves or attend part-time. A few students realized after the first term how expensive it was to attend SRU after they exhausted the private scholarship they thought would cover a full year. Student participants

toggled between full-time and part-time enrollment and between local community colleges and SRU, especially after multiple tuition hikes across California public post-secondary institutions. Jason, who entered SRU immediately after high school, encountered financial difficulties shortly after his first term as a freshman. He quickly switched to part-time status, which was significantly more affordable but also capped his enrollment to two courses per term.

I actually went partial because I needed to finish my [general education credits], cause I couldn't go full-time, so part-time seems best for me. But I don't like part-time cause it's a thousand dollars cheaper but then I see the difference in quality. I can go full-time and take four classes so I can get the double credits. I'm going to try to do that. I know that it's suicide but I have to do it.

Jason's manner of weighing out his enrollment options reveals his technical knowledge of enrollment policies at SRU. According to Jason, he had two options. One option was to enroll part-time for a minimum of a year at a reduced fee for two courses per term or another option to enroll as a full-time student for a flat tuition fee and load up on as many courses as possible. Because SRU charged a flat tuition rate for full-time students regardless of the number of courses, Jason planned to maximize his tuition dollars by taking as many courses per term as he could possibly handle. This way he could take advantage of the flat rate but likely would compromise his well-being, as he properly called it "suicide."

Jason also felt the marginalized by attending part-time. As mentioned in the section above, Jason decided to attend SRU part-time to save money. He highly prioritized his education and was severely disappointed by the level of support and hardship he encountered during his first year of college. "I'm just really upset because I'm part-time. I didn't feel like a normal freshman. It's like how many freshmen are part-time, I'm the only one that I know." By the end of his second term in SRU, Jason was barely maintaining his enrollment. He had signed a contract to reduce his enrollment to part-time and was reduced to two courses a term. He was

making slow academic progress and was planning to make up his credits at a community college over the summer.

Difficult Living Arrangements. The ramifications of limited finances go beyond the stress of paying for tuition fees and extend into the students' very means of survival. Food and a place to sleep were some of the most fundamental human necessities and the most urgent needs described by students. Students in the study described a daily dilemma over paying for books or having food on the table and a roof over their heads. Although they found it difficult at times to express their need for food, they also recognized that it was one need that the allies readily and quickly understood.

Most undocumented students could not afford the estimated cost of living on or near campus, which was estimated to be \$14,000 and \$10,000 respectively. Students living with relatives were expected to spend \$4,500 on housing, which was a significant savings. Because room and board got exponentially more expensive near campus, most students lived at home and commuted long hours to campus. Finding safe and convenient housing proved to be a challenge for Jason. He lived 10 miles away from SRU in an area that was realistic for his budget. The limited public transportation system and poor traffic conditions meant long daily commutes to campus. Jason shared with me the reasons why he needed a safer and closer location to campus.

I didn't have internet so I had to stay at school really late to use it—to take the quizzes for the science classes to answer the questions. Then there's the dangers of commuting cause I was assaulted when I was commuting home. This guy just tried to take my stuff and I didn't let him because I needed my laptop. So he beat me up. He beat me really bad cause I couldn't move. I was just in the middle of the street and he pushed me down still even more. It was right in the middle of the street because then he had gotten freaked out caused the cars came. But this is the sad part, people watched, they didn't do anything and when cars stopped they went around me and just kept going. So that was the sad part for me. Dang, this is reality...It sucks because I couldn't move. I couldn't eat. Everything hurt. I couldn't study. But I still had to turn in my paper by Monday.

The stress of commuting weighed on Jason. His assault was a vivid reminder of the risks he was taking to go to college everyday. “I could have died. We could die just from commuting. We could get assaulted.” Jason eventually moved home because the tuition increases meant he could no longer afford the \$200 rent for the room near campus. Moving home increased his daily commute from three to six hours. Because of the long commutes, he started “crashing” at people’s places for nights at a time. “Sometimes when I crash I stay for two days. So when I need to take a shower, where do I take a shower? I got resources.” He explained to me that he quick took showers at the gym and got food from the food closet on campus. Several students used similar strategies. In fact, DREAMERS created a directory of SRU students who volunteered to house DREAMERS on a temporary basis, so students who needed a place to sleep could look up a place to “crash.” It was a systematic process. “I crashed a lot at people's places, and I appreciated them letting me crash; they're being nice, they also gave me food which is nice also. But I mean I was sad. You're at people's places. They're nice that they let me crash; they didn't know me that well, but they still let me crash.”

Similarly to Jason, Michael and Dennis stayed temporarily with friends who lived around campus. They shared with me their perpetual struggles to find a steady living and study space. Dennis stayed with friends during the week and went home on weekends. He explained that during his third year, after he became undocumented he could no longer drive from home and afford housing. “I actually talked with a group of my friends who lived in nearby apartments and I told them about my situation. They said I could pay a little rent to use their living room. So I'm just using their couch everyday.” Michael, whose family lived four to five hours away, stayed intermittently with different friends on their floors and couches and went home during the

summers. Michael explained to me how he saw himself and the educational system through his transient experience at SRU.

I think that's the part that gets you down. Because I feel like I'm putting in the same amount of work as any other SRU student but I'm not able to or even have a simple thing as my own room to go and study and just relax whenever you want to relax. Something as basic as somewhere to go and sleep or making sure that you have food on the table, something as basic as that I'm denied that all the time. [...] I thought that after high school, I was like 'Okay, now I'm going to college and everyone is equal.' But I found out that it's not the same. 'Cause you know how they always tell you in high school, they always tell you "You're all freshmen, you're all going to be on the same boat. Blah, blah, blah." But it's not true.

Several students discussed similar money-saving strategies of staying with friends, showering at the gym, and eating at home or at the food closet. They developed a mobile lifestyle between living at home and with alternating friends. While students demonstrated a sense of camaraderie to support on another, students in the situation were frustrated with the limited amount of university alternatives. Before attending SRU, Michael considered college as a social equalizer where "everyone is equal;" instead college continued to place him at a disadvantage amongst his classmates. While he felt equal to his peers in his academic performance, he was reminded of this situation when access to basic necessities was a daily challenge.

Challenges with Food and Meal Plans. In some instances, not having sufficient food was not only a health but also a social problem. Anita, a second year, science major, describes how she copes with not having enough to eat through her campus meal plan. Unlike the majority of the students in this study, who lived at home, Anita lived in campus housing because her family lived over two hundred miles away from campus. Since Anita and her family were unfamiliar with the neighborhoods around campus and did not have friends or relatives living

nearby, they felt that the best option during Anita's first year was for her to live in the residence hall and purchase a meal plan. Anita explained the terms of her meal plan,

I got the lowest meal plan, so the weekend I would eat noodles or something [in tears]. I have friends [who pay for my meals in the dining halls]. And people ask me why I didn't just switch to another meal plan and I tell them cause of financial reasons. Then they ask me, "Why don't you apply for financial aid, like are your parents rich or something?" I'm like "No", but I couldn't explain. So that was a problem and also the struggles that I had—I couldn't just tell people about it. So I just had to keep it to myself. And that hurt me in a way because I'll be depressed or something and instead of studying I'll be depressed and so that took away from my grades [in tears].

Although it would appear that Anita had greater access to these resources than other undocumented students, she was not immune to the conditions of her status and the worries of having food on a regular basis. Anita was one of the more private respondents about her status to avoid exposing her struggles with other students who may be less understanding of her situation in such matters as not having enough food and supplementing her meal plan with instant noodles. During her interview, this issue brought up deep emotions for her, and she was in tears as she described her experiences. The institution was eventually able to provide some relief to students in financial need, and they attempted to provide meals in a delicate manner that preserved the dignity and privacy of students seeking these resources. However, students continued to express a need as food sources were offered irregularly.

Several students had to decide between buying books for their classes or eating. Without financial aid and other monetary resources, undocumented students could not afford tuition plus the cost of books. SRU estimates that students spend on average \$1,500 for books each academic year, which for undocumented students often cuts into other daily expenses such as food and other daily necessities. Kelsey and Jason shared with me their perspective on the matter and ways to cope with the cost.

Because every day matters, every cent matters, every dollar. You know, you look at your account and you just balance it out. There's a lot of the students here are always say, "You know what I don't have money for this, I don't have money for that. I'm kind of broke." And I just wonder, "Well, you know, you consider that broke? Consider thinking about eating or buying a book." That's being broke and it's hard.

I got good grades. I was really surprised. I mean I was really proud I got a B+. I don't know how I did it, cause I didn't have my books, I didn't buy them at all. I just went to the library reserves and then scan them. It was just really tough, like not having the books. I appreciated the books now...they're too expensive. Don't get them. Just scan them more.

In addition to scanning books at the library, students also asked professors or teaching assistants to borrow extra copies of books or to have the readings made available online.

Professors and counselors interviewed in this study also helped students by getting books for students to borrow. Furthermore, the cost of books varies across majors. Students and counselors mentioned the high cost of science textbooks, which made it a priority for counselors to secure books for science majors.

Restricted Student Access to Services. Commitment to long-standing institutional policy stood in the way of necessary reform, even when it applies to disadvantaged undocumented students. For instance, undocumented students who could not afford to pay tuition on time faced restricted access to campus resources; nevertheless, they were required to pay for them. SRU established a deferred-payment plan, which allowed students to defer tuition payment and minimize the need to stop-out. Students who were approved for this extension—by their counselor, professors, and department—could conditionally enroll in classes, but were banned from using services requiring a campus identity card, such as borrowing a book from library and using health-related services. As a result, although the university benefited from students' participation in courses and their eventual full payment of tuition fees, this policy deprived students of full access to university services. A student affairs administrator, Andres, offered his analysis of the practice.

Our students, essentially, pay fees for services they don't use. The school knows they're going to pay their fees: they've done it before. They pay fees every quarter. You can't give them an opportunity to use the services that they're paying for? It's wrong not to.... No, no, no. That's crap. The marginal cost of additional students going to a particular service is negligible. It's basic micro-economic theory. It's not a big deal. So I think the school can do better on that.

SRU lacked policies to adequately address the financial distress of undocumented students; thus, students used other existing policies to meet their needs. The extension provided by the deferred-payment plan enabled students to accumulate the necessary funds for the quarter. This policy was intended for students who experienced financial aid delay that typically lasted a couple of weeks. Unfortunately for undocumented students, delays usually lasted the entire term and were experienced more regularly, leaving these students without access to services for extended periods of time. Whereas other students might have had access to resources, such as family health insurance, undocumented students rarely had comparable alternatives (Passel & Cohn, 2009). Furthermore, Andres, a student affairs administrator who knew of students on the late payment plan, believed that undocumented students were more likely to defer payment than the general population. At the time of this interview, SRU records indicated that there were less than one hundred AB 540 undocumented students enrolled, representing less than 0.03 percent of the total student population. Thus, the marginal cost of providing them full access to university services should, in fact, be negligible.

Faith, an undocumented student who used the late-payment plan, felt that the limitations on services occurred at the most inopportune time, when she “faced a lot of uncertainty, anxiety, and depression.” She questions the institution’s receptivity of undocumented students,

Could SRU have done more? Yes. Did they? Not really. Even though there were only a few dozen of us enrolled, or even if there were only five, it does not make us any less significant, any less of a contributor, or any less of a student in the university. The university should be proactive in its quest to ensure the full participation of all its members, not just reactive.

There is a sense of frustration in Faith's experience at SRU. This account highlights the indignation of knowing that SRU prioritized her tuition payment over her contributions as a student and over her physical and mental wellness. By maintaining this practice, SRU marked her as an outsider and took away from her humanity.

Limited Scholarships. Although many students want to supplement their work with scholarships for which they are academically eligible, they cannot apply because of citizenship requirements. Most public and private scholarships require applicants to be U.S. citizens and to provide a social security number. Though there are some private scholarships available to undocumented students, these sources are competitive, hard to find, and range between a few hundred to a thousand dollars of funding. Dennis, a third year student described how difficult it was for him to find scholarship opportunities, especially during the first few years at SRU when he was uninvolved with student organizations.

It's really hard for me to find scholarships. Up until I joined DREAMERS, I was not aware of where I can find scholarships. I did go to [residence hall resource centers], and the career center. And they straight up told me, "we don't know, and we don't have any scholarships for undocumented students." And I was really appalled. I was like, "Oh my goodness, alright. So there's no resources for me." So there's another issue. Like, maybe they could have a section where, I don't know, for undocumented students, or they could make a list of scholarships that don't require a social security number. I recently got an email from DREAMERS with all that scholarship list, which is awesome. But it's hard for undocumented students who never joined DREAMERS or who have never heard about DREAMERS to get resources like that.

Dennis's comments demonstrate a great level of diligence in his search for financial support through institutionalized resources, specifically in student and academic affairs units, where scholarship information is traditionally made available to students. His experience demonstrates the institution's inability to find alternative scholarship resources for students like him. There are multiple factors embedded in this institutional oversight. One factor is the lack of effort and accountability by the institution and the other is that scholarships for undocumented students can

be as clandestine as the population itself. Opportunities for undocumented students are not well-advertised and require insider knowledge in order to compose a comprehensive list. Thus, Dennis concludes that the only useful source of support is a list of scholarships provided by DREAMERS on campus. As he also points out, without an awareness of and participation in this student group, he would not have been able to access this important financial resource. Thus, student groups were filling in for the lack of institutional support.

Academic Implications. Clearly financial challenges created heavy burdens for these students; however, it was less obvious at first glance how these financial constraints diminished the overall well-being of undocumented students. Undocumented students experienced limited academic fulfillment due to the impact of anti-immigrant policies, which made it difficult for undocumented students to be “students first” as they were often concerned with other areas of their livelihood. While financial issues remain the primary problem that limited their level of engagement and participation, there are additional social and institutional factors that negatively impact their academic performance. Undocumented students must navigate academic opportunities cautiously and strategically.

Limited Paid Employment and Extended Learning Opportunities. In addition to the impact undocumented status has on students’ ability to gain admission, it also affects their ability to participate in intellectual and research activities. As undocumented immigrants, most cannot obtain U.S. government-issued documents, such as a social security cards or driver’s licenses, excluding them from a wide range of curricular and co-curricular activities (Albrecht, 2007). Without money and travel documents, such as a passport or identification card, they are unable to participate in distant conferences, field trips, and study-abroad programs. Additionally, without the legal right to work, they are often excluded from paid internships, research positions,

and even volunteer opportunities to gain professional experience.

When a few students in this study were able to secure paid positions as student leaders, research and teaching assistants, and interns, they had to forgo salaries and stipends because of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), which prohibits employers from hiring undocumented workers. While exploitive labor practices endured by undocumented immigrants have been documented in the private sector (Bacon, 2008), there is little to no discussion of employment practices used by colleges and universities with regard to undocumented students. Although one can argue that college students are likely to volunteer or take internships without pay, the key distinction in these examples is that, even when serving in paid positions, undocumented students must actively decline payment in order to participate.

This difficulty in gaining paid work experience was faced by Alice, a science major who was compelled to gain research opportunities in order to be a competitive candidate for graduate programs and careers in science.

I talked to the professor in charge. Luckily he was a good, a nice professor, so I didn't explain. I just simply told him that I could not work in the country legally. He was nice enough and to say, "You can be part of the program but we're not going to pay you for it. We simply cannot pay you for it." And that's why I was able to do that internship for the summer.

The pretext for such exploitive circumstances is a mutually beneficial relationship; although students can gain useful social and intellectual capital, the benefactors (college professors and others) often discount the contributions made by students in these roles. The power dynamic embedded in this situation offers little room for students to advocate for monetary compensation. Alice was "thankful" to her professor for the opportunity to work for free. Her response reflects the dominant discourse imposed upon undocumented students, in which exclusionary measures are accepted as the norm. Thus, Alice welcomed the opportunity

for inclusion, even at an economic disadvantage.

Impact of Deportation Program and Homeland Security Measures. The Secure Communities program has become another federal barrier to academic engagement. In 2007, the Department of Homeland Security initiated Secure Communities, a deportation program, which shares fingerprints collected by local law enforcement with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). A program that promised to prioritize the deportation of convicted felons also has snared thousands of minor offenders (Bennett, 2011). “Students and mothers have been detained and deported alongside murderers and rapists” (Vargas, 2012, p.42). Consequently, a program designed to deport dangerous criminals also prevented students, such as Yasmine, a science student, from tutoring community youth as part of her service-learning (Eyler & Giles, 1999) course at SRU. Yasmine encountered complications at the local police station.

I went [to the local police department] and the woman [working there] was pretty mean, she goes “No school ID allowed. I need an official government ID. That’s like a passport or a driver's license.” That was it. So I ended up having to drop the internship. I couldn't continue.

Although it was unfortunate that Yasmine had to drop the course, she could have encountered more serious consequences by completing the background check. Because this process would expose the presence of any undocumented student to immigration authorities, it has deterred students from pursuing certain service-learning courses, majors, graduate programs, and even professions that required a criminal background check. Yasmine found it ironic that the community youth she was likely to work with were likely to be “undocumented” like her and said, “it sucks that I can't even be an intern there.” This protocol requires us to critically examine how educators might inadvertently shuffle students into deportation channels and how they potentially act as an extension to immigration enforcement. To avoid penalizing students for

their civic engagement or other forms of academic participation, practitioners and educators should incorporate this awareness into the curriculum and programming planning stages and design more democratic participation.

Academic Counseling. Academic advising is a seminal part of the college process. According to Campbell and Nutt (2008), “academic advising plays a critical role in connecting students with learning opportunities to foster and support their engagement, success, and the attainment of key learning outcomes” (p.4). The role of academic counselors was particularly vital in an institution where professors were primarily responsible for research and where students must navigate multiple layers of bureaucracies inherent in large institutions. Given the large undergraduate population, academic counseling was highly fragmented according to the type of counseling (i.e., general or major specific) and to the type of student (i.e., student athletes or first-generation college students). Students were assigned to a primary counselor to address their overall progress at SRU and were expected to meet with departmental counselors to address requirements outlined by each major. In addition, there was a broad range of counselors who advised students on areas such as career development, study abroad, and research. Based on Anita’s and Arturo’s responses, academic advising was another aspect of their collegiate experience where their legal status factored directly into the quality of their experience.

Awareness and support for undocumented students varies across disciplines. Students in science majors expressed more isolation and a lack of support by their professors and departmental staff. Michael, who was also a science major, wanted to raise awareness in the classroom in a bold, yet indirect way.

I really like science as in that's what I want to do in the future, but I feel like there's not a lot of support for us. First, being a Latino. There's not a lot of support for Latinos in sciences. And two, AB 540 is even less. They don't even know that we exist in south campus. I don't think my teachers even know that we're in the classroom. I have worn my

undocumented shirt, [with the words] “I'm undocumented” [printed on the] shirt to my class sometimes and they're like “Whoa. What's going on?”

Michael describes how the intersectionality of his race and immigration status shape the level of support he feels from his department. Latina/o students are underrepresented in STEM fields across the county, regardless of immigration status. Compounding his immigration status further marginalized him in his discipline. Michael wore his “I'm undocumented” t-shirt, which was a solid black t-shirt with bold white lettering. This was a popular t-shirt among undocumented student activists and wearing this t-shirt usually garners some attention. Michael's conscious decision demonstrated his intent to raise awareness of undocumented students in his department by making his presence known to his classmates and professors.

Invisibility and Marginality

Undocumented students at SRU routinely encountered peers, administrators, and faculty members who were unawareness of their presence at SRU. As one student observed, “I think that we have gained a lot of support within the past years. But I think that people are still like ‘Oh, there are undocumented students on campus? Should they be on campus?’ There's always that question about “Are they allowed to be here?” This line of questioning further reinforces their marginality, assuming their participation in SRU is illegal. Consequently, undocumented students had to deal with regular microaggressions and overt acts of hostility.

In Museus and Jayakumar's (2012) work on cultural diversity, they argue that institutional structures “built on monocultural norms are difficult to penetrate by anyone outside the predominant culture” and that “new groups receive limited resources because of previously established allocation procedures” (p. 14). In the case of undocumented immigrants at SRU, monocultural norms reinforce the privileges of citizenship and residency.

Monocultural norms at SRU were partly sustained through the invisibility of undocumented students. The larger SRU community often assumed there were no undocumented students on campus. Despite continuous efforts by undocumented students to educate the SRU community about their presence, they consistently encounter campus personnel who were unaware that undocumented people could even attend college.

Emotional Adjustments. Even in cases when students felt well-informed about how to navigate the application process, they may not be prepared for the emotional distress of going to college as an undocumented student. In Manuel's experience, he explained to me that there were emotional and academic challenges in his transition from high school to college.

I can say that when I was in high school, I didn't really feel the effects of my status—that came along with my situation. Mostly because I always had the support of staff and teachers in school. I never hid my situation. I actually have a friend, we came [to SRU] together and we both knew we were undocumented in high school so we tried to support each other, we even joked about it at times when we were in high school. Our teachers knew about our status and our counselor actually was the one that gave us some information about AB 540. However, that wasn't until senior year. So from my freshman to junior year, I was mostly concentrated on academics and I never really gave much thought to the idea of being undocumented.

Manuel attended a magnet math and science high school with a strong college-going culture. By being open about his status, he received college related information about how he could qualify for in-state tuition under California Assembly Bill 540 (AB 540). However, during his senior year in high school, his inability to qualify for financial aid became more of an issue when he realized he could not afford to attend his first school of choice. That was when he “first experience being unmotivated to come to any university.” He settled on SRU, his second choice, because it would allow to him to commute from home and because he drawn to the support offered by DREAMERS. Manuel reflected on the change he saw in himself.

Even now, I have some conflicts between how I was in high school and how I am now. In high school, I can say I never worried about any emotional stress. But coming here, you have the financial burden and then the issue of commuting,... I guess ever since coming to college I think about many more issues than I did before, like the educational system, about immigration, about global issues that I never thought about before. And so, of course I think it's always depressing knowing that you're labeled as another problem in the world. That's one of the biggest problems that I face as far as, you know, emotional stress.

In this statement, Manuel described the emotional stress and depression associated with being undocumented—of being labeled a societal problem. Even though his high school offered more school-based support for undocumented students than reported by other participants, it did not prepare him for the emotional stress he experienced in college.

Limited Participation and Students' Sense of Self and Belonging. In addition to the lack of awareness, students felt further marginalized by not being able to participate in many of the enriching activities of college life. As mentioned above, SRU had fostered a culture where students were encouraged to maximize their educational experience through both curricular and co-curricular activities such as service learning, studying abroad, internships, and research opportunities. Students were saddened by their limited opportunities. One student compared her exclusion to being teased with a hamburger she could not afford. 'Oh look! This is the greatest hamburger you'll ever have. But you only have a dollar to buy a hamburger.' Then, why are you flashing this \$100 hamburger in my face, you know? It's mean."

In the following excerpt, Faith, a student leader in several student organizations, described how her status and her financial circumstances prevented her from furthering her political engagement and development.

Institutional recognition is growing. For example, DREAMERS was awarded, [a campus award] recognizing our efforts as advocates at the university. So that was good. But then there's still policies in place that don't allow us to do research. There's still policies in place that don't allow us to sign up for certain programs so there's still institutional road blocks that keep us from getting full recognition as part of the institution. I mean, let's say

I wanted to do [the civic engagement internship] and go to D.C. I could apply for it. But, is it realistic to think that I would go there and be able to live there without financial aid? That's not realistic. They say these programs are open to everyone, but there's like all these other roadblocks to deal with.

Faith expressed the frustration she felt over the inconsistency of her membership at SRU. While she felt the university was taking steps to recognize DREAMERS and their contributions to the institution, this recognition does not provide her and her peers the access they needed to enrich their college experience. For Faith, opportunities for civic engagement were limited to opportunities undocumented students were able to create for themselves.

Students who want to become part of the campus in many ways, like through dorm life or maybe research or things that other students do like study abroad. All those things that make you feel like you're part of the college campus, we're usually excluded from. So we have to be forced to make our own college experience.

Often this discouragement and marginalization lead to the negative self-image. Their exclusion from activities became a barometer of their academic abilities and legitimacy as full members of the institution. Furthermore, the stresses of their environment lead students to experience depression. Maia explained:

The amount of research opportunities that are available for those that are undocumented are extremely low. And that definitely affects how they see themselves within SRU and what goals they set for themselves. Because if you don't have research experience, if you don't have work experience, if you don't have all these things then you're going to question what it is you are good at.

Maia “fell into depression” during her third year at SRU. She stayed home for two weeks, sleeping and avoiding her school related responsibilities. She said that was when she was “ really done and over with everything.” The one thing she continued was her involvement with DREAMERS. She believed her responsibility to the student organization was the only thing that motivated her to return back to school. The social support network was essential for her to resume her academics.

The Model Myth for Undocumented Students. Despite all their challenges, not only did these students aspire to be a top SRU student, they also felt the pressure of living up to what is expected of a model undocumented immigrant. Although they feel marginalized in school, being a college student gives them a legitimate sense of belonging in the larger society.

I'm not a criminal. I go to school. I have good grades and I just happen to have a copy of my transcripts on me. So I would always show them, like look. I'm a good student. I work. [...] I think the opposition has done such a good job on criminalizing us. They've been doing it for years. So the majority of individuals they have the notion that it's bad.

According to Manuel, this pressure to become a high-achieving student deterred his undocumented peers from seeking academic support when faced with academic challenges.

I feel like a lot of the members, or a lot the population that are undocumented are facing academic problems but are afraid to share them just because we're already portrayed as like this poster child that come from high school, being the best and brightest, and so we have to maintain that, you know. I think that's definitely hard, and I think from that it stems the emotional disbalance because you feel you have to be the very best to be accepted into whatever you're portrayed as. The DREAM students are portrayed as straight-A students who do not do anything else but study, be active for the DREAM Act and that's it. I feel that when people aren't doing that, it definitely affects their emotional health. They really don't feel they belong here, even when they are already here. So I would definitely say that that's an issue that's not really talked about. Even in our own community, even with the org.

In addition to Manuel, several students expressed the desire to become examples that disrupt the stereotyped media representation of undocumented immigrants. According to Lakoff and Ferguson (2006), contemporary U.S. framing of “illegal” immigrants stresses criminality and the objectification of immigrants. This allows existing debate to frame the issue on the personal choice of undocumented immigrants to break the law, rather than the economic and xenophobic forces that contributed to the growing presence of undocumented immigrants in the country. However, stories of undocumented college students complicate the freeloading stereotype of immigrants and instead create circumstances for interest convergence. It becomes vital for undocumented students to prove their value and contribution to U.S. society in order to shift

immigration policy away from deportation to a pathway to citizenship. As Manuel observed, there was much at stake, and students have internalized the poster-child image of a model Dreamer to such an extent that by calling attention to their academic challenges, they felt as though they were undermining their legitimate right to study at SRU or to be a member of U.S. society.

The positive image of an undocumented student is multifaceted. For Kelsey, it extended to her mental wellness. Her professors had recommended that she use the campus psychological services to help her with stress management, she considered going but opted to pass fearing the stigma of seeking mental health services. “I’m not trying to go in there. I’m not trying to let people see me walking in. What are they going to think?” In addition to the stigma associated with this, the other potential problem is that campus therapists and counselors may be unaware of the issue and make the situation worse. These students encounter more counselors who are unaware, than aware. Thus, relevant counseling was a key issue the ally group wanted to address.

Stepping Out of Invisibility

In response to the hardships outlined above, a number of students in this study organized to call for greater institutional support. This struggle for academic equity for undocumented students follows a long legacy of activism on American college campuses; such institutions become sites where democracy is challenged and redefined (Rhoads, 1998). Today, many undocumented college students are engaged in a fight for equality and inclusion on many campuses across the country—particularly in states with a larger undocumented community such as California or Texas and in states with high anti-immigrant sentiments such as Georgia, Arizona, and Alabama. Reminiscent of student movements in the past, “we once again are witnessing a resurgence of civil rights concerns and a push for more participatory forms of

institutional governance” (Rhoads, 1998, p. 28). It was evident in my interviews with students that they wanted to be acknowledged by and included as full members of SRU. This fight for equality is distinct from previous movements, because not only have they been deprived access and acceptance in higher education, they have been deprived of fundamental human needs, such as food, lodging, and funds for education.

Students are acutely aware of their invisibility at SRU. Alice, a student activist who has been involved with DREAMERS for several years, described the circumstances that compelled her shift from an uninvolved high school student to a politicalized student activist in college.

I know that when I was in high school, I was not into student government or organizing or putting events together. It's not something I did. Once I was here, it's something that no one else is doing for us, so we have to do it for ourselves. Setting up a group for ourselves and outreaching to our community and letting us know about undocumented issues. It's up to us. So that's why I think that's why most of us get involved in student organizing and student government and activism and lobbying. It's because we have to do it. We need to do it.

It is evident in Alice’s statement that she felt SRU had neglected her community of undocumented students. The burden of supporting undocumented students was “up to” undocumented students because—“no one else is doing it for us, so we have to do it for ourselves.” At times, supporting each other was a tremendous burden on the student group. They took on many institutional responsibilities such as training staff, mentoring and advising peers, and developing programs and workshops on campus. It is also important to note the timing of Alice’s shift, as it reflects the environmental changes when undocumented students exit high school, their protected access to K-12 education provided by *Plyer v. Doe* expires and they enter into a legal context that severely restricts their access to postsecondary education. The experiences described by students at SRU contributed to their sense of illegality. SRU reinforced their marginality through exclusion and neglect. Students were reminded of their undocumented

status as they go about their everyday business of being a college student. They commute several hours on the bus from home to participate in university activities, meet with counselors who advise them to take a leave or to enroll part-time to save money, meet with professors who make offhanded comments about “illegal” immigrants, and search for hidden academic resources that are tricky to find. These experiences accumulate to their discriminatory experience at SRU.

In response to the constant assault, Faith and others students like her had “catapulted this movement” and that they have become “the voice [for] themselves.”

Undocumented students have placed themselves at the forefront of the movement. We’ve taken on a lot of roles and we’ve been the leaders of that movement.... It’s a personal issue for us to be at the forefront of it and we put our whole person into it. We use ourselves; we use our stories to move people, to change politics. If we don’t see results, then we ask ourselves, “Wait, is my story, my person, or me as an individual not enough to make you think otherwise about this issue?”

In a mock graduation, undocumented students at SRU, wearing caps and gowns, protested with the slogan “Undocumented and Unafraid” to demonstrate their unwillingness to accept their peripheral status on campus. Faith added that the student movement at SRU was fueled by the passage of Arizona Senate Bill 1070. “I think everyone’s escalating their involvement...I mean we have undocumented students sitting in McCain’s office. I mean that’s pretty hardcore....So the more Arizona-like bills we see, the angrier people are getting. Students are fed up and I don’t think we’re stepping back from that.”

For undocumented students, being visible is another step to changing people’s understanding of undocumented immigrants. According Martinez-Calderon (2009) “while this ‘social invisibility’ provides some protection for many immigrants, some choose to abandon the ‘shadows’ in order to obtain a college education” (Martinez-Calderon, 2009, p.8) The need for visibility was evident throughout my research, when on several occasions, campus personnel

expressed the belief that undocumented students are legally banned from higher education.

Although undocumented students regularly held public demonstrations, such as teach-ins and rallies, to dispel these misconceptions, it appears that the larger campus remains relatively unaware of their presence.

To achieve campus visibility and engage in student activism, undocumented students must engage in some degree of disclosure. In recent years, there has been a growing use of the phrase “coming out” to refer to the process of revealing one’s immigration status to others. This phrase appears to be adapted from LGBT discourse in regards to sexual orientation. In Rhoads’ (1994) study on gay college students, he defines coming out as a “process of disclosing one’s sexual orientation, it begins with self-acknowledgement and expands outward to others” (p.77). In his study, he notes that although coming out is a step toward claiming a sense of LGBT identity, students hesitate in coming out due to larger social factors.

From a critical postmodern perspective, coming out may be seen as opposition to a normalizing society and culture that frames homosexuality as deviant. Claiming one’s lesbian, gay, or bisexual identity is a struggle against the power of the norm. In coming out, gay students open themselves up to social retribution. Their opposition may be seen not only as an attempt to claim a sense of identity but also as an effort to reshape social norms. (p.79).

Rhoads highlights three key aspects of the coming out process that is consistent with the coming out process of undocumented students. The process involves opposition to being labeled, resistance to society’s power to create norms, and a willingness to take the risk of retribution for self-determination. For undocumented students, the act of coming out aimed to disprove the criminalizing and parasitic stereotype of undocumented immigrants that have held steadfast throughout U.S. history. By coming out they, they attempt to shift the debate on immigration and redefine conventional notions of diversity.

The process and phrase of “coming out” became increasingly popular by student activists. Students across the country, including those at SRU organized local and national “coming out” events. These groups use social media (Facebook and Twitter) and advocacy websites to promote the first, annual National Coming Out of the Shadows Week, held during March of 2010. According to the National Immigrant Youth Alliance (2010), “Coming out can be anything from telling a friend about your status, to posting a note on Facebook to planning an all-out rally on your campus.” According to Rojas (2011), “the practice of ‘coming out’ as undocumented...has become a rite of passage of sorts” (p.2). Public disclosure of their status has become a milestone in their adaptation to undocumented identity. “This step led us, undocumented youth, to become a force to be reckoned with, a movement that can never be forced back into the shadows.”

One of the most high profile coming out processes was that of Jason Vargas, a Pulitzer prize-winning journalist who came out in a self-authored article in the New York Times. Similar to many undocumented immigrants, his narrative is one that negotiates the intersectionality of many identities. In the following quote, how his gay and undocumented identity interconnect.

I became the only openly gay student at school, and it caused turmoil with my grandparents. Lolo [grandfather] kicked me out of the house for a few weeks. Though we eventually reconciled, I had disappointed him on two fronts. First, as a Catholic, he considered homosexuality a sin and was embarrassed about having “ang apo na bakla” (“a grandson who is gay”). Even worse, I was making matters more difficult for myself, he said. I needed to marry an American woman in order to gain a green card. Tough as it was, coming out about being gay seemed less daunting than coming out about my legal status. (Jose Vargas, 2011).

There are also key differences between the two coming out experiences. According to Rhoads, a key concern for LGBT students was coming out to family members. The fear of rejection from family members was a key deterrent for several students in his study. Similarly,

undocumented status was often concealed or unsaid in the familial context, however, there is a different dynamic. There are parents who withhold this information until students became young adults and were ready to apply to college or look for work. The secrecy of this information can cause a negative family dynamic as it may sometimes create resentment from the students to parents for withholding this information until students' encountered challenges in the college going process. Another distinction is that undocumented students experience fluidity in their immigration status. Immigration status can change due to legislative measures or through personal circumstance. Thus, the end goals for these two movements are distinct. LGBT communities strive for the preservation and acceptance of LGBT identities. In contrast, undocumented immigrant communities seek acceptance, but the movement is working for a pathway to citizenship that eliminates undocumented status.

Conclusion

The challenges discussed in this chapter outline the reasons why students at SRU were compelled to organize and partner with institutional allies to create change. These challenges not only threaten their ability to successfully persist through college, but also negatively impact their basic livelihood. The partnership between undocumented students and institutional allies made evident the shared awareness of the challenges facing undocumented students. However, as the next chapter will demonstrate, there were no easy resolutions to the problems raised in this chapter due to political, structural, and organization barriers. The next chapter will discuss student organizing and the institutional response.

CHAPTER SIX: INSTITUTIONAL ALLIES

The growing presence of undocumented students has served to redefine aspects of student diversity at SRU. The students' unapologetic sense of belonging and call for democratic participation in higher education challenged SRU to shift previously held notions of access and equity. The recent influx of undocumented students raised greater awareness and receptivity to their participation through their increased visibility at SRU. This chapter discusses the institutional response to undocumented students and is organized into three main sections: the motivation of institutional allies, contradictory institutional influences, and the types of resources created by allies as part of their praxis.

The Motivation of Institutional Allies

Several factors motivated faculty and staff at SRU to “get involved” in supporting undocumented students. These factors relate to the influence of student activism and the growing influence of a network of institutional allies.

Student Activism Mobilized Institutional Allies. The public organizing of undocumented students was in stark contrast to earlier waves of undocumented students. In past decades, undocumented students were relatively faceless and voiceless at the SRU campus. Students revealed their status to a limited number of institutional allies who would advocate on the students' behalf in an effort to protect student privacy. Samuel, an ally and former undocumented student at SRU, recounted his experience. “When I was a student here, to be undocumented was to be in the shadows and to be hidden. It was something you never said out loud. You never say

'I'm undocumented.' I knew a couple of other undocumented students and you very seldom talked about it, not in public."

In recent years, since the passage of AB 540 and the growing momentum in the immigrant rights movement, he noted that a number of students have stepped out from their invisibility to serve as their own advocates and establish public identities. He explained the reframing of the issue,

Students were ready to organize and of course that was also around the time that the AB540 was signed into law and that gave students a little bit of hope as well. Definitely having that hope was important. So AB 540 wasn't the perfect solution, but it was a solution and it opened the doors to reframe the story. It was to say, "we're not just victims anymore, we can try to impact." Because I do remember when I was a student here and it always stuck with me that people who were advocating for undocumented student rights, would always say, "Well we have to do it because they're voiceless." And that always stuck with me, like yeah, they're voiceless. We can't talk about it. And I think the story got reframed, where the students says, "we're not voiceless. We can advocate for us as well." That was a completely different way of framing the story.

Alejandro, another administrator, agreed with Samuel's observation of students' increased visibility. He explained the advantages and disadvantages of this changing trend:

What has happened recently is that students have begun to stand up and become the face of the issue, which has humanized the whole thing. Which, I think, in one respect is much better because you're dealing with a human issue and you're dealing with a student and a face and a person...So it's gotten much stronger and much more meaningful because there have been people associated with this. So now we're really talking about a human being, talking about a student, a real life student who has gone through the educational system and has done well and so forth. And now you can't deny that this impacts a person. Whereas, before you didn't really see the connection between the issue and the student. But on the flip side of this, the challenge is that these students are putting themselves at risk because the situation is still there. People can be deported if they're caught. We have witnessed too many of our students that have been arrested around the country for various things going on and so we have to be very very careful about this.

Students at SRU disclosed their immigration status at the institutional and national level to humanize the issue, however, they took the risk of being detained or deported for their

disclosure. They organized campus rallies and protests, lobbied with local and national legislators, and spoke with local and national news media outlets.

The risk involved with activism for undocumented students introduced unique challenges for allies in guiding student activism. Samuel described his approach:

How does this impact the family, particularly when the student becomes an active activist on campus, which obviously we encourage but at the same time we have to be careful on how we encourage that process. I don't think we can irresponsibly encourage them. It has to be with the forethought that of course you are putting yourself in a vulnerable position and that you are doing this knowing the possible repercussions that could happen, not only to the student, but also the student's family as well.

Stepping out of the shadows has had real consequences for some students and their families.

There were students in this study and members of DREAMERS who had been detained or have had family members detained by immigration agents due to their activism in the immigrant rights movement. Thus allies have been concerned for students who revealed their status to the public.

Growing awareness and support has led to the increased ability of students to advocate on their own behalf through student activism, which has made their concerns and plight more visible. This resulted in a shifting institutional context calling for greater accountability to undocumented students. Samuel explained how students grew increasingly less tolerate of their marginalized experiences at SRU:

...students have really advocated for institutional accountability and really have embraced the spirit of civil rights in their outlook, which in turn has made the institution be more responsive to students.... definitely the students took ownership of the issue. ... I think the students really brought that up. They really made the institution become responsible to the students. They really changed this idea that they had to hide and be grateful that they were allowed to be there at the institution as oppose to 'I'm part of the community, I'm part of this society and this institution has to serve me as well.' That's a very different way of looking at the institution. And of course the institution has to respond to that.

Although there was a significant cost for stepping out of the shadows, it was a strategic

move to garner greater support among institutional actors. Several allies attributed their support and involvement to growing student visibility and activism.

When I see students being very public about it, getting mad about it and advocating for it I think it provides courage to those who are institutionally situated. It challenges them. It makes many of them want to be more useful, more helpful. And to the extent that that sort of bottom-up thing could be coupled with some top-down stuff as well.

I think a lot of our response comes from the fact that we have such an active student group. I mean, had they stayed undercover, had they not mobilized early, I think it would be very difficult for us to understand because there're so few of them. Until you see and hear their collective story and their collective passions and are able to meet their parents, you realize it is really quite amazing... 'Cause they've done so much, not only to get politicians aware, to get high school students and their families aware and SRU has become much more open about it... For some [students] revealing their identity is somewhat dangerous to them and their families and so therefore they take great risk in coming forward and speaking.

I had to admit that I was the one that pushed [for institutional aid] way more than [my counterparts at other institutions]. It may be that our students were more organized and were more visible that I had the opportunity to become more involved. The students may have met me sooner than [my counterparts] on the other campuses. I talk about it all the time with colleagues at other institutions because it's not just in California—these students are everywhere.

There's a lot more demonstrating going on, there's a lot more organization. I mean, there's just a lot going on around this issue across the country and more people have become involved. And I'm sure that more people are involved because of the fact that they see the students and they know who the students are. Previously, students would very rarely come out to people with the exception of a few of us. Now they're more out to expose themselves so that more people know who they are. As more people know who they are this has opened up the opportunity for more people to get engaged in this fight.

Undocumented student activists had garnered the support of top administrators at the university along with a substantial number of faculty and staff members who were invested in the immigrant student population.

In addition to supporting student activism, certain allies see the importance of fostering student activism. Edith, a student affairs administrator believed it was her role and her department's role to encourage student activism in a constructive way. She shared:

Activism is part of the development process for college students. It's to be expected and there's no way you should be surprised that 17, 18, and 19 year-old students, 20, 21, 22 feel passionately about issues and want to do things. That's what makes college students so incredibly special... It's really important and it's part of the developmental process. And, I think in student affairs, we feel like we're there to support that. We were there to support that in a very constructive way.

While she saw the value of student activism, she was concerned for students who prioritized student activism above their academic goals. She explained, “Because ultimately, students have to graduate and get jobs and go to grad school.” Thus, she wanted students to have those opportunities and believed that student affairs could reduce some of the burdens carried by undocumented student activists. She added.

A lot of burden they're carrying for a long time may be because they felt like there's no institutional support and they had to do it on their own...I think we should always be thinking about that. Are all the students who are leaders in this movement doing as well as they can academically, are they healthy? Are they thinking beyond UCLA? Or, are they sacrificing all that to really take on responsibilities that we could be partnering with them in and carrying a lot of the responsibility and burden? ...Some of the students are here one quarter, and sometimes it's not just financial. When you're in leadership, it's because you're really overburdened. You feel like you need to take a quarter off to really work with the population. That kind of commitment is commendable but shouldn't we also want them to be in school. Shouldn't we want them on track to graduation? Why should they have to sacrifice that to take on responsibilities that maybe we could... better handle?

Student activism and visibility prompted many allies to engage in the movement; however, allies also described a number of personal reasons that compelled them to get involved in this issue. Samuel was the only ally with personal experiences of being undocumented. For him, it was his own lived experience that prompted his involvement. He shared:

On a more personal level, having been an undocumented myself, having known the experience of how that felt, it is a personal passion for me to see undocumented students succeed at institutions like SRU. I guess an extension of that is having a picture of the immigration laws and interconnectedness of why people migrate. So having that consciousness makes it a moral imperative as well. Besides the personal experience, on intellectual level, to me it's more of a moral question that we serve students who are part of our society and who have done what they are asked to do, to not provide services for those students would just be unconscionable.

In addition to his personal experience, Samuel contextualized this inequity as a problem rooted in immigration law.

Another ally, Valerie, felt connected to this issue because of her family. She described this connection:

Because of my personal experiences of knowing family members and people who have been in that situation or who are currently in that situation. I think for the most part that's probably why it impacts me a little bit more than other student populations, because I'm familiar with the struggle. I can't say that I know what they're going through because I was born here so I never experienced that. But I can only imagine the kind of stress that that puts on people.

This familiarity with the struggle, compelled Valerie to proactively reach out to students as an ally by creating a safe space in her office. On her wall, she hung a large poster of artwork by Mark Vallen, titled *No Human Being is Illegal*. This image was first published as a bilingual street poster in 1988 to promote a campaign by the Central American Resource Center to secure the rights of undocumented Central American war refugees in the U.S. The image is of two individuals, who appear to be Latina/o young adults (one male, one female), standing discouragingly by a fence. They look away from the fence and seem distressed and deep in thought. According to Valerie, this poster is the starting point for undocumented students to reveal their status to her during their encounters. This poster demonstrates her support and marks her office as a safe space for students to share their status.

Similar to Valerie, Larry was motivated to continue the struggle for his loved ones. He described his motivation:

I do feel a very personal connection to this. Part of it is my own family history. My parents were born here... but my grandmother never had citizenship and was always trying to get an ID card. It was always something that bothered her quite a bit. And being a close friend to Marco, he would often say that supporting undocumented students as the one thing that he was really proud of. I do know that as he was ill, the one thing he really

wanted to work on was the funding piece.

Larry felt personally touched by these two individuals. He sympathized with his grandmother who was unable to get identification and he wanted to continue the legacy of his friend by continuing to raise money for undocumented students. Larry continued the work of his friend by organizing community-based scholarships in his honor.

In addition to the personal and intellectual motivations for being an ally to undocumented students, a few allies were compelled by their spiritual beliefs. Roger, a professor, ordained minister, and community organizer, was driven by the scriptures of the bible to advocate for undocumented students.

We can say that the mistreatment of AB540 students is a sin. It's an evil even, an injustice. It offends God. We have the obligation to love the AB540 community, to be an advocate for the AB540 community...For me, it's immoral to punish AB540 students by denying them access to public funding, by denying them access to a lot of different benefits based upon a choice they had no control over.

Faith-based organizations became key proponents of greater immigrant rights. Roger connected with undocumented students in his role as a professor, but worked through his church and non-profit organization to provide students with scholarships and spiritual support.

Influence of a Growing Ally Network. Supportive faculty members and administrators began to foster an ally network. At SRU, the network consisted of about fifty allies who organized around their concern that undocumented students be treated equitably. These allies, with varying levels of commitment, leveraged their professional roles and networks to create pockets of resources that could provide educational alternatives for meaningful student experiences. While students displayed more overt forms of resistance through protests and rallies, allies used more subversive behaviors that “foster the impression of compliance, agreement, [and] deference” (Scott, 1990, p. 90) to their professional roles in public higher

education.

The network consisted of faculty members from various disciplines and representatives from an assortment of campus offices including academic affairs, counseling, health services, community outreach, scholarship support, legal counsel, governmental relations, financial aid, career counseling, general administration, faith-based groups, and DREAMERS. Institutional allies gathered every few months to update the group on resources available to undocumented students through their respective department, such as meal coupons and book lending programs. Furthermore, they also worked collaboratively to address institutional challenges, (e.g., restricted access to support services and funding). This motley crew made up the official “unofficial” taskforce addressing challenges experienced by undocumented students at the university. Jane, a faculty member, described the composition and goals of this network,

We've built this strong network of administrators and faculty and it's a handful who are advocates. Between a few ladder faculty and administrators, there's a core group of us here on the campus who sort of see eye-to-eye about how we need to move an agenda forward around undocumented students. Whether we're teaching a class, or we're focusing on raising scholarship funds—it's making those links to key allies that we know can work together. That's not easy because there are all these [regulations], particularly around the issue of undocumented students.

They have used their collective voice to push campus-wide changes for greater inclusivity of undocumented students. They also have worked in their own units to create departmental changes. Furthermore, the unofficial nature of the committee provided it with a certain level of autonomy from campus bylaws, but it also reinforced the marginality of their efforts.

The personal relationships between allies created the network. The group dynamic allowed for increased communication among participants, which lead to more collaboration and less redundancy in the services provided by allies. Jessica, the only community organizer invited

to join the group, shared her outsider perspective on the organizational culture among allies and the benefits of belonging to the group:

It's identifying people and for me it was recognizing that [the institution] is a very big campus and also not well connected. I think [a colleague and ally] would probably say the same things. There's a lot of people doing a lot of things but not everyone knows who's doing what. And that's the problem and I think that's what the [ally committee] is. It's about getting people to know who's doing what so that we're not replicating or if we are we're reaching in a different way. Like with the food bank on campus that's one thing but we have a different kind of food bank.

Jessica was referring to the fragmented nature of the ally network. This disconnectedness resulted from the way in which allies created resources to meet the immediate needs of undocumented students in their department. Acts of support were commonly provided on a case-by-case basis and resources were usually difficult for allies to piecemeal together (e.g., providing textbooks for class or stipends for a part-time job). Therefore, allies rarely advertised these resources to the larger undocumented population—nor were these allies responsible for supporting the entire student population. As a result, resources were decentralized and difficult to identify. The ally committee aimed to reduce duplicate efforts and to join resources.

Larry was an ally who selectively shared his efforts with the network. He was private about his activity as an ally in areas familiar to him and he sought advice from fellow allies on issues that were new or unclear to him. He described how other allies can be helpful:

The smartest thing someone can do would be finding other institutional allies. So there's a few folks around who, you know, you can ask any question and they'll a) Tell you everything they know and b) Also try to help you figure out how to get something done. If you're not willing to even look then it's very difficult.

Given the limited experience the university has had in working with undocumented students and the volatile policies regarding their participation in higher education, allies consult with each other on policy and practice. Consequently, these conversations led to more standardized treatment of undocumented students.

Contradictory Institutional Influences

A key finding of this study highlights the contradictory nature of SRU's institutional context, wherein certain aspects of the campus climate provided support for ally engagement with undocumented students, while other facets of the university climate worked against ally efforts. The following discusses these matters.

Campus Climate of Support. Both student and ally respondents in this study recognized that top administrators at SRU had provided substantial support and leadership in cultivating a more receptive environment for undocumented students. According to a top administrator, "The highest level of the leadership of the university is supportive and interested in trying to do the best we can for the students." They showed their support in a number ways. Publicly, they endorsed the DREAM Act. They also demonstrated their commitment by maintaining a constant presence at student-organized events. Additionally, they leveraged their influential roles to raise private scholarship funds and worked behind the scenes to support students. In the following example, Edith, an administrator, describes the inner workings of the top administrators,

It's not just symbolic because she's also a person who walks the walk. She's going to the DREAMERS' banquet. She's engaging directly with the students. She's instrumental in making sure they have continued access to the president. That doesn't just happen. Those things don't just happen. She does a lot. For one student group like DREAMERS to sit down and send an email to the president saying we want to meet with you and they think that when they get a response saying let's schedule—that's all that's involved. 'No.' There's a lot that goes on and her primary role is making sure those channels are open for students to be in touch with high-level administrators and that high-level administrators are sensitized to the issues. She's advising folks on why it's important to meet with student groups. That doesn't just happen.

Here Edith, an administrator herself, is describing the contributions of one of the university's top administrators, noting that this individual "walks the walk" by participating in key events such as the DREAMERS banquet and "engaging directly with the students." Edith went on to note that

this senior administrator was “instrumental in making sure undocumented students have continued access to the president. That just doesn’t happen.” Edith pointed out that as a result of this senior administrator it is not unusual for a student group such as DREAMERS “to send an email to the president saying we want to meet with you.” It is quite common for such groups to get a response.. This administrator also ensures that other senior-level staff are familiar with the issues—“are sensitized to the issues,” in Edith’s words.

While having the support of top administrators demonstrates that a sea change has occurred in the recognition of this student population, the nature of that support as “good will” rather than being part of the official university structure highlights the need for further work and advocacy. Accordingly, some of the allies were concerned with the existing model wherein support was based on individual practice rather than on institutional policy. Samuel, an academic affairs administrator, expressed his concern,

I want to say it's so precarious this environment of support is always very precarious, always fragile. I'm always afraid that someone is going to pull the rug out from under us. The reason why [we have a supportive environment] is because of the people who are here. But that means it's not permanent. There's no permanency. And right now, it is in many ways supportive. It's not institutional at this point. I would say it is not embedded in the institution. It is embedded in the institution at this point because of the people who are there. But that could change.

Samuel emphasized the fragility of a support system that was contingent upon individuals who “volunteered” to serve as allies, indicating that their work as allies was independent from their professional responsibilities. As such, institutional allies were rarely rewarded for their efforts and they lacked accountability of their support to undocumented students. In this context, one student mockingly described these efforts as “side work” done out of the “kindness of their [allies’] hearts.” This student’s critique denotes the deficit thinking under which “heroic” allies “rescue” undocumented students who are disempowered by their status. Without more

meaningful ways of inclusion, these random acts of kindness will continue to create unstable, undemocratic, and dehumanizing forms of dependency, which reinforces the marginality of being undocumented.

Campus Climate of Hostility. The issues concerning undocumented students had been debated on college campuses decades before this influx of undocumented students enrolled at SRU. A number of allies had been advocating for undocumented students since the 1980s and their earlier experiences inform them of the political challenges that could arise in their current work in this area. One concern was backlash from the university's constituents. According to Alejandro, a public supporter of undocumented students, these instances of public backlash were commonplace. He shared that

This issue has always been an issue that's been contentious. It's always been an issue that has caused a lot of controversy, a lot of discussion, and a lot of blaming. So with California Proposition 187 the whole issue of blaming the immigrant kind of thing was out there, was rampant and anybody that was doing anything to help support immigrants, but particularly students got lots of questions or challenges.

Alejandro noted a newspaper interview in which he discussed a number of ways the institution was supporting and encouraging undocumented students to pursue higher education. The article made his support public and it opened this work with students to greater public scrutiny.

I remember getting a phone call the day of or the day after the article came out and somebody asked if I was employed by the university and proceeded to tell me that I was in violation of federal and state laws barring undocumented students from higher education. So I corrected the person and said "No, actually I'm not. They're not barred from education. They basically have to pay out of state fees. And our job is to make sure that students have information to access the educational resources."

The phone call became more and more heated until it was a "shouting match." Alejandro recalled the conversation further: "So he went on and started asking me 'how could I spend tax payers' money by helping those students?' He said lots of horrible things about the people and students,

but essentially, wondering how I could be paid and how that money could be used to help undocumented students.”

While Alejandro’s experience was an annoyance, other opponents had a more devastating impact on students’ ability to access higher education. The Bradford⁹ decision eliminated undocumented students’ ability to pay in-state tuition from 1992 to 2001. Samuel discussed how easily policy affecting undocumented students can be altered:

Those who agree with the plight of undocumented students are definitely in the majority right now. But it only takes one person. We saw that in the Bradford case. It was only one person disagreeing and making a fuss about it. That can turn the tables around. That was one person that impacted people across the state. That's what I mean by the lack of permanency. There's no guarantees with anything but it always feels like that at any point someone can say this is not legal, whatever that means, and that would change the climate automatically.

The Bradford decision demonstrates the impermanency of the political climate on this issue.

Another ally explained, “By their nature, undocumented students are outside and have been defined as such, again and again by policy and law. The law is uncertain, public policy is uncertain and, frankly, people's opinion is uncertain.” Therefore, the political volatility of this issue forces both students and allies to consistently engage in activism to sway policy and legislation in their favor. Samuel was always “on the alert” for attacks on immigrant rights.

Political contentiousness was also a concern for allies who were reaching out to donors for support. Julia, a top administrator, describes how she framed the issue when speaking with potential donors who were more conservative on immigration issues.

Well one of the challenges was just a political one because as the DREAM Act has ebbed and flowed with politics there are concerns among some faculty and some donors who I would say were more on the conservative side—who take the view “Well if they're illegal

⁹ A 1990 California court decision under *Bradford v. Regents*, found that undocumented students could not establish California residency under California law. (UCOP, 2009)

why should they get scholarships.” And then you try to tell the students’ story... one student who came when she was three and did not know until she was in high school. When she tried to get a social security number, her mother said “You can't get one.” So this story was told over and over. And so I keep saying, “Why should these kids pay for the sins of their parents? They've lived here. They have no place to return. Can't we look at this as an opportunity?” So that’s been difficult, because I had to be somewhat selective in the faculty that I talked to. And you kind of know the faculty, because you know their politics pretty much. And for donors, it was the same thing. I had to approach them carefully...I have to be very careful about talking about AB540 because some donors are opposed as we know they might be.

Resistance was also prevalent on campus. When asked about the campus level of receptivity to undocumented students, several described a hostile environment, including Evelyn, a counselor, who had heated exchanges with colleagues opposed to undocumented students. She described her frustration with opposing views, especially those of other “brown” friends and colleagues:

There are people out there who do not support this particular community. They don't see a reason why students are going to spend so much money to come to [this campus] when they're not going to be able to do anything with their degrees...I know very close friends who we have heated arguments about this and who are in a position to help economically and at the administrative level, and they just don't see it. I wouldn't know how to make them aware or how to illuminate them. How to get it into their heads that it's a human need to keep going and get better and to progress. They don't understand that and I know many people...people brown like me. So, it's sad to say that...and I just ignore them because there is no way they are going to change.

Conservatism was also present among the members of the university governing board. The board had been relatively passive about its position on undocumented students. Members preferred to defer to the governor on issues regarding residency for in-state tuition, eligibility for private institutional aid, and state aid.

Several allies believe that the board had the authority to grant undocumented students private scholarships collected by the university. They pushed the board to vote on the matter. Julia explained how little traction they got on this proposal:

We have argued that the board could step up to do this. And twice it got a little ways. But, again, it's a very conservative body, and they would not bring it up, or the president's office chose not to bring it up. The question is since there is separation of state from the university, could the university give private funds, and we felt that the board could opine...it never either reached them because the president's office felt they would not be receptive or a small number said this is not going to go forward.

The hostile environment shaped the work of allies, forcing some to support in the shadows of the institution. Larry shared his thoughts on public versus underground activism:

I'm not a big fan of that, in the sense that something should remain underground. I mean, why should it be? But that's a function of public opinion. I mean, it reminds of being in the closet. Life might be easier in the closet, but then again, it's sort of a sad life that one would have to exclude some large part of themselves from public view. And there's an analogy between being undocumented and not being able to discuss it or seek advice, or talk to people about it. So I'm comfortable with that aspect of it. I've noticed that in many instances being underground has been more effective. But I don't think it's a long-term movement strategy.

Contrary to Larry, Alejandro, an outspoken ally, feels comfortable working in the public eye. However, he feels compelled to defend or define his work in a manner that keeps it within legal parameters.

The work that I do focuses on prospective students. It doesn't say citizens, it doesn't say residents, it says students who are coming to the university. So, because we aren't doing anything illegal, I don't think people feel like there's a need to hide anything. We do it pretty openly.

Although the issue was gaining support, allies still had to walk a fine line between abiding by laws and policies and providing students with the means to obtain a meaningful educational experience at SRU. Several allies did not want to draw attention to the work they were doing to support students in fear of making the issue more political. The following allies explain how they negotiated the political aspects of this work.

The more you raise it the more political you make it. So, I think what you want to do is to keep a circle of people who are very active and helpful and work through a political

situation...I think that the circle is not as big as it could be but it is a political thing and you don't want to raise too many issues unnecessarily.

I've talked to many people who I would describe as institutional allies. And what they've said to me is "I'm most effective when I don't talk about what I'm doing." People very high, I'll attempt to say to them "Well what about this case? What about that? What can we do? Or thank you for doing that." And the conversations will end very quickly. Even though you know it's kind of this wink eye "I know you're an ally, you know I'm an ally" but let's not talk. Because I get more done when nobody knows what I'm doing.

These kids are caught in the politics of it. If you get too far ahead on this then those that oppose certain forms of immigration or immigration reform they would punish the university or something. So the politics are what they are.

These quotes show that allies were aware of the political nature of the issue and that they navigated the pockets of resistance carefully to move their agenda forward. They kept to their small ally network, used codes to communicate with one another, and tried not to offend the opposition to protect the students who are caught in the middle of the controversy.

A few respondents felt that there were also a number of questionable or quasi-allies at the institution. This questioning of one another created tension between institutional allies.

According to Jamie, there was an emotional toll to working with faculty members who are interested in researching undocumented students, but were less interested in supporting the issues they researched.

It's interesting now because everyone wants to study undocumented students. A lot of faculty want to do things around that or understand it more deeply. There's a question of how much and who? I've had some challenging conversations. "So you want to interview a whole group of undocumented students because it's going to contribute to something? Or your class will learn something? But what are you going to do for DREAMERS? What are you going to do for the DREAM Act? How are the students [in your class] going to be active in supporting those communities? Are you going to be on the scholarship committee with me?"..."Why is that student not getting that scholarship from your department just when they found out she's undocumented?"...Who's going to fight that system when her scholarship or his scholarship gets ripped away again from them? Then you don't get very many faculty stepping up, challenging the system. I mean, it's a few and you can count them on one hand.

Jamie was concerned with how undocumented students could be taken advantage of by researchers who were more invested in advancing their own scholarship than in the success of undocumented students. I can attest to Jamie's concern from my experience with the human subject institutional review process. When I applied to conduct research on undocumented students at SRU, the internal review board was hesitant in approving my study because they had received a high number of requests to study this population. They were concerned that undocumented students at SRU were over exposed to researchers.

Students also perceived this hyper-interest in undocumented students from faculty and others, and questioned their motivations. Faith, a student activist, shared her perspective on the issue,

Faculty support is weird because faculty are supportive of an issue. I've met faculty that are all about undocumented students and the DREAM Act and everything but then when you tell them about what's going on, on campus in terms of what DREAMERS is doing or any other department that's helping out they're shocked. So there's faculty aware of an issue but they're not connecting themselves to the campus to do something about it. So I ran into many of those.

Alejandro shared similar concerns for members of the ally committee. He explained,

As I look around the table when the ally committee meets I am wondering "What are they here for? Why are they coming?"...Sometimes people are doing things as kind of an opportunistic ways to become known about things. So, when you have people who are often times interested in being the face and the light of the issue, it creates problems.

According to Faith, she acknowledged the mutually beneficial relationship between undocumented students and certain allies. In her discussion on a course developed around undocumented student experiences, she said, "it helped the department grow their recognition for being at the forefront of this issue. So it was a mutual thing." She hesitated when the department

initially contacted DREAMERS to be part of the course. However, her concerns faded away after she and fellow DREAMERS were included in developing the curriculum for the class.

Ally Praxis and the Types of Resources Created

As a result of student activism working in partnership with institutional allies, SRU began to institutionalize a number of programs centered on the experiences of undocumented students. Furthermore, SRU assigned a point person to support undocumented students regarding educational strategies, financial opportunities, and tools to navigate the institution. Differing from previous efforts, these resources explicitly targeted undocumented students, and resources were more transparent and accessible on the campus website. In addition, allies also worked outside of the university, through community-based organization, to support students in ways they were unavailable within the university due to policy. These efforts can be broadly categorized as 1) fundraising and creating community partnerships, 2) building awareness, 3) institutionalizing resources, and 4) making specific efforts relating to faculty and academic affairs.

Fundraising and Community Partnerships. A top priority for most allies was to provide students with financial resources because they believed that many of the challenges they face stem from students' ineligibility to receive financial aid. Fundraising was the most common way allies provided support and often the starting point for their involvement. Allies learned through trial and error that fundraising was best done in partnership with a community-based non-profit organization, such as a church or a third-party scholarship foundation. These outside agencies could award scholarships to undocumented students in a way that was in accordance with state and federal laws and acceptable to donors. However, this was unclear in the early attempts by

allies to award scholarships to students. The line between state and private funding was unclear in the early stages of fundraising, especially in regard to scholarship funds from private donors.

Because allies could not easily change financial aid policies, some began to fundraise with local community partners to award private scholarships to undocumented students attending SRU. Ellen, a student affairs administrator, explained the benefits of this partnership: “We are looking to community organizations that are not tied by all the rules and regulations that a state institution has to worry about.” As non-profit organizations, community partners operated under a different set of laws and could give scholarships to undocumented students. A few allies took the extra step and established their own non-profit organizations. It was initially assumed that undocumented students could access these private scholarships because a third-party foundation that was associated with, but not part of the institution, managed the fund. Julia, a key fundraiser raised this issue with the legal counsel.

There was a lot of talk at the beginning as to whether the foundation was private or part of the state. So, it says you cannot use state funds but as soon as scholarship monies come in, if they are regulated through the foundation, they are called state money. ...so, this is why I've said, I always thought that the [legal] council office might have been more aggressive in taking a risk. Because that's what it is, it's a risk of being sued. “Would you be sued by someone for giving students a scholarship that had come through the foundation?” What's the risk of doing that? So the advice of general counsel was that it was illegal. So the risk was high...and then there was a new general counsel who claimed that he'd be very progressive and became more oppressive.

Since this policy made undocumented students ineligible for private institutional aid, institutional allies looked to community partners who shared a common goal in supporting undocumented students.

The political contentiousness of the issue extended to community organizations and not every agency approached by SRU was willing to take on the charge.

We did try to go to other outside agencies that we thought might help. And the answer that we got was “No.” Again, it was a political issue that these are undocumented students. 'This is not what we support.' I thought there would be some agencies that we'd go to that were interested in Hispanic students. But they closed the door really fast. They just didn't want to be involved in students who were undocumented thinking that they had their own challenges. But I thought that was somewhat shortsighted.

In this case, it was unproductive to assume this issue would be embraced by Latino-based organizations. Although this issue impacts a large segment of the Latino community, there are a number of well-established Latino organizations that have held an unsupportive stance to undocumented immigrants.

Other allies began to look to organizations that had a long-standing relationship with SRU to find a more receptive partner. Edith, a student affairs practitioner, developed a residency and scholarship program with the local interfaith council. “The university has a long history with the interfaith council....They've had a dorm facility close to campus and been involved in the daily life of students for a long time. It's a gathering of religious organizations but the work is interfaith.”

Edith began collaborating with Jessica, a representative on the council and through their discussions, they concluded that the interfaith council would be the most “valuable partner for helping undocumented students because they are a non-profit...[and] they have no legal responsibilities to the university.” For that reason, the interfaith council had the resources and autonomy from the state to provide housing, scholarships, and meals to undocumented students—all vital resources that the university could not offer because of state and institutional policies.

As Edith explained,

Our only wish for that program is that we could have more rooms. This is unfortunate. But that program has really turned into something special because one, the students are closer to the campus which is really amazing for them. I have seen some of the students transform because they don't have that burden of commuting sometimes up to 6 hours a

day, back and forth. But we also raise money for them so that they wouldn't stop out because of the fee hike. So, that was another initiative that we were involved with and we've made sure we're supplying basic needs like food with that Monday [meal] program. So that's really turning into something that has a lot of potential.

Unfortunately, the program only accommodates six to eight students at a time. Thus, they commonly maintain a long waitlist of students wanting to participate in the program. Given the autonomy of non-profit organizations, allies in other areas of campus had also started their own non-profit agencies.

Frankly I found that in many instances that in my official capacity as a state employee there is very little I can do. The laws and the politics have been set up specifically to exclude assistance to those students. So you say "Well gosh, what else can I do? Well we can set up a non-profit organization outside of the school. That can be my other job." And so, part of it would be learning to work outside of your institution. And, you gotta be willing to work off the clock, because there are just some things you can't do from one seat.

[My organization] is the non-profit organization that I started. Totally apart from my SRU hat, as such, we've had the privilege of sponsoring a number of scholarships for students. As a 501c3 we can receive donations and people can get tax write-offs. And so we've worked with AB540 students themselves to raise money so we've done it on individual levels where an individual student would say "You know I need money to pay my tuition fees. Can I get letters out there or emails out there try to get donations and then use that to pay my Reg. fees?" Yes, we've done that on an individual level.

Both allies emphasized this support as "work outside" or "totally apart" from their responsibilities at SRU. Allies who run their own agency emphasize that they engage in this support as "individual actors" and not in their roles as university employees. Similar to how the institution has drawn a fine line between private and public funding, allies were also attempting to make clear distinctions between their advocacy and professional work, even in instances when that distinction is difficult to clearly articulate or define.

Private donations were the primary source of funding for scholarships for undocumented students. Allies helped students find funding in a number of ways. One ally worked with a community-based foundation to connect private donors with students from his department.

Another ran a non-profit that awarded mostly first-year community college student scholarships for tuition and the cost of books. A third organized community fundraisers for individual students through faith-based organizations. A fourth reached out to SRU faculty in an annual letter writing campaign encouraging faculty members to contribute to an outside agency that specifically awards scholarships to SRU undocumented students. These funds have been essential in students' access and persistence in higher education.

There were some unique challenges in working with donors. Julia described the challenges of fundraising in non-conventional ways. "When I talked to donors they would expect, obviously, that their money would be coming into the foundation. Then I have to be very clear that it would have to come to [a community agency]. So that, for me, is kind of a conflict of interest because I should be raising money for SRU where we get credit." She continued on to explain how donors lose out on university "credit" by contributing to the community agency,

When donors give to SRU they get so many points from giving and so they would get fewer points for giving [to an outside agency]. Now, who cares about points? Well, for some, points are important because they get their good basketball seats. I thought "You know if they want to support students what difference would it make whether they gave to the SRU foundation or [the community agency]?" But it does make a difference because they want to make certain that the money goes to SRU students and that SRU has control over it. So when they did give to [the community agency] we had to assure them that there was a faculty committee working with [the community agency] and that students did get the money and that they were using it for education. So that's more difficult than I thought it would be.

Additionally, Julia highlighted the challenges of assuring donors that the community agency was held to the same standards as the university foundation. Another ally encountered donors who opposed supporting undocumented students. "We've helped work with organizations that have set up scholarships for folks with various degrees of success. Some of those funders found out that students are undocumented and then refused to give them money that had already been

rewarded.”

Experiences such as these made allies more thoughtful about how they reach out to potential donors. Julia felt that she had to be very cautious in speaking with potential donors. She asked indirect questions about donors’ politics on immigration to gauge their support for undocumented students.

In addition to monetary support, community partnerships also offered vital political support in the immigrant rights movement. Jamie, a professor and community advocate, noted the importance of building support with the labor movement. “We’ve been able to get a lot of incredible buy-in from national labor leaders and union leaders...to shift their positions to come out for the DREAM Act to support students...it was critical to support the students. The child of a day laborer who may be at SRU needs to be supported as well.” The constraints imposed by conservative interpretations of state and federal laws forced institutional allies to find fundraising support in the local community. In doing so, they built a wider web of resources and supporters beyond the walls of the institution. However, these piecemeal sources of support were far from providing students with the necessary funding to pay for tuition and cover their cost of living. Furthermore, scholarship amounts changed year to year and funds were only made available to a small number of students. Additionally, it was a tedious process for allies to work with outside agencies and for students to apply to them. Thus, most allies thought it was imperative that legislative changes be made that would allow institutions to offer institutional aid, which could then be provided in a more consistent manner to the total undocumented student population through a streamline process.

Building Awareness. As discussed in the previous chapter, undocumented students consistently encountered institutional actors who were unaware of their lawful presence as

students at the university. Thus, institutional allies saw the need to raise awareness along the educational pipeline to provide students with the necessary information and support to go on to higher education. Their goals, as Alejandro stated, were to “Really try to make sure that people were; one aware of the situation, [and] two sensitive and had an awareness to really try to make a difference in helping students access higher education.”

According to Samuel, it was vital that students received correct and relevant information. He was concerned that misinformation made it difficult or discouraged undocumented students from pursuing higher education. He shared his concern:

I mean there's a lot of misinformation. From the very basic, like public institutions do not take any undocumented students. So, even from the very basic. But once students know that they could participate in higher education, particularly in public institutions, then the question becomes, ‘Well, how do they go about doing that?’ It's not necessarily the traditional route that students will take.

Samuel continued to describe how he incorporates information relevant to undocumented students in his outreach to underrepresented populations.

Some concrete services are providing workshops that speak to the undocumented student experiences. Providing strategies on navigating the community college, providing resources at the community college that will help them navigate the transfer process, connecting them to people who are allies in the community, then also providing role models, students who have gone through the process and of course successful here at the university. I think one other basic service is the whole concept of being an ally and know that there is a safe space for students to come to where people are, not only friendly, but really seek out the students.

Several allies, including Samuel, had demonstrated that an essential piece of being an ally involved proactively accounting for students’ immigration status in all areas of their work with them. In other words, undocumented student experiences were not peripheral to the experiences of “traditional” students, but considered one type of the many different types of student experiences. Furthermore, Samuel believed that “...being part of that bridge allows students to

leave their community and then come to sometimes a more complicated, complex community and help them find the people who are going to facilitate their success here.”

In addition to informing students and immigrant communities of the opportunities in higher education, allies proactively informed fellow educators and practitioners. Alejandro, a well-known ally conducted a number of professional development workshops. “Currently, and for the last 10 years or so, I've been doing a lot of training and presentations on how to work with undocumented students in academic and institutional support [units].” He visited institutions across the country, which had invited him to conduct training for their faculty and staff.

However, building awareness around this issue was not always a straightforward process at SRU. Institutional allies encountered resistance, especially when they raised this issue in a more public or institutionalized manner. Gabriel, a professor, felt that the act of informing others about the benefits of AB 540 became “political terrain” because it conveyed personal and political positions in the debate over immigrant rights in the U.S. While certain departments offered training on these issues, there was no institutional commitment to make it a campus-wide standard. Thus, the burden of informing the campus rested upon students and institutional allies, who made it their personal charge to offer workshops and teach-ins. Gabriel explained the political nature of his actions,

We're embedded in a debate about immigration and, therefore, it's almost your position about AB 540 that reveals your colors. Are you pro or anti? What do you do here? I mean if you're a bureaucrat you have to help undocumented students—I don't think it's that easy. I think most of the challenge we have is that following and implementing basic provisions such as AB 540 has become political terrain, too.

At SRU, few departments mandated staff training on this issue, and whenever training was offered, the attendance was generally voluntary. To encourage greater awareness of AB540, students and allies emphasized educators' responsibility to enact and report AB540 as an

educational issue rather than a political stance. Consequently, an active and engaged network of allies has been essential to disseminating information to undocumented immigrant communities so the gateway to higher educational remained ajar.

Julia took a more discreet and individualized approach. She was well connected with professors on campus and aimed to raise awareness among faculty through a letter writing campaign to raise scholarship funds. She recounted the response she received from her letters.

I thought maybe the best way to raise money would be to talk to colleagues, talk to faculty members. I used Martin Luther King Day as a day off to write to as many faculty as I could... And it was amazing because many faculty did not know. They had no idea that there could be over 200 [undocumented students at SRU]-- they just didn't understand the funding base. So I've come back to the faculty or the same friends every Martin Luther King Day and probably raised over \$100,000 in the last four years.

Changing personnel was an issue for building awareness. Given that support for undocumented students was contingent on individual institutional actors, it was important that new institutional leaders were aware of the issues facing undocumented students.

I've been here for 13 years and the dean right now is my sixth dean. Almost every person comes in knowing absolutely nothing about what to do with undocumented students. And so, there's an education process. Part of it is not necessarily about changing minds, but presenting information that helps people understand what actually can be done. So rather than just saying, "Oh, well that seems like a problem we can't solve," we'll say, "Well listen, here are things you can do. Here are the things that are not allowable. Here are the things that you might be thinking of doing that I think are unfair." One question is "Well, do we even admit students like this?" The answer is "Yea, we do!"

With every new dean or department head, institutional allies made the effort to inform them of the policies and practices around undocumented students. For Larry, he on average had to repeat this process every two years. This added to the precariousness of support for undocumented students.

There were several instances when the advocacy work of allies extended to other

institutions. This was particularly the case when students applied for professional and graduate schools after they completed their undergraduate education.

I learned that many undocumented students wanted to go to graduate school, so after the first couple of years students did graduate because if you had come in as transfer students -- and they faced the same situation in graduate school. Only it was worse because there, once again, they were an unknown entity. Just trying to make inroads with them. So, that's kind of how I got involved, I was very struck by students' stories and tried to, whenever I could, intervene.

Institutional allies often stepped in to advocate for undocumented students who had a difficult time gaining admissions into and funding from graduate programs. Often times, these institutional counterparts were more willing and receptive to institutional allies than the individual students. Institutional allies often wrote letters to explain the laws and what institutions can do to admit and award funding to these students. As a result of this awareness, a handful of undocumented students from SRU continued on to graduate and professional programs across the country.

Additionally, students and allies wanted to raise awareness of the intersectionality of race and immigration status because, “The reality is that in most people's mind, when you say undocumented there is just one group, which is Latino.” The racialization of undocumented immigration as a Latino issue masked the racial diversity of this population at SRU, where approximately 45 percent of the AB 540 undocumented student population identified as Asians. Dennis, a Korean undocumented student, recognized the stereotypical image of an undocumented immigrant.

A lot of people think that when they hear the word “illegal” or “undocumented immigrant” they first picture someone jumping across the border. Jumping off the fence and they say, “Hey that's illegal, how can you come into our country from Mexico!”...They're not only from Mexico, some people are from Canada—there are a lot of people from Asian countries too.

Alejandro agreed with Dennis and noted that he encountered many allies who perpetuated this racist and stereotypical notion in their support for undocumented students.

Being undocumented does not only impact Latino students. And for many people, many, many people, particularly in the ally area, when you say undocumented they mean Latino. Many people associate undocumented students as being all Latino. And then, of course, most of them say that they're Mexican. That's the challenge in itself. So, you breakdown the Latino community, there are people from El Salvador, there are people from Guatemala and other places that are in this group of undocumented people. Many people think they're Mexican so they think that there aren't any differences. And there are a lot of differences in terms of support. But then you also break it down further into the Asian community because they're a huge number and most people think they're Chinese or Korean. While most of them might be, there are a lot of other Southeast Asians and others that are in this group too. It's really trying to provide support for all students regardless of where they come from.

Their assumptions about race impacted how institutional actors provided support. One example was a workshop for the families of undocumented students. The session was conducted in English and Spanish, excluding families that did not understand either language. Furthermore, Alejandro argued that it was necessary to disaggregate Latino and Asian undocumented student populations because there were distinctions in their experiences based on their national and ethnic backgrounds.

The racialization of this issue impacted the work of institutional allies in other ways. Tony, a campus administrator, found himself negotiating his own racial identity in his support of undocumented students.

Some students think [my support of DREAMERS is] pandering to my own racial community. But then I quickly elaborate on the fact that they need to be educated on what an AB540 student really is. An AB540 is not necessarily from Mexico. We have AB540 students who are Black, Asian you know? Not just Latin American students. Students accusing him of “pandering” to his own race belonged to other student organizations under Tony’s supervision. Ironically, many of these organizations were centered on race. These student organizations served African American, Asian American, Native American, and Latino

communities. Tony defended his work by noting that undocumented immigration impacts multiple racial communities.

At the very least, allies wanted to encourage the SRU community to be better informed about the experiences of undocumented students and to treat students as regular and legitimate members of the university.

You know that you're not going to change everybody and we're not about trying to change people's minds and feelings about it, we're just trying to have people become a little bit more sensitive to the issue. If you believe or if you don't believe in this issue, at least you treat people with respect. And that's really the issue for us.... I'm not trying to change everyone's mind to vote for the DREAM Act. Although I would like to, I know that I can't change people's mind. But what I can do is change the way they deal with students and others so that it becomes a much more respectful and human interaction. Thereby, creating an opportunity for students to feel more comfortable and welcome at the university. So, it's really about trying to inform people and provide opportunities for them to understand what it's like to be in the student's situation and how they might be able to support it.

Allies aimed to build greater receptivity to undocumented students so that students like Yasmine did not feel the need to constantly defend undocumented immigrants against hostile accusations. Yasmine hears these accusation all too often, including such remarks as “They leech off of our social security.” Or, “They don't pay taxes” and “They're responsible for all the drug trafficking.” She wanted to respond to each and every accusation with, “No, it's not like that. No, it's not like that.” But, at the same time she asked, “What can you do really?” For Yasmine, she believed her best option was “to tell people there's a humane side to it.” Allies aimed to discredit deficit notions of undocumented immigrants by sharing these students’ narratives with colleagues or by providing opportunities for students to share their own stories.

Institutionalizing Resources. Through the years, it became clear to institutional allies that there was a need to centralize and institutionalize resources for undocumented students, particularly in student affairs areas where students were bounced from one office to another. This

could be a challenging experience from the students' perspective. As a student affairs administrator explained that this happens, "Because students don't see us as separate offices. We do but they don't. It's all the university in their minds." An added challenge to this problem was that once students visited an office, students were once again referred from one staff member to another until they found someone who was sensitive and knowledgeable of their situation. In the worst-case scenario, students were turned away all together because the department was unsure of how to address inquires about undocumented status. Therefore, it was much more effective when students could identify specific allies in each area.

In 2009, one of the top administrators arranged to have a point person for the undocumented student population. According to Elliot, the point-person hired for the role, "I have to be able to respond to requests about resources, services, and information about this student population and all of that." The position was housed in the student service center, which was designed to help all students navigate the institution. Jamie and Edith developed the position and they explained their decision to place the point person in the student services center:

Well one of the things we were looking at was determining where there was a place on campus that's an effective funnel where people can come in and get referred, assisted, worked with on pretty much any subject. One of the things that we were finding was that a lot of students were going from place to place—not really knowing how to find the solutions to the issues.-Jamie

So, when we have an undocumented student, instead of going to a registrar and financial aid and then [residential life], and all these places that you can go to for service within student affairs, they can start at the [student services center]...The [center] is really a way to centralize that information and be the first point of entry for students.-Edith

The point person provided students with information about campus resources and referred students to knowledgeable and sensitive allies from various academic and student affairs departments on campus; this person also referred students to various resources in the community. In order to do so, the point person gathered information from areas such as community

organizations, the scholarships office, admissions, residential life, academic support, the mental health center, and outreach. The student services center also organized workshops on topics relevant to undocumented students' experiences, such as scholarships, mental wellness, academic resources, and legal advice. Another key role was disseminating this information in an accessible and transparent way. After this position was created, SRU formally launched a website with helpful information for undocumented students.

Another reason to create this position was to take a more proactive role in supporting the total undocumented student population. Edith explained the existing support structure,

I think the mistake that maybe we've made or people make is that every undocumented student is identifying and connecting with DREAMERS in some way. There's no doubt that DREAMERS is the lynchpin. They're a critical piece of this work. We couldn't do it without them but we have to think of how to reach a larger group of students. The other thing I feel strongly about is that the university start providing that support and not always having to rely on a student group to do it. There are a lot of things that they're doing that I feel is our responsibility. I mean, I appreciate it and I understand that it's a part of what this student groups is. But I feel, as an administrator, we should feel responsible for that work too.

Because SRU was slow to react, DREAMERS took on many of the roles of sharing information about resources, providing one another with scholarship listings, holding workshops on college access and persistence, running their own website, and even running their own professional development conference for high school and college counselors. However, DREAMERS were not connected with all undocumented students. According to DREAMERS meeting attendance and institutional records, it was estimated that about one third of the undocumented student population was affiliated or connected with the group. In fact, several students in this study were not active members in DREAMERS because they felt that the group was too focused on Latina/o experiences and legislative advocacy, or it conflicted with their familial and work obligations. The undocumented student point person aimed to outreach to the remaining two thirds who were

not active with the group.

In an effort to create more relevant resources, the center had consistently hired at least one undocumented student intern to develop resources and workshops. For Elliot, who worked closely with the interns, he explained the benefit of always including an “undocumented student intern who actually knows what is going on from the student's perspective.”

These students are actually living the experience and can share this with our staff and with other students. It's not just coming from articles or class material. It's coming from their own unique experiences. So, if you do something they will always tell you 'yea, or no, I don't think that's going to happen or work' because they see it better than you when you plan things. So it's good to have them. I think that's a good practice to always have student interns that are actually a part of that specific population because they can definitely shed light and insight on your planning.

Maia was one of the interns for this program and was also an active member of DREAMERS. In addition to helping the center develop programs and services she was also a liaison between the student services center and DREAMERS.

My role at the [student services center] is pretty much to serve as kind of a liaison between DREAMERS and [the center], and to also implement events that the [the center] does and attend meetings, and represent [the center] at different things. However, I'm still part of DREAMERS...I feel that my ultimate stance, regardless of whether I'm working at the center or not, I'm going to want what the students want, because I'm also a student and I know their struggles and I know what they go through.

Her involvement at the center added credibility to the center's commitment and understanding to student experiences. On the contrary, Maia felt that her work at the center discredited her commitment to DREAMERS, “I'm no longer seen as a student.”

SRU also implemented support in other areas of campus. When allies learned that students could not access campus resources if their tuition was not paid in full at the beginning of the term, they implemented a tuition payment plan. This would allow students to make three payments throughout the term and maintain full access to campus resources.

The university is trying to move to a differed payment plan, or installment plan, I guess that makes more sense...an installment plan for fees. Because of the fee hikes, we thought we needed to do something more immediate for undocumented students or students in general...which has been really helpful for documented and undocumented students as an option—with the hope that this option will be available to every student.

Institutional allies often emphasize that the resources developed for undocumented students would also benefit the campus as a whole. In practice, programs created to address the needs of undocumented students were often promoted to the larger campus as a benefit for all students. Paradoxically, the needs of undocumented students were rendered invisible in the process of institutionalizing resources that were most relevant to their experiences.

Faculty and Academic Affairs. Faculty supported undocumented students by creating curriculum related to undocumented students and hiring professors who engage in research on undocumented students. One of the most impactful ways faculty supported undocumented students was to develop courses on the immigrant rights movement with particular emphasis on undocumented students in higher education. Faculty teaching the course invited the leaders of DREAMERS to develop the curriculum and facilitate classroom discussions. As a student involved in the course explained, "...we hammered out the details, we worked on the details together and they allowed us to be a voice in that process because it was a class about us. So we got to decide on the syllabus and we had TAs and we had to agree on all that stuff together."

The class focused on immigrant students in higher education, the challenges facing undocumented immigrant students, and the legislative and policy issues that shape their educational opportunities. Students collected oral histories of each other, analyzed the policies that impact undocumented students, and created a publication with a collection of undocumented students' narratives. Several members of DREAMERS enrolled in the class, along with students who were unaware of undocumented students' experiences. This collection of student narratives

later became an organizing tool that shifted the public and institutional debate on immigration reform. Lisa, who helped develop the course, described the significance of the end product.

Subsequently, using the book as this organizing tool to really educate students about it and to talk about students telling stories and the importance of that. Not only for them as their story and who they are, but also for them to be able to shift the public debate, to shift the way the DREAM Act was being positioned within comprehensive immigration reform.

Students brought the book to lobbying visits and they coordinated book tours throughout the state to talk about the immigrant rights movement. When other faculty members from SRU and other campuses learned about this publication, they began to use it for their classes. This course was repeated several times and it increasingly developed into an organizing space for immigrant rights. Lisa believed, “Our role as instructors has always been to provide the research and the sort of educational and leadership development that students would need in order to work on fulfilling this dream that they have—of getting immigration status, paying for their education and getting in-state tuition.” The class fostered student activism and organizing skills to conduct lobbying visits, press conferences, and teach-ins.

According to Jamie, one of the professors who taught the course, there was resistance from the university to approve a class around immigration. She explained that “We are constantly under the gun almost, but under this scrutiny by the governor and by the regents about teaching working-class issues. So you can imagine trying to teach things that have to do with immigration.”

Ethnic studies departments at SRU offered several courses on immigrants and immigrant rights. The Chicana/o studies department highly valued this topic and professors who researched immigrant communities and experiences. Several tenure-track faculty members in the department researched undocumented immigrant issues such as detention centers, college access,

and labor rights. According to a Chicana/o studies professor he voted to hire a new faculty member due to her connection and research on undocumented immigrants. He explained,

This is a critical moment in time and here we have an opportunity to bring in a scholar who's documenting and writing and publishing about [undocumented students]. And who will further link, make a connection to this student body on campus. I said, "We'd be foolish not to [hire this applicant]." ... We are going to have a big event in the Fall... we want her to meet the student body and others, because she's going to be part of our faculty. I think that's another example, behind the scenes. Only in the sense that my politicking on this is that we're going to have another really important link to AB540 students on this campus. A faculty member who does research—and I know AB540 students know her, of her, and her work. She sits in meetings and all of that. So, it's just another example of how our department is going to be institutionalized and connected to this student body. I'm really, really thrilled about it... I think those are some examples of how the department can be more connected to AB540 students.

For Abraham, it was an asset to add a new tenure-track faculty member who was engaged in undocumented student research and was familiar with the undocumented student population. As he noted, she could help the department create stronger ties with undocumented students.

Contrary to Chicana/o studies, Asian American studies had a different approach to those who taught courses on undocumented immigration. Melody, an administrator in the unit, described the departmental hierarchy. Many of the courses that touch on undocumented immigration in Asian American Studies were taught by lecturers with strong community ties.

They're not tenured faculty in probably the same way. I know that they don't go to faculty advisory committee meetings. It's the tenured faculty that go to that and sit on the committees. I mean in the past, when the center was running the curriculum and [independent study courses], we had a lot more community leaders and activist types that were teaching classes. They still have some of those in the department but the tone is very different and I know that these instructors don't play the same role in the department or center with the faculty and staff than they do in their own arenas. It's interesting, huh?

Melody observed that courses on immigrant rights and community based issues were primarily taught by lectures, who had less influence and standing in the department.

Faculty members also served as allies in other ways. I learned through student interviews

that there were professors who had given their desk copies to them. They spoke at undocumented student events, hosted dinners at their homes, coordinated weekly hot meals for 20 to 30 students, and helped students find jobs and funding for school.

Conclusion

As undocumented students became more common and more visible at SRU, they mobilized a number of institutional allies to partner with them to create change at the university. The passage of AB 540 allowed students to step out of the shadows of institutional allies and serve as their own advocates. The number of allies grew with growing awareness of the plight of undocumented students. Institutional allies, including administrators, faculty members, and staff members began to organize into an ally committee to reduce redundancy and create a collective voice to respond to university resistance to undocumented students.

Allies supported undocumented students in a number of ways. Many of the allies engaged in fundraising activities to address the most urgent and primary needs of the students. They worked with outside agencies to award scholarships to students due to institutional restrictions of providing aid. Others focused on building awareness of the issues by training colleagues and providing college-going information to immigrant communities. One of the most significant changes at SRU was to create a point person who was responsible for helping undocumented students navigate the institution. This position was symbolic of the institutional support and recognition for undocumented students as part of the SRU community. Faculty also provided support by developing curriculum centered on undocumented students' experiences and using the classroom as an organizing space to develop student leadership and organizing skills.

The existing legal strictures require SRU officials to publicly comply with legal

mandates, yet there was evidence to suggest that there was also room for institutional actors to cultivate a culture of resistance to exclusionary practices. This chapter calls for institutional actors to use greater discretion in creating a more inclusive environment for undocumented students in postsecondary education. The examples in this chapter offer some guidelines to consider in developing a more inclusive environment.

First, allies in this study were primarily concerned with students enrolled at the institution. There was no discussion of how to reach out to students who had taken extended leaves or who had withdrawn from school indefinitely. Given the many academic interruptions, SRU needed a set of procedures to ensure students return to SRU in a reasonable amount of time. Second, although SRU appointed a staff member to support undocumented students, this did not adequately address the needs of this population. This appointment did not relieve the rest of the institution from proactively supporting undocumented students. Furthermore, the student population size and the scope of their needs required more than one staff person. Third, the institution needed a more formal mechanism and protocol for the treatment of undocumented students. In many instances, well-intentioned staff members were uncertain of how to answer student questions because of their undocumented status. Therefore, there was a need to develop a protocol and disseminate it widely whenever possible to establish standard procedures.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CALL TO ACTION

Educators and practitioners must be prepared for a very likely legislative shift that will make participation in and completion of higher education an explicit requirement of a pathway to citizenship for undocumented students. Since data for this study was collected, there has been growing legislative support for undocumented youth to pursue a college degree. These policies include the California Dream Act and President Obama's directive on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA). In 2011, Governor Jerry Brown signed the California Dream Act, a pair of bills (Senate Bill 130 and 131) allowing AB 540-eligible students to receive private institutional aid and state grants. As a result of these new bills, public postsecondary institutions in California are providing institutional aid to undocumented students and the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC), the organization in charge of allocating state grants, has budgeted \$19.5 million in state grants to be awarded to 6,000 undocumented student applicants. This new financial resource has motivated many undocumented students to enter into or return to postsecondary education. A recent article in Mercury News (March, 2013), reported that the CSAC, received over 20,000 undocumented students applications for state financial aid as a result of the passage of the California Dream Act. This policy change has caused a huge influx of undocumented college students in public postsecondary institutions in California. This spike in enrollment is also happening at SRU, where an estimated 500 AB 540 students are expected to enroll in the fall of 2013. These changes have resulted in the exponential growth in the number of AB 540 students compared to the statistics reported in 2007, when approximately eighty students were enrolled. This change in state policy demonstrates California's growing receptivity to undocumented students in higher education and the state's expectation for public institutions

to integrate this population into existing infrastructures that had previously excluded them.

Another game changer for undocumented youth is President Obama's directive known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). In the absence of federal immigration reform, President Obama issued this directive, which grants Federal DREAM Act-eligible undocumented youth lawful presence and employment on a two-year, temporary basis. On June 15, 2012, the Secretary of Homeland Security announced that undocumented youth who qualify for a pathway to citizenship under the guidelines of the proposed Federal DREAM Act would be deferred from deportation. This policy applies to undocumented youth who were under the age of 31 on June 15, 2012, came to the United States before their 16th birthday, had continuously resided in the United States for five years, were currently enrolled in school or had earned a high school diploma, and had no criminal record. DACA recipients were given a two-year work authorization. The benefit of this work authorization for those enrolled in higher education is that they could now engage in academic enrichment experiences such as research, internships, and employment on or off campus, which requires work authorization to receive wages.

Although these two actions have great potential to resolve the challenges discussed in this study, the implementation of these policies proved challenging for institutions and other state educational entities. In both cases, SRU had only months to consider the policy changes and develop new policies and practices at the institutional level. In two months between the passage of the California Dream Act and its effective dates, institutional leaders had to quickly decide how to administer scholarships and financial support in accordance with the state Dream Act. This was no easy task, since the awarding of money depended on the FAFSA to determine eligibility, which AB 540 students were not eligible use. To start, the university had no protocols in place to allocate financial aid for this population. Prior to SB 130, the university never

evaluated financial need or allocated financial aid for undocumented students since these students were ineligible for any form of institutional or state aid. Furthermore, there were limitations to adding undocumented students into existing financial aid system, which would require undocumented students to provide information and documents that are driven at the national level, which they are still not eligible to receive funding from. Thus, SRU had to develop an alternative, internal financial aid process that would be efficient in responding to the mandates of SB 130 and sensitive to serving a population that had not been served in recent years. However, a second financial aid system poses its own set of challenges. It caused confusion among students and staff. First, undocumented students were mistakenly disqualified for private scholarships because some scholarship administrators were unfamiliar with the California Dream Act and turned students away in the students' attempts to apply for scholarships. Second, few administrators had experience with the alternative application system for undocumented students and they lacked training on how to advise students through the process. Unfortunately, there were no definitive answers to some of these concerns because many of the questions had never been considered before. While administrators worked to change existing bureaucratic structures, undocumented students were turned away from scholarships, getting mixed messages from campus personal, and still unable to access funds they were now eligible for under the California Dream Act.

DACA also proved to be challenging for a different set of reasons. DACA allows undocumented students to gain lawful employment. However, DACA recipients have become a new category of workers that fall outside of conventional categories of citizen and non-citizen. This work authorization is granted on contradictory or even oxymoronic condition of being a "lawfully present undocumented immigrant," which proved confusing for the university in terms

of payroll and tax withholdings. For instance, undocumented students hired by the university with work authorization from DACA were first processed as international workers. The university required all international workers to submit a permanent foreign address and to indicate the individual's foreign tax residency. For example, an international student from China would indicate her home address in China and state that she was paying taxes abroad. However, to require DACA recipients to submit similar statements would be extremely damaging in their ability to adjust their immigration status, because this statement would be contradictory to the information undocumented students submitted to immigration authorities to gain approval for DACA. President Obama argued for the need for DACA on the premise that these students had no other home or national allegiance outside of the United States. In this case, by asking students to provide such information, the university was asking students to falsify information that could potentially jeopardize the students' eligibility for a future pathway to citizenship. This example demonstrates that as educators and practitioners, it is critical to have clarity on policies and practices that impact undocumented students to ensure that institutions do their due diligence to prevent compromising the students' ability to adjust their immigration status in the future. Furthermore, institutions must be in compliance with the law and not be liable for student misrepresentation to immigration authorities by requiring certain documents. These policy changes not only increased accessibility for undocumented students, but they also required that the state's public postsecondary institutions systemically integrate undocumented students into existing infrastructures in a way that is compliant with all government regulations, including those of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, the Internal Revenue Service, and Social Security Administration.

The trend in pro-immigrant legislation proposed across the country makes participation in

higher education an explicit requirement for a pathway to citizenship. Multiple proposals for immigration reform favor college-educated undocumented youth or those with the potential to obtain a college degree. The U.S. immigration system has historically favored college-educated immigrants. However, what is unique to these legislative proposals is that a college degree must be obtained from a domestic postsecondary institution. In the context of the proposed immigration system, both citizenship and a college degree are further commodified as means to social and capital gains. Legislators are clearly making the connection between citizenship and higher education but the question remains whether institutional leaders are ready to commit to the same agenda. If these policies pass, U.S. colleges and universities will play a larger role in the new immigration system, one that may require institutions to report the status of undocumented students to facilitate the immigration process by showing proof of student enrollment and academic performance. Higher education will have a more explicit connection and role in the future that may be similar to the international student database that was developed after 9/11 to report enrollment of international students to immigration authorities. Thus, how will such policies change the roles and responsibilities of institutional actors and how should institutions prepare for this possibility? In the past, allies have been reluctant or have refused to serve as an extension of immigration authorities, but how will they perceive this new role if the monitoring and reporting of undocumented students could aid students' ability to gain citizenship? In addition, how should institutions follow these laws in the near future in a way that is in accordance with the regulations and facilitates, not compromises, students' eligibility for a pathway to citizenship.

Given this multifaceted and changing landscape, this study explored the perceptions and experiences of institutional actors, as they attempted to reduce the obstacles and challenges

experienced by undocumented students caught in this complex maze. These matters are increasingly more central and urgent to the work of institutional practitioners, as more undocumented students graduate from high school across the country, matriculate into colleges and universities, and most importantly, become more open about their status. “Undocumented and Unafraid” is the new mantra many students are using to bring attention to this important issue. By using SRU as a case study, this research demonstrates examples of the various means of support for minimizing and overcoming obstacles for undocumented students, including funding, student culture, informal and institutionalized resources, public statements in support of undocumented students by institutional personnel, and a variety of nuanced efforts that help create a broader web of support. Increasing awareness, subsequent acceptance and support of undocumented students took years, if not decades, to cultivate and is far from being part of the overall campus climate. This shift required a burdensome learning curve pushed by undocumented students and institutional allies and, to a great extent, still falls detrimentally short of meeting student needs. The findings of this study offer a counterstory of an institution, of a group of individuals working within (and often resisting) set policies and parameters, to create alternative circumstances, discourse, and opportunities for a marginalized, and politically contested group of students. This finding highlights areas of support, how the support came about, and the systemic challenges and barriers that continue to stifle educational opportunities for undocumented students. It is through the understanding of the challenges and opportunities undocumented students face, coupled with the knowledge of the ever changing policies and practices that will provide success for students. It is the realization of the contribution undocumented students can make in our country, especially with a postsecondary degree, that

will change our institutions. It is through the implementation of fair and humane policies and practices, that these students will be fully integrated into postsecondary institutions and society.

Summary of Key Findings

Undocumented students face a number of challenges in their pursuit of higher education in a public research university in California. This study found that challenges associated with the students' undocumented status served as the impetus for students to become visible and partner with institutional allies in calling for greater institutional accountability and a more inclusive educational environment for undocumented immigrants. In response, institutional allies acted with and on behalf of students to create institutional change both within the institutional structures and outside of it in cases where their actions may conflict with institutional policies. This study found that student activism was the main impetus for institutional action and that there was capacity for allies to resist the marginalization of undocumented students that is arguably rooted in xenophobia and racism. This study found that institutional allies leveraged their professional roles and networks in creative ways to institutionalize resources that better support these students. Furthermore, this study showed the significance of allies who strengthened institution and community bonds and worked outside of the university to avoid the ramifications of the shifting and hostile political landscape.

Undocumented students included in this study had diverse migration experiences and immigrant identities. One came with a paid coyote, while another journeyed alone. Some left family members behind, while others came to reunite with loved ones. Many belonged to entire families of undocumented immigrants, while a handful were the only ones without papers. Their unique narratives highlight the diversity within the undocumented immigrant population and these varied experiences shaped their pursuit of higher education.

This study found that the lack of financial resources remained the most substantial consideration and barrier for undocumented students. These monetary factors were compounded by the fact that many undocumented students are from underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds, were the first in their families to attend college, and typically were from low-income households. Due to a lack of relevant college resources at the high school and postsecondary level, many students received guidance late in the application process or received incorrect or partial information regarding the college-going process. The lack of institutional commitment to provide this information to undocumented students created added barriers to student access. As a result, students looked to peers as role models for guidance and information about college and the college-going processes. Attending a community college has proven to be the most accessible option for many undocumented students, even when they were eligible and competitive for baccalaureate-granting institutions.

Consistent with issues of access, the lack of financial resources was the main barrier that impinged upon students' ability to persist. Undocumented students relied on a limited number of private funds and scholarships, money from friends and family, and income from unauthorized employment to finance the cost of education. In many cases, undocumented students relied solely on their own income to cover educational costs, often resulting in regular leaves from school in order to save up enough money to pay for the next term, and they were more likely to enroll as part-time students, thus extending their time-to-degree.

As a result of their financial hardships, many undocumented students are unable to afford basic needs, such as living in housing on or near campus, educational related costs such as books or technology, or even eating on a regular basis. Without adequate and affordable housing, students relied on "crashing" with friends and using campus facilities, such as the gym's locker

room and communal lounges to store food and other personal belongings. Others relied on living at home and commuting long hours. Depending on the commute, some risked their safety and spent a significant amount of time away from school and work. The culmination of having to protect their identity and the lack of official identification prevented many of these undocumented students from participating in a wide range of academic enrichment activities. Without travel documents, such as a passport or identification card, they were unable to participate in conferences, field trips, research colloquiums, or study abroad programs. Without legal employment, they lacked opportunities for work experience by being excluded from paid internships or on-campus student employment. Furthermore, they had limited access to professional and graduate programs after completing their undergraduate degrees.

These circumstances led many to describe their postsecondary education experiences in terms of a sense of hopelessness, shame, and fear. However, many students in this study began to step out of their invisibility to advocate for institutional change. In response to these students' call for institutional accountability, a network of faculty, administrators, and staff members developed into institutional allies to advocate on behalf of these students. Faculty developed curriculum centered on undocumented student experiences. Administrators worked to create institutionalized resources, such as a point-person and program dedicated to serving this population. Allies also operated non-profit organizations or cultivated strategic partnerships with outside agencies that could offer students resources, such as scholarships, housing, and food. Allies generally received the support of top administrators; however, they were well aware of the hostile and low receptivity to undocumented students at SRU overall. The existing legal strictures required SRU officials to publicly comply with legal mandates, yet evidence to suggested that there was also room for institutional actors to cultivate a culture of resistance to

exclusionary practices; however, university legal advisors tended to adopt the most conservative stances possible, in part, or so it seemed, to protect the university from reactions by conservative constituencies.

Implications for Practice

Grounded in a framework that aims to foster agency, transformative resistance, empowerment, and equality, I outline four principles for enhancing institutional support for undocumented students.

First, this study calls upon institutional leaders to distinguish of the difference between institutional and governmental governance, specifically to ascertain which institutional policies have been formed independently on the basis of government mandates. Waiting for legislation reform is overly reliant on a drawn-out debate over immigrant rights and reduces institutional accountability in serving its undocumented student population at the institutional level. As Museus and Jayakumar explained, “It is critical that educators question long-standing historical and institutional assumptions about the efficacy of existing policies and practices and engage in systematic reflection and inquiry of those aspects of their campuses’ cultures” (Museus & Jayakumar, 2012, p.18). By questioning institutional culture and practices, institutions may find opportunities to better respond to the immediate needs of local students rather than waiting for the time-consuming legislative reform process. However, this is not to discount the need for legislative reform; rather this study demonstrates the need for institutional reform to happen concurrently and independently of legislative reform.

Second, because the educational experiences of undocumented students often mirror the needs of first-generation, working-class students of color (Perez, 2009), programs developed to

address their needs can often benefit the larger student body. However, the needs of undocumented students should not be rendered invisible in the process of institutionalizing resources that are most relevant to their experiences. Instead, counselors or others who advise students should be informed of resources that can greatly assist this population of students. For example, a tuition payment plan that allows students to pay tuition in installments can be particularly helpful to undocumented students, who are systemically banned from financial aid, but it can also benefit all students with financial difficulties.

Third, building on Albrecht's (2007) study, I also conclude the need for designated personnel to help students navigate the institution. However, I caution against tokenized initiatives that aim to pacify the protest of undocumented students. Designated personnel should be available to serve as a reference for students, and students should be able to consult all departments so that the campus can share the responsibility of fostering greater inclusion. This study shows that isolated efforts will overwhelm individuals or units and reinforce the marginalization of undocumented students.

Finally, institutional response needs to be proactive. To achieve democratic outcomes, practitioners and educators need to consider all marginalized experiences when developing a set of requirements for participation. As much as institutions reflect broader social agendas, I believe colleges and universities play a reciprocal role in informing and shaping society. I am hopeful that this reciprocal relationship allows postsecondary institutions to redefine the boundaries of citizenship so that they more actually reflect the shift from finite nation-state boundaries to more global standards.

Seven Recommendations for Enhancing Institutional Support

Based on the preceding four principles mentioned above and the broad findings from this study, I have identified seven recommendations for enhancing institutional support for undocumented students: strengthen the educational pipeline to baccalaureate-granting institutions, foster democratic participation, create opportunities for social mobility, strengthen community partnerships, develop resources for mental and physical wellness, cultivate awareness of and receptivity to undocumented students, and create a center dedicated to serving undocumented students.

Strengthen the Educational Pipeline to Baccalaureate-Granting Institutions

Educators along the educational pipeline should proactively cultivate a college-going culture (Huber, Huidor, Malagon, Sanchez, & Solorzano, 2006) for undocumented students to strengthen their enrollment numbers in higher education. According to Huber et al. (2006) a college-going culture is “a school environment in which teachers, parents, and student peers have high expectations and encourage students to prepare for college” (p. 4). A challenge to the college-going culture is not having the relevant information to prepare students for postsecondary education. K-12 schools, community colleges, and baccalaureate-granting institutions should provide their personnel with training and resources that focus on college-going information for undocumented students, and this information should also be shared with families and outreach partners. One recommendation is to coordinate a conference of educators and practitioners to discuss the roadblocks along the pipeline and share institutional resources for support. College-going material should be accessible and transparent through institutional websites and publications. This information is particularly important for frontline staff members who are usually the first to communicate campus policies to prospective and incoming students. Educators can also strengthen the pipeline by connecting incoming students to peer role models

for mentorships, to fellow institutional allies for institutional support, and to private donors and scholarships for financial aid.

Equitable Participation

Access to higher education should be determined by the quality of education and not by enrollment numbers alone. Due to the limited data on undocumented student engagement at SRU, there is little aggregate information about their academic experiences or performance other than their enrollment. Undocumented students are often excluded from math and science disciplines and research and internships opportunities because the criteria for participations often excluded their participation. It is recommended that institutions create new standards or alternative methods for undocumented student participation, so that students can freely choose activities and disciplines that best reflect their academic interests and abilities. Furthermore, if institutions insist on enforcing exclusionary practices, they must ensure that the exclusion is demanded by the law and is not resistance to change established practices.

Another way to create meaningful learning experiences is to value the struggles of undocumented immigrants in the curriculum. Faculty members can support students by incorporating their lived experiences into the classroom, providing service learning opportunities that address undocumented immigrant issues, creating a safe space that allows for counternarratives that challenge the deficit discourse on undocumented immigration. Institutions can also add knowledge and data on this issue by examining it as a scholarly topic.

Create Opportunities for Social Mobility.

Institutions could help undocumented students plan for life after college by providing career counseling and mentorship, especially in terms of helping them to see the possibility of advanced study in graduate and professional programs. These students may need additional

advising on how to navigate options as an undocumented immigrant. In terms of career opportunities, students may gain more opportunities in the non-profit sector, especially with organizations that aim to serve undocumented immigrants. Therefore, career centers should develop more job opportunities through community-based organizations. Furthermore, it may be helpful for undocumented students to receive guidance on starting a business or becoming an independent contractor. Perez, author of *Life After College: A Guide for Undocumented Students*, states,

Although employers may not knowingly hire an unauthorized immigrant, federal and state laws often do not require proof of immigration status for an individual to go into business for him or herself and receive payment for goods or services. Individuals who perform services, but are not employees, are sometimes categorized as independent contractors.” (Perez, 2012, p. 29).

In addition to helping students gain employment, career advising should also include discussions on how to file taxes with or without a social security number, worker’s rights, workers’ compensation, and discussion of their immigration status with their employers. It is also vital for career services to communicate and prevent any discrimination in the hiring process with regard to undocumented students—particularly for students who are employed through work authorization. Employers can inquire about work authorization; however, they have no legal right to ask the circumstances for their work authorization in the hiring process.

In terms of graduate and professional schools, institutional allies may need to advocate on the students’ behalf in programs that falsely deny their admissions or funding due to their undocumented status. Often these institutional counterparts were more willing and receptive to institutional allies than to the student. Institutional allies can explain the laws from an institutional perspective and advocate for what institutions can do to admit and award funding to

these students. Because each graduate programs and professional program has its own admissions criteria and process, advocacy is usually done on a case-by-case scenario.

Strengthen Community Partnerships

Institutional allies can further their support for undocumented students by working with community partners who have a shared interest in supporting undocumented immigrants. This study has identified four types of beneficial community partnerships. First, charitable organizations could provide vital resources to undocumented students, including resources the university could not provide due to liability and legislative constraints. Examples found in this study were food, housing, and private scholarships. Second, private foundations were instrumental in distributing private scholarships directly to undocumented students. Private foundations allowed institutional allies to fundraise outside of the institutions and provide scholarships to undocumented students in a lawful way. A third type of organization to consider consists of immigration rights advocacy groups and immigration law firms. As immigration law becomes more complex and volatile, it is in the best interests of the universities and students to consult with immigration lawyers to ensure that educational practices follow legal guidelines and that they do not compromise the students' ability to remain in the United States. It is also helpful to connect students with pro bono immigration lawyers who can provide students with legal advice. Fourth, collaborate with legislative advocacy groups to advocate for legislative reform. Institutional leaders can have significant influence in the national debate on undocumented immigration.

Develop Resources for Mental and Physical Wellness.

It is recommended that mental health professionals and other healthcare providers on campus be highly knowledgeable of the emotional and physical hardships associated with being

undocumented. Undocumented students in this study recounted trauma from migration experiences and from the discrimination and stigmatization they encounter in their daily lives. I have encountered mental health professionals who liken the trauma associated with undocumented status is consistent with symptoms of Complex Post Traumatic Disorder (C-PTSD). Emotional distress associated with C-PTSD result from repeated or prolonged traumatic events. Arguably, their constant fear of deportation and their vulnerabilities as undocumented peoples accumulate into more pronounced emotional distress, such as depression, thoughts of suicide, and heightened anxiety. Postsecondary institutions need to train campus personnel to recognize emotional distress in students and be able to refer students to mental health professionals who are familiar with the unique circumstances of this population.

As a preventative measure, counseling centers on campus could facilitate therapy support groups for undocumented students and documented students who may have an undocumented family member to discuss their experiences and support one another. Institutions may also consider workshops that address specific topics, such as stress management, depression, suicide prevention, substance abuse, familial relationships, romantic relationships, and the added pressure to succeed as undocumented students. These were issues that were identified throughout my interview and participant observation period.

In terms of physical health, there was concern over the nutritional value of their meals. As mentioned earlier, some students were not eating regularly and those who were had limited access to fresh produce and food with high nutritional value. Students reported fatigue, weakness, and hunger. Institutions need to raise the nutritional value of food resources and provide students with nutritional and health-related workshops.

Cultivate Awareness of and Receptivity to Undocumented Students.

Allies can cultivate awareness of and receptivity to undocumented students in a number of ways. First, it is helpful to garner top administrative support. Support from top institutional leaders sets a tone and greatly influences the campus climate. Several respondents in this study noted the importance of having top administrative support and the ways that support translated into tangible resources. Garnering support may require allies to create opportunities for students to speak directly with , senior-level administrators to convey their lived experiences at the institution. With an average turnover rate of seven years for university presidents (Lederman, 2012) and a shifting political climate on undocumented immigration, it is up to institutional allies to keep top administrators abreast of the challenges facing undocumented students.

Second, develop a network of institutional allies to cultivate awareness. A network of campus allies comprised of such people, as faculty members, student affairs professionals, and academic affairs administrators must be developed in order to promote programs and resources on and off campus. Include student organizations as essential partners in the process to ensure their voice is present in the decisions. A campus committee or task force focused on undocumented students and their issues would be one avenue for developing a network. The type of committee should be determined by the unique circumstances of students at each institution and the institutional context. While some campuses have appointed task forces, institutions such as SRU have found it more effective to operate informally. One of the biggest challenges is to engage faculty members in the day-to-day operations and to have active faculty participation in committee work. Having a network of allies across campus helps students find support in various areas of campus. This is especially needed on campuses where institutional operations are highly fragmented.

Third, find ways to engage students' support systems, namely parents and legal

guardians, in the educational process. Provide them with information to support their undocumented children in the college-going process. Inform them of legislation that impacts their children's access to higher education, ways to pay for college, and how they can stay involved and be supportive of their children's educational process. Many undocumented students in this study were the first to go to college in America, and their parents were worried that going to college might result in deportation. Institutional allies need to communicate the risks but also the resources available to students. Institutions can invite parents for orientation and welcome events, as well as hosting on- and off-campus events to make them feel more comfortable and part of their child's educational process. Provide print materials and presentations in languages that are accessible to parents. Include parents in campus committees and invite them as speakers for events to support students. They can also be a viable resource to provide added support the undocumented students.

Fourth, provide professional development training to campus personnel. Institutional actors need to take responsibility for staying abreast of information relevant to undocumented students. They should become knowledgeable about policies and resources at the local, state, and national level and be aware of the challenges students face on campus. Share this information with the campus community of students, practitioners, researchers, and policymakers. Additional, allies should take opportunities to raise awareness among colleagues. For instance, they can discuss the issue in departmental meetings or inform colleagues in their professional associations. Allies can leverage their professional networks to build wider awareness and support.

Fifth, help to create the conditions in which students might empower themselves to become politically active. Part of becoming more visible is stepping out of the shadows of

institutional allies. Students are empowered when they serve as their own advocates. Work with students to create a safe space where they can meet and support one another. It is also critical to create opportunities for students to express their concerns to institutional leaders.

Sixth, efforts to support undocumented students need to address the intersectionality of student identities. According to Audre Lorde (1984), “There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives” (p. 138). This is becoming increasingly more apparent as we learn more about the complexities of undocumented immigrants. As noted in the discussion on student backgrounds, students had complicated stories. There are significant differences among subpopulations of undocumented students. For instance, students belonged to different types of families, mixed-status, single-status, transnational, and separated through detention. Furthermore, there are also different reasons why and how they arrived in the United States. While the majority entered the country undetected, it is estimated that 40 percent are visa overstayers. This population is also racially, nationally, and ethnically diverse. Additionally, queer undocumented students have been outspoken about the compounded experiences of being queer and undocumented. A clear intersection of their situation is that, without marriage equality, they cannot apply for citizenship through marriage. Educators and practitioners need to further explore how these intersections impact their college experience so that support is more relevant and also to ensure our efforts to address their immigration status does not discount or discriminate against their other identities.

Create a Center Dedicated to Serving Undocumented Students.

It is recommended that institutions support and recognize undocumented students by creating a center or program that is dedicated to serving this student population. This center or program would be responsible for centralizing resources, fostering greater awareness across

campus, collaborating with student groups, and advocating for undocumented students within institutional, state, and federal policy boards. Furthermore, this center should serve as a safe space and a symbolic gesture to foster a greater sense of belonging for undocumented students.

Another reason for such a center is that colleges and universities may become more involved in the immigration process as legislation such as the DREAM Act gains momentum at the federal level. There is growing bipartisan support to grant a pathway to citizenship for undocumented youth who complete two years of college or military services. Under this policy, attendance in higher education would grant undocumented youth a way to adjust their status. If such laws are enacted, institutions may see a growing number of undocumented students and the need to process paperwork and serve as a liaison to immigration services.

Research Implications: Present and Future

Considering the complexities embedded in the issue of undocumented immigration, there is room for innovative research. This study is an exploratory effort to uncover the tensions and processes in which postsecondary institutions attempt to cultivate greater inclusion for undocumented students. In the near future, I hope to replicate a similar study at a community college and a comprehensive university to draw out the impact of institutional type. As I noted earlier, the changing legislative context also requires researchers to continuously examine the shifting political climate and its impact on undocumented students.

Based on this study, I also discovered limited understanding of undocumented immigration. This study points to the need to expand the parameters of the undocumented immigrant community to include for instance, U.S. citizen children of undocumented parents. It would add to our understanding if we can determine whether this population of students

undergoes similar familial stressors to those of undocumented students and develop resources at the institutional level. A related topic to explore is the dynamic of mixed-status families. This area of research can help us illustrate that the fine line between documented and undocumented is often arbitrary and that the distinction between “us” and “them” is indistinguishable within a family unit. In addition, undocumented immigration is hardly an issue limited to U.S. borders. The growing global undocumented population displaced by war and economic crisis warrants more international comparative studies to draw attention to the global predicament of undocumented migrants.

Furthermore, there is limited research to help us connect the present circumstances or behavior of undocumented immigrants to why and how they migrated. First, the assumption on undocumented immigration is largely understood as a linear migration pattern, in which undocumented immigrants are presumed to have arrived in the United States directly from their country of origin. This study found that a number of undocumented immigrants experienced non-linear migration patterns. Students in this study noted that they entered the United States from countries that were not their country of birth or that their families had settled in multiple countries before arriving in the U.S. and had been undocumented in another country. Therefore, this phenomenon suggests that there are layers of migration between their current status as undocumented people to earlier diasporas. Secondly, the larger social and political circumstances for migration can shed light on the current behavior of undocumented immigrants. The immigration experience for many respondents was traumatic, requiring them to develop a set of coping and survival strategies which can contribute to their resiliency, but can also be counterproductive to their ability to navigate and become successful in the new environment. To

a great extent, coping mechanisms developed from traumatic immigration experiences have falsely been attributed to cultural influences.

Another area of research that warrants greater research is the identity development of undocumented students. Immigration status is a highly fluid identity tied with the shifting political context. One area of future research is the transitional experience of former undocumented students. As they adjust their status or gain rights and privileges through new policy, many students expressed stress associated with the change and resistance to becoming part of a system that has so harshly denied them legitimacy. Furthermore, undocumented student identity can be highly associated with policy, thus it would be interesting to understand how changing legislation shapes student identity.

Finally, the institutional response is based on the unique circumstances of students. For instance, migration patterns determine the nationality, ethnicity, and circumstances for migration. Thus, institutions in the mid-west are more likely to have Hmong and Middle-Eastern students, and those on the west coast are more likely to have high numbers of Latina/o and Chinese students. These varied circumstances require additional research on institutional support.

Concluding Thoughts

According to Paulo Freire (2003), “education is politics,” (p.486) and given the controversy inherent in the presence of undocumented individuals in higher education (Albrecht, 2007; Perez, 2009; Rincón, 2008), efforts to support undocumented students are undoubtedly considered political. Applying the principles of Critical Pedagogy, Critical Race Theory, Feminist Theory, and Resistance Theory, this study aimed to challenge educators and

practitioners in higher education to critically interrogate individual and collective agency for the purpose of advancing social justice in institutional life. To what degree are we able to ignite agency to transform xenophobic practices, if by doing so, we reveal our politics and potentially compromise our professional interests? This is the basic and challenging question addressed by this study.

However, the time for the debate is over and the time for action is now, particularly in California, where educators and practitioners will experience a spike in the number of undocumented students in the coming academic year. Institutions must plan or forecast for the future policy and demographic changes. Start thinking about all the areas of campus that will be impacted by this shift. Begin having discussions with students, parents, and institutional leaders to modify institutional protocol to take advantage of new policies in a way that most benefit students and the larger campus community. Beyond obvious ways to implement new legislation impacting undocumented students, consider all areas of campus that could become more accessible to students. DACA provides students with work authorization; however, the benefits of this directive can extend beyond work to make undocumented students eligible for graduate or professional programs. For instance, DACA recipients can now complete a criminal background check and carry out a medical residency with work authorization making them eligible for admission to medical school. Therefore, as educators and practitioners, we have great discretion in how we interpret, implement, and apply legislation in ways that can be transformative for the experiences of undocumented students in higher education.

Appendix: Interview and Focus Group Protocol

This study will rely on semi-structured data collection procedures. This interview or focus group protocol represents a list of open-ended questions that defines the parameter of this study.

Institutional Practitioner Interview Protocol

Thanks for agreeing to participate in the study. Your participation is voluntary and you may decide to withdraw from the study at anytime. Your responses will be kept anonymous and I will be the only person who will have access to your information.

May I tape record your responses, in order to get a more accurate account of your responses?

Before we begin, do you have any questions?

I will be asking you a few questions on your experience working with undocumented students.

1. What is the nature of your work at SRU?
2. What has been your experience in working with undocumented students?
3. How do you usually learn of a student's status?
4. How do you think undocumented students on your campus gain access to resources that are relevant to their situation?
5. What have you found are the challenges experienced by undocumented students during their college-going process?
6. Based on your experience with these students, what are the major challenges experienced by undocumented student after matriculation into SRU?
7. How have recent federal and state policies that are relevant to undocumented students shape institutional practices at SRU?
8. How would you compare the policies and practices at your institution with those at a (private or public) institution?
9. Would you assess SRU on a continuum between a hostile and a welcoming environment for undocumented students?
10. Have you or your department been able to offer any assistance? If so, how?
11. Have you partnered with any students to address these concerns?
12. Please describe your experience working with undocumented students to address these concerns?

13. Finally, what has been your motivation to engage in this type of work? To what extent, if any, is your work inspired by a sense of social justice for undocumented students?
14. Has your involvement with undocumented student been in any way a hindrance to your professional standing?
15. Besides your department, what areas of the institution have offered any other form of support to address any of the issues you mentioned earlier?
16. Are there any units of the institutions that has been most helpful?
17. Are there any units of the institution that has resistant to your work?
18. What can the institution do to better serve undocumented students?
19. Do you see your work with undocumented students as advocacy? If so, how would you define advocacy for undocumented students and in what context?

Thank you so much for participating and sharing your experiences with me. I look forward to seeing you at our follow up meeting.

Undocumented Student Interview and Focus Group Protocol

Thanks for agreeing to participate in the study. Your participation is voluntary and you may decide to withdraw from the study at anytime. Your responses will be kept anonymous and I will be the only person who will have access to your information.

May I tape record your responses, in order to get a more accurate account of your responses?

Before we begin, do you have any questions?

I will be asking you a few questions on your experience working with undocumented students.

1. Ask if they want to share demographic info such as: family size, hometown, educational background, age, race/ethnicity, generational college status, on leave/part time/full time attendance, course load, housing, year in school, transfer/direct-entry, major, etc.
2. Where are you enrolled and why did you choose SRU?
3. Describe your experience as an undocumented student at SRU.
What is a typical day/week/quarter/year?

4. Tell me about your involvement with other students? Are your friends primarily other undocumented students? Off-campus?
5. What are the challenges you have faced as an undocumented student at SRU?
6. What people at the university whom you find to be particularly supportive/helpful and least helpful? Consider, for example, students, faculty members, administrators, and staff.
7. How would describe the campus climate/environment in regards to undocumented students?
8. Have you shared your status with any administrators or faculty members at (name of institution)?
 - Why or why not?
 - If so, who? How and why?
 - Have they been able to offer any assistance to you? If so, how?
9. Have you partnered with any administrators or faculty members to address your concerns?
 - If so, how?
 - What is your experience with faculty or staff?
10. Besides those whom you have contacted, has the institution offered any other form of support to address any of the educational challenges you identified?
11. Where do you feel most comfortable on campus?
12. Have you engaged student-initiated efforts?
13. Are there any areas of the campus you feel is most helpful? What do you believe is the source of support within that area of the campus?
14. Are there any areas of the campus you feel is least helpful? What is the nature of your interaction with those areas of campus?
15. What can the institution do to better serve you and students with similar circumstances?
16. What are three key things you think the institution should know to better serve undocumented students?
17. Are you aware of student services and do you feel welcome to use them as an undocumented student?

Thank you so much for participating and sharing your experiences with me. I look forward to seeing you at our follow up meeting.

References

- [AB540]. (May, 2001). AB 540 Assembly Bill Analysis. California Assembly Committee on Higher Education. Retrieved on October 1, 2009 at: <http://info.sen.ca.gov/pub/>
- [UCLA Labor Center] Madera, G., Mathay, A. A., Najafi, A. M., Saldivar, H. H., Solis, S., Titong, A. J. M., Rivera-Salgado, G., Shadduck-Hernandez, J., Wong, K., Frazier, R. & Monroe, J. (Eds.) (2008). *Underground undergrads: UCLA undocumented immigrant students speak out*. Los Angeles: UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education.
- [UCOP] Annual report on AB 540 tuition exemptions 2010-2011 academic year. (May, 2012). Retrieved March 20, 2013 from http://ucop.edu/student-affairs/_files/ab540_annualrpt_2011.pdf
- Abrego, L. J. (2006). "I can't go to college because I don't have papers": Incorporation patterns of undocumented of Latino undocumented youth. *Latino Studies*, 4, 212-231.
- Abrego, L. J., & Gonzales, R. G. (2010). Blocked paths, uncertain futures: The postsecondary education and labor market prospects of undocumented Latino Youth. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 15 (1), 144-157.
- Albrecht, T. J. (2007) Challenges and service needs of undocumented Mexican undergraduate students: Students' voices and administrators' perspectives. Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, United States -- Texas. Retrieved September 10, 2008, from *Dissertations & Theses: A&I database*. (Publication No. AAT 3290814).
- Bacon, D. (2008). *Illegal people: How globalization creates migration and criminalizes immigrants*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Badger, E., & Yale-Loehr, S. (2002). Myths and realities for undocumented students attending U.S. colleges and universities. *Journal of College Admission*, 174, 10-15.
- Badger, E., Yale-Loehr, S., Vernon, M., & Schoonmaker, L. (2005). Undocumented students and eligibility for enrollment at U.S. colleges and universities. *Admission wRAP UP*. Retrieved January 28, 2008 from http://www.nafsa.org/_Documents/?admissions_wrapup_newsletter_9.pdf
- Bennett, B. (2011, August 6). States can't opt out of Secure Communities program. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/aug/06/nation/la-na-secure-communities-20110806>
- Biswas, R. R. (2005, January). *Access to community college for undocumented immigrants: A guide for state policymakers*. Retrieved December 12, 2007, from the Jobs for the Future Web site: <http://jff.org>
- Biswas, R. R. (2007, March). *Update: State policies regarding in-state tuition for undocumented students*. Retrieved December 12, 2007, from the Jobs for the Future Web site: <http://jff.org>

- Bogdan, R.C., & Biklen, S. K. (2003). *Qualitative research in education: An introduction to theory and methods*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education Group.
- Braa, D., & Callero, P. (2006). "Critical Pedagogy and Classroom Praxis." *Teaching Sociology* 34(4), 357-69.
- Briones, C., Cruz, J., Dias, M., Duarte, Y., Espinoza, P. J., Fonseca, L. et al. (2007). Students informing now (S.I.N.) challenge the racial state in California without shame...sin vergüenza! *Educational Foundations*, Winter-Spring, 71-90.
- Buenavista, Tracy L., & Tran, Tam T. N. (2010). Asian American undocumented immigrant students. In E. Chen & G. Yoo (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Asian American Issues* (253-257). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Campbell, R. (2012, November 26). Why Kris Kobach's career should end. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved March 23, 201 from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ryan-campbell/kris-kobach-immigration_b_2169084.html
- Campbell, S. M., & Nutt, C. L. (2008). Academic advising in the new global century: Supporting student engagement and learning outcomes achievement. *Peer Review*, 10(1), 4-7.
- Clark, B. R. (1960). The "cooling-out" function in higher education. *American journal of Sociology*, 569-576.
- Darder, A., Baltodano, M., & Torres, R. (2003). Critical pedagogy: An introduction. In A. Darder, M. Baltodano, & R. Torres (Eds.). *The critical pedagogy reader*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, Jean (2001). *Critical race theory: An introduction*. New York: New York University Press.
- Drachman, E. (2006). Access to Higher Education for Undocumented Students. *Peace Review*, 18(1), 91-100.
- Eyler, J., & Giles, D. E. (1999). *Where's the Learning in Service-Learning?* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Feranchak, E. W. (2007) An analysis of the attitudes of higher education leaders in 18 high-immigration states about the appropriateness of providing education benefits to undocumented immigrants. Ed.D. dissertation, East Tennessee State University, United States -- Tennessee. Retrieved September 10, 2008, from *Dissertations & Theses: A&I database*. (Publication No. AAT 3271889).
- Flores, S. M. (2007) The effect of in-state resident tuition policies on the college enrollment of undocumented Latino students in Texas and the United States. Ed.D. dissertation, Harvard University, United States -- Massachusetts. Retrieved September 10, 2008, from *Dissertations & Theses: A&I database*. (Publication No. AAT 3271681).

- Fortuny, K., Capps, R., & Passel, J. (2007). *The characteristics of unauthorized immigrants in California, Los Angeles County, and the United States*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.
- Freire, P. (2002). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (30th Anniversary Ed). New York, NY: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc.
- Giroux, H. A. (2001). *Theory and resistance in education: Towards a pedagogy for the opposition*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.
- Giroux, H. A. (2003). Critical theory and educational practice. In A. Darder, M. Baltodano, & R. Torres (Eds.). *The critical pedagogy reader*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Global Migration Group (2008). *International migration and human rights: Challenges and opportunities on the threshold of the 60th anniversary of the universal declaration of human rights*. Retrieved March 23, 2013 from Global Migration Group: http://www.globalmigrationgroup.org/uploads/gmg-topics/human-rights/Int_Migration_Human_Rights.pdf
- Gonzales, R. G. (2009). *Young lives on hold: The college dreams of undocumented students*. New York: College Board Advocacy.
- Gonzales, R. G. (2011). Learning to be illegal: Undocumented youth and shifting legal context in the transition to adulthood. *American Sociological Review*, 76(4), 602-619.
- Guroff, N. (2006). The “paper ceiling”—Undocumented students hit barriers after graduation. *New America Media*, January 25, 2006.
- Handel, S. J. (2007). Second chance, not second class: A blueprint for community-college transfer. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 39(5), 38-45.
- Harding, S. (1987). Is there a feminist method? In S. Harding (Ed.). *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues*. Indianapolis, IN: Open University Press.
- Hing, J. (2010, April 29). The lawsuits are here: ACLU, MALDEF, NILC challenge Arizona. *Colorlines News for Action*. Retrieved March 23, 2013, from http://colorlines.com/archives/2010/04/the_lawsuits_are_here_aclu_maldef_nilc_challenge_arizona.html
- Hjerim, M. (2001). Education, xenophobia and nationalism: A comparative analysis. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 27, (1), 37-60.
- Hoefler, M., Rytina, N., & Baker, B. C. (March, 2012). *Estimates of the unauthorized immigrant population residing in the United States: January 2011*. Washington, DC: Department of Homeland Security Office of Immigration Statistics.
- Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-208, 110 Stat. 3009-660 (1996).

- Jefferies, J. (2008). *Ideologies surrounding media representation of undocumented students*. Paper presented at the annual American Educational Research Association conference, New York, NY.
- Johnson, H. P., & Reed, D. (2007). Can California import enough college graduates to meet workforce needs? [Electronic version]. *California Counts*, 8(4), 1-22.
- Kemp, S., & Squires, J. (Eds.) (1997). *Feminism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kobach, K. W. (2006). The Senate immigration bill rewards lawbreaking: Why the DREAM Act is a nightmare. *Backgrounders*, 1960, 1-5.
- Ladson-Billing, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11(1), 7-24.
- Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Teachers College Record*, 97(1), 47-68.
- Lakoff, G., & Ferguson, S. (2006). The framing of immigration. *Rockridge Institute*. Retrieved 05/14/08, from <http://www.rockridgeinstitute.org/research/rockridge/immigration>
- Leticia A. v. Regents of the University of California. (1985). No. 588-982-5(Cal. Super. Ct, Alameda County).
- Lopez, J. K. (2010). *Undocumented students and the policies of wasted potential*. El Paso, TX: LFB Scholarly Pub.
- Lucas, M. S., & Berkel, L. (2005). Counseling needs of students who seek help at a university counseling center: A closer look at gender and multicultural Issues. *Journal of College Student Development* 46(3), 251-266.
- Maxwell, J. (1996). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- McGray, D. (2006, April 23). The invisibles. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved December 13, 2007, from http://www.newamerica.net/publications/articles/2006/the_invisibles
- McLaren, P. (2003). Critical theory: A look at the major concepts. In A. Darder, M. Baltodano, & R. Torres (Eds.). *The critical pedagogy reader*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Motomura, H. (2007, April 13). *The 25th Anniversary of Plyler v. Doe: Access to Education and Undocumented Children*. Retrieved March 24, 2012, from Berkeley Law: http://www.law.berkeley.edu/files/Hiroshi_MotomuraFINAL.pdf
- Museus, S., & Jayakumar, U. M. (2012). *Creating Campus Cultures: Fostering Success among Racially Diverse Student Populations*. New York, NY: Routledge.

- National Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good [NFHEPG]. (2012). Reconciling federal, state, and institutional policies determining educational access for undocumented students: Implications for professional practice. Ann Arbor, MI: Author.
- National Immigrant Youth Alliance (2010). *A guide to 'coming out' for undocumented youth*. Retrieved March 9, 2010, from http://action.dreamactivist.org/Coming_Out_Guide.pdf
- Neuman, A. (1997). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative research approaches*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Ngai, M. M. (2003). *Impossible subjects: Illegal aliens and the making of modern America*. Princeton University Press.
- Olivérez, P. M. (2006) Ready but restricted: An examination of the challenges of college access and financial aid for college-ready undocumented students in the United States. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, United States -- California. Retrieved September 10, 2008, from *Dissertations & Theses: A&I database*. (Publication No. AAT 3257819).
- Olivérez, P. M., Chavez, M. L., Soriano, M. & Tierney, W. G. (2006). *The college & financial aid guide for: AB540 undocumented immigrant students*. Los Angeles: USC Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis.
- Ong, A. (1999). *Flexible citizenship: The cultural logics of transnationality*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books
- Orellana, M. J. (2007). Unpacking immigration. *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies*. 3(2), Article 2. Retrieved 05/04/08 from <http://repositories.cdlib.org/gseis.interactions/vols/iss2/art2>
- Passel, J. S. (2003). *Further demographic information relating to the Dream Act*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.
- Passel, J. S. (2005a). *Unauthorized migrants: Numbers and characteristics*. Washington D.C.: Pew Hispanic Center.
- Passel, J. S. (2005b). *Estimates of the size and characteristics of the undocumented population*. Washington D.C.: Pew Hispanic Center.
- Passel, J. S., & Cohn, D. (2009, April 4). *A portrait of unauthorized immigrants in the United States*. Retrieved March 23, 2013, from the Pew Research Center: <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/107.pdf>
- Passel, J. S., & Cohn, D. (2011, February 1). *Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends, 2010*. Retrieved March 23, 2013, from Pew Research Center: <http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/reports/133.pdf>

- Peoples, S., & Kuhnhehn, J. (2012, June 20). Immigration suddenly roiling presidential contest. *Associated Press*. Retrieved March 23, 2013, from <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/immigration-suddenly-roiling-presidential-contest>
- Perez, I. (2012). *Life After College: A Guide for Undocumented Students*. Retrieved March 24, 2013, from Educators for Fair Consideration: www.e4fc.org/images/E4FC_LifeAfterCollegeGuide.pdf
- Perez, W. (2009). *We ARE Americans: Undocumented students pursuing the American dream*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.
- Perez, W., & Cortes, R. D. (2011). *Undocumented Latino college students: Their socioemotional and academic experience*. El Paso, TX: LFB Scholarly Publishing.
- Plyler v. Doe, 457 U.S. 202 (1982).
- Protopsaltis, S. (2005). *Undocumented immigrant students and access to higher education: An overview of federal and state policy*. Colorado: The Bell Policy Center.
- Rhoads, R. A. (1994). *Coming out in college: The struggle for a queer identity*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Rhoads, R. A. (1998). *Freedom's Web: Student Activism in an Age of Cultural Diversity*. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Rincón, A. (2008). *Undocumented immigrant and higher education: Sí se puede!* New York, NY: LFB Scholarly Publishing.
- Rojas, L. B. (2011, March 15). 'Coming out' undocumented: A Dream Act strategy becomes a rite of passage. Retrieved March 23, 2013, from 89.3 KPCC Southern California Public Radio: <http://www.scpr.org/blogs/multiamerican/2011/03/coming-out-undocumented-a-dream-act-strategy-becomes-a-rite-of-passage/>
- Seif, H. (2004). "Wise up!" undocumented Latino youth, Mexican-American legislators, and the struggle for higher education access. *Latino Studies*, 2, 210-230.
- Solórzano, D. G. (1997). Images and words that wound: Critical race theory, racial stereotyping, and teacher education. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 24, 5-19.
- Solórzano, D. G. (1998). Critical race theory, race and gender microaggressions, and the experience of Chicana and Chicano scholars. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11(1) 121-136.
- Solórzano, D. G., & Bernal, D. D. (2001). Examining transformational resistance through a critical race and LatCrit theory framework Chicana and Chicano students in an urban context. *Urban Education*, 36(3), 308-342.
- Solórzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2001). From Racial Stereotyping and Deficit Discourse toward a Critical Race Theory in Teacher Education. *Multicultural Education*, 9(1), 2-8.

- Suárez-Orozco, C., Bang, H. J., & Kim, H. Y. (2011). I felt like my heart was staying behind: Psychological implications of family separations & reunifications for immigrant youth. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 22*(2), 222-257.
- Tate, W. (1997). Critical race theory and education: History, theory, and implications. *Review of Research in Education, 22*, 195-247.
- Terkel, A. (2010, November 15). Court upholds law granting undocumented students in-state tuition. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved March 23, 2013, from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/11/15/california-supreme-court-uphold-ab540-_n_783722.html
- The Regents of the University of California v. Bradford, 276 Cal Rprt 197 (Cal Ct. App. 1990).
- United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA]. (2006). *A passage to hope: women and international migration*. New York: UNFPA.
- Van Hook, J., Bean, F. D., & Passel, J. (2005). Unauthorized migrants living in the United States: A mid-decade portrait. *MPI Migration Information Service*.
- Vargas, J. A. (2011). My lift as an undocumented immigrant. *New York Times*. Retrieved March 24, 2013, from: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/26/magazine/my-life-as-an-undocumented-immigrant.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0
- Wessler, S. F. (2010, October 14). Georgia bans undocumented students from public universities. *Colorlines News for Action*. Retrieved March 23, 2013, from http://colorlines.com/archives/2010/10/the_state_of_georgia_today.html