Undocumented Students: Creating an Inclusive Campus Environment

A Research study conducted (2010 – 2012) by:

Fairfield University ♦ Loyola University Chicago ♦ Santa Clara University

Abstract

Approximately 65,000 undocumented students graduate from U.S. high schools each year. Although the overwhelming majority of these graduates are relegated to underemployment in the low-skilled and informal sectors, some continue their education at community colleges, while others manage to earn four-year post-secondary degrees. In a study funded by the Ford Foundation, a team of researchers from Fairfield University, Santa Clara University, and Loyola University Chicago documented a two-year study of undocumented students to develop a better understanding of the challenges these students face at institutions of higher education. The project comprises a comprehensive analysis of undocumented students’ access to Jesuit colleges and universities, and their integration into these institutions. This poster presents some of the findings of this study, including the policies and practices that are in effect at some institutions, as well as proposed best practices based on qualitative data.

Purpose

- Study current practices of Jesuit Colleges & Universities
- Understand undocumented student experiences in Higher Ed
- Identify AJCU practices to inform new models of leadership
- Inform practices and policies to promote social justice

Methodology

1. Analysis of Missions & Websites
2. Online Survey
3. In-depth Interviews

All 28 American Jesuit Colleges & Universities
Across 28 AJCUs
110 staff respondents

Across 6 AJCUs
47 professional staff; 26 undocumented; Community “advocates”

AJCU Practices

- Admissions & financial aid
  - No Consistent Policies - Informal System
  - Dependent on commitment & energy of key staff
  - University financial aid resources limited
- Student Services – Support
  - Trained staff

Context

Overall population: 4 million expected High School graduates (2012-2013)*
Undocumented student population: ~5,000 U.S. H.S. grad.-year

Approx. 7 in 10 U.S. High School graduates will enroll in college
1 in 10 undocumented High School graduates will enroll in college

Average annual price for undergraduate tuition, fees, room, and board (2010-2011)*

$15,500
$10,000
$5,000

Policy tuition (including 25% for in-state state)

Pathway to citizenship

Student population excluded by AJCU policies

Constraint

Jesuit Mission

- 2010: ACU mission & apostolate statement, U.S. Jesuit presidents reaffirm commitment to “continuing the historic mission of educating first generation students...”
- Commitment to Undocumented – Reflects history of Jesuit Education
- Staff: commitment to undocumented – part of Core Mission

Perspective of Key Staff and Administrators*

- 20% Support
- 42% Unconcerned
- 34% “No More for Undocumented”

Research Team

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Research Implications

- Access to higher ed. & Jesuit education
  - Continued challenge for undocumented & all students with limited financial resources
  - Despite significant commitment – AJCUs cannot meet all financial need
  - Undocumented students: hard-working, want to contribute, utilize credentials

Financial

- Lack of access to Federal financial aid
- Filing fees may be unaffordable
- Struggle to tuition meet costs

Legal

- Family separation
- Student population excluded by DACA
- Lack access to
  - lawful immigration status – Pathway to citizenship
- Health insurance
- Unseen access to driver’s license

Personal

- Camus student
- Family obligations
- Anxiety, fear of disclosing status
- Limited campus life engagement

Academic

- Limited opportunities major, internships, study abroad, pursue graduate studies

Career

- Limited choice of career
- Status hindrance to professional practice
- Sense of hopelessness in ability to secure employment that fits Credentials

Scan the QR code to access the Immigration Student National Position Paper Report on Findings (January 2013)

AJCU Presidents, February 26, 2013, Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C.

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