

Undocumented Student Resource Centers: Institutional Supports for Undocumented Students

by Jesus Cisneros, The University of Texas at El Paso and
Diana Valdivia, University of California, Santa Barbara

Setting the Context

According to the Migration Policy Institute, approximately 11.2 million undocumented immigrants were living in the United States in 2013.¹ About a million were under the age of 18 and 4.4 million were under the age of 30.² A report by the UndocuScholars Project further estimates that about 200,000 to 225,000 undocumented immigrants are enrolled in college, accounting for about two percent of all college students and about ten percent of all undocumented immigrants.³

The uncertain and ever-changing socio-political climate makes higher education accessibility unpredictable and highly variable among undocumented immigrants. States retain the discretion to decide whether to include undocumented immigrants in higher education processes and how, if at all, to support them. The discretionary application of residency requirements for in-state tuition purposes, for example, limits undocumented students' access to higher education in many states.⁴ Coupled with ineligibility for federal and most state-based financial aid, these barriers often lead to undocumented students' premature disengagement from educational pursuits.⁵ Having an undocumented status reduces the odds of graduating from high school and enrolling in college.

Undocumented students' fear of disclosure of their immigration status during the college application process may additionally serve as an impediment to college enrollment. Though campus personnel often serve as important resources in accessing college, undocumented students often describe uncertainty regarding whom they can trust.⁶ Experiences where students' needs are not met, support is not provided, and information is not allocated often result in a sense of isolation and an unwillingness to seek advisement or support.⁷ Given these challenges to educational success, it is imperative that higher education practitioners and policymakers support, develop, and offer institutional supports that are responsive to the presence and needs of undocumented students.



Jesus Cisneros is an Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership and Foundations at the University of Texas at El Paso. He received a Ph.D. in Education Policy and Evaluation from Arizona State University, a M.S. in Higher Education Administration from Texas A&M University, and a B.A. in Journalism and Mass Communications from New Mexico State University. As a scholar, Cisneros takes a critical interdisciplinary approach to education policy and practice. His research is grounded by his professional student affairs experience in housing and residential education at various institution types. He currently serves on the board for United We Dream – the largest immigrant youth-led organization and is co-founder of DREAMzone, a knowledge mobilization

initiative that prepares educational leaders to respond to the presence and needs of undocumented students. Through research and practice, Cisneros has taken a visible stance to support undocumented students' access to higher education.



Diana Valdivia is the Undocumented Student Services Coordinator at UC Santa Barbara. As a student affairs professional, Diana builds and sustains services to holistically support undocumented students and institutionalize inclusive support practices. Diana currently serves as a Co-Chair for United We Dream's Board of Directors, the largest immigrant youth-led organization in the U.S., and is a member of the UC President's Advisory Council on Undocumented Community and Immigration. Diana holds a B.S. in Business Administration and a M.A. in Postsecondary Educational Leadership.

Her work as a student affairs professional has been recognized by being part of the 1st NASPA NOW Professionals Cohort.

Additionally, she is one the recipients of American College Personnel Association (ACPA) 2018 Annuity Coeptis (Emergent Professional) Award and National Conference on Race and Ethnicity (NCORE) 2018 Equity and Social Justice Award as a Change Agent.

SPONSORED BY



Graduate School of Education
Penn GSE

Center for
MSIs



Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) play a leading role among non-profit degree-granting institutions in serving historically underrepresented students.⁸ The number of institutions of higher education that are federally designated as minority-serving is indicative of the success of these institutions' recruitment and retention efforts. MSIs offer a range of support services to ensure that all students are able to build the personal and academic connections critical to their success. One such effort has been the creation of Undocumented Student Resource Centers (USRCs) across campuses. USRCs provide access to college opportunities for undocumented high school, transfer, undergraduate, and graduate students, as well as students from mixed-status families. The goal of USRCs is to create a welcoming and supportive environment that will enhance students' college experience, promote their civic and community engagement, and enhance their mental health and well-being. USRCs provide an extensive collection of services that enable undocumented students to overcome academic and personal challenges while also experiencing campus inclusion. USRCs make it clear that undocumented students are integral members of our campus communities and, therefore, should receive services and resources to support their educational attainment.



SOURCE: Skyline College's Dream Center. Photo taken by Pamela Ortiz.

Purpose of the Report

Documenting the emergence of USRCs across the country and how these institutional support structures are creating the conditions for undocumented students and students of mixed-status families to thrive can help institutions, particularly emerging MSIs, learn from each other and adopt practices that stress both a student-centered and capacity-building approach. Such information can also inform policymakers' understanding of the importance of USRCs for responding to the presence and needs of undocumented students and ensuring their educational success. The purpose of this report is to highlight USRCs as viable structures for supporting undocumented students in higher education. Our goal is to expose academic and administrative leadership to the possibility of USRCs and contribute to the generation of practice-related opportunities for enhancing undocumented student support services across MSIs.

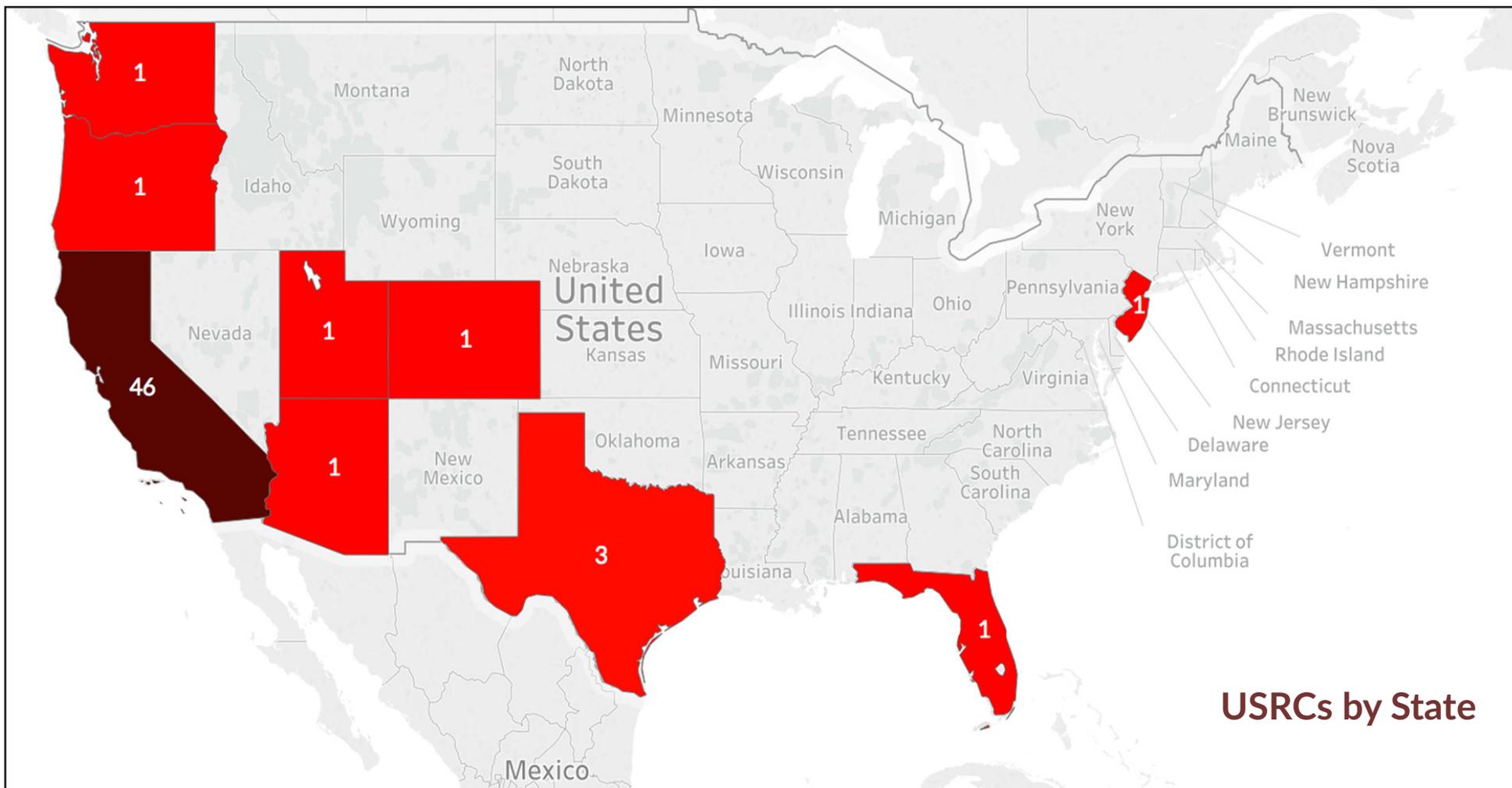
With support from the UndocuScholars Project at the University of California at Los Angeles, a research team composed of higher education practitioners and scholars conducted an in-depth qualitative investigation of USRCs across the country. The research team, which was composed of immigrants of various immigration statuses, was interested in identifying effective and sustainable institutional practices for addressing the barriers undocumented students face navigating higher education. We defined USRCs as physical structures on campus designated as centers that provide a space for undocumented students and students of mixed-status families to obtain institutionalized support. Performing a network analysis of undocumented student support services across institutions of higher education, we identified 56 USRCs that met our inclusion criteria as of May 2018. We contacted center personnel via phone and email and conducted in-depth interviews with students, staff, and faculty coordinating the work of these centers on 49 of the campuses identified.

In the following section, we provide an overview of the national landscape of USRCs as well as the major findings that emerged from interviews. We conclude with recommendations for policymakers and practitioners.

National Landscape

California has the largest population of undocumented immigrants and has played a major role in informing the national landscape on how to include and support undocumented students in higher education. With 46 USRCs (and counting), there is much that can be gleaned from California institutions of higher education that have established physical spaces for undocumented student support services on campus.

Other states including Washington, Oregon, Utah, Arizona, Texas, Florida, Colorado, and New Jersey have at least one institution with a designated USRC. Out of the 56 USRCs identified, 31 were on four-year institutions, while the remaining 25 were on two-year colleges.



Institutions with USRCs by

CALIFORNIA

1. Berkeley City College
2. Cabrillo College
3. California Polytechnic State University, Pomona
4. California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo
5. California State University, Dominguez Hills
6. California State University, Channel Islands
7. California State University, Fullerton
8. California State University, Long Beach
9. California State University, Los Angeles
10. California State University, Northridge
11. California State University, Sacramento
12. California State University, San Bernardino
13. California State University, San Marcos
14. Canada College
15. City College of San Francisco
16. College of San Mateo
17. Consumnes River College
18. De Anza College
19. East Los Angeles College
20. Evergreen Valley College
21. Fresno City College
22. Fresno State University

23. Glendale Community College
24. Grossmont College
25. Hartnell College
26. Los Angeles City College
27. Los Angeles Harbor College
28. Los Angeles Mission College
29. Los Angeles Trade Technical College
30. Los Angeles Valley College
31. Mt. San Antonio College
32. San Bernardino Valley College
33. San Francisco State University
34. San Jose State University
35. Santa Rosa Junior College
36. Skyline College
37. Sonoma State University
38. University of California, Berkley
39. University of California, Davis
40. University of California, Irvine
41. University of California, Los Angeles
42. University of California, Merced
43. University of California, Riverside
44. University of California, San Diego
45. University of California, Santa Barbara
46. West Los Angeles College

TEXAS

1. Mountain View College
2. Texas Tech University
3. University of Texas at San Antonio

ARIZONA

1. University of Arizona

COLORADO

1. Metropolitan State University

FLORIDA

1. Palm Beach State College

NEW JERSEY

1. Saint Peter's University

OREGON

1. Portland Community College

UTAH

1. University of Utah

WASHINGTON

1. University of Washington



SOURCE: President Soraya M. Coley joins students, faculty and staff as student-designed mural is installed in the Bronco Dreamers Resource Center library. Photo provided by Mike Manalo-Pedro, Coordinator of the Bronco Dreamers Resource Center at Cal Poly Pomona.

Undocumented Student Resource Centers

Emergence

The development of USRCs across institutions of higher education was often attributed to mobilizations by and on behalf of undocumented students, both on- and off-campus. Most USRC practitioners described long histories of student mobilization leading to the development of institutionalized support services for undocumented students on their campus. Student mobilizations initially led to the creation of institutional task forces charged with creating a cohesive plan for developing institutional support for undocumented students. The strategic institutional advocacy of undocumented students, staff, and faculty composite of these task forces helped establish institutional procedures for responding to the presence and needs of undocumented students. Common recommendations resultant from this work often included the development of a USRC, funding, and a full- or part-time position dedicated to working with undocumented students.

“It would have not happened without student activism engagement. It would have not happened without our leaders being brave saying, ‘We want to go beyond the status quo; to do something that aligns more with our moral compass of justice and aligns with risk aversion.’ It took student leaders to push the envelope and for our campus leaders to be willing to receive that and say, ‘You know what? This is the right thing to do. This is the ethical thing to do. And more importantly this is the just thing to do.’”

-USRC practitioner at a four-year institution

Undocumented students were often involved in the process of naming and developing their institution’s USRC. Approaches to naming USRCs were deliberate for the purpose of remaining culturally responsive to the local environment. Most USRCs, for example, decided to reference dreamers in their names. The term dreamer was perceived to be less politically charged than undocumented or immigrant, which helped shield the center from unwanted attention. Still, other campuses preferred to use the terms undocumented or immigrant in order to disaffiliate from references to state and federal legislation and challenge the politics of deservingness implied within the term dreamer.

“It was defined by our students. We had focus groups with our students because it is their [center]. I wanted to make sure that they felt that they were part of the decision making. And we have tried to involve students as much as possible because, at the end of the day, like I always say, this is for them and we need to make sure that when we create anything it is with the students in mind.”

-USRC practitioner at a two-year institution

Initially, some USRCs were student-run and operated with no commitment from the institution aside from physical space. Over time, however, as institutions recognized how changes in the socio-political climate were impacting undocumented student success, investments were made by institutions to establish a full- or part-time position. The passage of tuition and financial aid policies at the state level, in addition to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program at the federal level, certainly served as important impetuses for the creation of staff positions. The visibility of undocumented students on campus via organizing also helped. Similarly, as undocumented student services coordinator positions and USRCs emerged at peer and aspirational institutions, colleges and universities began to identify a need to keep pace with these trends in order to continue to attract, support, retain, and matriculate undocumented students.

“One of the big things they did a couple of years ago was to push for a dream center...we talked to [other campuses]. [These campuses] have dreamer resource centers that have been established for a longer time, so that was kind of one our selling points, ‘like you know, look at our peer institutions. They also have dream centers and we don’t and this is something we need to do.’ That was one of the many talking points for our student group. And then they really pushed for the center.”

-USRC practitioner at a four-year institution

Structure, Services, and Resources

Approaches to USRCs vary by context and are reflective of an institution's capacity, resources, population size, and organizational structure. For example, while most USRCs operate as standalone centers with specialized staff dedicated to undocumented students, others have been merged with multicultural student centers or offices for international students and use existing staff as de facto undocumented student specialists. What has been consistent about each of these models, however, is that institutional support for undocumented students is clearly defined and promoted. USRCs often create and sustain an extensive campus referral network and are able to provide customized support via partnerships both on- and off-campus. Given the breadth of services, it is not uncommon to see counselors, academic advisors, financial aid officers, and attorneys (among others) hold regularly scheduled office hours within USRCs. The following provides a list of services typically provided by USRCs:

Academic Advising

USRC practitioners work with students to manage extenuating circumstances or unexpected academic or personal challenges that may impact their studies while helping them progress toward degree completion. Students receive supplemental advising and tutoring, as well as opportunities to attend academic workshops and explore academic majors.

Counseling

In most centers, undocumented students can meet with counselors trained to deliver culturally sensitive and culturally relevant services. USRC counselors are trained to facilitate interventions and help undocumented students develop effective coping strategies. Creating opportunities for students to seek assistance without needing to fill out forms or make an appointment helps decrease stigma and cultivates trust; thereby ensuring that students are supported.

Financial Aid

USRC practitioners often work with financial aid officers to help eligible students fill out in-state tuition and state financial aid applications, when available. Additionally, some institutions also have partnerships with organizations such as TheDream.US, which provides scholarships for undocumented students. USRCs take a principal role in working with TheDream.US scholarship recipients to ensure their academic success.

Career Counseling

USRC practitioners often work with career services to identify occupational possibilities for students and alternative legal pathways to employment, such as entrepreneurship. Students are exposed to career options, including graduate school, and prepared for life after graduation.

Transfer Services

USRCs establish connections with community colleges and four-year institutions in the surrounding area to enhance students' understanding of the transfer process. USRCs for example, often work collaboratively to coordinate campus visits for students interested in transferring from community college to a four-year institution. The goal of these efforts is for undocumented students to be aware, not only of the processes and requirements for transfer, but also of the existing support structures post-transfer.

Legal Services

Some of the campuses work with their law schools or partner with local community non-profits to provide legal services for students. USRCs help connect students with legal professionals as much as possible. Attorneys provide free consultations, run DACA clinics, and help students identify alternative pathways for adjustment of status (e.g., U-visa, T-visa, VOWA, SIJS).

Undocu-Ally training

Focusing on the development of cultural competence and the reduction of prejudice, Undocu-Ally trainings deepen student, staff, and faculty's understanding of how to best support undocumented students socially and professionally. Trainings are often led by students and individualized for specific departments or functional areas.

There are also several resources provided by USRCs that similarly enable undocumented student success. Community partnerships similarly help facilitate the accessibility of many of these resources:

Lending Library/ Book Vouchers

USRCs obtain donated books, purchase books, or a combination of these strategies to build lending libraries. Students are able to borrow books for a school term at no cost. Additionally, some USRCs provide book vouchers to help defray the cost of books for students.

Lending technology

At a few institutions, students are able to check-out laptops or tablets. The goal is to support students' ability to access technology off-campus.

Emergency grants

Some USRCs provide emergency grants to cover expenses related to emergency situations, including medical, housing, transportation, detention, etc. These grants are intended to relieve some of the stress associated with unexpected circumstances.

Food Pantry/Meal Vouchers

Undocumented students can experience food insecurity as a result of income instability. For this reason, some USRCs provide meal vouchers and/or connect with local partners to provide access to a food pantry on campus.

Parking Permits/Bus Passes

For students with substantial commutes, locating reliable transportation on campus can negatively impact their academic success. For this reason, some USRCs provide students with parking permits or bus passes to alleviate transportation issues.

Scholarships

Some USRCs have fundraisers to establish scholarships for undocumented students. At other institutions, USRCs work with their institution's foundation or development department to create a fund for scholarships and cultivate donors. Scholarships are often used to cover the cost of educational expenses or the fees associated with DACA renewals.

Work-study

Because undocumented students are ineligible for federal work-study, some institutions have allocated state, institutional, and private monies to establish institutional work-study programs for students. Such programs provide students with opportunities to work on campus part-time while attending school.

Internships

Regardless of employment authorization, internships play a key role in providing undocumented students with an opportunity to gain practical experience and career development. Recognizing that internships are often unpaid, USRCs provide students with scholarships or honorariums to help compensate for the time invested in these opportunities.

Mentorship

USRCs are meant to be physical spaces where undocumented students can gather, socialize, and obtain support from institutional agents who are often also immigrants. This set-up facilitates opportunities for peer mentorship. However, USRCs also strive to formalize mentoring relationships by pairing undocumented students with staff and faculty who can provide guidance and support based on common goals and interests.



SOURCE: Students celebrate Cal Poly Pomona's first undocumented students' course in the Ethnic Studies Department. Photo provided by Mike Manalo-Pedro, Coordinator of the Bronco Dreamers Resource Center at Cal Poly Pomona.

Staffing and Responsibilities

USRCs are not influential simply because they offer services and resources to undocumented students. Rather, they have a powerful positive impact on the lives of undocumented students and students of mixed-status families because their staff perform complex multi-sector work. Most USRCs operate under the leadership of one full-time coordinator or director, while others utilize one or two part-time positions to fulfill similar responsibilities. Additionally, many of these positions are filled by individuals with DACA, which provides a level of relatability for working with undocumented students. The following provides a snapshot of the scope of USRC practitioners' everyday responsibilities:

USRC practitioners serve as content experts for the institution. Practitioners in these positions are often responsible for staying abreast of changes to immigration and education policy, relaying that information to students and other institutional stakeholders, and programming reactively in order to respond to students' needs. Within leadership meetings, USRC practitioners are charged with representing the perspective of undocumented students and formulating institutional responses to changes in the socio-political context.

"The biggest thing is that this position is brand new. We are really charting the path forward...It is very difficult to have this position because the administration doesn't know how to respond to different things. It doesn't know how to be supportive of undocumented students and it is our job within this position to change the culture and change the systems."

-USRC practitioner at a four-year institution

USRC practitioners also serve as institutional experts. They serve as the primary responders when undocumented students' needs are not met or support is not provided. Practitioners in these positions describe having to be knowledgeable of different institutional processes and functional areas in order to find solutions to unestablished institutional procedures for undocumented students. USRC practitioners educate individuals and departments about the nuances of their work and challenge and shape admissions, financial aid, registrar, and hiring processes to ensure the inclusion of undocumented students.

"Admissions, they told the students, 'no, you don't qualify. You have to pay out-of-state fees.' And right away, the student came to us and we said, 'no, no, no, admissions and financial aid. Remember, there is this new law.' So that prompted them to then talk to the right person in the Chancellor's office to ensure that we code the person correctly."

-USRC practitioner at a four-year institution

Given limited budgets and state and federal restrictions regarding the use of public funds, USRC practitioners often also serve in the capacity of partnership building. Practitioners rely on strategic partnerships with local, state, and national organizations to increase their resources and advance their centers' work. Socially embedded, mutually-beneficial relationships help expand and streamline the availability of resources and students' connections to opportunities. Such partnerships help foster specialized and individualized support for students.

"We partnered with a local non-profit immigration legal aid provider to sponsor free DACA clinics. So something like that, like the free DACA clinics, were so powerful. I mean, first of all we help some of our students either apply for the first time or renew their DACA, which was huge. But, by doing it through the college and through the dream center, we also provided opportunities for students who were allies to assist in that, to come and volunteer. And of course those benefits were extended to the community. And we partnered with a local non-profit group of attorneys who I think also really grew from the experience."

-USRC practitioner at a two-year institution

Related to community relations is USRC practitioners' work with outreach. In addition to working with current students, some USRC practitioners conduct presentations for local high schools and counselors to help individuals understand undocumented students' pathways to higher education. USRCs work with local communities to help prospective students apply to the institution and relay the message that undocumented students can go to college. USRC practitioners make students aware of existing resources and connect them with support networks in order to facilitate their pathways to higher education.

"High school students were coming in not knowing how to do the [in-state tuition] affidavit, not having done the [state] Dream Act application, so we said, 'okay, we need to start earlier.' So then we started going out to the high schools. And then we are trying to do case management, so we make contacts with the high schools so we can track them as they are coming in. What else do we do? We work with our community. We go out to community events and table. We try to have as much of a presence as possible."

-USRC practitioner at a two-year institution

Above all, USRC practitioners perform emotional labor in their everyday interactions with students. Emotional labor involves supporting students as they experience discrimination, marginalization, and trauma. It means forming genuine and caring relationships with students, and responding to their emotional states as changes in the sociopolitical environment take place. Yet, as DACA recipients, many USRC practitioners who perform emotional labor often do so while simultaneously navigating the effects of institutionalized oppressions on themselves.



SOURCE: Cal Poly San Luis Obispo's Dream Center, photo taken by Katherine Zevallos Pastor

The Benefits of USRCs for Students and Institutions

There are several benefits to the development of USRCs at institutions of higher education. At the top of the list is the way USRCs help students feel. Visible support structures help students feel welcomed and supported. Such spaces provide students with an opportunity to form a community among similarly situated others. Being able to interact with individuals (both students and staff) with similar experiences empowers students to feel more comfortable asking for help. USRCs help validate students' experiences and procure a sense of belonging, thereby enhancing their educational outcomes.

"You know I always go back to the first semester that we were in the new space. You know, when the students were coming in. I remember this one quote from this student as simple, as clear as it is, I think it's so powerful. The quote was, you know they said, 'wow, we are legit now.' That always stuck with me... I think it does a lot for the sense of belonging. Thinking and feeling this is your university and that your university, in some shape or form is committed to you and your identity...to who you are and to your family. While we still have a way to go, I think it does something for a lot of our students and even our staff and faculty..."

-USRC practitioner at a four-year institution

Additionally, by allocating services and resources, USRCs not only help attract students to the institution, but also help students see options to persist. USRCs signal an institution's prioritization of inclusive excellence and help formalize institutional supports that affirm its status as an undocu-friendly campus. By centralizing undocumented student services, USRCs help practitioners intentionally work with undocumented students and intervene when necessary. By tracking students and providing resources, USRCs are able to assist students from admissions to graduation, thereby improving persistence, retention, and graduation rates.

"If you provide resources to students and help them along the way, then they will continue to go—also building a better reputation for your institution. I know that there is sometimes the conversation about, 'oh, we are worried about getting more students. We are not retaining our students.' Right? If you help these students, you know, they themselves will do the outreach. They will tell other people where the resources are and to come. Building that relationship is definitely beneficial not just to the students but also to the institution as well."

-USRC practitioner at a two-year institution

Implications for Policy

The findings of this report yield several implications for policymakers. Recognizing the role of policymakers in driving national conversations and local implications for undocumented student success, the following recommendations include implications for developing and supporting USRCs:

1. Expand the creation of USRCs to institutions within states with high shares of the total immigrant population (e.g., TX, CA, NY, NJ, NV, FL)
USRCs can be found across California institutions of higher education and within a few other states throughout the U.S. A state's share of the total immigrant population highlights opportunities for institutions to intentionally support their communities and retain local talent. USRCs in states with high shares of the total immigrant population may provide the support undocumented students need to access, persist, and matriculate from local institutions of higher education.

2. Develop USRCs at institutions that extend higher education benefits to undocumented immigrants (e.g., TX, CA, NM, OR, WA, MN, CT)

USRCs are important to higher education practice, as changes in law, policy, and popular culture threaten to impose additional barriers to undocumented students' already limited access to higher education benefits, including in-state tuition and state-based financial aid. Because higher education benefits increase undocumented students' opportunities to enroll in higher education, institutions that extend such benefits should develop USRCs to support students from enrollment to graduation. For private institutions, access does not necessarily translate into student success without attention and commitment from the institution. Private institutions should be thinking about ways to support their undocumented students beyond domestic classification for tuition purposes.

3. Cultivate a USRC network

Policymakers should make a more concerted effort to cultivate relationships between existing and emerging USRCs across states. For example, policymakers can convene USRC coordinators annually so that they can share best practices and resources and build networks of support across universities, systems, and states. Such convening can broker connections between institutions that have successfully implemented a USRC model on their campus and those institutions that are in the process of developing one.

4. Increase funding for undocumented student services

Policymakers should support the implementation of USRCs across institutions of higher education. Supporting undocumented students through graduation is an investment for society at large. College graduates enrich the civic and economic life of their communities and contribute more in taxes than their peers with only a high school diploma. Because undocumented students are not eligible for federal financial aid and most types of state-based aid, it is incumbent upon institutions, systems, and states to designate funds for support structures, such as USRCs, to help undocumented students get to and through higher education.

Implications for Practice

The findings discussed in this report offer several implications for institutions with existing and emerging USRCs. These recommendations are also applicable to higher education practitioners at institutions where undocumented students are enrolled:

1. Center the voices of undocumented students

Institutions must include undocumented students' voices through the process of establishing USRCs. Undocumented students play an integral part of the history of the development of USRCs and the future success of such interventions on campus.

2. Leverage campus and community partnerships

Institutions should consider the role campus and community partnerships play in the success of USRCs. Partnerships, both on- and off-campus, expand the availability of resources for undocumented students and the capacity of the individuals coordinating this work.

3. Make a long-term investment in USRCs

USRCs epitomize educational interventions embedding long-term support for undocumented students as a matter of inclusive excellence. It is important to understand that even at the sight of any legislation that would provide a pathway to citizenship for some, there will always be individuals who will not qualify. For this reason, institutions should support long-term efforts to sustain USRCs as viable institutional supports for remaining socially embedded and culturally responsive to the needs of local communities.

4. Assess institutional context, capacity, and organizational structure

USRC models vary by institutional context, capacity, and organizational structure. Some have been created as stand-alone USRCs, while others have been merged with multicultural centers or offices for international students. Similarly, some institutions have created specialized undocumented student services positions, while others have committed a percentage of existing staff appointments to working specifically with undocumented students. Institutions should assess their institutional context, capacity, and organizational structure to identify the best approach toward institutionalizing undocumented student services on campus.

5. Increase the capacity of USRC practitioners

While having a space and a dedicated staff position is a victory already for several institutions, there is a need for additional staff support. Most centers operate under the leadership of one full-time coordinator acting in the capacity of a director. Others utilize one or two part-time positions to fulfill similar responsibilities. Given the number of students that USRCs attend to and the holistic approach the work requires, it is important for institutions to support USRCs with adequate staffing and space conducive to the multifaceted work USRC practitioners perform.

6. Develop sustainable funding opportunities

Institutions have funded USRCs through various approaches. Student government associations have been one source by allocating a student fee or designating funding to support undocumented student services. Another source has been institutional funding for programming via an institution's division of student affairs. System-level and regional/district level funding represents a third source, whereby systems or districts make renewable commitments to fund USRCs for a period of time. Lastly, institutions can also work with their foundation or development office to garner private donors via philanthropy. Some institutions, for example, have established matching funds mechanisms to incentivize donors. Institutions must consider multiple funding opportunities to sustain the work of USRCs.

7. Engage allies

Institutions may consider convening task forces or advisory boards for the purpose of engaging allies and supplementing the work of USRCs. USRC task forces or advisory boards may be composed of community partners and institutional agents who are interested in direct opportunities for enhancing the scope of USRCs. Some examples include leading fundraising activities to support the development of USRC scholarships and emergency grants or leading the work of Undocu-ally workshops to increase the reach and impact of this work. Task forces and advisory boards can help increase the capacity of USRC practitioners when institutional budgets are prohibitive of additional paid positions.

“A lot of people in student affairs come to us and ask ‘how can we help?’ which sometimes is not that most helpful thing to say, right? What we find most helpful is when people come to us with ideas. For example, when [one department] came and was like, ‘can we organize a 5k to raise funds for undocumented students? Would that be helpful?’ Yes. You know, [another department], ‘can we host an immigration Know Your Rights workshop where we invite local immigration attorneys? Would that be helpful?’ Yes! So, when people come to us with ideas, that is the most incredible thing because we already have so much on our plate that coming up with stuff for people to do takes a lot of energy and mental capacity and time. What we have learned, being in this institution, is that when people come to us with ideas, that is magic!”

-USRC practitioner at a four-year institution

REFERENCES

- ¹Zong, J. & Batalova, J. (2016, April 14). Frequently requested statistics on immigrants and immigration in the United States. Migration Policy Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states#Unauthorized%20Immigrants>
- ²Passel, J.S., & Lopez, M.H. (2012). Up to 1.7 million unauthorized immigrant youth may benefit from new deportation rules. The Pew Hispanic Center. Retrieved from <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/08/14/up-to-1-7-million-unauthorized-immigrant-youth-may-benefit-from-new-deportation-rules/>
- ³Teranishi, R., Suárez-Orozco, C., & Suárez-Orozco, M. (2015). In the shadows of the ivory tower: Undocumented undergrads and the liminal state of immigration reform. Los Angeles: Institute for Immigration, Globalization, and Education, UCLA.
- ⁴Dougherty, K., Nienhusser, H. K., & Vega, B. (2010). Undocumented immigrants and state higher education policy: The politics of in-state tuition eligibility in Texas and Arizona. *The Review of Higher Education*, 34(1), 123-173.
- ⁵Gildersleeve, R. E., Rumann, C., & Mondragon, R. (2010). Serving undocumented students: Current law and policy. In J. Price (Ed.), *Understanding and Supporting Undocumented Students. New Directions for Student Services*, 131 (pp. 5–18). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- ⁶Muñoz, S. M. (2016). Undocumented and unafraid: Understanding the disclosure management process for undocumented college students and graduates. *Journal of College Student Development*, 57(6), 715-729.
- ⁷Contreras, F. (2009). Sin papeles y rompiendo barreras: Latino students and the challenges of persisting in college. *Harvard Educational Review*, 79(4), 610-631.
- ⁸Gasman, M., Castro Samayoa, A., Boland, W. C., Washington, A., Jimenez, C., & Esmieu, P. (2016). *Investing in student success: The return on investment of Minority Serving Institutions*. Philadelphia, PA: Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions.