Access and Success Issues for Undocumented Students

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College Access Challenge Grant Network Meeting
Undocumented Students: Who are they?

- Born outside of the United States
  - many have lived in this country for a significant portion of their lives,
  - Reside in the US without the legal permission of the federal government.

- Many students and their families entered the country legally on tourist or work visas and chose to stay in the US after their visas expired. Others entered without any form of documentation.
“Illegal Aliens”

- 250,000 Undocumented People in Colorado (5.8%)
- 81% of Undocumented People are of Latino Decent (57% Mexican)
- 8,000 Undocumented 18-24 year olds in CO high school grads or GED recipients
- Highest Dropout Rate
Undocumented Students:
Why don’t they just apply for their green cards?

• Existing avenues for gaining legal status are fairly restrictive

• Generally, someone must be sponsored by a close relative who is already a citizen or resident, or by an employer

• Even if the student has a close relative (e.g. sibling, spouse) to sponsor, he/she may still need to wait several years to apply
Challenges

- Lack of Academic Preparation
- High Poverty
- Feeling of Alienation
- Low Expectations
- Lack of Resources and Guidance
- Lack of Identity
High School Dropout Rates

Historical Legislation

- **Plyler v. Doe (1982)**
  - U.S. Supreme Court decision that granted undocumented students the right to “compulsory” public education in the U.S.

- **Illegal Immigration and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA)**
  - §505: Discouraging language for states to provide higher education “benefits” to undocumented students.

- **Higher Education Act of 1965**
  - Legal residency requirement for federal aid.
**Education “Pipeline” in Colorado**

% of Enrolled Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>K-12</th>
<th>2-Yr Colleges</th>
<th>4-Yr Colleges</th>
<th>BA Degrees Awarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Challenges - Colorado Law**

- **“HB 1023”** (CRS. 24-76.5-101 et. seq.)
  - Prohibits all “public benefits” including postsecondary benefits
    - Exception for federal mandates (K-12 education)

- **Effect on Immigrant Postsecondary Education**
  - Significantly higher tuition rates
  - Denied access to College Opportunity Fund
  - State financial aid prohibited
Tuition Prohibitively High

- Average annual income for an undocumented immigrant family: $27,400
  - 40% lower than the average CO family

- 57% of immigrant children in Colorado below the federal poverty level

- Out-of-State Tuition Rates are
  97% - 560% higher than in-state rates
Efforts

- Higher Education Access Alliance
- Private Scholarships
  - Volunteer
  - Grades
  - Letters of Recommendation
- Accelerating Students Through Concurrent Enrollment (ASCENT)
- Post-Secondary Education Options
- Colleges with Affordable Tuition
Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors – DREAM Act

- Undocumented Students living in US at least 5 yrs
- In-State Tuition
  - Repels 505 of IIRIRA
- Eligible for Some Financial Aid
- 6 Year Conditional Status
- Pathway to Legal Residency
Negative Effects

- 5% of undocumented high school graduates go to college
- 67% of their peers go on to college
- CO ranks 42nd among states in sending Latino/a students to college
- Only 11% of undocumented immigrants age 25 – 64 have college degrees
Colorado high school graduation rates by demographic

- Latino/a: 57%
- Native American: 58.9%
- African American: 65.4%
- Caucasian: 82%
- Asian: 83.5%

Graduation rate
A State Solution: Tuition Equity

- 30 states have considered legislation since 2001
- 10 states have enacted tuition equity laws
States that have successfully enacted tuition equity laws.

States that have successfully enacted tuition equity laws and allow access to financial aid for undocumented students.
Resources

- Private Scholarships
  - Volunteer
  - Grades
  - Letters of Recommendation
- Accelerating Students Through Concurrent Enrollment (ASCENT)
- Post-Secondary Education Options
- Colleges with Affordable Tuition
Scholarships

- Hispanic Annual Salute
- Latin American Educational Foundation
- Colorado Educational Services and Development Association
- Stephenson Scholarship
- International Scholarship Fund
- La Raza Youth – Nuestra Gente
- Comcast Scholarship – One per school
- Chicano Organization and Research in Education
Other Fundraising Opportunities

- Graduation Party
- Letters
  - Volunteering
- Side Jobs
- Church
- Any other suggestions?
Colleges In Colorado

- **Metro State College**
  - Extended Campus

- **Adams State College**
  - Offers up to $5,000 through their Good Neighbor Scholarship for out-of-state students
    - Undocumented students are considered out-of-state students

- **University of Denver**
  - Anonymous donor offers approximately a full-ride scholarship for an outstanding academic undocumented student. *When applying to DU, undocumented students should mark the box: international student.*

- **Fort Lewis College**
  - Students are considered out-of-state for residency, but can qualify for academic merit scholarships
Friendly Neighboring States/Schools

New Mexico

- Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) schools in NM will consider CO high school graduates to be WUE students.
  - 150% of in-state resident rate (usually much lower than the out-of-state rate). See WUE website for a list of WUE schools in New Mexico: http://wue.wiche.edu/
- New Mexico Highlands University, Las Vegas, NM
  - offer a four-year scholarship that reduces tuition to in-state rates + $200 book stipend per year for students who have a 3.5+ GPA and 20 ACT OR 3.0+ GPA and 23 ACT (must maintain a 3.0 GPA + 12 hours per semester to keep for 4 years).
- New Mexico Junior College, Hobbs, NM
  - Out-of-state tuition is only $1250 for the year + they offer housing and meals on campus for approximately $4000 for a complete school year.
- Santa Fe Community College
  - If students register as an out-of-state student, the early bird rate is $70 per credit hour, or $2100 for 30 credits for the year.
  - They do not have housing; however, Santa Fe CC is a wonderful campus and the city is a beautiful and fun place to live.
Friendly Neighboring States/Schools

Nebraska

- **Western Nebraska Community College**
  - Multiple locations within a short distance drive from Denver
  - $78 per credit hour (approx. $2400 tuition for a 30-credit year).

- 17% Hispanic population at the school and many of their students are undocumented.

- Dorms and apartments available where students can live for approximately $5,000 per year for room and board.
Friendly Neighboring States/Schools

Wyoming

- Casper College
  - Students eligible for WUE tuition per credit hour
  - Dorms available where the students can live – cheaper than attending college in Colorado.
  - However, there are very few/no Hispanics in the Casper area; therefore, undocumented students would be quite noticeable, a serious downside.
Highlights of ASCENT

- All “College Ready” students can take college courses starting at 9th grade.
- Students must have an Academic Plan prior to enrolling in College course work. Plan must be approved at school level and district level.
- Course work must be applicable toward earning a degree or certificate at the institution.
Highlights of ASCENT

- One course per semester of remedial math and English during their Senior year
- Students who complete 12 college credits by end of senior year, qualify for 5th year status.
  - Student must meet all graduation requirements, by end of senior year, be college ready, admitted to the college, with no remediation.
- Tuition level set by the State, no higher than community college rate. Fees may be the responsibility of the student.
Highlights of ASCENT

- Student must repay the school district for unsuccessful completion of course, i.e. dropping a course after drop date, failing a courses.

- Local school district is not required to provide transportation to post secondary institution.

- 6th year condition: If student is within 15 credits of completion and is F&R lunch student. Student may apply for waiver.
ASCENT for Undocumented Students

- Potentially Earn An Associates Degree
  - Advising must start early
  - Student must be aware of responsibilities
  - Parents must be involved
Questions?