

INNOVATION GRANT RESEARCH REPORT:

**Working Together to Improve Campus Climate for
Undocumented AB540 Students at UC Berkeley**

PART C: INTERVIEW PROJECT

Principal Investigators:

Prof. Lisa García Bedolla
School of Education & Center for Latino Policy Research
lgarciab@berkeley.edu

Prof. Evelyn Nakano Glenn
Ethnic Studies, Gender and Women's Studies
& Center for Race and Gender
englenn@berkeley.edu

University of California, Berkeley

Graduate Student Researcher:

Kevin Escudero, M.A., Ph.D. Candidate
Department of Ethnic Studies
kescudero@berkeley.edu

Campus and Community Partners:

Alisa Bierria (Associate Director, Center for Race & Gender)
Elisa Diana Huerta (Director, Multicultural Community Center)
Lupe Gallegos-Díaz (Director, Chicano/Latino Student Development)
Jere Takahashi (Director, Asian Pacific American Student Development)
Rising Immigrant Scholars through Education (R.I.S.E.)
Asian Students Promoting Immigrant Rights through Education (A.S.P.I.R.E.)

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~ Literature Review ~

Academic research regarding the experiences of undocumented youth in higher education highlights prevailing theoretical models and hypotheses in the field as well as areas that warrant further study. This body of scholarship, one that has emerged from work conducted in the past decade, is still under development, but has provided important insight in terms of what directions educators and policy makers should take when proposing programs and building infrastructure to assist undocumented youth in navigating life post-K-12 education. This project, through conducting interviews with self-identified Asian and Latina/o undocumented students at UC Berkeley, seeks to add to this literature in the fields of education, student development, sociology and ethnic studies. An important contribution of this study is that our findings are the first to draw upon Asian and Latina/o student experiences. Works of other scholars have specifically focused on the experiences of Latino students (Abrego, 2006; Seif, 2006; Gonzales, 2008; Abrego & Gonzales 2010). Recently, however, a growing number of scholars have sought to foreground the experiences of Asian undocumented students in relation to Latina/o undocumented students (Chan, 2010; Buenaista & Tran, 2010; Buenavista & Gonzales, 2011).

The concept of racial “microaggressions” on college campuses presents a theoretical framework for understanding the marginalization experiences of Students of Color in the college/university setting. Microaggressions can be defined as “subtle, stunning, often automatic and non-verbal exchanges which are ‘put downs’ of [individuals] by offenders”;¹ and can be applied not only to the experiences of students of color, but also to other student populations such as LGBT/queer students, immigrant students and others who do not fit the normative definition of a university/college student today. According to Perez Huber et. al.,² microaggressions cause unnecessary stress to students of color, privileging white students and causing students of color achieve lower rates of educational success.³ Though instances of discrimination and racism directed towards undocumented students at Cal may be publicly denounced by university officials, this scholarship points to the ever present nature of these factors and points to the importance of not only incorporating the needs of undocumented students in the formation of institutional infrastructure, but also to examine more closely the day to day interactions between undocumented students and their peers, faculty and staff on campus. Members of the undocumented student community at Cal and other college campuses oftentimes have subtle interactions and exchange with their peers and other individuals that cause unnecessary stress. While some of this stress can be due to their status, it is also due to the anxiety that goes with having to hide or reveal their status. Also, many students also must deal with multiple manifestations of microaggressions as students of color, as immigrant students, as working class individuals and so on. Understanding the daily as well as cumulative effects of microaggressions undocumented students face on multiple fronts was a principal focus of this innovation grant study with the over-arching goal of working to improve campus climate for

¹ Perez Huber, et al. & Solórzano, Daniel, Walter R. Allen, and Grace Carroll. (2002). “Keeping Race in Place: Racial Microaggressions and Campus Racial Climate at the University of California, Berkeley.” *Chicano Latino Law Review* (23), p. 17.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*, p. 16.

this vulnerable student population. Additionally, particular emphasis was placed on the role of institutional actors on the ability of a student to realize his/her full potential at UC Berkeley by fully utilizing all resources available at the university.

Furthermore, what some have called the “myth of meritocracy”⁴ has provided the illusion to students that if they only work hard enough, they will somehow be able to legalize their status, yet this is not necessarily true. The DREAM Act, a bill that if passed could provide students with a path to legalization,⁵ has been introduced multiple times since 2001, the most recent being in 2010. As a result of the federal government’s inability to pass any sort of immigration reform legislation, sociologist Leisy Abrego has found that lack of legal status affects the life outlook and future aspirations of the students she interviewed. According to Abrego, this in turn affects students’ educational achievement and that of their younger siblings during high school.⁶ The study also showed that undocumented students face significant financial barriers to going to school and that these financial barriers cause feelings of hopelessness and unfair treatment.⁷ For the innovation grant research project we asked students about their motivations for going to college, the resources and networks to be successful in making the transition from high school to UC Berkeley as well as the impact of their older siblings on their decision to pursue higher education.

Looking more closely at the impact of legal status and its impact on the adolescent development, sociologist Roberto Gonzales examines the transition into adulthood for the undocumented 1.5-generation.⁸ Of particular focus in Gonzales’ study were the ways in which K-12 public school education and immigration laws collectively shape the experiences of immigrant youth⁹ finding that public schooling during adolescence provides students with a buffer from undocumented life because they are able to experience inclusion in public schools.¹⁰ Though during the time undocumented youth spend in K-12 public schooling their immigration status does not directly limit the activities in which they are able to partake as compared to their peers, once students reach 16 years of age, that they begin to experience first-hand the exclusion as a result of their legal status.¹¹ It is important to note, however, that many youth find the lack of financial resources so severe that it serves as a prohibitive factor resulting in many undocumented young people deciding to leave school before graduating from high school or for those who do graduate, deciding not to apply to college.¹² Similar to Abrego’s

⁴ Negrón-Gonzales, G. (2009). “Hegemony, Ideology and Oppositional Consciousness: Undocumented Youth and the Personal-Political Struggle for Educational Justice.” Berkeley: ISSC Fellows Working Papers, Institute for the Study of Social Change.

⁵ For more specific information on the requirements and legislative history of the federal DREAM Act see the Migration Policy Institute’s report, “DREAM vs. Reality: An Analysis of Potential DREAM Act Beneficiaries,” which can be found at: <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/DREAM-Insight-July2010.pdf/>

⁶ Abrego, L. (2006). “I Can’t go to College Because I Don’t Have Papers’: Incorporation Patterns of Latino Undocumented Youth.” *Latino Studies*. p. 220.

⁷ *Id.*, p. 213.

⁸ Gonzales, R. (2011). “Learning to be Illegal: Undocumented Youth and Shifting Legal Contexts in the Transition to Adulthood.” *American Sociological Review*, 76(4): 602.

⁹ *Id.*, p. 603.

¹⁰ *Id.*, p. 608.

¹¹ *Id.*, p. 609.

¹² *Id.*, p. 611.

findings, Gonzales points to the prohibitive barrier legal status provides when students are unable to financially afford college, despite having aspirations or the ability to attend. Universities must therefore make themselves accessible to this student population if they truly desire to be inclusive of all eligible applicants, regardless of race, gender, class, sexual orientation *and* legal status. A key factor allowing undocumented youth to overcome the financial barrier and stigma of their legal status in pursuing higher education, Gonzales finds, are trusting relationships with teachers or other adults (high school/college counselors, faculty/staff and administrators).¹³

The networks undocumented youth utilize in order successfully make the transition from high school to college and navigating the college/university environment can be attributed to “undocumented student friendly” campus employees – faculty, staff, TAs/GSIs and counselors. Sociologist Laura E. Enriquez finds that undocumented Latina/o students are able to find “emotional, financial and informational resources from various social actors, primarily their family members, teachers and peers.”¹⁴ Limited by legal restrictions placed on public universities’ ability to allocate funding benefiting only undocumented students. Many undocumented youth, however, choose to attend public college/universities as tuition is more affordable than compared to private institutions. Paying out of pocket for tuition, undocumented students largely rely upon faculty/staff and administrative allies at public universities. The sheer number of undocumented students at public colleges/universities has also brought calls for administration and campus faculty/staff to develop programs for undocumented students as a part of fulfilling its mission of providing all students an equal opportunity to make full use of the resources at their institution. While many private institutions provide undocumented students with generous financial support there do not exist a critical mass of such students to warrant a call for institutionalized resources such as at a UC or CSU campus. Enriquez suggests that undocumented students need “highly specialized informational resources as a result of the institutional barriers created by their legal status”¹⁵ and that these students participate in “patchworking” by piecing together their various resources in order to meet a specific objective.¹⁶ In this report, generated from the 18 interviews conducted, we seek to provide an empirical basis for the recommendations as to what services/resources the university can and needs to provide for members of this student population in order for them to be treated fairly and equitably.

Thus far, it has been shown that the college campus is a hostile environment for undocumented students and that a lack availability of adequate financial resources to assist students in paying for college acts as a deterrent from the pursuit of higher education. In order to overcome these barriers, undocumented students must draw upon highly specialized networks of faculty/staff allies to find the necessary resources in order to be successful at the college/university level. Aside from documenting the struggles undocumented students face in pursuing higher

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ Enriquez, L. (2011). “‘Because We Feel The Pressure and We Also Feel the Support’: Examining the Educational Success of Undocumented Immigrant Latina/o Students.” *Harvard Educational Review*, p. 484.

¹⁵ *Id.*, p. 469.

¹⁶ *Id.*

education, student affairs professionals have also begun to develop resources for other student affairs staff on how to best serve the needs of the growing numbers of undocumented students in higher education. Jerry Price in his edited volume, *Understanding and Supporting Undocumented Students: New Directions for Student Services*,¹⁷ seeks to provide an overview of the different factors that influence the experiences of undocumented students in the college/university context.

With regards to the multiple navigations undocumented students must make once on the college campus to access resources that they may or may not be able to obtain, depending on university policy and state/federal law, Price makes clear that students must also cope with feelings of anxiety and despair as well as shame for their situation and proposes a set of recommendations to help mitigate these factors. Similar to the recommendations by the UC Berkeley Chancellor's Task Force,¹⁸ Price and his colleagues recommend establishing multicultural support programs and services that have a role in "affirming cultural pride, hope and dignity" of the students,¹⁹ developing a specific fundraising strategy specifically for members of this student population, establishing coalitions with community based organizations that advocate for immigrant rights and youth, expanding college outreach to reduce admission and matriculation problems of undocumented students and revamping health and clinically oriented services by training providers on socioemotional and sociohistorical experiences of undocumented students.²⁰ As will be discussed in the findings and recommendation sections of this report, mental health and counseling/psychological services for undocumented students is a great need on the UC Berkeley campus and the limited number of staff capable of assisting students facing these issues is an extremely pressing need.

Echoing the recommendations outlined in the 2010 report issued by the Chancellor's Task Force on Undocumented Members of the On-Campus Community suggests, Price et. al. point to the responsibility of the college/university faculty, staff and administration to not only support undocumented students during their four or more years on campus, but to effectively prepare students for life after graduation. Suggestions include providing career center staff with training about the challenges undocumented students face in finding/securing employment, that they know about the CA DREAM Act and other state/federal policies affecting students' prospects following graduation.²¹ Another suggestion is for counselors to become familiar with tuition laws for graduate school and the different rules about grants and fellowships. Career services could also assist students in becoming more effective networkers. Emphasizing the importance of career services/development for undocumented students in particular is vital given their limited options for employment and graduate studies after graduation from college.²²

¹⁷ Price, J. (Ed). (2010). *Understanding and Supporting Undocumented Students: New Directions for Student Services*. Wiley Periodicals.

¹⁸ Chancellor's Task Force on Undocumented Members of the On-Campus Community. (2011). "Recommendations to Chancellor Birgeneau." *UC Berkeley Division of Equity, Inclusion and Diversity*.

¹⁹ *Supra note 23*, p. 47.

²⁰ *Id.*, p. 48.

²¹ *Id.*, p. 61.

²² *Id.*, pp. 62-63.

Based on the theoretical frameworks formulated as to the needs of and strategies employed by undocumented students pursuing higher education the data from this report will add to currently existing models drawing upon data from UC Berkeley, the flagship institution of the University of California system and one of the largest higher education systems in the nation. Additionally, the demographics of the undocumented student population are extremely diverse across a variety of factors including race, gender, age and educational trajectory. Though it is expected that the experiences of undocumented AB540 students at UC Berkeley will fit the hypothesis and theoretical findings from scholars who have studied similar populations across the nation, this project adds to these studies a focus on a site that has been received little attention in the literature and places a significant emphasis not solely on undocumented Latina/o college students as other studies have done, but considers the experiences of undocumented Asian Pacific American (APA) youth who make up almost half of the undocumented student demographic at UC Berkeley and within the UC system.

~ Methodology ~

Participants for the project were recruited using snowball sampling as well as broad, general outreach strategies (listservs, bulletin boards and email postings) and all interactions with participants were designed to ensure the confidentiality of the participants' identities given the sensitive nature of the information being discussed. Students who were interested in being interviewed were asked to complete an online form accessible only to the three interviewers – Kevin Escudero, Elizabeth de la Torre and Chantiri Ramirez. After completing the online form a member of the interview team contacted each participant to schedule a date/time to conduct the interview. Once all interviews were completed, a team of three undergraduate research assistants transcribed the interviews and afterwards all audio files were deleted from the computers used to conduct the transcriptions. Names were not recorded in the transcripts, but instead pseudonyms were used therefore preventing the association of the transcript with the participant should it be accessed by someone not involved with the project and data collection process. Kevin Escudero, the Research Coordinator GSR and the other two interviewers each conducted approximately one-third of the interviews. Interviewers took between 1 ½ to 2 hours and followed a detailed interview protocol that can be found at the end of this section. Broadly speaking, participants were asked about the factors that led to them matriculate to UC Berkeley (whether from high school or community college), their process of acclimation to the Berkeley campus (utilization of student groups, clubs and organizations; support received from faculty/staff), interactions and experiences navigating the university's administrative bureaucracy, experiences in the classroom and in relation to their major, social integration and mental and physical health.

Below is a table outlining the basic characteristics (name, gender, age, major, birthplace and transfer status) of each participant. While we acknowledge that 18 interviews may not constitute an entirely representative sample of the estimated 115 graduate and undergraduate undocumented students at UC Berkeley in obtaining the sample, we sought to provide one well balanced in terms of gender, age, major, national origin and transfer student status. As

recorded in the chart, the majority of the participants were current Cal students except for three alumni and almost all but one were undergraduate students. This mirrors the University of California Office of the President (UCOP) estimates of undocumented students at UC Berkeley and in the UC system in general.²³ A significant issue we encountered in the distribution of participants was recruiting Asian Pacific American (APA) participants that reflected the breakdown of Latina/o and APA undocumented students at Cal an estimated 45% and 48% respectively. Three of the 18 surveyed were born in Asian countries, while 15 were from Latin American countries. Of the students born in Latin American countries, almost all were born in Mexico. In terms of gender identification of those sampled, 11 were male and seven female demonstrating a slight underrepresentation of female participants. Based on the table, it is also important to note that of the students interviewed, many chose to major in public policy, political science or other social science/interdisciplinary disciplines mentioning their intention to work as policy makers, lawyers and in community based organizations/non-profits advocating for increased rights for the greater immigrant community. However, this does not negate the fact that four of the 18 students majored in the sciences and two of the 18 were “Pre-Med” students intending to pursue a career in medicine and healthcare. Lastly, seven of the 18, nearly half of the participants were community college transfer students. Students provided varied reasons for attending community college: some because they felt that they did not have the grades or qualifications to apply to Cal directly from high school while others were accepted to UC Berkeley directly from high school, but did not attend at that time as they were unable to afford tuition and unaware of the financial resources available to them as AB540 students. Multiple interviewees had been accepted to UC Berkeley directly out of high school and chose to attend community college out of financial necessity. Many students also mentioned that with the recent passage of the California State DREAM Act (AB130 and 131) and with increased efforts by staff in the campus Financial Aid and Scholarships Office coupled with greater visibility of undocumented students on campus, there can be increased retention and matriculation of such students directly to Cal.

²³ *Supra* note 9.

~ Interview Participants Demographic Table ~

Name²⁴	M/F	Age	Major	Birthplace	Transfer Student?
David	M	22	Gender & Women's Studies	Mexico	Yes
Maricela	F	19	Political Science	Mexico	No
Felipe	M	21	Sociology	Mexico	Yes
Henry	M	22	Political Science	South Korea	Yes
Alex	M	23	Anthropology	Mexico	Yes
Esmeralda	F	22	Ethnic Studies	El Salvador	No
Jennifer	F	21	Anthropology	Mexico	No
Lorena	F	21	Biology	Mexico	No
Monica	F	25	Law	Mexico	No
Anna	F	22	Linguistics	Mexico	Yes
Steven	M	21	Molecular Cell Biology	Thailand	No
Juan	M	29	Latin American History	Mexico	Yes
Eduardo	M	20	Political Science	Mexico	No
Paul	M	22	Political Science	Philippines	Yes
Michael	M	21	Engineering	Peru	No
Marianna	F	19	Undecided	Mexico	No
Andrés	M	20	Public Policy	Mexico	No
Héctor	M	23	Molecular Cell Biology	Mexico	No

²⁴ Note: All names used are pseudonyms in order to protect the identity of the interviewee.

~ Research Findings ~

Drawing on 18 in-depth interviews conducted with current and recently graduated UC Berkeley undocumented AB540 students we have identified the following nine themes around which to organize our findings: family, attending community college, the role of older siblings in the pursuit of higher education, bureaucratic interactions at the university, funding undergraduate education, identity, “coming out” to faculty/staff, mental health & activism, the role of community based organizations in supporting students and post-college life. These themes represent a thread of common issues raised by multiple undocumented students interviewed as part of this project and represent important aspects of undocumented student experiences that warrant greater attention by university staff and administration as they seek to develop policies and resources to better meet the needs of this segment of the student population. Compared to the findings of the 2011 Chancellor’s Task Force on Undocumented Members of the On-Campus Community, our report’s findings are drawn from interviews with students that represent an extremely diverse-cross section of the UC Berkeley undocumented student community as depicted the table below. These findings also examine more closely the multiple facets of undocumented students’ lived experiences and discusses the manner in which such factors need to be accounted for in university policy/decision making.

Family: Childhood Separation and Dislocation

While many UC Berkeley students and in general college/university students around the nation draw financial and emotional support from immediate and extended family members, this is not necessarily true for undocumented students. Throughout their lives, undocumented youth find themselves separated from their families and loved ones, in particular during the early years of their lives when their parents make the decision whether or not to migrate to the United States. For undocumented students, constant family support is not always readily available and these students place important emphasis on peer networks and many times rely on supportive faculty/staff allies for this type of support.

Describing memories of his childhood in Thailand and his parent’s decision to migrate to the United States, Steven remarked,

I was born in Thailand and so I grew up there, in Thailand with all my family until I was nine years old and finished third grade. There my parents were business owners and we had a construction company. Then Thailand’s economy in 1998 became really bad for everyone so businesses went down and [my parents] had to declare bankruptcy. Because of that you know they had a few choices and they eventually decided to try to come to the U.S. My parents came first and they worked in restaurants and I, my brother and my sister and I, stayed in Thailand for six months more with our grandma before joining our parents in the U.S.

Similar to Steven’s family’s experience, Henry remembers staying behind in South Korea, while

following his parents' divorce, his mom traveled to the U.S. to see what possibilities were available should the family decide to relocate. Similar to Steven, the family initially re-located due to the poor economic situation in Asia in the 1980s and 90s:

I came to U.S. from South Korea at the age of 11 with my mom and older sister. It was June 25th 2001. My mom came here before us just to settle in, two months beforehand and then my older sister and I took a plane and then came here in June 2001. I guess back in South Korea one of the main reasons that we came [to the US] was because of financial difficulties. Our family used to own a Japanese restaurant business, but it didn't work out and we eventually had to file for bankruptcy. After the divorce between my mom and dad, I lived with my mom and older sister. We were trying to figure out how to continue living in South Korea and a lot of people, not only our family, were facing similar issues because of the IMF's [International Monetary Fund's] impact on the South Korean economy; it was a mess. My mom talked to family and relatives about potentially moving to America, and one day my mom asked me about, if we [my sister and I] were comfortable to move to the United States. I was very hesitant to say yes because obviously I didn't know anything about language or American culture and it was all of a sudden, but I think she had already made a decision and talked to a lot of folks about it and potential opportunities in the U.S.

Like Steven's family, Henry's parents consulted their children regarding the decision whether or not to remain in the U.S. and become undocumented or to return to Thailand where his parents would be jailed for evading taxes and debt collectors:

At some point before we moved our parents had told us [my siblings and me], 'What do you think about staying here?' and we were like, 'Wait what do you mean?' and then they tried to be very honest and straightforward as much as possible telling us about our family's financial situation where either we go back and then my parents would probably have to go to jail or we could stay [in the US] and try to make it work. So we stayed in [city] and my parents worked as a waiter and waitress in Thai restaurants.

Therefore, although youth may have varying understandings of their family's legal situation, Steven's experience is illustrative of how even at an early age young children are exposed, even if in a limited way, to a partial understanding of the implications of their legal status. This early exposure to the possible implications of their status later culminates with the decision to apply to college, fill out the FAFSA, or obtain a driver's license, when students are forced to confront their parents and have conversations about the actual limitations of not having legal status in

the U.S.

Recounting her own experience migrating, Anna and her parents initially chose to move to the United States due to financial and economic hardship, but traveled back and forth between Mexico and the U.S. Her father migrated first followed by Anna, her mother and her siblings. Later, the family decided to return to Mexico, while the father remained in the U.S. Eventually, because the father chose to stay in the U.S. where he could earn a better income and be paid higher wages and sent for his wife and children to join him. As a result, Anna grew up with limited interaction with her father, but also transnationally, attending school both in the U.S. and Mexico for a period of a few years each during the first few years of her educational experience. She recounts,

Growing up we were used to going back and forth [between Mexico and the U.S.]. My dad worked in the U.S. and then we joined him afterwards. I went to pre-school here [in the U.S.] and then went back to Mexico until I was in sixth grade. When we went back [to Mexico] the last time, in sixth grade, [my parents] said we were going back for good. I remember I was so sad. I was like, oh my god, I'm leaving my friends, and then, parting with my things and giving people things and stuff. So, that's when they told me we were going to stay there forever. But then my dad stayed in the U.S. while my mom, siblings and I returned to Mexico and then a few months later my parents changed their mind and told us we were going back to the U.S. because of my dad's job and his ability to find work here [in the U.S.] but not in Mexico...

Aside from parents migrating first and children following, many spend some or all of their childhoods apart from their parents as fathers and mothers must leave children in their birth countries while they venture to the U.S. to see if re-settling is a possibility. If so, they must search for jobs, find housing and to orient themselves with the local community before returning to bring the children or sending word to a relative/family member to bring the children to join the family.

Maricela stayed in her home state of Oaxaca with her grandmother while her parents traveled to the US with her younger siblings and joined the family later on only to find that she did not see her parents as parents and because both of them were constantly at work, she ended up caring for her younger siblings acting as their mother, not older sister. Reflecting on her experience migrating to the US, Maricela recounts,

Well, I came here when I was nine years old; it was just a few months after I turned nine. It was forced; I didn't want to come here at all because I was living with my grandma in [village name], but because she was losing control of her drinking habits. My biological mother would hear about that and was really concerned. They [my parents and uncle]

talked to my grandma and threatened her: 'you have to bring her or else they're going to take her away from you and you're never going to see her again.' So it was decided. She said, 'I'll go, I'll make the trip there.' So my grandma crossed the way people usually do: through the desert. I crossed a different way. I didn't have the hard experience of how people go through really horrible things. It was really easy for me because I remember just, like, crossing the Tijuana checkpoint, showing identification. They didn't even look at me. I remember the border being so tall, and I was so tiny; they didn't even look down [in the car] to see who was there. My uncle just showed them my passport or, well, somebody else's passport that I was using, and then I remember crossing. Then we got into a taxi and my uncle just put me on his lap and I just fell asleep. Next thing I know, I woke up in Anaheim and I see my dad waiting for me outside a laundry room. It was really fast. I didn't even know where I was. I was just like 'my grandma's going to go, so I have to go.'

Upon her arrival in the US, Maricela had a very difficult time re-connecting with her siblings, whom although she had never met, was expected to bond with, and eventually care for on a daily basis. The adjustment to life with her family in the US was difficult and continues to prove challenging even today during her time at UC Berkeley. Maricela recounts,

Well, because I was integrated within the family at age nine everybody [all the kids] were confused. They were already an established family so it was kind of like if an outsider came in. If anything, with my mother, [now it's] like a best friend relationship because that was the only way that she could approach me. I couldn't picture her as a mom. Now when I go home I see her being more caring and trying to nurture me a lot; I see her trying to hug me or when I'm on the couch she's like 'oh come here, let me hug you.' She wants me to sit on her lap and stuff like that because I guess she never enjoyed having me as a little kid. She never experienced that with me; she did with my other sisters. So she wants to do that now, she wants me like a baby. It's really strange for me because I've never experienced that from her. With my father it's really weird. It's like my father and I are strangers and when he's sober we don't really talk, we just try to avoid any real sort of communication or contact. When he's drunk, we'll talk a little bit and he'll be like "oh, mija, te quiero mucho" [oh, my daughter, I love you very much] and things like that, but it's only when he's drunk.

For Maricela, not having her parents around to support her during her childhood and being forcefully separated from her grandmother who she saw as the parental figure in her life

proved to be extremely difficult. Even today, Maricela's family situation continues to frustrate her as her father has moved out of state, her mother has decided to follow her husband to the Mid-West and the children live on their own in Orange County while Maricela is at Berkeley upset as she cannot help care for her siblings and angered over her parents abandoning of the children.

Due to more stringent immigration laws and regulations at the state and federal levels, separation from parents and siblings is increasingly more common among undocumented youth and this causes significant social and emotional stress. Increasingly students have been forced to take semesters off from school when a parent or sibling who contributes to the family income is deported. Some students must take time off of school to raise money, not to return the following semester, but to pay the expenses for a parent who was deported and seeks to return to the U.S., to work and support the other members of the family household or to repay outstanding financial debts to the university.

In December of her senior year, having already submitted her UC applications and only six months from graduating high school, Lorena, her mother and her sister (then a Cal undergraduate student) were deported by ICE:

One morning during my senior year of high school ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] came to our house and took my sister, my mom and me; deporting us that same day. My brother and dad had left for work so they weren't deported. They took me from my house, knocked on a few other people's doors nearby since they had deportation orders as well, then to a detention center in San Francisco, and then an airport in Oakland. From the airport in Oakland they flew us to Arizona to collect people who were in jail, so there was a bunch of people with criminal records they were deporting, people getting out for drug possession, prostitution. Then they placed us in a van, alongside convicted felons and people serving sentences in jail, and dropped us off across the border in Tijuana.

Explaining the circumstances of her deportation, Lorena noted,

...In the late 1990's my family wanted to legalize their status so my father contacted a lawyer he had heard had helped other people get citizenship. At that time my family had been in the country for seven years. There was a law, I don't remember it well, but it was along the lines of if you're in deportation proceedings you could legalize if you'd been in the country for seven years or something like that. The law was about to end so the lawyer put in our application knowing that we wouldn't get accepted. He ended up committing fraud against a lot of people. So once we submitted our application it was denied so he

submitted an appeal. Once he submitted the appeal he split. We never heard from him; we couldn't contact his office. We found out later he did it to a lot of people. His license to practice had actually been taken away because of complaints of fraud.

Lorena was deported with her sister as she was preparing for school in the morning. Because Lorena, her sister and their mother were deported during the school's winter break closure, they were able to return, paying a *coyote* to smuggle them back into the country before the start of the next semester. This experience, however, of being deported, placed with individuals who had been convicted of criminal activity and only being allowed to take a bag full of belongings as she said goodbye to the house she grew up in and country she had lived in since age, brought about significant emotional stress that she Lorena had difficulty in working through as many of her peers and her sister's peers were unaware of their undocumented status in the U.S.

Juan's father, Jose, was deported the third week of the fall semester of his second year at Cal. As a result, Juan was forced to take a semester off to return home and help take care of his family and work to earn money as a construction worker to pay a *coyote* for his father, Jose, to be able to return. Juan's youngest brother was born in the US and therefore a U.S. citizen and his mother and middle-brother, both undocumented, all relied upon the income of his father who was employed as a construction worker. Describing the day his mother called and informed Juan that his father had been deported, Juan reflects,

I didn't travel home very often because I'm from San Diego and close to where I live there's a checkpoint. The last time I had seen my father was two months before he was deported. When I got the call from my mom I just broke down and all my friends were asking, 'What happened, is something wrong? Do you want to talk about it? But I just wanted to be alone. I couldn't take it; the stress of being a student and being far away from my family – I just needed to get away from it all.

Road Stop on the Path to Cal: Attending Community College & Transferring to UC Berkeley

Scholars have already observed that the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act only benefits a limited proportion of undocumented young people in the U.S. and that only 5-10% of undocumented youth pursue higher education, let alone graduate from colleges/universities.²⁵ This can help explain the discouragement undocumented high school students feel with regards to their futures. Many students wonder to themselves, "If there's no possibility of me getting a job because I don't have papers, then why try (to graduate)? Why aspire to earn a college degree?" This leads to many bright young students who have the

²⁵ Gonzales, R. (2007). "Wasted Talent, Broken Dreams: The Lost Potential of Undocumented Students. *In Focus*, 5(13). Immigration Policy Center of the American Immigration Law Foundation: Washington, D.C.

potential to graduate high school and pursue college electing to leave school because of a lack of awareness about post-K-12 and post-college opportunities. Of students interviewed, many were at the top of their graduating high school classes, but chose not to attend UC Berkeley for a variety of reasons, but largely due to the financial inaccessibility of a 4-year university education and a lack of awareness of financial resources available to students – private scholarships, payment plans, etc.

David, a fifth-year Gender and Women’s Studies major, was admitted to Cal as a freshman and describes his first impressions of the campus and reasons for withdrawing within the first week of classes:

So when I think about my experience about coming to Cal and when people ask was it a good experience or a bad experience, I can’t reply because when I was first admitted and came and to Berkeley I thought I was the only undocumented person in the world. I was admitted as a freshman and when I came to check out the campus I was amazed. I thought to myself, ‘this is just like Harry Potter Hogwarts, I love it!’ But I had no idea what Berkeley was and as soon as I set foot I had to leave because I was like wait ‘I can’t even pay for college what am I doing here?’ So I left back home [to Southern California].

David returned home to attend community college and later decided to re-apply to UC Berkeley after earning his A.A. degree. Nevertheless, he did not give up his dream of attending Cal and worked full time while in community college to have enough money to pay for tuition at UC Berkeley.

Commenting on his two years at the junior college, he remarked,

I went to community college, which I really absolutely hated. I hated it because I just felt this is messed up that I worked really, really hard in high school to get in college and here I was; I just felt like community college wasn’t my place. I felt like I treated community college as a burden. I was doing my two years and getting out of there. It [community college] felt like high school all over again for me and that’s why I didn’t like it. It didn’t feel intellectually stimulated and I even saw a lot of my high school classmates there and I was like ‘oh my god this is so embarrassing, why am I here?’ I just became really resentful about that, and started becoming really angry I not towards my mother about my status, really hating that I felt so limited because of it.

David’s experience at the community college was one of frustration for working so hard, but still being restricted in terms of his opportunity to excel and learn as a result of his legal status and embarrassment among former high school classmates who attended community college as

a result of not earning grades sufficient for acceptance into a school such as UC Berkeley. Wandering the campus unaware of the resources available to undocumented students and of the existence of a UC Berkeley campus undocumented student community, David could have possibly avoided withdrawing from the university and returning home had he been introduced to these resources and had such resources been institutionalized to effectively reach all undocumented AB540 students accepted to the university. Not informed of his ability to return to UC Berkeley as a student who had been accepted and initially enrolled in courses, David ended up re-applying as a transfer student and will graduated from UC Berkeley in May 2012.

Moreover, in the pipeline of undocumented students from high school to UC Berkeley, community college is an important site in which students become aware of their status as AB540 students and work, part or full time, to save up funds for when they transfer to a 4-year college/university. As David recounts,

Even though I really disliked community college I have to say it really did prepare me in terms of 'this is just snippet of what you will be encountering at a four-year institutions given your status.' It was through community college where I had gained an awareness that there were more undocumented students and that I needed to fill out the affidavit, and learned to apply for private scholarships. There was a lot of reformation that I took in from community college that really helped me once I got here, 'I know what I need now, I got to go find the people and start now working with people so I can get those resources,' so in that sense community college was a great transition.

Anna, similar to David, was accepted to UC Berkeley right out of high school, but because of her family's inability to pay for college and knowing that she was ineligible for state and federal financial aid, chose not to attend and instead completed one year at her local community college later applying and being accepted to UC Berkeley as a transfer student. Discussing her decision to attend community college instead of immediately enrolling at Cal, she commented,

I was accepted [to UC Berkeley] out of high school, but there was no way we [my family] were going to pay for it because then, again, I didn't even know that I could qualify for scholarships. My counselor, she was okay, but she didn't really know anything about that [being undocumented]. I don't think I really told her, so there were just no resources available to me. I was like, okay, well, I'll just do community college for a year and then transfer again.

Older Siblings: A Pivotal Influence in the Decision to Pursue Higher Education

For undocumented students having an older sibling seems to greatly heighten their ability not only to pursue post-secondary education, but also in terms of their success navigating on-campus resources/networks (Abrego, 2006). In particular for the case of UC Berkeley undocumented students, though some of the students' older siblings were the first in their families to attend college, few have graduated from 4-year colleges/universities and many are currently attending community colleges with the hopes of transferring to a UC campus in the near future. UC Berkeley undocumented students therefore have been able to learn about the process of navigating the higher education system from their older siblings, knowledge they are able to use to increase their success at 4-year colleges/universities.

Commenting on older his brother's assistance in navigating higher education as an undocumented student, Felipe remarked,

I found out through my older brother what AB540 was. That's pretty much as far as how he helped me out in terms of navigating higher education, because up until that point, believing that I was not undocumented I had to learn you know the things...I didn't know what my options for school after that and I didn't know what were the venues I had to go through to sort of make that happen and so that's one thing that my older brother did help me establish. He showed me what AB540 was, and how to get instate tuition.

Unlike David's experience in the previous section, upon arrival at UC Berkeley, Felipe was well aware of his ability to pay in-state tuition based upon AB540 and was able to also apply for private scholarships prior to arriving on campus to assist in funding his two-years of education. Having an older sibling who had already begun the process of navigating the higher education system proved to be an important asset for Felipe. Given the informal social networks through which students obtain information as to the resources available to undocumented students, without an older sibling who has gone through such an experience, many undocumented students decide to attend community college and enter UC Berkeley as transfer students. In this instance, the community college functions as an important site for undocumented students to become aware of private scholarships, student support groups and the AB540 waiver process. Due to the high cost of attendance and rapid progression of multiple fee increases in the span of only a few years, many undocumented students, even with the prospect of paying in-state tuition, have reconsidered attending 4-year institutions such as Berkeley directly from out of high school, even if they are admitted.

Unlike Felipe, Lorena has two older siblings, a brother who graduated from San Jose State University and an older sister who recently graduated from UC Berkeley. Entering UC Berkeley as a freshman, Lorena was unaware of resources for AB540 students, as her sister, during her 4-

years at Cal, was unaware of groups such as RISE or local non-profits. Commenting on her prospects for attending college during high school, Lorena responded,

Fortunately because of my sister and brother, I was in every single honors class my high school offered I never had a problem with school. I did really well academically. I was in a lot of extra curricular activities and was in sports too. When my sister came to Cal, it wasn't even a question whether or not I could go to college. I knew I could go to college. It was limited where I could apply – I figured I couldn't apply to any place far away – so I only applied to Davis, Berkeley, and San Jose State.

With the assistance of an Educators for Fair Consideration (E4FC) scholarship, Lorena was finally able to free up more of her time to participate in RISE, the AB540 student support group on campus. Working extremely long hours and commuting in order to be able to afford 4-years at UC Berkeley, Lorena only recently has begun to explore the AB540 student community and support networks that exist:

It's only been recently that I even joined RISE and then I got the E4FC scholarship. I would say that it's really difficult as a science major. I can't intern with a non-profit and most of my extra curricular activities have to do with working in a research lab. It's also difficult also when you commute because a lot of the RISE meetings start at 7pm. It's really dangerous for me to be at the BART station where I park at night. Also my freshman through my junior year I worked 30 hours a week as a waitress. In between, I'd be taking a lot of classes, if I had a chance I'd study. If I had a 20-minute break I'd study because I couldn't study over the weekends because I had work.

Steven's brother, similar to Felipe, but unlike Anna, attended community college and taught Steven about his possible options for pursuing post-secondary education:

I had known about AB540 only because I have an older brother and sister, and we had found out about it through a family friend. He was basically the 'guinea pig' who went to the office and actually tried to use it. So I had known that I should be able to use it. But then even then I was like 'can I use it at the university level?' I wasn't sure because he went to a junior college.

Emphasizing the importance of older siblings as well as community networks, Steven's experience becoming aware about his eligibility to pay in-state tuition points to the importance of, as noted in the previous section, the community college in informing undocumented

students about their options in pursuing higher education and older siblings in sharing this knowledge with their younger siblings. The mentorship, support and encouragement of older siblings is a vital and important resource to undocumented students and can help explain the factors that have assisted these talented young people in successfully making it to and graduating from UC Berkeley.

Arriving at Cal: Bureaucratic Interactions and Navigating a Challenging Campus Climate

Upon arrival at Cal, many undocumented students do not have a central office or staff member to provide resources and assistance in navigating the immense and daunting undergraduate campus system. One student, Lorena, recounts how her older sister, despite attending UC Berkeley herself, did not make use of any resources or know of any scholarships specifically for undocumented students. It was not until Lorena's final semester that she was finally able to become aware of and access these resources:

My older sister [America] just got into graduate school and is waiting to hear back from a few other schools. I'm so proud of her! She didn't know of RISE [the undocumented student support group on campus] or any other AB540 student resources. I didn't know of them either until I was able to not have to work because I received a scholarship from a private foundation (E4FC).

In terms of her awareness of Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) that houses the newly created AB540 staff position, Lorena commented,

No one had ever told me about EOP [or those similar resources] until [David] was like, 'hey there's this office and it might be helpful to you.' I think I'd seen it once because I was in the tutoring center a lot for math, but I didn't know what it was. I didn't know I qualified for it as an AB540 student. I also didn't know any of the 'Raza' spaces on campus. And because the Biology Scholars Program didn't address any issues in terms of AB540 I was really isolated.

This instance points to the need to staff in all campus departments and programs to understand and be aware of the resources available to undocumented students and the circumstances of their situation – inability to obtain a driver's license in California, to be paid as a payroll employee, etc. Such an awareness would have helped Lorena, as well as America, gain access to these important resources and the very extensive, well developed network of allies on campus.

Similar to Lorena and her sister America's experiences, Steven was unaware of AB540 student resources on campus until he did a Google search and found a link to RISE, the AB540 student support group at Cal:

So the university was not very helpful in terms of finding resources; I don't think they have put out any resources like [UC] system wide and because I didn't know anyone in high school who went to Cal and my high school was far from the Bay, when I came to Berkeley it was really tough going to speak to Financial Aid. I thought to myself 'oh should I be completely honest?' It just felt uncomfortable showing them all my documents and the people in Financial Aid still not completely sure how to work my case even though looking back right now they had so many AB 540 students they should have known what to do.

A science major like Lorena, Steven attributed the lack of awareness among staff he interacted with outside of Financial Aid to the possibility that there may not be as many undocumented students in the sciences as in the social sciences/humanities:

I think it might have had to do with my major. I was a Molecular Cell Biology (MCB) major, and didn't have resources. I knew about the SLC [Student Learning Center] and all these departments that have a lot of resources. Maybe it was my major but also because I didn't know anyone who could refer me to the right resources. I was also hesitant to reach out to others and instead waited for people to reach out to me. The resources are there, but you just have to know who to connect with, which for me was really difficult. And it really wasn't until RISE that I heard about these resources. It's funny because I found them through Facebook somehow and saw this flyer for a conference. But even then I was afraid to go. I also Google-ed resources to see what was out there, which was semi-helpful – it helped me connect with E4FC [a Bay Area non-profit that advocates on behalf of undocumented students].

Lack of access to resources or awareness of the resources available can also have detrimental effects on undocumented students deciding whether or not to remain at Cal. Having limited knowledge of the resources available to undocumented students at Cal and the possibility of paying in-state tuition and private scholarships that supported undocumented students pursuing higher education, David spoke to the Registrar's Office seeking to cancel his admission and left the university for good:

I remember calling the Office of the Registrar being like, 'Oh I need to cancel my admission to Cal' and they asked why. I remember telling them that I decided it wasn't the best school for me when technically it was because 'oh I'm undocumented I don't have funding to go here.' It was a super awkward moment on the telephone I didn't know what to say. It was weird because I was literally begging them to cancel my

admission, I remember saying no I really need you to cancel my admission, like please I just need to do that.

David's experience highlights the situation many undocumented students face when they are admitted to Cal – extremely excited to be admitted to such a prestigious and highly ranked university, but unsure how to fund their education due to their legal status in the U.S. Though some decline the offer of admission and never visit the campus or attend, David did decide to attend, but upon arriving on campus, found himself lost and unsure of who/what resources to turn to.

One student, Esmeralda, considered switching universities and transferring to a private college/university hoping that they might be able to provide her with more funding to pay for school:

You know, I was really seriously thinking about it [transferring]. My dad didn't have any money to help me pay for school and the situation back home wasn't that great. I thought if I took a year off, saved some money and applied to transfer, maybe it would be better for me...In the end I decided to stay because I really like it here at Berkeley and I have come to depend on the network that I have built of those who support me. It's still really hard though [financially].

We Deserve to Be Here!: Funding Undergraduate Education

For many working-class, immigrant students paying for college is an extremely difficult endeavor, even with the assistance of federal grants and loans. Undocumented youth, however, are ineligible to receive these resources, which therefore makes it even more difficult for them to attend college. This situation oftentimes forces students to work long hours at low-wage jobs and to take semesters off from school to work full-time in order to save up enough money to return to school the following semester. Recently, however, Governor Jerry Brown signed the California DREAM Act into law. Split into two bills – AB130 and 131 – the Act provides qualifying students who are not legal permanent residents or US citizens, with access to private funds donated to the University of California and beginning January 1, 2013, certain taxpayer funded grants/scholarships. Previously the university was unable to make these funds available to students citing the fact that once private funds were donated to the university, they became “public” funds, for which undocumented immigrant students were ineligible to receive.

Though university staff/administration are still currently working to determine which funds will be available to students as a result of recent legislation, these efforts have focused on undergraduates given that these students make up the largest proportion of the undocumented student population on campus. The relevancy of this legislation to graduate student funding is also under discussion among staff in the Financial Aid & Scholarships Office

and the university's Graduate Division. Additionally, this process is also being implemented on a campus specific basis as opposed to UC-wide partially due to the fact that Cal as compared to other UC campuses runs on a semester system, but also as a result of the strategic planning on the part of UC Berkeley Financial Aid & Scholarship staff who set aside funds in anticipation of the California DREAM Act's passing. UC Berkeley has therefore been able to make funds private available to students beginning January 2012, months after the bill being signed into law by the Governor and ahead of other UC campuses.

In the meantime, as the campus continues the implementation phase of these policies, undocumented students will continue to struggle and encounter hardship in funding their own education, but hopefully not to the extent that they did prior to such legislation. During the next few years as the university makes the transition to the greater availability of financial aid resources and scholarships to AB540 students, it will become increasingly important for all involved to understand the unique challenges and barriers members of this student population face in paying for college.

Prior to the new regulations now in place following the passage of the California DREAM Act, talented students such as Steven, could not accept prestigious university scholarships that they had earned due to their undocumented status. Steven was a fourth-year Molecular Cell Biology major from Thailand and the recipient of the prestigious UC Regents Scholarship at UC Davis, however he eventually decided not to attend due to the high cost of tuition and his inability to accept the 4-year UC Regents scholarship. He notes,

I applied to all the UC's and I got into UC Davis and into Berkeley, but then Davis had that Regent Scholarship that they had offered it to me. It was \$7,500 renewable four years. My parents were like 'wow, great job, okay you're going there!' I was so happy you know and then a week or two weeks before the deadline they started sending me emails saying 'your paperwork is incomplete,' and then 'I don't think you are actually eligible for the scholarship.' My family and I eventually went in to talk to them and they told us, 'no there's nothing we can do come back when your status changes.' I was like 'really?' I was devastated; it was really tough that week. I worked so hard and I thought it would pay off, and it like didn't in a way. I was really considering for my parents, like community college. Because I knew that they, if I asked them they would be a 100% supportive of trying to make it work at a UC, but I knew that it would be really hard on them. So I really considered going to community college, but then I was very lucky that my uncle and aunt, hey saw the value in going to a UC first and decided to loan me the money for my first year.

Not being able to accept the Regents scholarship had a very immense toll on Steven that, similar to other undocumented students, pushed him to consider attending community college

and then re-applying as a transfer student to UC Berkeley or UC Davis and so that his parents would not have to sacrifice so greatly for him to be able to attend college. Also, the frustration and anxiety placed upon Steven by those working in the university financial aid office who provided him and his family with varying levels of information regarding his ability to accept the scholarship demonstrates the importance for not only staff to be educated about the university's policies for AB540 students, but also for staff to regularly communicate with one another and to work closely with families and students to strategize as how to best may college affordable for the student, not to tell students to "return when their status has been adjusted."

Similar to the case of other working-class students, families must come together to help students pay for college and to support themselves. Steven worked, received support from his aunt and uncle who were citizens and was the recipient of some outside scholarships. Responding the question of whether or not he has had to take time off from his studies due to financial difficulties, Steven explained,

I have not had to take any time off because I am really fortunate, I have support from my parents, a little bit of support from my aunt and uncle (they are a little bit more financially sound and they agreed to like help because it's education and they think it's really important). So my first and second year I had to work. I worked at [restaurant] for like a month and a half but then they laid me off because they weren't getting that much business and so money was kind of a concern but as far as tuition I had it okay until the third and fourth year. Then they [my aunt and uncle] were like, okay as per our agreement, you [now need to] apply to scholarships. They want to start me off and then I applied to scholarships, luckily I have been able to get good amounts [of scholarships] so I didn't have to get time off.

Lorena, like Steven, worked many hours in order to pay for school and also did not have to take time off from school due to financial need. However, the amount of time that Lorena worked greatly impacted her ability to become involved as a member of the on-campus community and even to become acquainted with the AB540 student resources/networks present on campus. Moreover, Lorena found it extremely taxing on her studies to have to work 30 hours on weekends and to commute to campus one hour each way on public transportation. Reflecting back on the four years she spent working full-time as a hostess and attending school, Lorena commented,

Trust me I've been a waitress for a long time and you feel like a slave for them. The customer is always right and they always comes first it doesn't matter if they'd been rude to you. You have to keep a positive face. I started off as a hostess then I became a waitress at [restaurant] in Union City. We [my sister and I] both started off at [restaurant 1] but then she got a job at [restaurant 2]. I'm ecstatic not to be working

anymore though. It's unbelievable! I guess in reality if I look back I learned a lot of things from my experience there but emotionally and physically I was drained. I would work for many hours and physically by Monday I'd be exhausted. Just physically I have to fight to stay awake in my classes. That's one big component, I feel like my grades just leaped after I quit [restaurant name]. Emotionally, I grew up with a lot of kids in AP classes and honors classes. They had the life that I wanted for myself. For example my ex [boyfriend] moved to Washington for college. He partied on the weekends, he was president of the club soccer team and he had so many social activities. I couldn't join any social clubs. People would look forward to Fridays; I hated Fridays. Fridays meant I had 5 hours of lab, 8 hours of work and then I wouldn't get out till 3 am, and start over the next day. Emotionally, physically, it was draining. I would get home around 6, go straight to work, I would work till 2 or 3 in the morning. Saturday morning I'd study, then I would work all day and same for Sunday. Then back to class Monday morning at 8 am.

Now with the recent passage of AB130, the first half of the California DREAM Act that went into effect January 1, 2012, Lorena finds that it is much easier for her to concentrate in class and to be involved in the AB540 student community on campus:

I'm so relieved not to have to work anymore. Its so crazy how one piece of legislation can make such an impact on your life. I always think about my friends who don't read that much on politics. But I think that literally someone's decision today could affect my life tomorrow, and how funding can help me be more involved in social groups like RISE which can then help me mentally, emotionally. It's a big cycle and all these things are really connected so yeah, AB130 has really helped me out.

David, in contrast to Steven and Lorena who both had family networks that they were able to draw upon and were fortunate in receiving off-campus private scholarships, was homeless for many months and not having enough money to pay tuition, audited all his classes hoping that when he was able to return as a registered student, that the university would allow him to receive credit for the work he did during this time. Discussing his experiences during the time he was homeless and the constant anger/frustration he felt during this time in his life, David remarked,

I was homeless for a while and then I was able to negotiate a living situation with one of my ex partners; he was just really willing and understanding in a sense that he gave me a space to have a roof over my head. I was auditing all my courses that year, and that year was just really frustrating. I kept coming back to this is so unfair I continue to

work really, really had for this and I am continuing to work more than other students and yet I still have to deal with all these institutional injustices, you know that are really limiting for me continuing my education and yeah and so there was that year that I had to take off, and yeah that year was so draining and emotionally and mentally exhausting and physically I was just always tired, I noticed how all that just took an effect on my body and I started, I was losing weight I lost a lot of weight that year. It was interesting too, because even at that time, I had this conversation with other undocumented friends. We know we're not going to be using our degrees like we can't really put our degrees to practice but seriously why do we keep doing this to ourselves it's really damaging. It's really damaging to us just as humans and emotionally and mentally it's really exhausting but yet we keep pushing ourselves...And that year I applied to fellowships I applied to internships explaining my situation. That year I ended up receiving a fellowship at Princeton, and an offer to teach with a professor to work on a course development that promotes this idea of engaged scholarship... And I received scholarships, I received a lot of scholarships that year; that was the first time that I felt like, 'this is so weird I have money for school,' I don't have to worry about that, now I just have to focus in school.

Therefore, similar to other first-generation, working class students of color, undocumented youth encountered multiple barriers when paying for college. This inability to pay, however, is exacerbated by the students' in-eligibility for private and public financial aid administered by the university that has resulted in difficulties or students integration into the overall campus environment. For AB540 students to have full access to the resources and opportunities available to all students at Cal, their basic needs must be met, which include housing, tuition and books. Without the ability to meet these basic needs students are homeless living in on-campus offices, sharing the couch at a friend's apartment or forced to take a semester/multiple semesters off from school. Repeatedly in interviews students raised housing as well as access to and awareness about mental health services as their two most important needs that have gone unmet by the university. This situation also creates a great deal of stress and frustration for students adding to the difficulty of navigating the UC Berkeley campus climate.

More than Just Undocumented: Navigating Multiple Identities and Lived Experiences

For undocumented students at UC Berkeley and across the nation, their legal status is oftentimes seen as their only social identity through which they are able to understand the world around them. However, in interviews conducted as part of this project, students made it clear that there is in fact much more to their identity aside from their undocumented status, an identity that for many does not become particularly salient until adolescence (Abrego, 2006; Abrego and Gonzales 2010, Gonzales 2011).

Though at first glance many would label Marianna as a morena, or a dark skinned Latina, she actually identifies as an indigenous Zapotec from Oaxaca who still speaks her native language and was raised in a Zapotec village until age nine prior to migrating to the United States. When asked how she would describe herself to someone she just recently met, she responds,

Well, that's quite complex! Right now, at this stage if I was to meet someone at this point in my life, I would identify myself as who I truly am, you know, a Zapotec and an indigenous woman of Oaxaca. I feel sometimes it really just depends on who I'm talking to. If I feel pretty comfortable with you, I'll be like 'Yeah, I'm a Zapoteca, I'm indigenous, and I come from this specific pueblito.' Usually that will trigger more conversation like 'oh, really...' and stuff like that. I find myself explaining a lot of the culture.

Yet, such an identity does not necessarily resonate with the way that terms that Marianna uses to identify herself as a student on the UC Berkeley campus:

I think my key identity within the campus itself is as [name], the undocumented student, you know. The student that....she's part of that special population that's very vulnerable, but not very exposed because you know, there's lots of dangers out there, and I think a lot of people know me as, you know, that I'm indigenous, or they just assume that I'm Mexican. Or maybe they don't really know the complexities that are part of my identity; they just see me as the undocumented student and that's pretty much it.

David, a self-identified queer undocumented student has looked to academia and the possibility of graduate school as a means for working through for him, what it means to be queer and undocumented. He is also part of a group of queer and undocumented DREAM Act eligible students who have come together to form a support group and activist organization to bring attention to the issue of gender/sexuality within the larger undocumented immigrant community. Reflecting on the struggle in working to reconcile his activist and community efforts and their relation to his own identities, David remarks,

I feel like it wasn't until a year and a half ago that I started thinking 'I am undocumented but I'm also queer.' Because I started seeing how in my own organizing and my own involvement with different organization and extra-curricular activities being part of the Gender Equity Resource Center meant being gay and being part of the Chicano Latino Student Development meant being a person of color and being part of the Multicultural Immigrant Student Program meant being an immigrant. So I started seeing that I am really dividing my identity up into these spaces. It wasn't until a year and half that I really started engaging with

a lot of feminist of color thought and it really started me thinking and just processing what it meant to be undocumented, what it means for me to be a student of color or what it means for me to be queer; it's something that I feel very fragmented about because I can't find that center ground for myself that while I try to be inclusive about myself with my identity.

For David, academia has provided an useful avenue through which to begin to deal with the “fragmented identity” of being both queer and undocumented:

Lately I have been experiencing my own discomforts in the sense that what it means to theorize my own lived experience being queer and undocumented and how valid or invalid is it as seen by other academics. I think that's part of the reason why I am so interested and invested in being part of an interdisciplinary program where I'm able to bring my own experiences onto the table. I am doing interviews with folks and I am drawing from literature and if I am being asked to remove myself or my own bias from those experiences, it's really impossible for me to, given that I myself am queer and undocumented. While I feel that academia has become this point of entry to gain a voice it has also become a point of entry of a lot of unstable ground where it's not the research work that people expect sometimes when I bring my own personal narrative. It's oftentimes seen as 'this is not the way that we hope you would engage with your work.' Yet, I do think that academia allows for space, for marginalized communities to gain a voice, but it's also very troubling at least for myself because I feel like I can't stick to some of the rules that academia has imposed on how research works or how it should be done.

In addition to the axes of being indigenous and being queer and undocumented, it is often assumed that the majority of undocumented youth are Latina/o. As discussed in a previous section of this report, Asian undocumented students make up approximately half of the undocumented students in the UC system. Nevertheless, Asian undocumented students are many times depicted as anomalies or outliers due to the persistence of the model minority myth that casts all Asian youth as high achievers regardless of their socio-economic status, their family situation and their personal circumstances that have or have not allowed them to be socially mobile.

Henry, a fourth-year undergraduate student at UC Berkeley in reflecting on his experience “coming out” as an undocumented student and the response he received from the media and local community based organizations states,

I remember when I read the stories of other undocumented students.

The combination of all of [the stories] really made me want to go to the next level because there were other undocumented students and I knew that I wasn't alone. That's the first thing I remember when I shared my immigration status with the [community college name] newspaper. I got really good, positive feedback from like nonprofit organizers and some people around me and slowly continued to publicize my story and gradually getting more and more comfortable doing so. I started sharing my story to different classrooms and doing some AB540 workshops to the point where you know what I am going to come out as undocumented in the camera and you know released a YouTube video. I also created my personal webpage and shared my blog. After that it basically exploded in a way because I guess nonprofit organizations were like 'it's a Korean undocumented student actually coming out' and there were so many opportunities for me to do speaking engagements and do a lot of work around the DREAM Act and AB 540.'

Therefore, due to his identity as a Korean American undocumented student, community based organizations as well as the media flooded Henry with requests for interviews, news stories and other forms of media coverage. In this sense, Henry began to feel that while it was important to speak up on behalf of his community and to represent the experiences of undocumented Asian American students, but also that his voice should not be the only one heard.

During the summer of 2011, Henry was approached by a group of organizers from the Inland Empire DREAM Team of Southern California who asked him to participate in an act of civil disobedience. They specifically requested Henry's participation due to his Asian American self-identification:

It was mainly the Inland Empire Dream Team and some of the California individual folks that approached to me and were looking need API [Asian/Pacific Islander] representation and offered the potential to participate in the civil disobedience. They told me that I had two months to think about it. It wasn't an easy decision in terms of that no API undocumented students had done it before and it was also the first time I had ever participated in an act of civil disobedience. I don't know if my case was right and I had a lot of questions, but in the end made the decision to participate. The purpose was to empower other undocumented youth to come out of the shadows and proclaim their status as undocumented and unafraid and nothing to be ashamed of. And also to fight unjust immigration laws like a secure communities program. I really wanted to bring this issue to the next level, to show that it's not only a Latina/o issue and felt it was important for me to bring the face to the civil disobedience action so that API folks slowly

engage in this conversation; to increase the visibility and to talk about this issue.

Initially concerned about issues of safety and the possibility of deportation, after much deliberation Henry decided to participate in the act of civil disobedience and to represent the Asian American community as he felt it was important to demonstrate that undocumented status was “not only a Latino issue.”

Though undocumented students are not solely Latina/o and the issue of status cuts across multiple racial/ethnic communities, Henry still finds it difficult when in similar organizing spaces with his Latina/o peers:

So I am so grateful for RISE [Rising Immigrant Scholars through Education] and RISE members because you know it's [organizing] all connected. I feel very comfortable with getting involved and being active with Latino undocumented students because just to start with I had to work very closely with the Latina/o community when I first became involved in AB540 student activism; there was no choice. For me it was very comfortable; nothing was wrong with. At times though I guess sometimes I feel isolated when they speak Spanish or when I don't know their cultural things that I don't really understand, but other than that I felt like they are really family to me because it is really related to our struggles.

Despite cultural differences, according to Henry, he still feels a sense of family and community with his Latina/o peers and feels that working through cultural difference or instead, celebrating such difference, will in fact strengthen the movement and its base of supporters.

The narratives of Maricela, David and Henry invoke the theme of intersectionality/intersectional identities. For many undocumented students, university faculty, staff and administration must understand that while being undocumented does play an important central role in the experiences of these students, their status does not necessarily dictate the way in which they view themselves, which many times may overlap with other identities they hold including their gender/sexual orientation and racial/ethnic identities. Undocumented students are also students; similar to other students at Cal and on college/university campuses around the nation they face decisions of whether or not to apply to graduate school, how to apply for an internship, how to manage work and homework assignments, etc., but with additional challenges and limitations due to their lack of legal status. However, for many students, striving not to allow legal status to become the key, defining characteristic of their identity is a struggle in itself that represents the need to humanize the experience of being undocumented.

Can I Trust You?: Deciding Whether or Not to “Come Out” to University Faculty/Staff

In the case of many undocumented students the decision to whether or not to reveal their status to university administrators and faculty/staff depends upon the situation they find themselves in and the necessity/applicability of their status to the issue at hand. Such a decision includes a careful calculation of how revealing one’s status will benefit the student. If sharing one’s status does not provide a large enough benefit for the student – access to resources, support and/or opportunities – it may not be in the best interest of the student to divulge his/her status to the administrator or campus authority figure.

For Maricela, it was not until her performance in class began to suffer due to family issues back home and the need to work 30+ hours per week to pay tuition that she considered sharing her status with her Graduate Student Instructor (GSI). Maricela, a high performing, eager to learn student always made sure to have completed class readings and came prepared to discuss the material. Many times she visited professors and GSIs during office hours to gain more clarity on course concepts/topics and earned grades at the top of the class. In this instance, however, she began to miss multiple classes and fell behind in the readings, making her feel as though she was not performing to the best of her ability, at which point she decided to approach her GSI about her status and situation. Describing the experience of sharing her status with her political science GSI, Maricela remarked,

I think it depends [who I share my status with]....like, even my professors – it’s really hard for me to come out to them. I don’t think any of my professors know that I’m undocumented; I think it’s only you [interviewer] and my other GSI in political science that know I’m undocumented. And you know it because you’re in the space where I’m in and my other GSI, I had to explain myself to her, like why was I struggling in the class, because I was struggling so much at the time. I didn’t have enough time to do homework and I felt really bad because she was putting in so much work into the class and sometimes I wouldn’t finish all my readings and wasn’t fully prepared for class. I felt really bad because it’s like ‘you’re putting in your effort but it’s not that I don’t want to, I just don’t have time, so I had to explain to her my situation, about why I wasn’t performing to my fullest extent. She said ‘you know what? It’s okay, I understand’ and was really helpful. She went out of her way to make sure to meet me outside of class and to help me with readings and stuff like that. It was really cool. I don’t know if I will receive that kind of response from other people, but with her I took that risk because I thought I was disrespecting her in some way; she was putting so much effort into her work and coming to class prepared, and, like I said, I really appreciate good GSI’s because I’ve had sucky GSI’s so when I come across good GSI’s, I put all my effort into doing really great, so with her, I felt like I wasn’t performing my best, but it’s not because I

didn't want to, it was because I couldn't.

Maricela put herself in an extremely vulnerable position by sharing her status with her GSI. While the GSI responded in a positive, supportive way, the exact opposite reaction could have also very easily occurred. For Maricela she had to weigh the repercussions and potential gains from either decision – to share or not to share her status. If she shared her status, the GSI would not feel disrespected by the lack of preparedness and engagement Maricela had in the course. Yet, at the same time, she risked the possibility of the GSI reacting negatively to her situation attacking her for “breaking the law” and being an “illegal immigrant,” or even the possibility of the GSI reporting Maricela to immigration authorities.

Many undocumented students, during the time in which they decided whether or not to share their status, “feel out” or “test” these individuals by asking questions to illicit their opinions and perspectives regarding immigration. Jennifer, a recent UC Berkeley graduate and a former anthropology major did not consider sharing her status with her faculty/staff mentors until she began to apply to graduate programs. Reflecting back on the process and the nervousness she felt in sharing her status, she explains,

When I was applying to Ph.D. programs I began to ask professors for letters of recommendation. Part way in to this process I soon realized that I needed to share with them my personal statements. In my personal statement I discussed my experience of being an AB540 student and how it limits my ability to receive university funding. If I was admitted into the program I wanted them [the committee] to know my status, but also to know about the ways I have worked to overcome these limitations. If I gave the professors my personal statement they would know my status. So I first wanted to tell them in person. I had worked with these professors for many years; I had taken their classes and even assisted some of them in their research projects. But the issue of status had never come up. I was really nervous and somehow tried to ask them about the California DREAM Act, asking if they had heard that it passed, to see their reaction to it. Some of them didn't know what it was, some did, but were indifferent. Only one really knew what the DREAM Act was and what issues AB540 students faced. In the end, though, they were all supportive. I was applying to grad programs so they needed to know. They would have found out eventually. And it was actually helpful for them to write about it [my status] in their letters as it helped me to get a better funding package in the end when I was accepted to some of the programs!

While for Maricela sharing her status with her GSI came with advantages, in the case of some students such as that of Lorena, a Biology major who was an assistant in a lab on campus, it is not as easy to find a time to discuss status or for that matter, one's personal life:

I do enjoy being more active in the AB540 community on campus. Being in the sciences you don't know any other Latinos. Your professors are all white, male, super old, mostly conservative guys. It's [status] something you just don't talk about. I've never had a professor tell me about anything related to his/her personal life. It's not like social science classes where during office hours you could check in with them and share something personal. It's something they [science professors] couldn't understand. For example, if I started bawling to one of my genetics professors they would think I was crazy. They wouldn't know what was going on or to ask why I was crying or having a bad day.

For Lorena, protocol in her field/department consisted of students coming to office hours to ask questions about class or was in the form of group office hours, different than her peers in the humanities and social sciences who oftentimes were able to sign up for 15 or 20 minute individual appointments with faculty. In her discipline, as a woman and a student of color, Lorena found the departmental environment unsuitable to sharing personal feelings/experiences in a "professional" atmosphere of strict, formal relationships between students and faculty.

Aside from sharing one's status with faculty/staff, undocumented students may also encounter a different set of issues when deciding whether or not to share their status with their peers. While faculty/staff in positions of power and authority represent a certain set of risks, sharing one's status with peers could easily entail a large group of individuals spreading the word that individual students are undocumented or associate themselves with undocumented student groups/organizations and therefore must be undocumented (by association). After receiving an Educators for Fair Consideration (E4FC) scholarship, Steven, an Asian American undocumented student, wanted to see what the reactions of his childhood friends would be if they found out that he was undocumented. Participation in the E4FC writing workshop and being surrounded by other undocumented students who had openly shared their stories with friends, faculty, staff and others around them made Steven wonder what reactions he would illicit:

I remember a scholarship ceremony as the first time that I saw all the other students who were [E4FC] scholars that got the award and just seeing all their accomplishments too and that there were a lot of other people who were equally determined and all attended UC's. Also the writing workshop the E4FC did the first summer I joined really connected me to a lot of people. We talked about our private stories and really emotional stuff, so I think coming out of that, that's when I felt like you know there's other people and that you know I got support from them and I would ask them, what are the pros and cons while you would tell a lot of your friends and while you would come out in public at like a university event or something bigger you know what can come out.

After his experience in the E4FC summer writing workshop, Steven decided to share his status with his childhood friends, beginning with those who had known him longer and working his way to more recent friends. While this has been a gradual process, it has proven to be healing for Steven who had previously felt like he was hiding an important and at times, crucial aspect of his identity from those outside his family that he was closest to. Discussing his strategy of sharing his experiences as an undocumented immigrant with those closest to him, Steven noted,

Recently I'm starting to tell people [about my status] but I guess compared to a lot of other [undocumented students], then no [I haven't told a lot of people]. I only recently started getting involved in the AB540 community because I am a senior now, but when I was a sophomore in the summer of 2010 was when I got an E4FC scholarship and met other students who were like me. I started thinking 'oh my god, there are others like me!' It's like through the process of writing and meeting other people I began to think about what if I told a lot of my really good friends about my status – what would their reactions be? I started telling some of my high school friends first, going back to tell them and right now there's maybe like ten of them that know but that's still not everyone. Yeah, but more of my university friends know because of my involvement in [undocumented student organizations/groups].

Despite Steven's strategy of revealing his status to his childhood friends on an individual basis, in the college/university context, many of his friends and roommates inferred his status due to his involvement in undocumented student groups/issues. The summer writing workshop and the formation of AB540 student friendly spaces and peer support networks, greatly enabled Steven to realize first and foremost that he was not alone in the issues he faced as an undocumented student at Cal, but also to receive support from other AB540 students with greater levels of openness with regards to their status and sharing their status with peers, mentors and faculty/staff.

A Healthy, Balanced Self: Activism & Mental Health

Though it may not be initially apparent at first glance, discussing the activism and mental health outcomes of undocumented youth together is extremely important as both issues are very much interrelated. For some undocumented students, political activism and the "coming out" process act not only a means of self-expression of one's identity, but also serve to break the barrier of silence with which many students find suffocating and inhibiting. Among those who do participate in activism, it easy for them to burn out and many find it difficult to balance their activist work with their academic work, placed under a great deal of pressure to not only be highly involved, but also to speak at press conferences, engage in hunger strikes, travel for speaking engagements, lead/organize weekly meetings and take part in a host of other activist

related responsibilities.

Describing his decision to reveal his status to his peers and the reasons that compelled him to “come out” as undocumented, Henry, a student from South Korea who grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area discusses the intense mental and emotional stress that he was under, which prompted him to share his status as a means of searching for a community of others like himself. He commented,

...I guess the, even the reason why I started to publicly come out or to organize was because I found out my immigration status and started becoming aware of the limitations of my status. I was really just sick and tried of waiting and being silent. There were a lot of turning points where I needed to speak up. I would've either committed suicide or gone back to South Korea...I was just unhealthy for me. For instance during my community college years I was trying to get a drivers license in Washington state, and because I was so scared to take an airplane I took Amtrak it took approximately 48 hours. They told me that my documentation was not valid so I had to go back with Amtrak another 24 to 48 hours. I thought to myself 'why do I have to do all this crap?' I was thinking about this and I was tired of doing all this and my mom getting home late [from work]...this whole situation just frustrated me to the point where I decided to come out and get actively involved...

However, the frustration and anger that propelled Henry to become involved eventually led him to his goal of expanding his community and building a support network of other undocumented students at the local and national level:

Slowly I got a lot of connections and resources around me and once I realized I have a lot of support system within the community in addition to a combination of frustration and anger I wanted to step farther in terms of coming out as an undocumented student and I remember when I read story of Tam Tran²⁶ and other undocumented students...the combination of all of them really made me go to the next level because there were other undocumented students. I realized that I wasn't alone.

Peer networks, however, are not the only university-based form of support necessary to the persistence of undocumented students in the college/university context. Though peer networks are inherently important and vital to the success of undocumented youth in higher education, there is still a large need for greater institutionalized mental health support services for

²⁶ Tam Ngoc Tran was a graduate of UCLA and pursuing her Ph.D. in American Civilization at Brown University when she was tragically killed in a car accident along with Cynthia Felix, another undocumented student. Tam is well known as a leader and activist within the undocumented Asian American community making films about the experiences of undocumented youth and the struggle to pass the DREAM Act.

undocumented students. At UC Berkeley's University Health Services staff member, Dr. Laura Guillen, who works with first-generation, Latina/o, immigrant students and also with a variety of other related populations, was brought up multiple times in interviews with students were asked: Who on campus (faculty/staff) have you personally found useful or helpful in navigating the resources available to you? Students have also collaborated with Dr. Guillen to organize trainings for UHS Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) staff who are not familiar or have not worked with members of the undocumented student community.

Eduardo, a student who along with other AB540 student leaders and Dr. Guillen help organize the group training in Fall 2011 remarked,

We did a fishbowl activity where we sat in the middle and we just answered questions. Everyone was watching and then we did Q & A afterwards. I think they find out what experiences of students were like on campus and they really wanted to help.

This example of student and staff collaboration to communicate the needs of undocumented members of the campus community with the practitioners who seek to continually update and enhance their services to meet the needs of the campus' ever-changing demographic is indeed laudable. This student/staff collaboration has also led to greater information sharing of resources among students and vis-à-vis peer networks. Eduardo continued,

Since [the training] I haven't had the chance to speak with anyone from the Tang Center, but I've been meaning to I still plan to go talk to a counselor and build a relationship, for personal reasons I wanted to talk about some of like the struggles and stress, but I haven't been able to. I've emailed Laura [Guillen] and kept in contact because I had a couple instances where I wanted to get more resources like mental services for like my peers and stuff like that. So in that sense it definitely opened the communication between us [students and CPS staff].

Nevertheless, not all students' experiences with the Tang Center's Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) staff have been positive. Following her experience being deported from the US and separation from her parents and older brother, Lorena finally decided to seek out assistance from a member of the Tang after breaking up with her long-time boyfriend who she had up until then confided in regarding her experiences at school, issues she faced as an undocumented student and her family situation as well. Explaining her reasons for seeking out help at the Tang Center, Lorena explained,

For the sake of my family, for a really long time I didn't talk or write about it [the experience being deported during high school along with her older sister who was a second year Cal student]. Even within my family we never talked about it, but it was definitely consuming me. I

would have so many nightmares. I would wake up in the middle of the night panting. Sometimes it'd go on for weeks...one week completely, sometimes once every month. It would come and go. I never went to the Tang center for it until recently. Last semester I sought help from the Tang Center. That's why I went, it was too much. Also, my mom was getting ready to leave to Mexico so it was all these feelings coming in. My mom's leaving, I felt like I was going to be alone, my ex [partner] was getting really distant with me. I felt alone. Maybe if my ex [boyfriend] was close or open with me I would have dealt with it, but breaking up with him just stripped away all my support system. And then that's when I was like I need, that was the tip of the iceberg, then everything else I had been feeling, all the isolation I'd been feeling for the last four years; everything I had kept in. I told the person you make the appointment for the first time and was crying on the phone. I said 'I'm a mess, I'm having nightmares, my family's leaving...I have nightmares, I can't sleep, I don't have any friends.'

Yet, taking all of these issues that she had pent up inside her and becoming even more stressed trying to decode these extremely complex emotions that she was undergoing, Lorena's experience at UHS's Counseling and Psychological Services was far from what she had expected. Describing her experience seeking mental health resources at the Tang, Lorena commented,

The lady I went to, was not helpful, because she obviously had not had much experience with undocumented students and she made me feel more isolated she, it looked like I was teaching her about what undocumented students have to go through at the university and it was awful.

Lorena eventually returned to the Tang Center upon the suggestion of a friend and found her experience to be completely different from her first visit; his time she had seen Dr. Laura Guillen. She recounted,

So someone suggested I go and talk to Laura [Guillen] and said that she could help me. When I went to go talk to her I really saw the difference. She's so aware about undocumented student issues. She seems like she's truly concerned and she's very experienced. She told me she'd been at the Tang center for 8 years, counseling undocumented students since her first year. It's just ridiculous...had I not had someone recommend for me to go and speak with Laura, I probably never would have returned to the Tang Center.

Our Right to Organize!: The Strategic Role of Campus-Based Student Groups & Community Based Organizations

Aside from the resources that the campus offers to assist students in becoming integrated into the campus climate, it is also important to recognize the role of community partners who though not located on the actual college campus, provide many services/resources to undocumented students at UC Berkeley and those who attend other Cal State, UC and private college campuses. Moreover, these community-based organizations (CBOs) are instrumental in supporting student activism and working with students/campus administrators to advocate on behalf of state and federal immigration reform legislation.

For Paul, a student who was raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, he describes his realization of what it meant to be undocumented as a gradual process, one in which he slowly began to learn the limitation imposed upon him by his lack of a social security number, inability to work, to receive federal financial aid and to qualify for a California driver's license:

I didn't know about immigration status at all until during my senior year in high school, when I applied to college. That's when my mom really opened it up, when she explained everything. She told me how I came here with a tourist visa and it expired, how we were trying to renew our status and how she did for an extension of tourist visa. So I was here legally for ten to twelve months. Within that period she was trying to figure out different ways to legalize our status but it really didn't work out. And that's when I slowly realized, I mean at first I didn't know what it meant to be undocumented because I thought, 'oh I just don't have documents, I'll get them later on.' My mom even said 'don't even worry about, just focus on school go to college if you get good grades you will get legalized and you know you will find a young fine woman and get married you will be okay.' That's what she said and I thought it was simple and easy. But as I grew older you know I obviously I learned that I could get a job.

Yet, prior to attending Cal, when he initially began his college applications, Paul received assistance from a local community based organization, the Korean Resource Center, in Los Angeles and its sister organizations in the Bay Area. He was referred to these organizations through his family's informal social networks: his mother suggested that he connect with this organization that she heard about from their local church pastor and the organization referred him to resources closer to where he lived and went to school. It is therefore extremely important that colleges/universities not only partner with multiple on-campus units that work directly with first-generation, low-income student populations, but also with regional and state-wide community based organizations that outreach to a similar demographic.

Recounting his initial experience working with non-profit/community based organizations and the impact they had on his legal consciousness, Paul remarked,

...And that's when I slowly reflected on what she said a long time ago in terms of marriage in terms of driver's license she was hiding from me about our immigration status. You know at first I was upset and was blaming my mom about my immigration status, but she still encouraged me to apply to college and referred to this non-profit organization on how to fill out college applications. That's when I learned about AB 540 and the DREAM Act and once I found out about these bills, I was sort of relieved that I could pay in state tuition fee and that there was still some sort of opportunities for me to go to college. I got connected to that nonprofit organization which is Korean Resource Center in Los Angeles and when I connected with the nonprofit organization [in LA] they connected me with some nonprofit organizations here [in the Bay Area] and that's how I slowly got involved [in immigrant rights organizing]. Working with these [organizations] also encouraged me to become involved in activism and organizing. They told me, 'we need more Asian undocumented young people like you who are willing to tell their stories.'

Since his initial connection with these non-profit organizations, Paul has taken part in two major pro-immigrant rights actions – the first being an act of civil disobedience during Summer 2011 in San Bernardino, CA in which he and a group of fellow DREAM activists were arrested, but later released and the second being a trip to Alabama to learn about the history of the African American struggle for civil rights in the 1960s as part of a contingent of Bay Area undocumented student activists. He also met with representatives of President Obama at the White House for a national Asian American youth summit. Though greater resources to support student activism at the campus/university level are indeed necessary, the university must also recognize the critical importance of these non-profit/community based organizations in working alongside student activists fighting for immigration reform legislation.

Similar to Paul, for Steven, also a self-identified Asian American undocumented student, community based organizations were also an important for his own politicization process and for coming to consciousness about the implications of political action and the campaign to pass the federal DREAM Act:

So ASPIRE [Asian Students Promoting Immigration Reform through Education] is a support group but it's also where I grew in my activism. I don't think I am really a full activist at all, but in terms of the DREAM Act that's where I learned [how to begin to engage in activism]. I started doing phone banking and writing to all these senators in their offices. I attended rallies and went to the capitol a lot to speak with lobbyists.

Through this process I refined my story and received training on how to organize and how to put pressure on the media to cover issues important to my community. I want other Asian undocumented students to see that there are others like them involved in the movement and I think that, by showing by example that's one of the way you can really have students come out [and speak about their experiences as undocumented]. Because it sucked going through high school for me not knowing anyone [else who was undocumented] and it was really tough at times. But now it's different.

Yet, aside from the role of community based organizations in supporting student activism and assisting students in applying to college, they also provide important spaces for students to build peer support networks. The off-campus location of these organizations allow students to be able to separate their experiences of being undocumented from that of being a student as the two are not necessarily synonymous for many undocumented youth. This is also not to say that the campus cannot provide a “safe community space” for students, but that because those on campus have been slower in responding to this student need, it has instead been taken up by off-campus non-profit organizations. With regard to his involvement with Educators for Fair Consideration (E4FC), a San Francisco based non-profit who works primarily to support undocumented college students, Steven commented,

I remember the ceremony [when I received a scholarship from E4FC]. It was the first time that I saw all the other students who were scholars and just seeing all their accomplishments; there were a lot of other people who were equally determined and from all the UC campuses. I really connected with a lot of people and we talked about our private stories and really emotional stuff, so I think coming out of that, that's when I felt like you know there's other people with a similar experience as me. It was really nice.

Furthermore, campus-based student support groups also actively work to meet the needs of undocumented students in the context of their campus-specific issues. For instance, at UC Berkeley, students have formed Rising Immigrant Scholars through Education (RISE). However, these student groups need increased financial and staff support from the university in order to truly thrive. Ideally, these campus-based groups would be connected to a larger regional network of non-profits and other campus specific student groups. A Bay Area DREAM Network has been formed and so too has a Northern California DREAM Team, but simultaneously there also exists a network of local CBOs, who have as part of their efforts to support AB540 students, have worked with students to organize their own leadership development programs, student support groups and activist training programs. According to Anna, a recent Cal Alumnae,

RISE [Rising Immigrant Scholars through Education] meets weekly and serves as a support group for undocumented students on-campus. We

also put on a yearly Spring conference for high school and community college students, teachers and counselors which is always very highly attended. And throughout the year we meet with the Chancellor and other campus administration to encourage them to create resources that we will have access to so that we can pay for school, work on campus, prepare for graduate school and life after college, etc. We also participate in marches, protests and demonstrations in Oakland and throughout the Bay Area, oftentimes in collaboration with other groups like E4FC and 67 Sueños.

Instead of placing the burden upon the students to educate the faculty, staff and administration, it would more sense to provide staff and financial resources to RISE to assist student leaders in building a sustainable infrastructure for the development of increased resources for members of the AB540 student community that does not over-burden students who are already stretched extremely thin.

Decisions of What to Do After College: Obstacles in Funding Post-Graduate Studies

For many undocumented AB540 students now that the campus climate at the undergraduate level is gradually improving and under the leadership of Chancellor Birgeneau, the university is taking more seriously, students have expressed concern over the uneven application of efforts to the undergraduate AB540 student population as opposed to the graduate student population.

Paul, a political science major from the Philippines, whose younger sister is currently an undergraduate at UC Berkeley remarked,

I hear from my sister about all the great things happening and all the opportunities that are becoming available for undocumented students. It makes me really happy to know that my sister is able to take advantage of these opportunities. At the same time, I'm applying for graduate school. It's been really difficult speaking to the same folks at Cal who are helping my sister to support herself in school who when I ask them about resources for undocumented grad students, don't have any answers. They just keep sending me to the same people who send me to the same people who referred me in the first place.

Lorena, a student in a prestigious privately funded university scholars program is clearly on the path to pursuing graduate school – she has the grade/GPA, the experience conducting research with a faculty member and has already received numerous university honors/awards for her academic and community work. However, despite the university equipping her with the skills and knowledge to pursue graduate school, she has found herself without any source of funding to attend graduate school. She noted,

I feel like a kid again. I feel trapped. As if everyone has been cheering me on and encouraging me, with such high expectations, and me, not able to achieve them. And it's not because I can't or I don't want to. It's because I have no way to support myself. I see all of my peers graduating and being accepted into M.D. and Ph.D. programs and they ask me, 'why don't you apply? I'm sure you'll get in.' I can't bear to tell them it's because I can't afford the application fees or even if I could that I couldn't attend. Instead I just tell them that I'm waiting to get some experience first before applying. It makes me so bitter sometimes to know that I am not able to continue with my studies...

Similar to Lorena, Steven too has plans of attending graduate school, yet has decided to take an extra semester at Cal to finish his senior honors thesis and to save up money before applying to graduate school:

I thought about graduating early this semester and applying to medical school, but when I spoke to the admissions officer [at the school I wanted to apply to], he told me that he was not sure if there were any resources for undocumented students to attend grad school so I decided to stay an extra semester at Cal to try and figure things out...

Steven, like other students interviewed, such as Paul, Jennifer, Esmeralda and Juan expressed these concerns when speaking to UC Berkeley Graduate Division and Financial Aid staff and their equivalents at public and private universities in the San Francisco Bay Area region. It therefore makes sense for UC Berkeley, a leader locally and state-wide at the university level in providing financial and institutional support to undocumented AB540 students to continue to develop appropriate funding and support mechanisms for students at the graduate level.

~ Conclusions and Recommendations ~

While campus climate at UC Berkeley for undocumented status is improving, students still suffer from multiple, aggregated microaggressions.²⁷ In the narratives presented in this report, many students recounted not understanding the process of navigating the campus as well as not knowing where to find much needed resources and guidance. Students also dealt with the additional burden of having to educate faculty, staff and peers about their status. Along these lines students did not always know whom to trust with information regarding their situation. This led to unnecessary increased levels of stress and anxiety, which the university should be actively working to alleviate.

In order to ensure a better campus climate, Cal must continue to work towards creating a welcoming and safe environment for all students. This report takes into account the Chancellor's Task Force on Undocumented Students recommendations,²⁸ but supplements them using empirical data gathered from current and past UC Berkeley undocumented students. Starting from these recommendations and extending them based on the interviews from the students, we provide some tangible steps and recommendations as to how to best implement these recommendations.

Campus Specific Recommendations

Students' family life can create dislocation and separation and also create gaps in the student's life, which can make the college experience for the students very isolating. According to Perez Huber & Malagón (2006) and Enriquez (2011) social support for undocumented students is extremely important and serves needs that may not be as critical for other student populations. Social support may come in the forms including, but not limited to student organizations, peer networks and family members. For undocumented students, their sources of social/emotional support are different and resources developed must be geared especially for members of this population. Not all students have family members close by in the state or even in the country and need guidance not only on the college-going process, but also in terms of "how their legal status will present specific barriers at an institution and about how to navigate through those barriers" (Perez Huber & Malagón, 2006, p. 850). While the university cannot stop family separations and has no part in the stresses induced by the immigration status of these

²⁷ According to education and critical race scholar Daniel Solórzano, racial microaggressions can be understood as "subtle insults (verbal, nonverbal and/or visual) directed toward people of color, often automatically or unconsciously" (Solórzano et al., 2000, p. 1).

²⁸ Chancellor's Task Force on Undocumented Members of the On-Campus Community. (2011). "Recommendations to Chancellor Birgeneau." *UC Berkeley Division of Equity, Inclusion and Diversity*.

students, university staff and administration can provide a space for these students to cultivate much needed peer and social support.

1. **Based on empirical data gathered by the researchers as part of the innovation grant project and informed by scholars who have done work in this area, we recommend that the university allocate sufficient space and funding for a community lounge and resource center.** This space would provide a central location for students to gather, to share in community and to network with one another and share knowledge across generations. It would also be beneficial in providing students a location where they know that they will be among peers who are undergoing similar/shared experiences, where they will not receive questions such as “what is an AB540 student” or “oh, really, why can’t you drive?” or “why can’t you travel to Mexico to visit your family?” that as mentioned prior, cause undue and unnecessary emotional and psychological stress for students.

Furthermore, this space should have a lounge feeling and not be another office space either for AB540-student supportive staff or for an AB540 student organization. Instead, this space should be a place conducive to socializing and which is open 24 hours, providing “a home away from home” feeling that is important in helping these students feel welcomed and make the adjustment to Cal. This would assist in the building of community among members of the undocumented AB540 student population on campus. This space can also serve secondarily as a central location to house a host of projects that are geared towards serving undocumented students, but are currently spread out across a variety of campus units/offices. First, the space would house a book library in which undocumented students could borrow books. This would be an informal arrangement where students and even professors could donate books for their classes that students need, but are often unable to afford. Second, this space needs to have computer facilities – computer stations, scanners and printers that students could utilize. The fact that these facilities would be available 24 hours and not during the traditional 9am-5pm time period would enable undocumented students, who either commute or must work long hours in order to fund their studies, to have access to these resources. Though similar resources are currently available at the campus library facilities, the availability of these resources at a centralized space for undocumented students is important as it centralizes resources for members of this student population who pay for resources, but have less frequent access to them than their peers. Lastly, it is highly important that this space include a food pantry and refrigerator where dry food could be kept. Moreover, given that food is an extremely important resource to which many AB540 students have limited access, a refrigerator would allow students who host

events or receive food donations from local companies/organizations to be stored in a central space where all students have access to.

Though there exist obstacles to creating such a space, the first and foremost is obtaining adequate funding. Possible funding sources include the Division of Equity and Inclusion, the Chancellor's Office and university fundraising targeting private and corporate donors. Another issue that must be worked out is how to best configure/create this space. **For this, we recommend that the university create a working group of students (RISE members, but also those who do not attend RISE or are not as involved in the AB540 student community), members/officers of the ASUC & GA and staff who specifically support undocumented students (for example Meng So, Elisa Diana Huerta, Lupe Gallegos Diaz, Laura Guillen and Jere Takahashi).** We also recommend that this be a separate project from the Task Force, but that is also in collaboration with Task Force members. This is because the efforts of this project should be specifically guided and directed by student leaders and staff. A possibility would be for the community lounge and resource center to be housed in the new Eshelman Hall, which will be designed to be a 24-hour facility. However, this space will not be open for the next few years and it is vital for such a space to begin to be developed as soon as possible.

2. Taking into account that older siblings and community/peer support networks are key methods through which undocumented students are able to access information, developing a post-college mentorship program for undocumented students currently at Cal is a very important factor to increasing the retention and matriculation of AB540 undergraduate students. Following the model of GRADD (Graduates Reaching a DREAM Deferred), a group of AB540 college graduates who provide training and workshops across the state for undocumented students as they think about life after college. This organization is strongly supported by the UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education. Recently, in Fall 2011, with funding from the Haas Innovation Grant Project, we brought members of GRADD to Cal to offer an all day workshop for Northern California students. The workshop had over 25+ attendees from across Northern California including UC Davis, UC Santa Cruz, San Francisco State University, Cal State Fresno and local community colleges. This was the first time GRADD had presented in Northern California and the organizers had mentioned during their visit that they hope events like this will continue with the organizing of a Northern California team of GRADD. **Therefore, in order to encourage the development of peer mentorship projects such as GRADD, we recommend that the university, through the AB540 student resource center, provide funding for a peer mentorship program on campus**

among students, but also for the development of a Northern California extension of GRADD based at UC Berkeley. Currently a group of UC Berkeley AB540 alumni and other AB540 students from across the Bay Area have come together informally to form the Northern California equivalent of GRADD. This has resulted out of an unmet need of the students not only to build a pipeline of AB540 students into higher education, but also to help gain clarity as to the application of AB130 & 131 to students pursuing graduate studies. **Given this, we suggest that the Chancellor's Task Force on Undocumented Members of the On-Campus Community take up the issue of funding sources/possibilities for undocumented graduate students.** Questions remain as to the possibility of AB540 students to serve as GSIs and GSRs as well as their eligibility for certain university-wide, multi-year fellowships such as the Chancellor's Fellowship and the Eugene Cota-Robles Fellowship.

3. **Another recommendation is for the university to actively assist students to create a base of information regarding their legal options.** The university has the resources and alumni to create a base of volunteers to give legal advice/information and this mirrors a recommendation put forth in the Chancellor Report's Recommendations. In order to implement this recommendation, the university can also utilize its resources and clinics at Boalt Hall, the university's law school, to provide these vital resources to students and their families. Similar services exist for students seeking to resolve academic grievances (Ombuds) and housing eviction, small claims court, debit/credit card actions, etc. (Student Legal Services), but can be expanded in order to meet the needs of the AB540 student community, many of whom may possibly be eligible to file claims as refugees, asylum seekers or other legal action.

4. **Additionally, due to the fact that a very large proportion of undocumented students do not enter Cal directly out of high school, but are transfer students, we recommend that the Transfer Center, part of the Transfer, Re-Entry, Student Parents (TRSP) Center, develop more targeted outreach and support services for potential undocumented transfer students.** In order to accomplish this, greater funding and resources should be allocated to support transfer student initiatives already spearheaded by Lorena Valdez, Program Director of Transfer Student Services, who is already working closely with Dr. Laura Guillen of the Tang Center, to ensure the recruitment and retention of first-generation, minority college students. This would greatly assist the Transfer Center in continuing its development of programs and further solidify the pipeline between community college and 4-year universities, including UC Berkeley, as a feasible and affordable route for undocumented students in California. **We also encourage the Transfer Center staff to work collaboratively with counselors and faculty at the**

community colleges. Given that many students take some semesters off from Cal and attend community colleges in the area, counselors should be well versed with the classes that transfer and should be supportive of students wishing to take on this option.

5. Aside from increasing Transfer student services and recruitment geared specifically towards undocumented students, another campus unit, the Tang Center's Counseling and Psychological Services and Career Counseling Library, can also potentially be a highly utilized resource for undocumented students. Currently underutilized by members of this on-campus campus population and as discussed in the section, "A Healthy, Balanced Self: Activism & Mental Health," many students are connected to these units through individual staff members and a network of AB540 student friendly campus staff. Training for all staff members in these campus units, similar to the training suggested below for all campus faculty and staff would be instrumental in meeting the needs of students during and immediately following their time at Cal. **In terms of Counseling and Psychological Services and the recent training co-led by AB540 students and a CPS staff member, Dr. Laura Guillen, we recommend that CPS undertake further trainings and actively work to recruit and hire additional staff with expertise in assisting immigrant students, students of color, working-class students and other campus populations with similar backgrounds.** This will prevent an overload of work on a handful of staff and students to continually organize educational activities for current staff members and to augment and enhance already existing strengths of the current CPS staff. Furthermore, while current Cal students may receive financial aid to cover the cost of SHIP (Student Health Insurance Plan) insurance and given that undocumented students now have access to these resources through financial aid provided as a result of the recent passage of the California DREAM Act, there is still no waiver of need-based assistance to students who are unable to afford these fees. For undocumented students, these fees and the extra cost of medication could in fact serve as a deterrent for students using these services in the first place. **We recommend that the university actively works to implement a waiver or financial need based assistance plan for students unable to pay the cost of Tang Center service fees, co-pays and/or cost of medication.** Also, many undocumented students have not grown up with health insurance and therefore are unfamiliar with the processes of fully utilizing the benefits of their mandatory campus SHIP insurance. Such a policy would not only benefit undocumented students, but also greatly assist other student populations including homeless students, independent students/those previously in foster care/"wards of the state" and low-income students to name a few.

6. Moreover, given the extremely limited options for undocumented students post-college graduation, **we recommend that the Career Center developed services targeted towards the unique situation undocumented students face in the job market.** Building on the excellent work of Career Library Manager Jenny Olmedo, suggestions for resources to be offered include finding internship opportunities that do not require social security numbers, how to apply for graduate school application fee waivers (especially if students are ineligible to file a FAFSA or to take part in federally funded TRIO programs that provide students with graduate program application fee waivers), information on ways to work as an undocumented immigrant (as an independent contractor, using an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number – ITIN, etc) and information on pre-graduate school training programs available to non-citizens/those who are not legal permanent residents. Given that the scope of these services may not necessarily fall under the umbrella of services offered by the Career Counseling Library, they can also be implemented in collaboration/conjunction with staff at the UC Berkeley Career Center.

7. **On a campus community level the university needs to work towards ensuring that all faculty and staff are educated about what it means to be an undocumented AB540 student and despite their particular political slant or stance on immigration, the rights of AB540 students as UC Berkeley students. It is important for faculty/staff to understand that assisting undocumented students is an obligation of the university and to providing equal access/equal opportunity to all Cal students.** This will assist in building a more welcoming and inclusive campus climate, as students will then feel more comfortable disclosing their status to different faculty, staff, administrators and GSIs without feeling that they will be reported and/or stigmatized. As evidenced by this report’s section, “Arriving at Cal: Bureaucratic Interactions and Navigating a Challenging Campus Climate” and “We Deserve to Be Here!: Funding Undergraduate Education,” many of the times students found a lack of knowledge about the subject among faculty and staff and were forced to educate their professors and peers about their situation. **Developing a mandatory training for campus faculty and staff would be a start to rectifying the situation.** This training could then also be broadened to include GSIs and other campus administrators. Such a large-scale, basic introductory training to the issues facing undocumented AB540 students would go a long way in creating an environment where the students feel like university faculty/staff are aware of their issues and will at least have some basic understanding of their situation or be able to point them in the direction of someone who can connect/provide them with the proper resources. Students will then no longer have to feel as though they must always educate others and instead will see those others as resources. **This training can also be done in**

collaboration with local community based organizations (CBOs) who have been instrumental in investing in and training UC Berkeley students to be successful organizers as well as to promote the creation of safe spaces for undocumented student organizing/activism. For greater elaboration on this area and the impact of CBOs on undocumented student politicization, see the earlier section, “Our Right to Organize!: The Strategic Role of Campus-Based Student Groups & Community Based Organizations.” These organizations include, Educators for Fair Consideration (E4FC), the Asian Law Caucus and Centro Legal de la Raza in Oakland, all located in the Bay Area. Southern California CBOs that provide support resources to undocumented students statewide include the UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education, the Korean Resource Center, the National Korean American Service and Education Consortium (NAKASEC) and the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA).

- 8. Currently under discussion and spearheaded by Laura Guillen (Counseling and Psychological Services), Jenny Olmedo (Career Counseling) and Meng So (SLAS/EOP), stickers/decals are being developed that AB540 student friendly faculty/staff can place in their offices or on their office doors.** These stickers, having been implemented at other campuses such as the City College of San Francisco, are extremely useful in allowing students to recognize who can be helpful in terms of resources. The people who are obtaining these stickers should also receive a resource guide after undergoing training on how best to assist these students. The training, which has developed out of the discussions from this group, could be organized and implemented by a team of students, faculty and staff. Ideal candidates for members of this team would be self-identified AB540 students who are members of RISE (Rising Immigrant Scholars through Education), the AB540 student support group, ASPIRE (Asian Immigrant Student Promoting Immigration Reform through Education) and/or MISP (the Multicultural Immigrant Students Programs) and faculty and staff allies (potentially members of ISIC – the Immigrant Student Issues Coalition). **This group should be provided with funding in order to maximize their effectiveness and in particular, to compensate students for the work they are providing in building this infrastructure on behalf of the university for future generations of students.**

One primary way to create a broader base of understanding and important tool for these training is the creation of a resources guide tailored specifically to the UC Berkeley campus. This guide should be done in hard copy and disseminated to all students, faculty, staff and administrators at Berkeley. The resource guide should include some information about what it means to be an AB 540 undocumented student and should include Berkeley specific resources around issues of financial, mental health,

housing, academic and social support groups. Similar guides have already been created at other California colleges/universities such as for example, the one at Cal State Long Beach (CSULB), which can be accessed online at:

[http://www.csulb.edu/president/government-](http://www.csulb.edu/president/government-community/ab540/handbook/ab_540_handbook.pdf)

[community/ab540/handbook/ab_540_handbook.pdf](http://www.csulb.edu/president/government-community/ab540/handbook/ab_540_handbook.pdf). This resource guide can also be distributed to communities that have strong connections to the UC Berkeley campus including local high school and community college students so that students and staff at those colleges can have early access to the information they need to succeed at Cal.

Macro-Level (Institutional Policies & Legislative Advocacy) Recommendations

1. **On a macro level, UC Berkeley can provide for a better campus climate by recognizing the presence of undocumented students and advocating for them and their futures.** One way that Berkeley can create a better campus climate is by supporting current in this area as the Chancellor and Vice Chancellor of Equity and Inclusion have openly discussed their support for legislation concerning increased resources for undocumented students, in particular in the context of higher education. **Even though AB 130 & AB 131 have passed there still remains much work to be done, more specifically, the central importance of passing some sort of federal legislation allowing students to adjust their status.** The University of California, with the Berkeley campus administration at the forefront, can be instrumental in calling and supporting such legislation. Even if these efforts are not successful, students will feel support and this affects the campus climate for students. This recommendation is also mentioned in the Task Force's recommendations, but we feel it important to emphasize this point further (p. 6).
2. **Related to the need for university officials and administration to advocate for federal legislation to aid undocumented students as they graduate from Cal and navigate "life after college," it is also important for the university to take a position to ensure that students feel safe on campus. Therefore, we recommend that the university and UC police should make it clear that this is a safe campus for undocumented students.** The university and Chancellor Birgeneau need to take steps in order to ensure that students are safe on campus and feel comfortable approaching UCPD or other local police entities such as the Berkeley Police Department. Recently ASUC Student Senator Ju Hong co-facilitated a workshop with Angela Chan, attorney at the Asian Law Caucus on the Secure Communities Program ("S-Comm") and the issue of whether state and local agencies must comply with ICE holds/detainers. While this issue is being contested by local legal agencies and community based organizations, **the university should develop**

a policy or a memorandum of understanding between the Chancellor and the UCPD and Berkeley PD to prevent students from possibly being detained as a result of their immigration status. Further, in terms of protesting or one's right to free speech, the university needs to understand and recognize that undocumented students are a particularly vulnerable population and should create a policy about dealing with AB 540 students at protests. This is especially pertinent if the university calls for police force aid from the surrounding community. The newly hired staff member working on behalf of undocumented students, Meng So, should also be present at these events and have a strong working relationship with UCPD in the event that an AB540 student is arrested during an on-campus protest/rally.

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Attachment: Interview Protocol

Guiding questions:

1. What are key obstacles faced by undocumented AB540 students on the UC Berkeley campus?
2. Do students' challenges at Cal vary systematically by national origin, gender, class, or another line of demarcation?
3. Where have students found (or built) positive spaces of support for themselves on campus (or off)? What can these supportive spaces teach us about how to support these students at Cal?

The project will explore the experiences of AB540 students from their arrival at Cal to the present day along four main dimensions:

1. Pathways to success – we will ask respondents to describe how they go to Cal and the most critical ingredients for their arrival on campus (mentorship, family support, community engagement, etc.)
 - a. How did you make it to Cal? What was your journey like (transition from HS, community college, took time off)?
 - b. What sources of support allowed you to make the transition to Berkeley?
 - i. Any specific teachers or mentors? How or in what ways did they assist you in your journey to Berkeley?
 - ii. Did you participate in any programs or work with any community-based organizations prior to coming to Cal?
 - iii. Were you active politically with regard to undocumented student activism/organizing prior to coming to Berkeley? In what way?
2. Acclimation – respondents will be asked to describe in detail their first two semesters on campus. What were the key challenges they faced? Where were they able to find support or assistance on campus?
 - a. Can you describe for me what your first semester at Cal was like? Do any memories or specific experiences stand out? Why?
 - b. Can you tell me about any difficulties or challenges you faced? How did you overcome them?
 - c. In what campus spaces on campus were you able to find support? How did you come in contact with these individuals/spaces?
 - i. Student groups?
 - ii. Local community-based organizations?
 - iii. Specific staff/faculty?
 - iv. Campus counselors?

- 3. Lived experience** – all Cal students interact with a variety of institutional actors during the course of their time on campus. We are interested in exploring the degree to which those experiences are unique for undocumented AB540 students. In particular, we will ask questions about their experiences with:
- a. Financial aid/support** – how much did they know about their financial situation before arriving and what have they experienced since getting to campus? We are especially interested in documenting the varied strategies these students employ in order to support themselves on campus, especially given rising tuition and the current budget environment. (Also finding housing and food).
 - i. At which point did you first become aware of your status? What was this experience like? What did you think/feel? How did you find out? How did you react?
 - ii. Once you became aware of your status, what strategies did you use to fund your studies at Cal? How did you become aware of these opportunities?
 - 1. Fundraising?
 - 2. Work?
 - 3. Applying for scholarships?
 - 4. Peer support?
 - iii. How do you provide for the basic necessities – food and housing? Is this a constant struggle or challenge for you?
 - b. Bureaucratic interactions** – there is anecdotal evidence that undocumented AB540 students are often not treated well by staff. We would like to explore this question and ideally identify if there are particular offices/sectors of the bureaucracy that are especially unwelcoming of these students.
 - i. What has your experiences with faculty and staff at the UC been like? From your experience, are faculty/staff generally aware of what AB540 is or the needs of students like yourself?
 - 1. Have you had a particular experience with staff who were unaware of AB540 or did not understand your situation?
 - 2. How did they react to your situation? How did you respond?
 - ii. Have there been any particularly helpful individuals on campus that have assisted you in navigating the university bureaucracy?
 - iii. What skills or attributes did they have? In your opinion, what qualities/skills are necessary for staff working with AB540/undocumented students to possess?
 - c. Academic exchange** – do AB540 students feel their legal status affects their ability to access Cal’s academic world? How (or do they) incorporate their experiences into class discussions? How responsive do they feel faculty are to their unique needs?
 - i. How has your status affected your experiences in class? Have you ever discussed your status in relation to course material or topics?
 - ii. Have you disclosed your status to your professors or fellow classmates? Why or why not? What has this meant for you?

- iii. Do you feel that identifying yourself as an undocumented student stigmatizes you in the eyes of staff or your peers?
 - iv. Do you feel that your status has prevented you from accessing any particular resources on campus? If so, why? And which resources?
 - d. Social climate – how do undocumented AB540 students navigate their social world? How do they negotiate the “coming out” process with their peers? How does the need for secrecy, along with their other legal limitations (no drivers’ license, ID, etc.) affect their ability to engage socially with other Cal students and engage fully with campus life?
 - i. When if at all, have you “come out” to your peers or faculty?
 - ii. Can you describe to me what this process was like? What did it take you to get to this point where you were comfortable doing so? If not, have you considered identifying yourself as an undocumented AB540 student? What reasons or experiences have led you to chose not to do so?
 - iii. In what ways have you had to alter your lifestyle because of the impact your status has had on you (inability to receive a driver’s license, no US government ID, etc.)? Has this been a significant issue for your while on campus or during your time at Berkeley?
 - e. Heath – Mental and Physical
 - i. In what ways do you care for your body? What does a healthy lifestyle look like/mean for you?
 - 1. Have you ever accessed any mental health services on campus? If so, when? How did you become aware of these services? Did you have any issues or experience any barriers in doing so?
 - 2. How do you take care of yourself physically? (Do you exercise, go to the gym, walk, etc)?
- 4. Plans for the future – the literature on undocumented students suggests college graduation can be a point of frustration, with AB540 college graduates having to take menial jobs that do not reflect their level of educational attainment. How do these students think about their life after Cal? What resources are they aware of to help them make that transition? What are their plans for the future?
 - a. What plans do you have post-graduation? How do you feel that the university has (or has not) prepared you for this?
 - b. Under ideal circumstances, what you would be doing in the next 5-10 years if you could plan it any way you wanted? Under current circumstances, what do you see yourself doing in the next 5-10 years?
- 5. Activism (covered in prior interview).