

IN LIMBO: BRINGING STABILITY TO UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS
ENROLLED AT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION
IN CENTRAL TEXAS

by

Michelle M. Sotolongo, BFA

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Committee Members:

Sarah Blue, Chair

Gloria Martínez-Ramos

Ana Juarez

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the youth who struggle to be recognized as Americans in their pursuit of education. For all immigrants who endure unthinkable sacrifices, leaving their hearts and homes behind searching for a new life. Never feel ashamed of where you came from, who you are, or what you aspire to be.

You are exceptionally valuable.

You are inspiring.

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ABSTRACT

This research takes an institutional and administrative approach to identifying availability of resources for undocumented students in the state of Texas, as well as offering helpful guidelines for those employed in higher education. Relationships with school counselors and teachers are particularly important sources of information and guidance for undocumented students. College admissions counselors and recruiters, financial aid, counseling centers, and academic advisors are the administrators who are most likely to encounter challenges with undocumented students, and who should be knowledgeable of these resources. Most of the information students receive about applying to college, however, comes from other adults in the community, as opposed to school agents. Employees of institutions of higher education are in a position to extend support to this population. This study will evaluate the degree to which the institutions are effectively providing such guidance. The objective of this research is to identify the complexity of undocumented students' status, the challenges they face, and how they can be helped to succeed in an uncertain future through higher education. This study assesses policies regarding undocumented students in Central Texas universities as perceived by their administrators, faculty, and staff. This assessment provides insight into possible short-term solutions that can then be adopted by other institutions across the state, or even nation. It examines what resources are available in the areas of financial aid, career services, support groups or networks, and legal assistance.

I. INTRODUCTION – WHY DO WE CARE?

...when someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing. Yet you know you exist and others like you, that this is a game with mirrors. It takes some strength of soul – and not just individual strength, but collective understanding – to resist this void, this nonbeing, into which you are thrust, and to stand up, demanding to be seen and heard.

~ Poet-essayist Adrienne Rich, 1984

This research takes an institutional and administrative approach to identifying availability of resources for undocumented college students in the state of Texas, as well as offering helpful guidelines for those employed in higher education. Relationships with school counselors and teachers are particularly important sources of information and guidance for undocumented college students' career planning and academic achievement (De Leon 2005; Suárez-Orozco et al. 2015, 450). College admissions counselors and recruiters, financial aid, counseling centers, and academic advisors are the "institutional agents" who interact and assist most often by being on the "front lines". Therefore, employees at institutions of higher education are in a position to extend support to this population. To what extent are these "institutional agents" aware of the needs of undocumented college students? What do they perceive are the challenges facing undocumented college students? This study evaluates how and to what degree institutions of higher education in Central Texas are effectively assisting undocumented and DACAmented college students. The objective of this research is to identify the

complexity of undocumented college students' challenges, and explore how to help them succeed in higher education. Within the context of restrictive immigration policies, my goal is to understand experiences of undocumented college students through an administrative perspective. This exploration provides insight into possible short-term solutions that other institutions across the state, or even the nation can adopt. Student-led initiatives, the roles of faculty and staff, the Development, Relief, and Education of Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, and the most recent executive order of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) serve as key components in the discussion of undocumented college students in higher education. This study further examines what resources are available in the areas of financial aid, career services, support groups or networks, and legal assistance.

Undocumented college students are in limbo, or stuck in a state of transition. They are often strong-willed individuals who were raised in the United States and feel as American as their U.S.-born peers, but face exclusion outside of academia because of their legal status which is an "ascribed characteristic given by the state" (Martínez-Calderón 2010, 25). Navigation and negotiation of the complexities of higher education inherently are daunting and stressful for any student, but especially for students who do not have residency or citizenship. They constantly negotiate if, when, how much, and to whom they disclose information about their immigration status. They do not qualify for federal financial aid or the ability to drive or work. Accessibility to resources for undocumented college students in Central Texas has a tremendous impact on retention and graduation.

Availability of resources for undocumented youth is a critical issue, as recently detailed in the account of undocumented youth's struggle with fear of deportation and

social stigma, by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Jose Antonio Vargas. Vargas publicly revealed himself as undocumented in an autobiographical article in *The New York Times*.

In his own words, he describes his experience as:

living a different kind of reality. It means going about my day in fear of being found out. It means rarely trusting people, even those closest to me, with who I really am...It means reluctantly, even painfully, doing things I know are wrong and unlawful. And it has meant relying on a sort of 21st-century Underground Railroad of supporters, people who took an interest in my future and took risks for me (Vargas 2011).

In order to offer the best chance of success to all students in Central Texas, institutions of higher education have the opportunity to bridge the gap created by national and state policy by providing resources to this population.

II. BACKGROUND: GATEWAYS TO EDUCATION

Where We Stand – The Situation for Undocumented Youth in Higher Education

The United States graduates an estimated 50 million high school students per year, 65,000 of whom are undocumented (Passel 2001, Institute of Education Sciences 2010, U.S. Department of Education 2010). In 1982, the United States Supreme Court made a landmark decision regarding the Texas case of *Plyler v. Doe*, enabling all children residing in the United States to earn a K-12 education. This case noted that the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment included undocumented immigrants and established the right of undocumented children to a public education. As monumental as this is for those children, the ruling only applies to kindergarten through the twelfth grade (Olivas 1995). A complication then arises when those same children want to attend an institution of higher education. Of all the undocumented youth who graduate from high school, only 10 to 20 percent actually go on to college (Passel 2003). Approximately 7,000-13,000 undocumented immigrants enroll in US colleges every year (Educators for Fair Consideration 2012). A large share of this population attends Texas public universities. The state of Texas provides opportunities to undocumented college students that the majority of other states do not. With its geographic proximity to the Mexican border and high numbers of immigrants, Texas laws recognize the importance of immigrants' contributions to society. Texas pioneered legislation allowing in-state tuition for students who meet certain criteria by passing House Bill (HB) 1403 in 2001, which made undocumented college students eligible for state financial aid.

The general population remains largely unaware of just how complex and slow the legalization process is. Because of this, one can often hear the following question:

"Why don't they just wait for their documents and enter legally, like "everyone else?"'"

Or they do not take the time to investigate beyond the sound bites, sensationalized headlines, and rampant anti-immigrant rhetoric that vaguely glaze over the challenges. However, no legal proceedings, passports, or visas were even necessary for Europeans until 1924, when the majority of European immigration had already begun to wane (Ngai 2004). There is a history of anti-immigrant attitudes. A common example is U.S.-born citizens criticizing current policy, often referring to their ancestors abiding by laws of the land in their journey, implying that undocumented workers are “morally reprehensible whereas legal residents are morally superior” (Golash-Boza 2011, 16). Golash-Boza (2011) goes on to explain that this nativist stance relies on the false assumption that some migrants have followed the “rules” whereas others have broken them. However, U.S. policies have played a fundamental role in generating and directing migrant labor flows – both legal and illegal, the consequences of which are still felt on all sides of the borders. Being undocumented poses constraints for students to navigate and negotiate higher education (Gildersleeve 2010).

Legal immigration is costly and requires a test of patience. Immigrants pay hundreds of dollars per person in fees, for medical exams, and travel (US Citizen and Immigration Services 2016). Decades-long wait times have created a bottleneck in the immigration system, leading families to risk deportation, time living in limbo, family separation, and poverty in hopes that the uncertain gains will outweigh the risks of unauthorized migration. Sociologist Tanya Golash-Boza argues that the challenges undocumented college students face do not lie “in the criminality of the individual migrant, but in the fact that current laws and policies are out of sync with both U.S.

foreign relations and labor needs in the United States" (2011, 44). Unraveling the mystery of the legalization process was the focus of a study by Stuart Anderson and David Miller (2006) that outlined examples of green card wait times based on criteria such as marital status or relationship to U.S. citizens. As of the 2006 study, the wait time ranges for skilled workers and foreign professionals, to siblings of U.S. citizens, exceeded five to twelve or as many as 22 years, if the prospective migrant happened to be from the Philippines. Visa allocation caps are set per country depending on the current influx of nationals from those countries, therefore, countries like Mexico and the Philippines have a longer wait time. Nearly a decade later in 2014, not much had changed as foreign individuals seeking employment. Recent examples such as bachelor's degree-holding applicants from Mexico faced an 18-month backlog, while bachelor's degree-holders from India endured a 10 to 12-year backlog for a green card (Walsh 2014).

Countless types of visa categories exist in addition to legalization via family sponsorship; however, they are extremely limited and very specialized. One of the most beneficial, perhaps even prestigious, but particularly difficult to obtain is the H-1B visa. Government fees for hiring skilled foreign-born professionals via the H-1B have increased, generally exceeding \$3,000 for each individual hired (Anderson and Miller, 2006).

Recent Policy Attempts to Grant Rights to Undocumented Youth – DREAM Act and DACA

No major federal immigration legislation has been introduced in the US since the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996; for a population of young people (the 1.5 generation), who were not born here but are American in all but their legal documents, the struggle for legalization continues. The most persistent effort to obtain rights for undocumented youth has been the federal DREAM (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) Act. The DREAM Act, at the federal level has not passed, and has been debated in Congress since it was first introduced by Senator Orin Hatch (Republican- Utah) and Senator Richard Durbin (Democrat-Illinois) in 2001 ("Basic information about," 2010). It was crafted to offer a six-year conditional legal residency status to undocumented youth who meet several criteria. These criteria include the following: 1) entry into the United States before the age sixteen; 2) continuous presence in the United States for five years prior to the bill's enactment; 3) receipt of a high school diploma or its equivalent like the General Educational Development (GED) exam, or admission into an institution of higher education; 4) must be between the ages of 12 and 35 at the time of application; and 5) demonstrated good moral character. This original version of the DREAM Act proposed that within six years of approval for conditional permanent residency, the individual must have completed at least two years of one of the options outlined in the previous step. Once five and a half of the six years have passed, the individual would then be able to apply for Legal Permanent Residency and eventually for United States citizenship.

Regardless of federal DREAM Act's shortcomings, successful policy efforts at the state level exist and I address them in a later section.

Under the DREAM Act, qualifying youth would be authorized to work legally in the United States, go to school at the in-state tuition rate, and join the military. Once approved and granted Conditional Permanent Residency, the individual would have to do one of the following: either enroll in an institution of higher education in order to pursue a bachelor's or higher degree or enlist in one of the branches of the United States military. However, those who have already completed at least two years of college education towards a bachelor's degree or higher degree would still have to wait the five and a half years in order to apply for Legal Permanent Residency even though they may have already obtained a degree. Students who do not complete the requirements would be disqualified.

This federal legislation has not yet passed, despite having been introduced at least eight times since 2001 (Appendix A). At present, it is uncertain what will happen with the DREAM Act. There has not been another revision or reintroduction since 2010, but the conversation amongst politicians and the media is shifting more toward comprehensive immigration reform that may include elements from the original versions instead of adopting it as a stand-alone bill. Many supporters of the DREAM Act see it as a form of hope for the undocumented youth that have been struggling with their illegitimacy during and after college. The implications for the lack of immigration reform has had a negative impact on undocumented college students, making them unqualified for federal financial aid, giving them a precarious status in the US, and hindering their work and educational opportunities.

In 2012, in a revolutionary milestone in the fight for equitable immigration reform, President Barack Obama announced an executive order, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). This executive order allows eligible undocumented immigrant youth to request deferred action against deportation for a period of two years, subject to renewal. However, this bestows legal *presence*, not legal *status* upon individuals granted DACAmentation. Upon approval, the individual may be eligible for employment authorization (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2015). The name of the executive order barely captures the intricacies that it entails, but it gives hope to an entire generation of undocumented young people who have been waiting for the opportunity to study and work legally in the United States. What makes DACA so different from any previously introduced piece of immigration reform is that it grants undocumented youth the possibility to engage in lawful employment. Of the 4.4 million undocumented immigrants in the US under the age of 30, an estimated 1.7 million potentially benefit from DACA (Passel and Lopez 2012). However, as an executive order it is ultimately a short-term solution; DACA could be reversed by a future administration.

There are seven main points under which applicants for DACA must comply (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2015). The requirements include components relating to date of entry of the applicant, such as being under age 31 as of June 15, 2012; and having entered the United States before the applicant's sixteenth birthday. Other components of DACA require that the applicant provide verification of having continuously resided in the United States since June 15, 2007, up to the present time. Proof is also required demonstrating that he or she was both physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012 (the day the executive order was given), and at the time of

making the request for consideration. Applicants must have entered the United States without inspection before June 15, 2012, or have a lawful immigration status that expired as of June 15, 2012. This would make most international students ineligible to apply for DACA to use as a method of renewing student visas or finding lawful employment in the United States (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2015).

Education is emphasized as a goal or principal value, as all DACA applicants must also be currently in school, have graduated, obtained a certificate of completion from high school, a general education development (GED) certificate, or be an honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States. Finally, just like the DREAM Act, DACA has the stipulation that no applicant may have been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, three or more other misdemeanors, and “does not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety” (dhs.gov 2012). DACA-approved undocumented college students in higher education will be able to work in better jobs, under better working conditions. While not a perfect solution, or even a path to citizenship, DACAmended college students are no longer forced into the underground cash economy because their degrees will prove fruitful, at least for the time being. In the few years since its implementation, DACA has allowed this formerly ineligible population to become a new contributing element in the American workforce (Balderas-Medina Anaya et al. 2014). The benefits of DACA are temporary, and more importantly, not guaranteed to be honored by future legislators or administrations, as a shift in political party could completely eliminate the program and leave undocumented youth in a deeper state of limbo.

State and University Policy

There are significant impacts on undocumented college students in higher education stemming from the differences between national, state, and local policies. In order to best serve the needs of undocumented college students navigating the daunting tasks required of all college students, it is important to recognize the additional burdens they bear that come with not having access to citizen rights and benefits.

Texas

States like Texas that offer in-state tuition for undocumented college students are attempting to level the playing field to give undocumented college students a higher probability of succeeding in higher education. Numbers of DACA-eligible youth in Texas add up to roughly 183,000, according to a Migration Policy Institute analysis of US Census Bureau data and reflects an increase of approximately 31,000 between 2013 and 2015 (American Immigration Council 2015, Migration Policy Institute 2013b). Texas is home to just over 1.4 million undocumented immigrants, of which 200,000 ages 18-24 are eligible for DACA. Nearly 50,000 of Texas' undocumented youth are enrolled in college. Of the undocumented immigrants residing in Texas in 2013, immediately eligible for DACA, most moved here from Mexico and Central America (94%), and Asia (5%), and nearly half are female (47%). Eighteen percent have enrolled in college, and a mere three percent earned a Bachelor's degree or higher (Migration Policy Institute 2013a). These numbers highlight the challenges that undocumented youth have in enrolling in and completing higher education, even with DACA in place.

Compared to other states' policies, Texas is unique in its attitude toward undocumented college students in several ways. Foremost is the open support for in-state

tuition from former Texas governor Rick Perry, who was widely criticized by his own Republican Party for statements made during the 2012 presidential campaign primary debates (Perry 2011). Perry placed the value of allowing undocumented college students to pay what other Texas residents pay in the context of economic benefits to the state. While critics presented in-state tuition as a form of massive fraud that is ruining higher education for everyone else in the state and draining funds, Perry emphasized the ethnic makeup of Texans – approximately 38.2 percent self-identified as Hispanic/Latino (2014) – and his constituents’ voting and spending power, as well as their potential future revenue and intellectual capital (Jackson 2011). The strongest argument Perry made during a debate in his 2011 presidential run was that we “need to be educating these children, because they will become a drag on our society. I think that’s what Texans wanted to do. Out of 181 members of the Texas legislature, when this issue came up, only four dissenting votes were cast. This was a state issue. Texans voted on it. And I still support it greatly” (Transcript 2011). The current governor Greg Abbott, however, has spearheaded anti-immigrant efforts (Sakuma 2015) while giving thinly veiled responses to inquiries about his opinion on in-state tuition for undocumented college students (Watkins and Blanchard 2015). Abbott avoided being outspoken on the specific issue of in-state tuition, instead viewing the law as “flawed” and stating that he “would not rule out signing into law a bill eradicating the program” (Ratcliffe 2015).

As reported in the Texas Tribune, the numbers of undocumented college students in Texas who paid in-state tuition in 2013 range dramatically between community colleges and four-year institutions. For instance, Dallas Community College District schools matriculated 3,691 undocumented college students at the in-state tuition rate,

while the University of Houston had only 757 (Ura and McCullough 2015). In the same report, Texas State University, University of Texas at Austin, and University of Texas at San Antonio had an estimated 719, 762, and 253 undocumented students, respectively. The Tribune provided no data on private institutions.

Until about 2010, there had been no real opposition to this particular legislation in Texas. However, Republican hopefuls of the 2012 presidential election, as well as legislators from Texas and other states often exhibited their urgent desire to repeal all legislation that benefits undocumented immigrants (Garrett 2013; Russell 2011, 6). Similar rhetoric resurfaced during the 2016 presidential campaigns (Decker 2016; Kurtzleben 2015; McArdle 2015). Proponents argue that creating a hospitable, supportive environment for undocumented college students is an investment in the future of this country. An economic impact study by the Texas Comptroller concluded that every dollar the state invests in higher education for undocumented college students would yield more than five dollars for the Texas economy in the long run (Comptroller 2006). Other states have drawn from Texas' methods for determining who is qualified to receive in-state tuition (Dougherty, Nienhusser, and Vega 2010).

Some states have advocated for more undocumented youth rights while some are lobbying for fewer rights. As of October 2015, a total of twenty-one states had passed some form of legislation allowing undocumented college students to qualify for in-state tuition, including California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, and Washington (National

Immigration Law Center 2015.) Florida was the most recent state to pass favorable legislation, in 2014.

The State of Rhode Island generated a precedent in immigration reform in September 2011 by creating a policy that allowed undocumented college students to receive in-state tuition to its institutions of higher education. The Board of Governors for Higher Education unanimously made their decision after deliberating with the public for three and a half hours and defending their stance against the objections from several legislators who believed the matter “belonged in the General Assembly, not before a policymaking panel” (Macris 2011). Proposed legislation had failed the previous seven years when brought to the General Assembly. Changes to state legislation clearly do not happen overnight, but Rhode Island paved the way in facilitating resources to undocumented college students wanting to pursue higher education.

Four states have passed legislation that bans undocumented college students from qualifying for in-state tuition: Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, and South Carolina. Alabama and South Carolina have a complete ban on allowing undocumented college students to attend institutions of higher education, while Indiana’s governor signed legislation explicitly denying in-state tuition rates to undocumented college students. Georgia is unique in recent decisions made by the University of Georgia system, requiring prospective students at those campuses to provide proof of citizenship prior to registration (Diamond 2011). According to the school regents, these new measures are “a way to assure taxpayers that students applying to the state’s most prestigious colleges are not displaced by illegal immigrants” (2011).

Currently, in Texas, for an undocumented student to attend an institution of higher education, a signed affidavit must be notarized and submitted to the institution of intended matriculation. The institution verifies the following: name, date of birth and age, affirmation of graduation from a Texas high school or receipt of a GED certificate in Texas, and residence in Texas for three years leading up to graduation from high school or receipt of a GED. Students also verify their residence in Texas for the 12 months prior to the date of the semester in which student will matriculate. Finally, the applicant must submit a notarized affidavit of having filed or *intention* of filing an application to become a permanent resident at the earliest opportunity available to the student (Residency 2014). However, there is no opportunity currently available for the applicant to legalize his or her status, making the situation an impasse.

While broad decisions affecting undocumented students are dictated by the state's legislature, such as extending in-state tuition or allowing them to obtain a driver's license, the intricacies of matriculation for undocumented college students and the resources available tend to be made on an individual basis varying from campus to campus, public and private. Therefore, it is fundamental to this study to first identify each school's official stance on the matter of undocumented students enrolled at their institutions, if one even exists, in addition to the resources they currently provide. This information will help to better serve that population's needs, and aid them in successfully graduating from college.

III. FACTORS INFLUENCING SUCCESS: RETENTION, GRADUATION, AND BEYOND

Conceptual Frameworks and Studies

This study uses the theoretical frameworks of cultural citizenship, liminality and segmented assimilation to frame a discussion of the challenges faced by undocumented college students in institutions of higher education. I begin by defining each of these concepts to better identify their characteristics and their usefulness for understanding the challenges faced by undocumented youth. This section will end with an overview of undocumented student debt, and access to university resources and in-state tuition.

Cultural Citizenship

Cultural anthropologist Renato Rosaldo's conceptualization of cultural citizenship aligns itself most closely to the situation in which undocumented youth in higher education find themselves. While Rosaldo claims cultural citizenship is an oxymoron, he also very accurately defines it as,

the right to be different and to belong in a participatory democratic sense...in a democracy, social justice calls for equity among all citizens, even when such differences as race, religion, class, gender, or sexual orientation potentially could be used to make certain people less equal or inferior to others (Rosaldo 1994, 402).

Undocumented college students ("Dreamers") consider themselves full members of American society, and have been living as such for the majority of their lives. Cultural citizenship is arguably one of the most important characteristics distinguishing Dreamers and more recently arrived immigrants. While one group carries a stigma due to a perceived lack of assimilation, the other is virtually identical to the concept of a typical

American until the bureaucratic discrepancy is acknowledged. Following Rosaldo's definition of cultural citizenship, the missing piece for making Dreamers whole Americans in the eyes of society is legalization of status that subsequently offers them all the same protections and rights guaranteed to every U.S. citizen, and allows representation in the democratic process.

Other researchers, such as Flores (2003) have focused their discussion on cultural citizenship from the perspective of Mexican Americans who were born and raised in the U.S., therefore considered legal citizens, but failed to be accepted into the mainstream culture. This perspective is reflected mostly in literature about 1960s civil rights movements, particularly that of Chicanos, and is a parallel situation of what Dreamers are experiencing: the same struggle for a sense of belonging (Kymlicka & Wayne 2000, Stevenson 2001). It is easier to make discriminatory assumptions based on physical appearance, such as racial profiling; deciding to accept or reject an individual based on legal status, however, is near impossible to do unless it is self-disclosed. Jan Pakulski draws the distinction that citizenship rights are not synonymous with collective rights in general, and are "sanctioned by the legal, political, and administrative apparatuses of the state" (1997, 74). Undocumented college students are left out of the natural progression citizen rights tend to take. Pakulski explains the way in which western societies typically enfranchise their citizens: civil rights lay the foundation for political rights, followed by the establishment of social rights as an extension of political rights. Higher education is most commonly viewed as a collective right, but current legislation reflects otherwise. Access to campus resources intended to facilitate the retention and graduation of undocumented student populations arguably falls under the same principles that guide

social rights (Pakulski 1997). Undocumented college students yearn for full participation and inclusion in all aspects of American life. While they are not able to exercise the political rights of legal citizens, general acknowledgment of their existence and access to relevant campus resources offers undocumented college students an opportunity to reach their full potential within their social community.

Undocumented youth receive conflicting messages from society when there is no federal legislation barring undocumented immigrants from opening bank accounts, taking out private loans, or purchasing private health insurance; and yet, they can still be denied at the discretion of banking institutions, health care providers, and institutions of higher education (Gildersleeve, Rumann, and Mondragon 2010). As with any student attempting to navigate the complexities of higher education, resolving challenges that affect education is formidable, especially without the benefit of federal financial aid. Just as universities typically offer additional resources for special groups such as first generation college students, those with learning or physical disabilities, LGBTQ support, or extreme financial hardship, undocumented college students are another group in need. What a university can or cannot provide is widely variable based on its type of funding (public versus private) and each institution's own policies regarding undocumented college students.

Liminality

Several studies have used the concept of liminality to interpret the specific situation of undocumented youth (Abrego 2006, Costanzo et. al 2002, Gonzales and Chavez 2012, Menjívar 2006). Liminality describes a state of being in which something is indeterminately “in between” or in limbo. This research concentrates on liminality’s context within a legal definition, specifically in the case of undocumented college students. Menjívar (2006) labels liminality as an “...uncertain status – not fully documented or undocumented but often straddling both – [that] has gone on for years and permeates many aspects of the immigrants’ lives and delimits their range of action in different spheres...” (1001). For the purposes of this study, liminality is a condition that impacts undocumented youth by stigmatizing the students throughout their educational careers. Upon graduation, these youth find themselves without a way to legally practice their professions or contribute to society through civic actions such as voting. Abrego used Costanzo et al.’s (2002) term “quasi-legal” to describe the kind of situation undocumented college students find themselves in and just how much their legal status can influence their educational attainment. According to Abrego, undocumented college students are most likely to realize their legal status right before high school graduation, in the process of applying for college. Abrego’s thoughts lay out the cause and effect of policy on immigrants’ challenges very clearly stating “those who face exclusionary state policies that deny them legal status experience greater structural and economic limitations, and must adapt to limited economic options, weak co-ethnic networks, and general disadvantage – often regardless of human capital” (2006, 214).

The unique characteristic of liminality as related to immigration status, however, is its basis in the frequency with which immigration legislation changes. In other words, an individual's legal status can change from lawful to unlawful with a change in legislation, whether or not the affected individual is aware, and incur severe repercussions. At the very least, the individual would no longer be eligible to access social programs. The uncertainty of this type of legal status has led to prolonged family separations and impeded access to higher education in the United States. Due to the ambiguous nature of the undocumented college students' situations, the institutions' ability to provide necessary resources is also hindered.

Liminality highlights the central role the state still plays in shaping and regulating immigrants' lives. Immigration legislation, as observed in a study by Kitty Calavita in Spain, "actively 'irregularizes' people by making it all but impossible to retain legal status over time" (1998, 530). Menjívar emphasizes that liminality is temporary, but it is not a unidirectional or linear path from undocumented to documented status. Liminality demonstrates immigration law's ability to constrain and enable human action. Furthermore, Torres and Wicks-Asbun (2014) found that opportunities, aspirations, and goals for the future of undocumented college students create an underclass "of frustrated youths, whose talents and potential are ultimately lost to society as a whole" (196).

Many immigration scholars have drawn on the idea of liminality in their work. Golash-Boza (2011) illustrated how liminality was intentionally created by policy, such as Arizona's Senate Bill 1070 and the federal Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) 287(g) that entangle immigration and criminal law enforcement at the state and federal levels, respectively. Arizona's Senate Bill 1070 and the federal (MOA) 287(g) are examples of

legislation considered to be some of the harshest in immigration law history, both requiring residents to have registration documents in their possession at all times or face a possible misdemeanor at best. MOA 287(g) is an agreement entered into by the United States Department of Homeland Security and the local law enforcement agencies in 2006 granting qualified personnel to perform certain functions of an immigration officer (Immigration and Customs Enforcement 2007). Arizona's SB 1070 requires state law enforcement officers to perform duties usually reserved for certain federal immigration agencies: to determine an individual's immigration status during a "lawful stop, detention or arrest", or during any unspecified "lawful contact" if there was any reason to suspect the person as undocumented (US Immigration and Customs Enforcement 2016). Not only does this sentiment lead to general misinformation, it perpetuates an *us* versus *them* mentality that ultimately informs policy-makers to make decisions and legislation that act as barriers to higher education for many undocumented college students. The intersection of criminal law enforcement and immigration law enforcement was used by law professor Juliet Stumpf to coin the term "crimmigration", as the merging of those two different regimes of law (2006). Likewise, Gonzales and Chavez (2012) argue that the biopolitics of citizenship and governmentality "enclose, penetrate, define and limit one's life and actions" (256). Now more than ever, the immigration system is affecting the potential of success for these students, their families, and the institutions that educate them.

One cause of liminality, often overlooked in discussions of undocumented immigrants, is the extreme difficulty of obtaining legal documentation. From the financial cost, travel, accessibility to consulates, and myriad other contributing factors, the list of obstacles to legalization seem never-ending (Anderson and Miller 2006). Long

processing times and a limited number of certain visas force thousands into a liminal status. Skilled foreign nationals, particularly graduates of U.S. universities, cannot work or remain in the United States without H1-B visas. Anderson and Miller (2006) proposed expanding green card quotas for family- and employment-based immigrants as well as increasing the cap on H1-B visas made available to skilled professionals, implying the government must also take some responsibility and action to allow these immigrants to regularize their status and eventually move away from liminal status.

Segmented Assimilation and Mobility

Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou (1993) outlined segmented assimilation theory according to legal categories that create a stratified system of belonging, wherein not all groups are treated equally and are discriminated in society and by immigration law and social policies. Abrego (2006) applied the theory of assimilation in her study of children of migrants in Los Angeles. Her study included the theory of segmented assimilation to demonstrate the “legal and social contradictions associated with undocumented status limit beyond these youths’ chances for upward mobility through traditional means” (212).

Differentiated assimilation is relevant to this study on undocumented college students because assimilation of undocumented college students may be result in either upward or downward mobility. For example, Portes and Zhou (1993) observe that while there is a “growing acculturation and parallel integration into the white middle-class”, the opposite is also true in groups who face discrimination resulting in “permanent poverty and assimilation into the underclass” (82). Another form of adaptation described by Portes and Zhou is the connection between deliberate preservation of the immigrant

community's values and camaraderie. The resources available to undocumented college students higher education can be tremendously influential factors in their experiences for their futures in American society. Lack of support networks and resources could increase the risk of undocumented youth following paths of other marginalized native youths as a way to cope with their own challenging situations.

Meanwhile, legal categories mark immigrants as non-nationals and deportable, becoming marks of exclusion (Portes and Zhou 1993). In other words, undocumented youth are not fully integrated in the eyes of the law and still face the social stigma associated with being undocumented, making it difficult for undocumented college students to get the resources they need to thrive in the college environment.

Undocumented college students are at risk of downward mobility, immobility, or "feeling stuck" due to financial challenges, lowered motivation and self-esteem upon finding out legal status, or the lack of resources that would potentially alleviate those roadblocks (Dozier 1993; Suárez -Orozco et al. 2015). On the contrary, high-achieving undocumented college students enrolled at institutions with resources that adequately address some of their specific challenges may experience much more positive outcomes and upward mobility. Nonetheless, access to resources aids immigrants' integration.

Segmented assimilation implies there are multiple outcomes of immigrant incorporation, as not all immigrants have the same access to resources or face the same environmental conditions, which results in disparate outcomes (Menjívar 2006, 1002). The fear of deportation places undocumented families, or families with mixed-status members are vulnerable to feeling worry, anxiety and stress because they are targeted by the anti-immigrant sentiment (Majumdar and Martínez -Ramos 2012). Additionally,

Burns, Garcia, and Wolgin found that over 200,000 undocumented immigrants in the US also identify as LGBT. Because they find themselves at the intersection of two already marginalized groups are among society's most vulnerable individuals" (2013, 1). This group experiences the compounded dangers of exposure, considering the history of detention centers disregarding gender identity, or the fate that awaits them in their home countries if/when deported (Burns, Garcia, and Wolgin 2013,24; Tabak and Levitan 2014).

Long-term immigrant incorporation and broader forms of citizenship and community belonging (and exclusion) are shaped by the multiple legal categories in immigration law, including liminal statuses (Menjívar 2006). It is the hope of these young undocumented Americans pursuing higher education that they be recognized not by an outdated bureaucratic process, but by what they have worked so diligently to earn, and the contributions they make. The importance of legalization is even more urgent upon graduation, relying on the social support networks they have developed over time while waiting for a way to be legitimated through their success as students and members of society, predicated on the value of meritocracy and equity rather than equality (Torres and Wicks-Asbun 2014). Any protections that accompany undocumented college students will eventually end, but as educators, it is in everyone's best interest to do as much as possible while the students are under our trust.

IV. DEBT, IN-STATE TUITION, AND ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

The intersectionality of debt, in-state tuition, access to university resources and how well undocumented college students navigate and negotiate college has been explored by numerous studies. The argument posed decades ago by Francis, Kelly, and Bell (1993) that the culture of institutions of higher learning may facilitate the assimilation of minority students through the provision of services that assist them academically and socially is still very much a valid one. Their study explored how the school setting affects success or failure and how institutions offer resources to their students, enabling them to overcome poverty and “attitudes inimical to the culture of learning” (Francis, Kelly, and Bell 1993, 437). Special attention should be given to the nuances involved in undocumented college students’ plight, which are not appropriately reflected, or relevant, in the typical career counseling and planning process currently available (Ortiz and Hinojosa 2010). Previous studies have indicated the special attention required by the vulnerable undocumented student population in areas of university resources, including mental health/counseling, and access to financial aid and in-state tuition.

Recent qualitative studies indicate common themes that can be extended to undocumented youth throughout the U.S. (Perez 2010, Torres & Ashburn-Wicks 2014, Suárez-Orozco et al. 2015). When faced with so much rejection stemming from lack of legal status, it is often inclusion by peers and other aspects of campus life, such as student clubs or pre-professional organizations, that helps undocumented college students become integrated into the life of the college and community (Martínez-Calderón 2009). This involvement encourages students to remain enrolled in college, something

administrators always consider a high priority. William Perez, in his extensive research on undocumented high school and college students (2009, 2010) recommends specific factors that institutions can implement to support undocumented services. These include support services tailored to the population served (i.e. student organizations, clubs, and advocacy groups), which help undocumented college students gain a sense of empowerment and official institutional recognition.

The emotional well-being of students, another critical element with high potential to impact retention and graduation rates, requires counseling services on college campuses. Ideally, mental health services are provided, and easily accessible, to all students. However, some students' concerns require a delicate sensibility. For example, a study by Dozier (1993) found three central emotional concerns for undocumented college students: fear of deportation, loneliness, and depression. Those concerns make it difficult to reach out for help and further isolate undocumented youth in an environment that is supposed to cultivate students' socialization and networking skills through shared experiences, in hope of broadening one's horizons. Participants from Dozier's study on undocumented youth's psyche reported avoiding medical treatment due to the perception that their immigration status might come into question. Another common predicament was staying in poor working conditions, fearing inability to find another job. Keeping such information to oneself can be overwhelming. The ability to express the need for financial, academic, or emotional help can dramatically affect students who would otherwise have nowhere to turn. If the retention and eventual graduation of these students is important to the institutions that admit them, then they have a duty to provide appropriate support groups, counseling, financial assistance, and targeted services to meet

those goals. Without services that aid retention, enrollment, and graduation, undocumented college students are at risk for dropping out (Suárez-Orozco, Katsiaficas, and Birchall 2015, 427-63). They will continue to move within the college system, unacknowledged, and trapped in another state of liminality.

It is the contention of Francis, Kelly, and Bell (1993) that the degree to which students are able to integrate into their campus culture, ultimately affecting academic achievement, is directly attributed to the relationship between what they refer to as exogenous (external or background) and endogenous (foreground) variables and institutional interactions. Utilization of remedial and tutorial services, skills development, counseling, and student organizations fall under foreground variables, while factors such as high school grade point average (GPA), family income, educational background, and method of financing education are considered to be external. If the institutional interactions are positive, students are more likely to select a major area of study and have increased motivation to continue. Nevertheless, it is instrumental for students, faculty, administrators, counselors, and tutors to create and sustain the informal connections that will truly help integrate marginalized populations into the campus' social and cultural life.

The involvement of undocumented college students in campus activities serves to narrow the gap of higher family contributions and involvement that native college students tend to have (Perez 2010). A multi-pronged analysis by Patricia A. Perez (2010) identified three major influences on college choice by undocumented Latinxs¹ eligible for

¹ Latinx is the gender-neutral alternative to Latino, Latina, and Latin@. Tanisha Love Ramirez and Zeba Blay, "Why People Are Using the Term 'latinx,'" The Huffington Post, July 05, 2016, accessed July 20, 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/why-people-are-using-the-term-latinx_us_57753328e4b0cc0fa136a159.

California's version of the DREAM Act: outreach as opportunity, cost or affordability, and social support networks. Institutions could take into account studies such as the one conducted by Torres and Asbun-Wicks (2014), which revealed that nearly 80 percent of undocumented college students they surveyed had the desire to finish college and possibly continue to earn a graduate or professional degree. The reality, however, is that only 45 percent of those undocumented college students believe achieving their educational goals is realistic. Opting to provide resources tailored to this population's need would benefit the institution and the students greatly by positively influencing retention and graduation rates.

A strong case for implementing resources for undocumented college students is reinforced by the concept offered by Gildersleeve, Rumann, and Mondragon (2010). They state that student affairs professionals must take "the rights, privileges, constraints, and controversies" into consideration for "investigating the particular legislative, judicial, and political realities in their local and institutional contexts" (2010, 15). It is their recommendation to create alternate opportunities for undocumented college students to thrive in the university setting, despite conditions placing them in a constant struggle to afford college, but not qualifying for a majority of financial aid; for example, payment in the form of stipends in exchange for work on special projects or service. According to Perez (2010), undocumented males are less likely to trust counselors with such privileged information as legal status, so there may need to be the creation of alternate ways of connecting with that group of students. Resources are essential to this population's success are further discussed in studies focusing on the social and emotional needs of

undocumented college students, as well as how and where they tend to get their needs met.

Debt

Financing education is arguably the most notable factor in an undocumented student's ability to matriculate, re-enroll, and graduate with a degree. Overall, as of 2014, the outstanding amount of money borrowed to help cover educational expenses is a record-breaking \$1.2 trillion (Ellis 2014). Studies have found that approximately 69 percent of all American college students graduate from with about \$29,000 of student debt (Student Debt 2015, 2). Of those who earn their bachelor's degrees at public and private institutions, the most frequent borrowers were lower-income dependent students enrolled in private non-profit institutions (Woo 2013).

Undocumented youth are more vulnerable to debt, given that 39 percent of undocumented children live below the federal poverty level, compared to 17 percent of U.S.-born children. Recent studies indicate that the principal barrier in undocumented youth accessing a college education is a lack of financial resources, which forces them to work harder than many of their peers in pursuit of a future career that may never come to fruition (Diaz-Strong and Meiners 2007, Gildersleeve 2010, Torres and Wicks-Asbun 2014). For those who attend private institutions, assistance with funding due to the much higher costs, which can be double or even triple the average amount of public institutions, is even more crucial.

Most undocumented youth have no alternative but to join the nearly 12 million fellow college students taking on the burden of loan debt (Frum 2007). The main

difference between traditional and undocumented college students, however, is that undocumented college students do not have the same legal standing which would allow them to be financially self-reliant, and not only run the risk of incurring insurmountable debt with unstable income upon graduation, but also lack the ability to pursue careers for which they have become indebted. These illustrate the hindrances in mobility caused by their liminal state.

Undocumented youth may often elect not to apply to any colleges to save money, unless they were confident in their chance of admission. They also tend to begin their college careers at community colleges because they are substantially less expensive, and may have fewer restrictions regarding enrollment eligibility. Some consider community colleges as the “gateway to higher education” for undocumented college students concerning their affordability (W. Perez 2010, 34). While there are some scholarships and grants available for undocumented college students, there are not enough to meet the needs of every individual. Without financial assistance, students are forced to reduce school enrollment to part-time, and/or work more (to the possible detriment of their studies), which can prolong graduation (P. Perez 2010). If still willing and able, many students transfer to and successfully complete undergraduate degrees from four-year institutions, often with the intent of pursuing advanced degrees. Many undocumented youth make the most of their situation by continuing their studies (Valdivia 2015) and increasing their intellectual and social capital, which also reduces the risk of encountering police or immigration officials (Gonzales and Chavez 2012, 263). However, until there is a path to legalize their status, their options are limited. The implementation of services like in-state tuition for undocumented college students in Texas can be seen as a means of

providing equal access to higher education to a population at risk of downward assimilation or mobility.

Impact of In-State Tuition

In-state tuition is not a free pass, tuition waiver, amnesty, or a means to bypass the immigration system. The College Board defines state residency as the place of a student's permanent home, and is generally how institutions determine eligibility for tuition rates. Each individual state establishes its own eligibility requirements for whom and under what circumstances a student would qualify for in-state tuition. These requirements change periodically based on any revisions made to the state legislature or institutional policy (College Board 2012). The significance of whether or not someone is eligible for in- or out- of state tuition lays in the cost difference between the two: students categorized as out-of-state, which may include undocumented youth, international students, and those who list another state as their permanent residence, pay thousands of dollars more in tuition and fees. The total cost per semester can add up to be almost double the amount of the cost for an in-state student. Unless the state or institution in which an individual attends school has a law, policy, or waiver granting in-state tuition rates, undocumented youth are classified as international students, and therefore pay much higher tuition rates.

Over 60,000 undocumented college students typically graduate from high schools in the United States annually. In-state tuition grants the benefit of affordable, and therefore accessible, higher education to all residents of that particular state who have graduated high school. In-state tuition is one way to give everyone the same advantages or

opportunities to those who begin their college careers at a disadvantage and face dilemmas much more complicated than that of native students. In Texas, rather than basing tuition rates on federal or national citizenship status, undocumented college students are recognized by the colleges as residents of the state and therefore eligible for some state benefits.

Each state has its own set of variables that affect the outcomes of immigrant student enrollment such as location, level of diversity, economics, leading political party, and, transportation access. U.S.-born student enrollment numbers at each institution can also influence its availability of resources for undocumented college students. Texas serves as an example of successful outcomes of in-state tuition as detailed earlier (Dougherty, Nienhusser, and Vega 2010). Furthermore, variables distinguishing Texas from other states are its geographical proximity to the border with Mexico, which tends to result in a larger immigrant population; as well as debt, inclusivity in the community or ethnic enclaves, and participation in extracurricular activities that affect the success of undocumented students in the college environment. This study contributes to the existing knowledge on undocumented college students by giving specific examples of the challenges they face at the campus, state, and national levels. By focusing on the administrative perspectives at several Central Texas universities, this study enables current faculty, staff, and administrators to compare strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities at their own campuses to better serve their undocumented student populations.

V. DATA AND METHODS

To examine the policies, awareness of policy, and perceptions of resources provided to or needed by undocumented college students, this study was comprised of qualitative and quantitative data. It drew from the experiences of university administrators, faculty, staff, and undocumented college students at public and private institutions in Central Texas. This study had 128 participants: 29 faculty members, 51 staff members, and 17 administrators (See Table 1). A total of 26 students, five of whom self-identified as undocumented, participated in a survey (Appendix C-D) approved by the Institutional Review Board at Texas State University (Appendix F). Only qualitative data from the undocumented student responses were analyzed to determine the kinds of resources available and accessible to undocumented college students in Central Texas, as well as discover the campus climate and any best practices that could be gleaned from their offerings. Unstructured observation and website analysis further informed the results.

Table 1. Survey Responses, 2015 (n=97)

College	Faculty	Staff	Administrators	Totals
Concordia University	10	2	1	13
Texas State University	7	32	5	44
Trinity University	1	3	2	6
University of Texas-Austin	0	8	2	10
University of Texas-San Antonio	6	6	3	15
University of the Incarnate Word	5	0	4	9
Total	29	51	17	97

Sample Selection and Methodology

To understand what resources are available to undocumented college students in Central Texas, this study analyzes data from a survey of six non-profit institutions: three public and three private universities. Institutions of higher education in the United States are categorized as non-profit or for-profit corporations, the former including both public and private, with private institutions operating independently of state control (International Affairs Office, U.S. Department of Education 2008). It is uncertain how variation in governance of these institutions impacts retention and graduation rates of undocumented college students based on policy created, or followed by, government-appointed board members (public institutions) or self-elected board of trustees (private institutions). The sample targeted in this study was narrowed down by geographic location, enrollment size, and classification as public or private universities in the Central Texas region. Enrollment numbers for all universities were obtained from the fall 2012 numbers published on university websites (Appendix B). Of the institutions that participated in the study, three were public: Texas State University – 34,225 students; the University of Texas at Austin – 52,213 students; and the University of Texas at San Antonio – 30,474 students. For comparison, the largest of the private institutions in the same areas were also selected, providing a range that includes Catholic, Lutheran, and secular institutions. Two of the private universities are in San Antonio - the University of the Incarnate Word, a Catholic institution with 9,188 students, and Trinity University, a secular institution with 2,525 students. The sixth institution studied, Concordia University located in Austin, is a small Lutheran liberal arts university with approximately 2,500 students. From this point on, the universities will be referred to as

Texas State, UT-Austin, UT-San Antonio, Incarnate Word, Trinity and Concordia, respectively.

The qualitative data analyzed in this study draws primarily from structured interviews conducted via an online survey (Dunn 2000, McGuirk and O'Neill 2000). I attempted to obtain responses from high-ranking administrators from each participating institution, including officials such as the Dean of Students, Vice President of Student Affairs, Director of Multicultural/Diversity Affairs, and the Director of Financial Aid. Mid-level staff such as faculty/instructors, academic advisors, undergraduate admissions, and health and wellness resource providers all received the survey directly via e-mail. The ideal sample would also have included a robust mix of undergraduate and graduate students, especially those who identify as undocumented or DACAmented, in order to provide balanced perceptions of their respective campus climates. To locate my target population, I provided the opportunity for individuals to sign-up if willing to participate in an anonymous survey for the benefit of this research at targeted gatherings. These gatherings included local, regional, and national conferences for higher education, like academic advising, but also from smaller settings like professional development seminars, university social events, and student organization meetings. All targeted participants who had not already previously demonstrated their interest by signing up on the preliminary mailing list were located using directory information readily available on their university websites. Additionally, the study relied on snowball sampling, which identifies “cases of interest from people who know other people with relevant cases” (Bradshaw and Stratford 2000, 72). This method was implemented as a means to increase the participant pool for the structured interview portion of the study by having the

selected recipients distribute the survey to any other individuals who expressed interested in participating, or were in a position of influence, such as members of the student government. Informal conversations on the topic at advising conferences and university seminars, events and meetings also inform this study.

Undocumented college students are under constant pressure to stay under the radar, which made obtaining a large group of respondents who self-identify as such exceedingly challenging. The ideal sample would include at least ten students from each institution, along with a healthy number of faculty, staff, and administrators. Even though Suárez-Orozco et al. (2015) had a considerably larger and more organized research team, they encountered the same obstacles in recruiting a substantial sample of valid responses from undocumented college students in their national study to be truly representative. In a continued effort to increase responses from undocumented college students, I referred to contacts in trusted networks such as sponsors of student organizations that cater to minority issues, international, or multicultural interests. I also invited the general student population at the designated institutions to complete the survey as a form of control group to investigate the perceptions and knowledge of students who may not be directly aware of the plight of the undocumented student population. Responses from U.S.-born students were statistically insignificant and therefore excluded from the results.

Development and Distribution of Survey Instrument

A survey generated with a Google Docs survey tool was distributed during the months of February through September of 2015, via electronic correspondence using only participants' official university email addresses. This particular tool was selected because

it is easily accessed via the Internet by both the researcher and participants. Electronic surveys were selected as the best distribution method for several reasons. First, the majority of participants tend to have internet access through their institutions. Second, the process of snowball sampling was facilitated if/when respondents shared the link to the electronic survey with other potential participants, increasing the sample size significantly faster than hard copy surveys, without violating confidentiality or anonymity. Third, electronic surveys presented me with the option to contact potential participants with multiple opportunities to respond. Finally, data can be better controlled and maintained so the analysis is based on consistent, accurate information, which is more secure than hard copy surveys (Umbach 2004, Bradshaw and Stratford 2000).

Questions were comprised of a mix of yes/no, multiple choice/drop-down menu selection, and short answer/fill-in-the-blank. The questions from the survey began with broad demographic information at first, eventually leading to more specific questions about undocumented student challenges (Appendix C-E). Emails were sent in waves, beginning with the initial invitation to participate, followed by a series of reminders sent at intervals of two to four weeks throughout a timeframe of seven months. Direct emails containing a link to the survey were sent to nearly 1,000 contacts. The study was designed to be anonymous: regardless of snowball sampling and direct email, there was no guarantee that a recipient of the link would complete the survey and individual responders could not be linked to their responses.

Participants for the survey portion of the research answered introductory questions that directed them to a more limited set of questions based on their self-identified demographic, funneling until specific questions about resources for

undocumented college students were asked. For example, the main identifiers narrowed down with the question “Are you a student?” (Appendix C-D). No contact information for the undocumented college students were disclosed or used for any purpose other than making initial contact for survey recruitment.

I expected responses from university employee participants spanning the institutional spectrum from tenured faculty, adjunct instructors, lecturers, and counselors to student affairs coordinators and advisors. Central research questions measured the level of awareness of undocumented college students or challenges particular to this group at the campuses studied. Additionally, the survey was designed to reveal what disparities, if any, there are in services available at each institution from the perspective of the U.S.-born and undocumented student, faculty, staff, and administrators. Ideally, this study would have comparatively measured the different target groups, but given low participation, the research instead focuses on the administrators, faculty, and staff who serve this population. There is a higher likelihood that offices, programs, or organizations designed around multicultural students have more experience servicing, or at the very least interacting with, undocumented college students. But, since the issue of immigration is so sensitive, most undocumented college students usually go completely undetected by university employees, save for a few witnesses of revealing information such as Admissions and Financial Aid.

The survey also inquired into how receptive certain campuses in Central Texas are to undocumented college students and whether or not they find one or more persons with whom they feel comfortable enough to self-disclose. Making even one connection

could make or break a student's ability to complete an undergraduate degree, so how easy is it for a student to find someone they can trust with their legal status?

Website Analysis

In addition to the survey, this study also draws on an analysis of university websites to analyze the support offered to undocumented college students. It is typical for institutions to make information available for prospective and current students through an official university website. Each institution included in this study has an active website with a search feature. This study investigated key offices and departments that are crucial to the student experience and process of matriculation by searching the following commonly used key terms: “undocumented [student]”, “DREAMer(s)”, “DACA”, “DACA-eligible”, “DACAmented”, “international”, “residency”, “non-citizen”, “non-resident”, “HB 1403”, “SB 1528”, and “in-state tuition”. These key terms were chosen because of their relevance to immigration and higher education. Admissions, Financial Aid, and Student Affairs/Campus Life/Student Life department pages were the usual search results housing key terms.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Through an analysis of institutional observations and 128 surveys, this study highlights the level of awareness, perception and attitudes that various administrators, faculty, staff, and students have regarding resources and policy for undocumented college students. It also assesses the types of resources available to undocumented college students at six institutions of higher education in the Central Texas area. Undocumented college students attend a variety of four-year institutions based on their personal, academic, and professional goals and means. The survey was designed to focus on campus-level resources, identification of potential allies, and therefore offer significant insight into what Central Texas public and private institutions perceive as being essential to the success of this population of students. Furthermore, the study aimed to reveal which high-ranking administrative unit(s) at each institution is generally responsible for making decisions that affect undocumented college students via policy.

This study sought to identify differences, if any, in policies or campus climate between public and private institutions, focusing attention on faculty, staff, and administrator perceptions. An underlying assumption of this study is that a public institution, as a state entity, considers all its stakeholders' interests when making major decisions. It is expected that private institutions, specifically those with a religious founding, are able to take more liberties in policy than public institutions and may be more generous in their offerings to vulnerable populations of students. However, this study examines if the charitable characteristics of religious private

institutions transcend into actions that embrace and support the undocumented student population.

The academic experiences undocumented college students have during their time, inside and outside the classroom, determine their ability and willingness to re-enroll, graduate, and their subsequent long-term success. This study confirmed the existence of a disparity in knowledge of undocumented student challenges amongst faculty, staff, and administrators of higher education. Without knowledge of these specific challenges, the appropriate and necessary campus resources are ineffective. In lieu of direct survey responses from undocumented college students in Central Texas, this study draws on responses from Suárez-Orozco et al.'s comprehensive survey of undocumented college students to supplement the data gathered from this study's survey. The Suárez-Orozco et al. (2015) study recorded the opinions of 906 undocumented college students from across the U.S., highlighting success indicators such as debt, inclusivity, and participation in extracurricular activities that affect undocumented students in the college environment. If an institution offers more resources for its undocumented population, then the likelihood of those students re-enrolling for future semesters and graduating may increase. Subsequently, an increase in sense of belonging and acknowledgement of cultural citizenship would remove some of the stigma that results from the liminality of their situations.

The many factors affecting undocumented college students are discussed in the following sections. Drawing on results from the survey and website analysis, I focus on the reasons undocumented college students seek help, which resources and services educators *think are available* to undocumented college students, resources

and services educators *think* undocumented college students *want*. I continue with examples of ways in which the selected universities provide resources to undocumented college students, as well as identifying how institutions define undocumented college students and the designation of services.

Reasons Undocumented College Students Seek Help

Identifying the challenges with which undocumented college students need help shed light on future retention and graduation rates. Suárez-Orozco et al.'s 2015 findings determined what undocumented college students need and want from their institutions. At its core, student suggestions are simple: they want to be seen and heard by institutional and political leaders, imploring universities learn about their situations and provide clear, consistent information. Suárez-Orozco et al.'s (2015) national findings do not deviate much from those of undocumented student responses in this study's regional findings. The undocumented college students in my study were asked to choose all that applied from a list of basic challenges they have sought help with from campus entities. These challenges could be considered indicators that potentially impact retention and graduation rates. The five undocumented college students reported that they had requested help in the areas of financial, academic, and social support, followed by legal and emotional help.

More than one undocumented college student from Texas State expressed seeking financial, academic, and legal help, as well as social support/networking and emotional support. Similarly, administrators who encountered an undocumented student in need of assistance responded being approached most often for financial help, legal,

social/networking, emotional support. Assistance with academic issues was not requested as frequently. Surprisingly, no undocumented college students mentioned asking for help with job opportunities despite finances being a top concern. Though they are unable to work legally, undocumented college students could still use trusted relationships and contacts to locate cash-based income opportunities such as babysitting, tutoring, cleaning, or even legitimate jobs upon becoming DACAmented.

Resources and Services Educators Think are Available to Undocumented College Students

Undocumented college students are a perfect example of a vulnerable population with distinct needs. The complexities of immigration policy are constantly evolving and vary from state to state, and campus to campus. Keeping up with the changes is not easy, let alone knowing what services or resources may be available for undocumented college students at their universities. It can be even more difficult if there is no official policy or enforcement protocol when challenges that undocumented college students face arise.

Undocumented student responses from Suárez-Orozco et al.'s study do not explicitly discuss the implementation of campus policy, but it could be interpreted as a natural extension of the public endorsement they recommend as a way to create an "undocufriendly" campus (2015, 454-455). Many of the faculty, staff, and administrator respondents from this study *perceived* that undocumented college students already have access to academic and social/networking resources or services on their campuses. They indicated the assumption that all students, regardless of legal status, have access to any service related to academics. Overall, the 29 faculty respondents reported thinking

undocumented college students currently have access to academic (14), financial (9), social/networking (10) help, job opportunities (7), legal assistance (7), and emotional support (12). Faculty members and administrators had similar levels of awareness and perceptions regarding which resources undocumented college students have access to, differing from the staff perspective. For example, immigration law is complex and may be outside the scope of what university attorneys are equipped to handle. While faculty think all enrolled students have access to the university's attorney, when it comes to immigration issues they may more often be referred to immigration attorneys vetted by the individual campus attorney but who do not hold an official affiliation with the university. In one instance at Texas State, students brought in outside attorneys and organizations to host DACA clinics to address legal concerns when not readily available on their campus as a standard resource. The UT-Austin Law Clinic is the stand-alone example of a university directly providing immigration counsel to its students, as well as offering services to non-students at low cost. The sensitive nature of navigating life as an undocumented student drives this population underground, keeping them in limbo and making it more difficult to connect with other students on campus and participate in the typical college experience with everyone else (Kuh, Vesper, and Krehbiel 1994; Contreras 2009; Perez, et al. 2010).

Accessibility to social and emotional support on campus for undocumented college students an integral part of improving their experiences (Dozier 1993). All levels of a campus hierarchy should address accessibility to resources as a priority, as these success indicators impacting retention and graduation are beneficial to all parties involved. Aside from academic assistance, social and emotional support systems on campus were among

the most easily accessible, according to the perception of faculty, staff, and administrators. However, university websites did not often facilitate finding information about campus student organizations or specific networking opportunities. A primary benefit from such support systems includes creating a pipeline for undocumented college students after graduation in an effort to promote graduate studies, internships, fellowships. Additionally, support systems help locate other financial relief in the form of scholarships, grants, and maybe even alternative income sources, while awaiting immigration reform that will legalize their status, and in turn removing them from the liminal existence in which they are stranded.

Resources and Services Educators Think Undocumented College Students Want

Making students feel comfortable and welcomed in their college communities is necessary in ensuring a positive educational experience, and in turn maintains healthy retention and graduation rates (Kimball and Campbell 2013). The services offered by institutions of higher education in Central Texas can be inclusive of their diverse student populations by offering resources to students who may otherwise be less likely to succeed in the academic environment due to external forces out of their control. Given the absence of direct evidence of what services undocumented college students want, perception informs decisions or available resources. University employees have important roles in the lives of the students they serve, but the level of interaction depends on their position in the academic hierarchy. How closely do administrators, staff, and faculty perceptions at the six institutions studied match undocumented college students' needs? According to this study, the top three needs of undocumented college students as

perceived by faculty, staff, and administrators, are job opportunities, legal, and financial assistance. These results are not surprising given the extensive examples from other studies, discussions, and general understanding of the financial constraints undocumented college students face under their circumstances (Gonzales et al. 2013; Muñoz & Maldonado 2012; Perez 2010; Menjívar 2006). College tuition costs are increasing at unprecedented rates, making it not only difficult to attain for U.S.-born students from low socio-economic backgrounds, but even more so for undocumented college students who have little to no recourse to generating income or qualifying for federal financial aid. Undocumented college students' liminal legality directly influences the inadequacies in their financial aid and income, whereas legalization of immigration status would remedy the latter. In the meantime, university representatives who responded seem to agree that it is up to their institutions to offset the shortcomings by addressing the needs they perceive are of utmost importance to their undocumented student population. For example, more than one UT-Austin staff member believed that health care is a service undocumented college students would want.

The impact resources offered at Central Texas universities has on undocumented college students, notably on retention and graduation rates, must be considered when deciding how and when to implement measures that assist them while matriculated at their institutions. Most of the five undocumented college students in the Central Texas survey felt it would be very helpful to have academic help and assistance with job opportunities, and all deemed financial and legal help very helpful as success indicators for retention and graduation. Social and emotional support was reported to be just as essential to their success as the previous factors.

The decision to offer services that undocumented college students need is informed by the perception of how enrollment and retention numbers are impacted by the inclusion or lack of said resources, or success indicators. This study surveyed undocumented student services offered at or made accessible through the various institutions, concentrating on financial, academic, legal, and emotional help, social support and job opportunities.

Considering the national survey responses gathered by Suárez-Orozco et al. (2015), the demand for safe spaces by undocumented college students is on the rise, and as a result been implemented in 68 percent of four-year public and 58 percent of four-year private institutions in the US. The most common safe spaces as reported in the Suárez-Orozco et al. study were student clubs, proving instrumental with their socially supportive structure. Nearly three out of four students frequented those safe spaces (448).

This study gauged faculty, staff, and administrator perceptions regarding the impact that resources tailored to undocumented college students would have on general enrollment, as well as retention/graduation rates. The average response from faculty members ($n=8$), when asked about the potential to aid general enrollment was more neutral than expected. Furthermore, an equal number of faculty believed resources would be either “very helpful” or “not very helpful”. Administrator ($n=6$) thoughts on general enrollment being impacted by the offering of resources to undocumented college students indicated a clear opinion that it would, in fact, be interpreted as “somewhat helpful” or “very helpful”. Nearly half the staff responses ($n=22/51$), on the other hand, overwhelmingly revealed feeling it would be “very helpful” to provide resources for undocumented college students in an effort to positively affect their general enrollment.

One Concordia faculty member elaborated on her experience with retention rates being lower for ESL (English as a Second Language) students and recommended that as an additional resource to consider. Though her comment is rooted in legitimate concern and there could be a correlation, it did not specify whether the ESL students also happen to be undocumented. Approaching undocumented college students in a similar manner as native first-generation students also seems to make sense, as another Concordia faculty member mentioned being her instinctual reaction, especially when many of them are the first in their family to attend college.

There was a marked difference in the number of staff members who believe providing resources to their undocumented student population would prove “very helpful” in increasing their retention and graduation rates. Financial assistance was at the top of responses to this specific question, with legal assistance, and job opportunities coming in closely behind. Overall, faculty, staff, and administrators agree that specific resources, such as those described in this study, would be moderately helpful for general enrollment, but undeniably more beneficial to retention and graduation rates. The first step in creating institutional change is acknowledging where change is beneficial, which the faculty, staff, and administrators have done. Furthermore, as all universities strive to surpass the previous year’s enrollment numbers, offering the types of resources that help undocumented college students succeed becomes a more lucrative selling point to a growing population of undocumented youth who are deciding what college to attend. There are myriad variables that can improve a student’s experience and thereby increase likelihood of re-enrollment. Each university must make a deliberate effort to keep a finger on the pulse of its student demographics and needs. It is up to administrators, in

particular, to familiarize themselves more with those needs and develop resources that work best for their university's specific undocumented student population while adapting to the transitional policies.

One of the challenges undocumented college students face, recognized by many of the staff members who responded to the survey, is the impact limited funding for school has on them. One staff member from Texas State detailed the domino effect that lack of funding can have on undocumented college students, recognizing the financial needs students have even after receiving state funds that rarely cover all of their academic expenses. The staff member added, "The state also provides loans for them but they need a co-signer and usually their parent [is] not able to help because of their immigration status thus the stress of how they are going to pay for their education. Grades also start declining. The ones under DACA can work under state work study but our university does not offer it to them."

Developing innovative ways to reach vulnerable student evolving populations about assistance available to them is something that needs constant revisiting at all institutions, especially in the case of undocumented college students who are subject to legislation and policy. Undocumented college students should be able to find the help appropriate to their needs with relative ease and this study identified the methods most often used to locate those resources. The majority of information was relayed by word-of-mouth, and it will probably continue to be until institutions implement official channels of information for undocumented college students in a clear and accessible manner. Uncertainty amongst faculty, staff, and administrators is widespread as to how their universities address challenges directly affecting undocumented college students. There is no right or wrong

way to address those challenges, especially since each institution ascribes to its own regulations under the direction of the state legislature. This uncertainty on behalf of the campus representatives causes confusion and stress for undocumented college students and their allies. Furthermore, campuses with decentralized departments that narrowly focus on their own work make establishing common practices difficult to find in delicate and complex situations, like working with undocumented college students. An administrator from UT-Austin explained that their International Office has led the effort to provide resources to its undocumented student population. Despite that effort, the office is still unable provide advising to the students, but at the very least tries to serve as undocumented college students' campus advocate.

Providing Resources to Undocumented College Students in Higher Education – Resources Available at Each Campus

Accessibility to information is important for prospective students as well as currently enrolled students so they can become educated and empowered. Undocumented college students who can easily find resources more likely to feel safer, welcomed, and cared for by the institution, and in turn decide to enroll or continue attending that particular institution. The quantity and quality of the available information further illustrates the institution's level of awareness of undocumented student challenges. The mere act of including undocumented student information on an official university website demonstrates the institution's willingness to assist these students.

Campus-level factors that comprise the main recommendations offered by undocumented college students in Suárez-Orozco et al.'s results parallel the general themes found in this Central Texas study. Both studies emphasized the ties between

financial aid and college affordability. Additionally, campus climate and safe spaces, peer and academic support, and awareness – discussed in this study as resources and outreach, and perception of discrimination – all fall under what Suárez-Orozco considers campus assets. This parallel illustrates many commonalities in the challenges experienced by undocumented college students, regardless of geographic location and provides a baseline for implementation of corresponding resources.

In this section, I highlight successful examples, as well as some attempts, of outreach to undocumented college students by public and private universities in Central Texas. While three universities, Concordia, Texas State, and UT-Austin, explicitly mention undocumented college students (Table 2), two of the three exhibited comprehensive information for their undocumented college students in easily searchable formats. It is worth taking the time to explore the different ways that each institution explicitly or unintentionally reach out to the current and potential undocumented college students. Of the six institutions studied, UT-Austin excelled at providing accessible, clear and comprehensive online information. Texas State scored very well with programming and quality of information but could improve on clarity and consistency. UTSA searches resulted in passive outreach attempts, where UT-Austin and Texas State have a focused and active outreach trajectory.

I will be analyzing services based on a website analysis, first for the public and then for private universities. Search results on the UT-Austin website led directly to the International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) webpage containing the most extensive assemblage of information and resources for undocumented college students, prominently displayed. A quick link menu on the main ISSS page easily leads to information on the

Longhorn Dreamers Project, the name for UT-Austin's undocumented student support network. Categorization of the university's resource offerings promotes planning with chronological components labeled "Before College," "During College," "After College" another exceptional illustration of the manner in which the university makes information accessible. Furthermore, in a progressive demonstration of meeting students' needs, the UT-Austin Admissions office collaborates with the International Student and Scholar Services department, a subset of the International Office, to provide a new student orientation session specifically designed for undocumented college students.

Table 2. Visibility of information and accessibility of resources related to undocumented college students on university website

Searched Terms	Concordia	Texas State	Trinity	UT-Austin	UT-San Antonio	Incarnate Word
<i>Institutional Resource</i>						
Activity or Event	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Career Advice	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Coalition	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Financial Aid Options	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Orientation	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
“Safe Space” or Center	No	No	No	No	No	No
Scholarships	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Student Organization	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Written Policy	No	No	No	No	No	No
<i>Keywords Resulting in UY Information</i>						
“DACA”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
“DACA-eligible”	No	No	No	No	No	No
“DACAmented”	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
“DREAMer(s)”	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
“HB 1403”	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
“In-state tuition”	Yes*	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
“International”	Yes*	No	Yes*	Yes	Yes*	Yes*
“Non-citizen”	No	Yes	Yes*	Yes	No	Yes*
“Non-resident”	No	No	Yes*	Yes	No	Yes*
“Residency”	Yes*	Yes*	No	Yes	Yes*	Yes*
“SB 1528”	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
“Undocumented [Student]”	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No

*University web pages referencing these terms may include, but do not directly imply, undocumented college students

Texas State University provides a noteworthy amount of information for undocumented college students on its website. The practicality of the information is good, but still lacks some clarity. While it remains a step behind in the overall availability of specialized services, it is still further ahead than most of the other institutions studied.

Residency requirements for students to pay in-state tuition rates at Texas State are outlined on the Undergraduate Admissions website. House Bill 1403 and Senate Bill 1528 searches yielded results on the Financial Aid and Scholarship Office website, but only in relation to completing a TASFA application, and not actually going into any detail describing or defining the bills (Financial Aid and Scholarships 2015). Texas State has taken a multi-pronged approach to dissemination of information online, making it easy to locate social resources for undocumented college students. For example, a web page stemming from the Office of Student Diversity and Inclusion's main page highlights undocumented student assistance on campus, as well as support organizations in the local and neighboring areas and universities, and national resources, providing students with information that extends beyond their time in college. Moreover, a DREAMer Safe Program designates departments and offices in which 50% or more of the office's full-time staff have completed a training session on undocumented student assistance.

Attendees of the training workshop receive an individual placard with contact information on the reverse to refer to when assisting students. Departments and offices meeting the 50% completion requirement to qualify for the DREAMer Safe Program are recognized with an additional placard to display (See Figure 1). The goal of the DREAMer Safe Program, as explained on the website, is to ensure that undocumented and DACAmented students receive timely services and resources at Texas State

University. The DREAMer Safe Program was implemented in 2015 and will probably take time to become established enough at the university to be implemented or required for all employees because a major shortcoming of the program is that it is only as effective as its attendance. In other words, the program's current opt-in method of registration captures but a small group of supporters. Transparency of information and policy is not as strong at Texas State as it is at UT-Austin. Campus resource materials compiled and used in specialized trainings serving as the only guide for allies to reference, as there is no written policy found in administrative records resources. Those highly detailed resources are generally not online and are not currently accessible to faculty, staff, and administrators unless they attend the training sessions or request them. These two institutions' resource pages prominently display the student organizations, University of Texas at Austin's University Leadership Initiative (ULI) and the Student Community of Progressive Empowerment (SCOPE) from Texas State University, created by and for undocumented college students and their allies at their respective campuses. Members of the Texas State community further demonstrated a pledge to increasing awareness of undocumented college students and improving campus climate by creating a space for dialogue. The Hispanic Policy Network, an organization at Texas State comprised of Hispanic faculty, staff, administrators, and graduate students committed to the improvement of higher education opportunities for Hispanics, hosted a special meeting. Participating in this meeting, which was open to anyone who wished to attend, were invited members from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and US Office of Citizenship and Immigration Services with the intent of providing information about

where to seek information about immigration. This kind of initiative is promising and serves as an excellent example of what other institutions can do.



Figure 1. Bobcat DREAMers placard and Dreamers Safe Office Program logo, Texas State University

The web page containing registrar residency requirements for the University of Texas at San Antonio provides potentially relevant information, but does not seem to do so deliberately for undocumented college students, leaving it open to interpretation. Results for the word “international” were broad and details were found only after clicking a series of several links on the International Student information page, which is indirectly accessible from the main UTSA website menu without utilizing the search function. Furthermore, while there was an easily accessible list of active student organizations on campus, some of which are multicultural in interest, none specifically target undocumented college students or immigration issues. This is an example of a case where internet resources are available and used to relay information to current and prospective

students, but not in an effective manner overall. The quality of the information, when eventually locating it, is lacking.

The private universities in this study, namely Concordia, Incarnate Word and Trinity, provided less and weaker information (see Table 2). Two results came up when searching Concordia's website for “undocumented student”: one, a guide for the first year common reading book on the topic of immigration; the other was a list of Concordia University’s Service-Learning Week events, all of which follow the same themes of immigration and implement a religious context. There was no indication that those findings were tied to a larger movement or network in support of undocumented college students. It was also not clear on the website, whether undocumented college students may be considered international students at Concordia according to their definition and therefore eligible for \$10,000 in financial assistance. However, there are no explicit limitations regarding citizenship detailed in the eligibility requirements. While undocumented college students and their challenges appear to be a point of campus discussion during a specific event, there were no search results for specific terms that directly relate to undocumented college students (see Table 2). Only someone with knowledge of those terms and their significance could infer their inclusion under the generalized information on international students. If there happen to be support networks, programming, or other resources available at Concordia, Incarnate Word, or Trinity, they are invisible and therefore as effective as if they were not even in place.

Though U.S. citizenship is not required to apply to Incarnate Word, the student must complete an application for international student admission. Students can find immigration resources on the Office of International Student & Scholar Services web

page. However, the resources are seemingly limited to students with F-1 and J-1 visas. International students receive little more than a referral to browse the university's immigration library or schedule an appointment if they have more detailed questions. The Financial Assistance Student Handbook states that "almost everyone can qualify for some type of financial assistance if they meet the general eligibility requirements listed...U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen as defined by the U.S. Department of Education" (Student Guide 2015).

The needs, concerns, and challenges of undocumented college students are very different from those of traditional international students, and therefore require their own space in the discussion. A key component to providing resources to undocumented college students in higher education is symbolically acknowledging their presence on campus, as well as what institutional guidelines are in place that may affect them. However, a possible cause for hesitation on behalf of the institution to acknowledge these students is that the institution could then find itself forced to take a side, which could result in backlash from immigration critics. While some advocates are not concerned with potential repercussions that may come with aiding undocumented college students, others, like a staff member at the UTSA Career Center, still find it difficult when approached "based on the laws of our country pertaining to employment, to assist them without feeling like [she is] personally breaking the law." The same staff member also felt undocumented college students are difficult to advise on employment because so few options exist. UTSA offers advice regarding career development, but little can be done to advocate for internships or jobs in the US. Academic, legal, financial, emotional, social, and employment support contribute to the availability and accessibility of resources for

undocumented college students in Central Texas, and in turn maintain healthy retention and graduation rates for this population.

The six institutions studied are reflective of the range in policies and resources available to undocumented college students in Central Texas. By outlining the approaches taken by these schools as reported by the survey participants, I determined what kinds of resources tend to be more widely available. Several faculty (13) and staff (12) members were not sure of the kinds of services or resources their offices offered undocumented college students. Faculty members thought that their universities offered mostly academic (9), social (8), and emotional (8) assistance. Concordia and Texas State faculty and staff shared the perception that undocumented college students receive the same services as all other students at their institutions. A Concordia staff member replied that he offers something as simple as encouragement to the undocumented college students he serves, which could be overlooked by many, as a way to boost confidence. Staff members from both public and private universities indicated that they helped their undocumented student populations with social/networking (16), emotional support (25), and academics (13). Two Texas State staff members noted that they have attended trainings and professional development sessions covering best practices for working with undocumented college students at the university level. Furthermore, other Texas State staff members reported assisting with housing, tuition adjustments, and referrals to other campus resources, agencies or organizations, as well as sourcing or recommending scholarships undocumented college students may be eligible for as the opportunity arises. Universities lacking a public or official institutional stance on undocumented college students result in piecemeal, and possibly short-term, solutions. Not always capable of

providing comprehensive solutions for students, individual departments often coordinate and combine resources to ensure that the university can meet all students' needs.

An administrator from UT-Austin made it known that his/her university offers web-based social support and networking. Most institutions offer basic services available to all of their students, regardless of status, such as academic help and emotional support in the form of counseling. Undocumented college students from organizations such as the student-led University Leadership Initiative at UT-Austin fill the gaps campus resources do not address. ULI designs and sells slogan buttons (See Figure 2) to raise both awareness and funds for undocumented college students. Furthermore, the buttons display solidarity between undocumented college students and their allies, which strengthen the supportive system. This study did not determine whether the providers of emotional counseling at the institutions that offer such services are knowledgeable in handling the particular challenges of undocumented college students. Only two administrators stated being unsure of what kinds of services their respective office or department offered specifically for undocumented college students.



Figure 2. University Leadership Initiative (ULI) fundraising buttons, University of Texas-Austin

Defining Undocumented College Students

Without the ability of properly identifying undocumented students in higher education, these students are invisible. Their needs go overlooked and underserved equitably making it difficult for universities to support them adequately by providing the resources they need to overcome the obstacles they face. Furthermore, uncertainty of how to define this population by name and characteristics contributes to the liminal nature of their situation. Not knowing what constitutes an undocumented student may also influence the level of awareness of the challenges undocumented college students face and the policies that affect them. Assisting undocumented college students requires recognizing the qualities particular to that population.

So, who or what is an undocumented student? How many people working at institutions of higher education in Central Texas can answer with certainty and accuracy? The faculty, staff, and administrators from the various institutions surveyed gave their definition of an undocumented student in an open-ended question. Of the four administrators who answered, only one was accurate. Faculty and staff at all the institutions, however, gave reasonably accurate definitions, including a faculty member from Incarnate Word who used student enrollment status with the university, rather than the context of unauthorized immigration, in the reported definition.

The intersectionality between race, ethnicity and country of origin, gender identity, and an individual's undocumented status is imperative when attempting to provide resources to undocumented college students. While the current immigration conversation in the US media seems to portray undocumented persons as a homogenous group (Lewis 2016), with a particular focus on those of Latin American heritage, their

needs as “UndocuBlack”, “UndocuAsian”, or “UndocuQueer” are obscured. These nuances are just as important to recognize as their immigration status. Some faculty and administrator participants assumed or framed their discussion of undocumented college students in terms of Latinx students by referencing Hispanic Serving Institutions. For example, one Concordia faculty member remarked on the university’s growing percentage of Hispanic students and therefore “would suspect that some students are undocumented.” This trend is apparent in not only higher education, but also in the media, despite immigration being an issue affecting people of various ethnicities. It is not difficult to comprehend the overgeneralization when the majority of undocumented immigrants come from Latin America, especially in the large border states of Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico, and Texas. However, lawful or unauthorized immigration is not just a Mexican issue, or a Latinx issue; it is a policy issue affecting all immigrants (Chan 2010, 29-31). Both faculty and staff definitions sparingly used the term “illegal” in reference to an individual, indicating that the effort to shift toward positive language labels, as petitioned by the National Association of Hispanic Journalists and Define American to implement in the media (Arana 2015), is growing among higher education professionals. For the purposes of my study, an undocumented student is anyone who was born abroad and brought over at a young age, completing most of his or her schooling in the US. Usually the individual has entered the country without official authorization or inspection, or overstayed their visas & are present in the United States with or without their parents.

Identifying Undocumented College Students as a Vulnerable Population

To accurately categorize students as a vulnerable population, someone must determine the characteristics worthy of that designation and what services the designation entail. So how are vulnerable student populations identified? Subsequently, what process determines the allotment of resources to aid them? Each campus studied operates differently in its decision-making protocols. There appears to be a top-down hierarchy of decision-making at all campuses, but one compelling commonality among them was that administrators reported conflicting information at four of the six institutions (See Table 3).

Also important to identify is the type and amount of resources allocated for undocumented college students. Communication between administrators, faculty, and staff increases the consistency of information for the students to better navigate the university system. If the process by which resources are identified and allotted is transparent from the top of the hierarchy to the bottom, it also facilitates institutional implementation of the needed resources or at least makes areas in need of improvement more visible as well. Examples of resource allocation procedures were given for only two institutions, Texas State and Trinity. The process for Texas State, described as starting with the annual operating budget, and comprised of state and federal funding, is decided on by the President's Cabinet based on requests made by the Provost or Vice Presidents. Trinity's method involves the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs-Student Academic Issues, and Dean of Students making a case to the Vice President for Faculty and Student Affairs (VPFSA). The VPFSA then presents at the "Budget Retreat" for further deliberation of institutional funding priorities between the President and all the

Vice Presidents; the University President makes the final decision. Not a single administrator mentioned student demand as a factor in making decisions or implementation of new policy. This revelation points to a greater need for student visibility, involvement, and agency to voice their needs to institutional leaders.

Table 3. Perception from administrators regarding which administrative office determines the definition of a vulnerable population at their university, 2015 (n=17)

Institution	President of University	Provost	Vice President of Student Affairs	Vice President of Academic Affairs	Dean of Students	Other Answer	Total Responses
Concordia University			●				
Texas State University	●		●				
Trinity University	●						
University of the Incarnate Word		●		●		No clue	
University of Texas-Austin		●					
University of Texas-San Antonio			●		●	University committee	
Totals	2	1	4	1	1		2

Perceptions of Discrimination, Safe Spaces, and Campus Climate

When immigrant groups enter the U.S. they experience discrimination. There is a long history of anti-immigrant sentiment in the U.S. that goes beyond the scope of this paper (Ngai 2004, Golash-Boza 2011), and undocumented youth experience even more

discrimination and social stigma than legal immigrants (Gordon 1964). Discrimination is openly frowned upon in social situations, and it arguably is even more so in academic settings, especially when required to adhere to federal Title VI anti-discrimination regulations (U.S. Department of Education - Office for Civil Rights 2015). Title VI is the closest thing to federal legal protection, an undocumented immigrant can receive without the use of federal funds and resources. The other minimal protection, only for enrolled college students, is the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, of 1974 (U.S. Department of Education 2015). However, what one typically envisions as discrimination generally goes undetected, but it does not mean discrimination does not occur, and it is still a reality perceived by many undocumented college students. Responses from Suárez-Orozco et al.'s 2015 national survey, which had a considerably larger sample size, was used to supplement this study's undocumented student data. Undocumented college students in Suárez-Orozco et al.'s study (2015) identified sources of discrimination experienced on their campuses. Their study revealed that of the 906 undocumented college students comprising the national sample, nearly seventy percent experienced discrimination based on legal status during the previous month. The discrimination originated mostly from other students and financial aid officials (Suárez-Orozco et al. 2015, 445-46).

Undocumented college students attending any of the six universities selected for this study in the Central Texas area were invited to give their input on current campus climate and experiences. Five undocumented college students, all students at Texas State, varied in their reporting of their experiences of discrimination on campus. Three of the five students indicated that they were comfortable asking for help from or revealing their

status to someone on their campus; two indicated that they were not. One student reported that she did not experience discrimination because she was not “open about [her] status,” while another student felt discrimination due to his race but not legal status. A sophomore reported feeling indirectly discriminated against when the professor of a Political Science class “talked about illegal immigration and spoke about it in a negative light.”

Students typically expect universities to be a safe place for the open exchange of ideas to occur freely. Unfortunately, undocumented college students are not immune from discrimination on campus any less than they may be outside of it, though it may take on different forms.

The connection between awareness of undocumented student challenges and lack of targeted resources, including support services, is evident in a comment from one of the thirteen staff members (See Table 4 and Figure 3) at Texas State who have worked with an undocumented student and believe discrimination exists on their campus. She explained, “As a university, we lack the resources, the knowledge, and the organization so that other students, staff, and faculty can provide undocumented college students with information that will help them navigate college and life. When the knowledge, awareness, organization and resources are lacking at an institution of higher education, undocumented students become more vulnerable and it is easier to discriminate them and to ignore them too.”

Table 4. Level of faculty, staff, and administrator awareness of discrimination on campus toward undocumented college students, by institution, 2015

Institution	Yes	No	Not Sure	Total
<i>Public</i>				
Texas State University	13	9	9	31
University of Texas-Austin	3	1	3	7
University of Texas-San Antonio	2	4	6	12
<i>Private</i>				
Concordia University	0	7	5	12
Trinity University	0	2	3	5
University of the Incarnate Word	0	4	3	7
Total	18	27	29	74

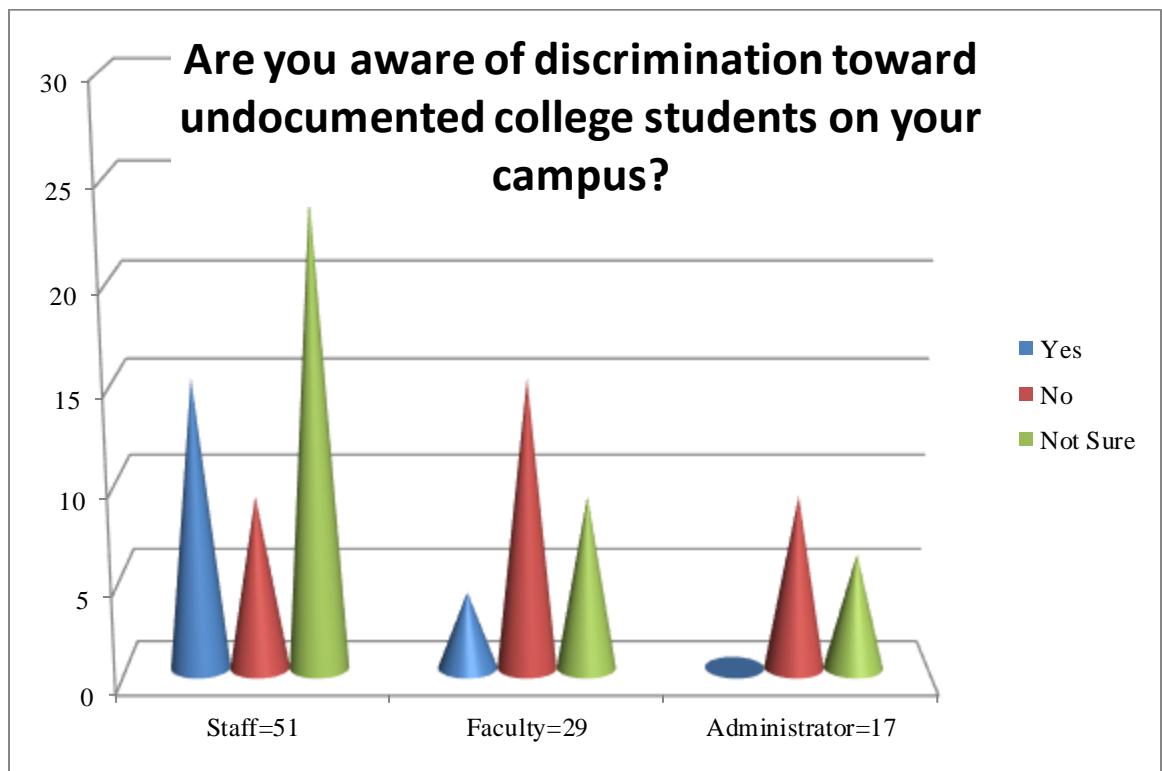


Figure 3. Level of staff, faculty, and administrator awareness of discrimination on campus toward undocumented college students, by job title, 2015 (N=102)

Staff members were asked to describe any instances of discrimination against undocumented college students they may have perceived. Discrimination comes in many forms and interpretations, so respondents' definitions of an undocumented student capture a broad spectrum of what, when, and how they perceive discrimination may happen on their campuses. One Texas State staff member' perceived discrimination in a lack of specific programs for undocumented college students that are officially sanctioned or initiated by the university, as well as small incidents of minority students being excluded from academic and social activities. Another elaboration on the issue of discrimination came from a Texas State staff member with first-hand experience of it on campus. This person described there being a "problem with minorities in general being institutionally discriminated against. As a student here, I felt it myself. For the undocumented student, I think the discrimination is compounded by the need to keep their status a secret which keeps individuals from seeking help or asking any faculty, staff, or administrator for guidance without knowing for certain that that university representative is a safe person to go to." According to many other responses, institutions have some form of discrimination due to legislation and public policy that must be followed, as opposed to campus policy or procedure.

A few examples of inconsistencies in accessible, clear information affecting perceptions of campus climate came from Texas State and UTSA staff. One Texas State staff member mentioned that the university policy is not clear at all, but undocumented college students still seem very welcome. Any system in place to support undocumented college students, however, remains underground, forcing individuals to seek out others who have the appropriate knowledge, skills, and understanding to support this student

population. Staff perceptions on the campus climate at Texas State are as inconsistent as the levels of awareness regarding undocumented student challenges in higher education. Another comment from a staff member, who has experience assisting undocumented college students, that the university “as a whole has refused to welcome or acknowledge the needs of this population.” Their perceptions of discrimination vary widely, perhaps based on previous experiences with undocumented college students or on the kinds of environments created on campus when anti-immigrant students bring politically-charged rhetoric into the ‘safe space’ of campus. The term “undocumented”, while not as blatantly politicized as “illegal(s)”, is loaded with deeply rooted stigma. The UTSA staff member who stated being aware of discrimination on campus attributed it to witnessing the sentiment from others with the attitude that undocumented college students are “stealing a spot from a citizen or trying to take the opportunity for an education away from a US citizen.” The most unabashed example of discrimination on campus was a proposed game of “catch an illegal immigrant” in 2013 organized by the Young Conservatives of Texas chapter at UT-Austin, which was ultimately canceled by the chapter for fear of retaliation by the university after attracting negative publicity.

Almost half of faculty participants in the Central Texas study (15/29) perceived that there was evidence of discrimination toward undocumented college students at their institutions, but did not reveal details about the incident, similar to Suárez-Orozco et al.’s national survey of undocumented college students (2015). Causes for those responses are comprised of hearing comments made by students such as “undocumented people shouldn’t be here.” as well as suspecting that undocumented college students experience “tacit if not explicit discrimination on campus.” Likewise, another Texas State faculty

member mentioned indirect types of discrimination like limited access to financial aid, housing options, and professional opportunities. Some responses acknowledge that even though the topic of undocumented college students, such as the challenges they face, or potential status-based discrimination has not been visible to them, its occurrence is not ruled out. Furthermore, it was suspected by the same faculty member that the lack of discourse might even serve as an indication that discrimination is indeed present. One faculty member at UTSA defines discrimination as “requiring intent”, and based on that definition, believes undocumented college students do not experience discrimination on his campus. Comparatively, a Concordia faculty member brought up an intriguing thought as to why discrimination toward undocumented college students may not be prevalent at her institution. She believes certain circumstances make it possible for undocumented college students to go completely undetected throughout the entirety of their college career. The faculty member commented, “As a private institute, students can self-pay and no one would know. There is a disadvantage to being an illegal alien residing in the US, but that is an ethical issue whether one considers that to be discrimination or not. Our institute views all students as persons worthy of time and effort.”

No administrator perceived discrimination at their institutions. However, one person from Trinity appeared to be unsure of his campus climate but stated he “certainly hope[d]” there was not, as another explained she does not have direct knowledge of discrimination while simultaneously holding firm that undocumented college students “do experience this”. If there happens to be some sort of written or customary policy against discrimination of undocumented college students, then deciding what to do

becomes an issue of cognitive dissonance. One sentiment given by an administrator from Trinity is that educators have an obligation to educate all students who wish attend and are admitted to the university. Legal status of a student is not “something we as an institution have the means to determine, and it’s not particularly relevant to our mission. Personally, I feel that the lack of Congressional action on immigration issues put the US in a morally untenable position to be denying rights and privileges.” Equally important to effecting change and leadership on college campuses is the acknowledgment like the one made by an administrator at Texas State, who admits being new to the subject, that “these students have little to no support or assistance in terms of legal issues they face prior and during enrollment, nor upon graduation. No one in administration seems to know where to send these students for help/advice, nor does anyone seem eager to provide guidance.” The larger point here is that there is so much elusiveness in defining, identifying, and helping this population that it perpetuates institutional discrimination; these groups remain invisible by inaction. The fact that administrator from Trinity acknowledges not only that there might be discrimination, but that they don’t know about it – probably because undocumented college students don’t really have clearly designated people they can safely talk to – is really helpful in showing that administrators may be looking the other way and not actively helping this population.

Housing costs may seem like an issue that all students from a low socioeconomic status face, but the important difference to consider here is that undocumented college students are not eligible to receive any federal financial aid. State grants or private funding undocumented college students may successfully obtain often do not suffice and still leave their accounts thousands of dollars delinquent, illustrating a direct

debt/retention correlation. A Concordia University Staff member who was unsure of the institution's policies or possibility of discrimination against undocumented college students "firmly believe[s] that no student is deliberately discriminated against during the admissions process or in classes..." however, "the cost of tuition holds back many undocumented students from attending. Even when undocumented students are eligible for TASFA aid, there are many more 'hoops' through which they must jump in order to receive this aid."

Fitting in is often taken for granted but can be a major cause of attrition in students who transfer from community colleges, have humble origins, or belong to a minority group. Taking that into consideration, a single negative experience can shatter any sense of security, especially for undocumented college students who face multiple uncertainties in their lives. This is an issue that can be addressed by institutions of higher education. Along those same lines, another Texas State staff member made the point that undocumented college students "need to feel there are specific programs that can address their needs. Faculty and staff need to be educated on the many challenges students and their families have to face to get a better understanding how better to help these students." Students want to be recognized as individuals, whose opinions and needs matter to those charged with guiding them throughout their time in college. The staff member continues explaining a chain reaction, "When students can feel the university understands their specific situations, and there are programs in place to help them, they will buy into staying here with hopes to graduate... Students then likely communicate this positive sentiment to their parents, who eventually start to believe this University is a good thing."

An excellent suggestion came from yet another Texas State individual. She posited the designation of a specific space on campus for undocumented students, where *any* of their questions could be entertained on a weekly basis by “reps from financial aid, attorney’s office, academics, etc. . . so students can . . . get answers without having to run around campus, which just adds anxiety and stress to an already stressful situation.” She finally touches on the limited visibility of specialized programming for undocumented students commenting, “if such a program already exists, it needs more exposure.” Of course, due to the highly sensitive nature of the circumstances in which undocumented college students find themselves, increased exposure is a risk many are still not willing to take, even if the benefits could possibly outweigh the cost.

UT-Austin’s Center for Students in Recovery is an example of a safe space where students can seek help free of cost or stigma. According to a staff member accessibility to students is “never contingent upon a student’s enrollment status, immigration or legal status, access to insurance, or anything else.” It can be so freely available because it operates independently from the Counseling and Mental Health Center and University Health Services. Offering expansive services for such specific needs does not come easy; as with most things in higher education, there is a lot of red tape to navigate, shrinking budgets, and already overextended personnel. Even so, there are special people who selflessly champion for issues they deem important, such as the coordinators of UT-Austin’s Longhorn Dreamers Project website that is entirely run by members of the University Leadership Initiative and International Student & Scholar Services staff, on their own time, and is “a lot of extra work on top our already stressful jobs.”

The level of awareness that university employees have is contingent upon an undocumented college students' decision to share their legal status with a campus representative. Students find representatives they feel they can trust through many channels.

Providing Resources to Undocumented College Students in Higher Education – Challenges, Resources, & Policies

It is important to evaluate the awareness with which university employees include undocumented college students in their policy-making. Undocumented student experiences throughout their educational careers are affected by the campus climate. Campus climate is usually determined by the comfort level of students as well as satisfaction with overall academics, faculty/staff, and resources for success. Without acknowledging challenges relevant to a growing population across institutions of higher education, those students may slip through the cracks. Consequently, retention and graduation rates are negatively impacted and the prospects of dropping out with high levels of debt are grim. They become further trapped in a liminal state; unable to progress in the same way as their peers, struggling between staying underground or crossing from invisibility to outing themselves with an 'illegal/undocumented' label that was given to them.

The survey in this study asked that faculty, staff, and administrators rank their level awareness of undocumented student challenges and/or related policies at the national, state, and campus levels, as well as elaborate on why they think there is or is not discrimination against undocumented college students at their institutions (See Figure 4).

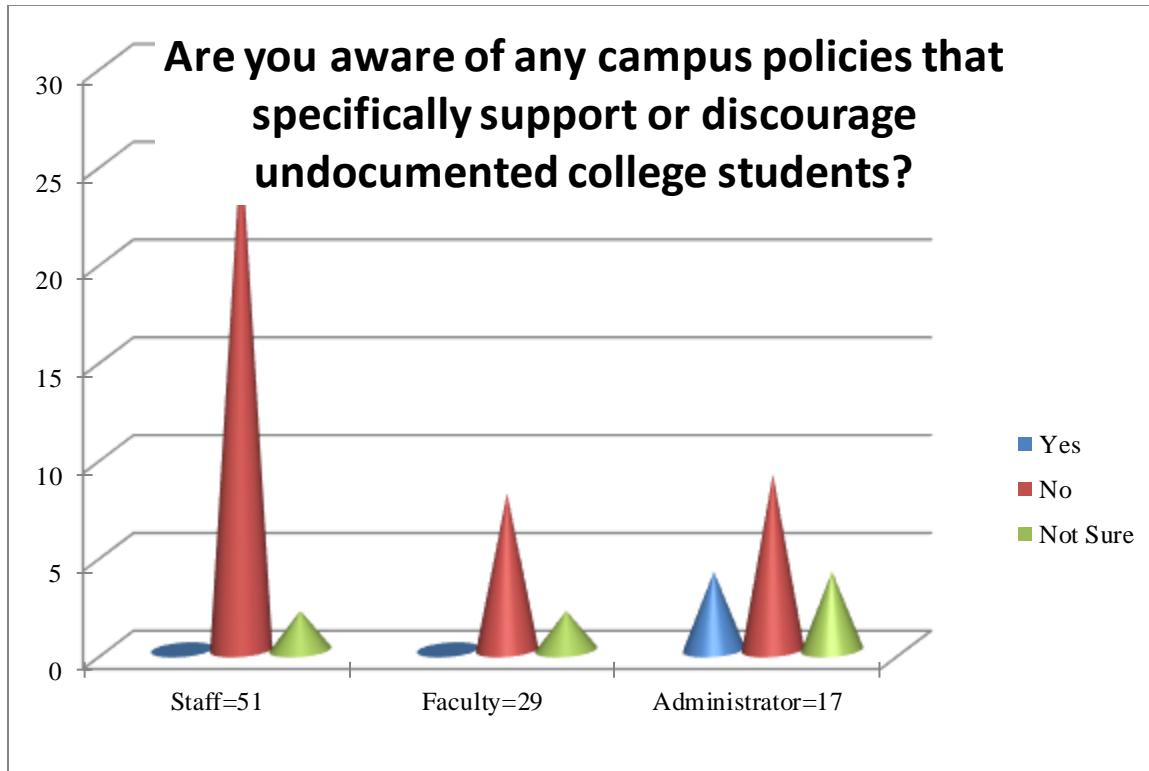


Figure 4. Awareness of campus policies that support or encourage undocumented college students by job position, 2015 (N=102)

This study assumed that different levels of awareness are likely depending on the individual's position within the institution. Administrators, while in the position to influence policy at the institution, may not actually encounter undocumented college students as often as faculty and staff, resulting in a disconnected awareness. Seventeen administrators responded to the survey, of which nine revealed they have been in the position of directly helping an undocumented student, and eight have not. There was little to no awareness of undocumented challenges on behalf of faculty and staff members. Only one faculty member from Texas State University reported knowing about support organizations on campus, naming Bobcat DREAMers as one, and state assistance such as Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA), but no official campus policies. While overall response rates were underwhelming, at least one administrator from each

institution participated in the survey for this study. Of the administrators who responded, about one third mentioned the granting in-state tuition for undocumented college students as a benefit.

The kinds of job opportunities undocumented college students have access to are also limited. They are not legally able to work on campus or elsewhere unless they are DACA recipients, and even then would not be eligible for programs such as work-study, given that work study is a form of federal financial aid. The survey indicated that faculty, staff, and administrators of Central Texas institutions were not always aware of those limitations. Staff members (14) from Texas State, UT-Austin and UTSA, all public institutions, reported jobs for undocumented college students are available on their campuses. A total of seven faculty members from Concordia, Trinity, UTSA, and Incarnate Word claimed to offer job opportunities to its undocumented student population. Furthermore, Concordia, Texas State, and UTSA administrators (5), had the perception closest to reality regarding job opportunities. While on-campus jobs may not be possible as means to pay for academic and living expenses, undocumented college students frequently use their university community contacts to find odd jobs like tutoring, dog walking, babysitting, or catering. DACAmended college students may have the option of non-work-study positions on campus.

Perspectives from the participating faculty, staff, and administrators at the six surveyed institutions do not demonstrate a trend or pattern within the different categories of resources accessible to undocumented college students, which in itself is indicative of how scattered perceptions are across institutional hierarchies. In addition to university personnel's perception of the resources that undocumented college students have access

to at their institutions, it is also important to consider what they perceived to be the kinds of resources undocumented college students still want.

Debt and Retention

The kind of debt students incur from a college education is more than just tuition. In-state tuition is a very hot topic, but only alleviates part of the hardship undocumented college students face. Often forgotten are the numerous additional expenses such as room and board, books, supplemental learning aids, access fees, lab equipment, transportation, and a host of other incidentals that quickly add up. Suárez-Orozco et al. stated the same in their 2015 study, reporting that 90 percent of the undocumented college students who responded to the national survey expressed concerns about being able to buy textbook and supplies, 29 percent of which were “extremely concerned” (444). The students also stressed the importance of tangibly receiving more financial aid to realize their academic goals (453). This study, however, focuses on Texas in particular. The Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA) has provided countless students with partial financial relief, something not available in many states. The TASFA helps non-citizens like undocumented students pay for college, as they do not currently fit immigrant categories eligible for federal aid. Immigrant categories eligible for federal aid include Permanent U.S. resident with an Alien Registration Card, Conditional permanent U.S. resident with visa type I-551C, or an Arrival/Departure Record (I-94) assigned to refugee, asylum-granted, parolee (for a minimum of one year), or Cuban-Haitian entrants. The TASFA guideline works much like that of the in-state tuition legislation, whereas the individual is eligible based on classification as a Texas resident (College for All Texans 2015).

The undocumented college students seemed knowledgeable and aware of their status' impact on their eligibility to receive financial aid. These five respondents knew they were ineligible for federal aid, but still qualified for state aid. Scholarship eligibility was not clear to all five respondents, as one of them reported being unsure about that particular resource. All five participants stated the chances of them re-enrolling at their institution for the following semester was very likely. There was more diversity in answers to whether or not the undocumented college students believe in their likelihood of graduating. At least three of the five thought their graduation was very likely by rating it a 5 on a scale from 1 to 5; one student each ranked their likelihood as 3 and 4. One student from this study responded that while satisfied with the services received on campus, he wished it "was easier to find scholarships for a non-resident." The desire for a centralized office providing resources for undocumented college students was expressed by another respondent, as was declaring financial aid one of "the major contributing factors in re-enrollment, money is scarce and a little help goes a long way for students as myself." These responses are similarly reflected in some of the undocumented college students expressed in the Suárez-Orozco, et al. study. The common sentiment was a need for more financial aid as well as equal treatment when it comes to receiving financial aid enabling them to further their academic careers (2015).

Tuition is an expected expense, but the additional expenses of textbooks, activation and membership fees for required digital materials, meals and lodging drastically increase the final cost. Campus housing becomes a tricky situation for some undocumented college students. For instance, many institutions require their first-year students to live on campus unless they meet certain criteria granting off-campus housing.

One example is Texas State's current housing policy that restricts off-campus waivers for students age 21 or older, those with a family residence within a 60-mile radius of the university, or who have completed 30 or more college credit hours. Students not meeting one of those requirements must reside on campus or housing owned by the university. Costs of student campus housing, which have a mandatory meal plan, can cost anywhere from \$2,710 per semester for the least expensive combination to \$5,915 per semester for the higher end combinations ("Housing", "Residents" 2015). While off campus housing is paid monthly, housing through the university requires lump sum or installment payments. Installment payments can allow students to save and pay smaller amounts at a time; however, the smaller amounts can still be in the thousands of dollars. These payment structures and rules, as one staff member mentioned outside the survey, is becoming a barrier to retention for some of the undocumented college students. Unable to make payments for housing in addition to tuition and fees, the students' accounts become delinquent, and therefore make them ineligible to return to campus housing the following semester or even register for courses.

How Undocumented College Students Find Assistance

The sensitive nature of the situation in which undocumented college students find themselves forces them to remain in an isolating state of liminality and at risk of downward assimilation. University faculty, staff, and on occasion administrators, are likely to build rapport with their students and are entrusted with confidential information such as the need for money, food, or other resources. Asking for assistance with those

matters is a delicate task but undocumented college students still managed to find assistance through a variety of methods.

At the six participating institutions, “word of mouth” was the primary way that faculty and staff reported being approached by an undocumented student (19/44). Once undocumented college students have identified individuals they feel are trustworthy enough to disclose their status to, they can ask for help with the challenges affecting them.

Gaining the insight directly from undocumented college students was an ideal goal for this study in order to develop a stronger understanding of what challenges they face and how to respond appropriately to their needs. However, responses from undocumented student participants were not significant enough to warrant quantitative analysis. The five respondents to the survey used in this study who self-identified as undocumented college students all indicated that they found resources through word of mouth, which is not unlike the results from many other studies. Additionally, some found assistance via flyers or posters on campus (2), an independent or community organization (2), or their university’s official website (1). Of the total of five, not a single one reported a university-sponsored event as a means of connecting with someone on their campus who could help with the previously stated challenges.

The manner in which administrators reported being contacted by undocumented college students was again most common by word of mouth. These findings suggest that there is much room for improvement on behalf of the institutions to reach out to undocumented college students and generate a stronger sense of inclusion.

Undocumented student responses to the national survey by Suárez-Orozco et al. further

illustrate the frustration felt when information and resources are difficult to access. One student expressed having been “referred from one faculty member to another in a never-ending loop” and would “highly appreciate” her university in New York to compile accurate and up-to-date information (2015, 452). Having consistent information coming from a centralized source within each campus would also alleviate any challenges that arise from word of mouth communications, such as perpetuation of misinformation, and reduction of confusion when contradictory information from different individuals at a single institution has been as also illustrated by other scholars (Balderas-Medina, et al. 2014). Bringing together the undocumented college students in need and the campus representatives with the knowledge and resources to provide assistance is a crucial piece of the puzzle. It does not do anyone any good to offer resources if nobody is aware of them or if they are difficult to locate.

Having established a demand for specific resources for undocumented college students and a desire on the part of faculty, staff and administrators to assist them, the next section explores possible similarities, constraints, or disparities between resources offered at public institutions and those at private institutions. Asking faculty, staff, and administrators from both kinds of institutions may lend insight on the perceptions they have on undocumented college students and the issues they face in college.

Differences in Resource Availability between Public & Private Institutions

Working under the assumption that policy differs between public and private institutions, this study evaluates possible differences by asking administrators to share their perceptions. Administrators usually have years of experience from working at various institutions and can offer valuable insight regarding possible differences in resources available at public and private universities. Those who responded did not believe there were any noteworthy differences between what services are available for undocumented college students at public versus private institutions other than public institutions must take public opinion into consideration, be bound more by state law, or encounter heightened scrutiny. Whether or not the respondents perceived differences between the kinds of resources available at public and private institutions, the ability to identify support networks or other resources for undocumented college students on their own campuses is potentially beneficial for overall enrollment and increased retention.

When undocumented college students contemplated how their individual experiences or access to resources might differ if they attended another type of institution – for example, a student attending a public institution versus a student attending a private institution – there was not much speculation. Policies regarding undocumented college students at public institutions, as reported in this study, were not distinctly different from those at private institutions. One undocumented student disclosed feelings that “undocumented students don't usually go to private universities because of the tuition cost so there probably wouldn't be that many to get together to ask for such resources or even put their own together.”

All institutions have some statements about diversity and inclusivity as part of their student affairs or campus life philosophies in an effort to provide an excellent educational experience for their entire student population. Some, such as the faith-based private institutions, attributed commitment to outreach as operating in accordance to their particular institutions' ideologies. For example, in providing insight into the relationship between university resources and retention rates for undocumented college students, one administrator stated, "The Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word teach our campus to care for all individuals with sincerest regard to their humanity, their ability, and need. I believe this mission is valuable to offer support to any student, undocumented or otherwise." Faculty, staff, and administrator survey responses conveyed care for all students, regardless of background; yet missing from the Incarnate Word website is tangible evidence substantiating goals of outreach on behalf of the university for undocumented college students. In another example from a private institution, the staff member proclaimed Christian teachings and values as the "unofficial motto" of the university and the basis for inclusivity. While some private institutions rely on their religious affiliation as a moral compass, public institutions are bound to comply with anti-discrimination regulations set by the federal Title VI, under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (U.S. Department of Education - Office for Civil Rights 2015). Numerous participants from both public and private institutions, however, voiced their uncertainty, or even a "woeful ignorance" about the challenges experienced by and resources necessary for undocumented student success and could only speculate the campus climate, at best.

There were not many discernable differences in policies between public and private institutions. I expected private institutions to be able to take more liberties in policy than public institutions. A public institution, as a state entity, must consider all its stakeholders' interests when making major decisions. Private institutions, specifically those with a religious founding, are expected to be generous in their offerings to vulnerable populations of students. However, did the charitable characteristics of religious private institutions transcend into actions that embrace and support those in need? Answers from faculty, staff, and administrators in this study provided little insight into differences between public and private institutions that could impact the kinds of resources available to undocumented college students. While respondents from private universities felt the institution's intent is genuine, there were no ways with which to measure or observe actions taken affirming that intent.

Assisting undocumented college students is a complex process with countless variables and players. This study revealed the levels of awareness faculty, staff, and administrators at a sampling of public and private institutions had about undocumented college students and assessed the diverse approaches taken by universities in Central Texas in supporting undocumented college students. The overall impression left by this study's results is that awareness of the challenges faced by undocumented college students is low and muddled. Other institutions in Texas, and even nationwide, wishing to replicate similar programs and services at their campuses can learn from the successful examples from this study, as well as the attempts made in good-faith by other institutions but fell short on the outcome. Communication that is easily accessible, clear, and comprehensive serves to maintain healthy enrollment, retention, and graduation rates.

The six examples from Central Texas demonstrated the overwhelming need for university personnel to have basic awareness of undocumented college students and their unique challenges, and that consistency in disseminated information is paramount.

VII. CONCLUSION

This research aims to highlight the opportunities and dilemmas undocumented college students face while attending Central Texas universities. I have taken an institutional, and administrative, approach to identifying available resources for undocumented college students in the state of Texas, which offers an understanding of trends and practices that allow undocumented college students to feel more accepted. Drawing on themes of cultural citizenship, segmented assimilation, and liminality, these trends also illustrate potential benefits or disadvantages that can shape the future of both institutions and the undocumented college students in higher education. For example, how resource availability for undocumented college students affects retention, enrollment, and graduation rates is related to segmented assimilation. Having opportunities that level the playing field for traditionally disadvantaged college students is seen as a driving force behind whether or not those college students follow a path of full integration and upward mobility.

This study relies on participant responses to the survey to understand differences in available resources based on type of institution. Those differences could determine how well a student performs academically, and how included undocumented college students feel on their respective campuses. Cultural citizenship, in this instance being accepted fully as a member of the community, and having the support systems necessary to overcome the obstacles that accompany higher education, is especially relevant to those who lack documentation. Without inclusion as recipients of essential campus resources, undocumented college students are at risk for assimilating into less desirable outcomes and/or enduring in indeterminate liminality.

This study sought to identify and understand the accessibility of resources for undocumented college students enrolled in higher education through this research, viewed through an administrative and institutional lens. Responses from administrators, faculty and staff revealed that institutions as a whole do not have widespread knowledge of undocumented college students, the challenges they face, or policies that affect them. There are a handful of individuals and organizations at each campus with some level of awareness, usually due to a personal experience or encounter with an undocumented student. Services already readily available at most institutions such as academic assistance, social/networking, emotional support or counseling were not seen quite as influential in respect to retention. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to see what would result from adapting social groups, networking contacts, and counseling sessions to meet the specific needs of undocumented college students. If the recent surge in national non-profit advocacy groups as well as local student organizations is any indication, college campuses will become more open, aware, and encouraging of undocumented college students. It will be easier to accomplish, however, if the same faculty, staff, and administrators who responded to this survey must remain vocal and put their support into action.

This study was not able to answer concretely whether or not the highest authoritative figures at public and private universities in Central Texas have similar levels of awareness regarding their institutions' undocumented student populations. However, what can be said for these specific institutions, based on the numbers and types of responses received for this study, is that there is a noticeable disconnect between the administration, faculty and staff, and students in their knowledge of undocumented

student challenges. The most disconnected are the administrators who had vaguely generalized knowledge and little to no direct contact with undocumented college students. Faculty gave very descriptive and largely accurate definitions of undocumented college students, as one could expect from an academic or scholar, but were otherwise unaware of academic, socioeconomic, or legal complications beyond that.

One primary finding of this study that was mentioned repeatedly by numerous administrators, faculty and staff is the importance of financial opportunities undocumented college students lack. The ability to provide for oneself and one's family extends beyond higher education. It is a matter of pride and a sense of purpose. When facing obstacles that affect every facet of their lives, creating access to financial resources facilitates resilience of undocumented college students. As one faculty member from Texas State recounts her experience with undocumented college students in the classroom, "they struggle the most with funding for their education since many loans are not available to them. They also have fewer personal resources to cover the gap when a loan has not yet come in but they must make tuition payments. They are also often first generation college students and are not sure how to navigate university resources."

Adding insult to injury, this faculty member also has had students miss class because a parent or relative was being deported.

While educators' hands are tied when it comes to complying with codified federal and state legislation, there is still room for improvement on what can be done at individual campuses to make the college experience for undocumented college students more manageable, and hopefully positive.

Limitations and Recommendations

The biggest limitation to this study is its sensitive nature, making it difficult to extract data from a population that survives on its invisibility. There is still a legitimate concern of retaliation, deportation, ostracizing from the community and general stigma of being undocumented that weighs heavily on this group of students. Small focus groups with explicit incentives in exchange for participating could have increased responses from undocumented college students and should be considered for future studies. Another limitation, for which there is no concrete solution when collecting data from a survey, is potential respondents' hesitation to participate in the study due to their assumption that their contribution to the study is minimal or nonexistent. Not knowing much on the subject of undocumented college students prevented participation, even when the survey states its purpose is to understand perceptions as well as direct knowledge if available before consenting to continue to the questions. Determining the higher education community members' level of awareness regarding the undocumented student population is a key component to the study. Revising the purpose statements used in the recruitment email and at the start of the survey with more clarifying language may persuade potential respondents to continue even if they are unsure of how helpful their answers may be.

This study is rooted in the desire to contribute to the success and inclusion of undocumented college students in Central Texas. By compiling approaches from several institutions of ranging sizes and philosophies, other institutions can refer to this study for ideas on implementation of resources and services that are necessary for undocumented student success. The basic mechanisms for achieving inclusivity at Central Texas institutions explored here serve as a starting point; these activities, centers, organizations,

and support systems can be duplicated or adapted at all institutions looking to revamp the retention and graduation rates of a growing and valuable population, regardless of their size or affiliation.

A common occurrence in responses from faculty, staff, and administrators was the association of Latinxs with undocumented status, as well as concerns with retention and graduation since they are identified as a high-risk demographic for attrition. While this association is expected in states, such as Texas, that have substantial numbers of Latinx residents, it is vital to remember that undocumented college students are visually indistinguishable from traditional students, come from a multitude of countries, and each face their own variation of challenges requiring special attention. The development and implementation of the aforementioned mechanisms, customized to campuses nationwide, is encouraged.

Undocumented student responses would ideally have been at least ten per institution. Student input is of utmost importance, and further work like that of Suárez-Orozco, et al. (2015) which was used to supplement my findings, needs to continue alongside administration-focused studies like this one. Monetary incentives (such as gift cards, which were used by Suárez-Orozco et al. with moderate success) for conducting focus groups or upon submission of survey, along with additional statements of assured anonymity are possibilities for future studies. Only the undocumented college students know what they want or need, but the perceived risk and fear of exposure often outweigh benefits of speaking out, or may not be worth a free slice of pizza or Walmart gift card valued at \$10.00.

Universities must create a unified understanding of the proper procedure for assisting undocumented college students pursuing degrees in Central Texas. Recalling the results regarding visibility or awareness of resources, where none of the five respondents reported receiving assistance because of a university-sponsored event. While some administrators were able to describe a systematic process, the way in which identification or designation of vulnerable populations get to the point of deliberation remains unclear. Transparency regarding every step of the policy-making process affecting undocumented college students is ideal, allowing students to voice their concerns and opinions more freely, fostering an open dialogue between administrators, faculty, staff, and students.

Types of job opportunities available to or desired by undocumented college students were not explicitly defined in the study's survey. While it referenced the general ability to find employment, universities could take into consideration the possibility to provide job opportunities on campus for undocumented college students in a way that would not violate institutional hiring regulations, or at least increased networking opportunities that could lead to potential earnings.

This study did not go into the psychological and social impact language and terminology have on undocumented college students' academic success. However, a longitudinal study of how, or if, deliberate campus initiatives can incite a shift in language, and in turn have a positive impact on retention and graduation rates of undocumented college students would prove insightful.

This study further examined the issue of whether undocumented college students might be more likely to re-enroll in or graduate from college if their institutions offer them resources. Enrollment, retention, and graduation rates are of utmost importance to

the survival of colleges and universities. Resources that support all types of students and their circumstances at institutions of higher education in Central Texas can provide much needed relief for undocumented youth. Matriculation lessens the impact of not having papers, when otherwise forced into participating in the underground cash economy so many undocumented immigrants face. This precarious set of circumstances renders many undocumented immigrants unable, or very unlikely, to voice their concerns. However, recognition as members of a campus community offers sanctuary, and in turn increases the prospect of retention and graduation. Authors Kimball and Campbell summed the situation up best, stating, “retention is a by-product of a good educational experience” (2013, 10).

APPENDIX SECTION

Timeline of Federal DREAM Act Submissions

 2001	S.1291, introduced in the Senate by Senator Orrin Hatch (Rep.)
2003	S.1545, introduced in the Senate by Senator Orrin Hatch (Rep.) H.R.1684, introduced in the House by Representative Chris Cannon (Rep.)
2005	H.R. 5131, introduced in the House by Representative Lincoln Diaz-Balart (Rep.) S.2075, introduced in the House and Senate by Senator Dick Durbin (Dem.)
2006	S.2611, introduced in the Senate by Senator Arlen Specter (Rep.) <small>*As part of the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006</small>
2007	S.2205, S. 774, introduced in the Senate by Senator Richard Durbin (Dem.)
2009	H.R. 1751, introduced in the House by Representative Howard L. Berman (Dem.) S.729, introduced in the Senate by Senator Dick Durbin (Dem.)
2010	S.3992, introduced in the Senate by Senator Dick Durbin (Dem.)
2011	S.952, introduced in the Senate by Senator Dick Durbin (Dem.)

**All documents accessed via the Library of Congress website: <https://www.congress.gov>



Appendix A DREAM Act Legislative History

Institution	Location	Affiliation	Fall 2012 Enrollment	Source:
Concordia University	Austin, Texas	Private Institution, Lutheran	2,500	http://www.concordia.edu/page.cfm?page_ID=75
Texas State University	San Marcos, Texas	Public State Institution	34,225	http://www.emm.txstate.edu/resources/enrollment-reports/contentParagraph/0/document/2012+Preliminary+Enrollment+Report.pptx
Trinity University	San Antonio, Texas	Private Institution, Secular	2,525	http://web.trinity.edu/Documents/ir_docs/FACTBOOK%20%202012-2013.pdf
University of the Incarnate Word	San Antonio, Texas	Private Institution, Roman Catholic	9, 188	http://www.uiw.edu/admissions/whyuiw.html
University of Texas at Austin	Austin, Texas	Public State Institution	52,213	http://www.utexas.edu/news/2012/09/19/2012-preliminary-enrollment-data/
University of Texas-San Antonio	San Antonio, Texas	Public State Institution	30,474	http://www.utsa.edu/ir/publications.html

Appendix B Fall Enrollment

Survey Questions for General Population:

How long have you worked in higher education (if a student, how long have you attended this institution)?
How long have you worked at this institution? (skipped if a student)
How would you define an undocumented student?
Are you aware of any campus policies that specifically support or discourage undocumented students?
Do you feel undocumented students are discriminated against at your institution?
Have you been in the position of helping an undocumented student in your office?
If so, how did that/those student(s) find you or your office?
With what issue(s) do those students most frequently come to you for help?
What resources or services for undocumented students do you or your office currently offer?
What resources or services do you think they need?
Approximately how much have you taken out in student loans? n < 1000, n in increments of 10000,
 $100000 < n$
On a scale from 1 to 5, how likely are you to enroll next semester?
On a scale from 1 to 5, how likely are you to graduate?
Is there any additional information specific to your university that would help the researcher understand
the relationship between university resources and retention rates for undocumented students? (faculty/staff
only)

Appendix C

Survey questions for the general population (student, faculty, staff)

Survey Questions for Undocumented Students:

How long have you been attending this university?
How would you define an undocumented student?
Are you aware of any campus policies that specifically support or discourage undocumented students?
Do you self-identify as an undocumented youth/student? (an answer of yes continues with the following
specific questions; an answer of no skips to the set of questions for general population.)
How comfortable do you feel asking for help from or revealing your status to someone on your campus?
Do you feel you have been discriminated against at your institution?
From which offices or university departments have you received help?
How did you find those offices or contacts?
How were you helped by those contacts?
On a scale from 1 to 5, how would you rank the service you received from those contacts?
With what issue(s) do you most frequently go to those contacts for help?
What resources or services for undocumented students would you most like to have on campus?
How do you think the services or resources would be different if you were at a public/private institution?
Approximately how much have you taken out in student loans? n < 1000, n in increments of 10000,
 $100000 < n$
On a scale from 1 to 5, how likely are you to enroll next semester?
On a scale from 1 to 5, how likely are you to graduate?

Appendix D

Questions for undocumented students

Survey Questions for Administrators:

High ranking administrators such as President, Provost, Vice President of Student Affairs, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Program Directors, and Academic Deans

How long have you worked in higher education?

How long have you worked at this institution?

How is a vulnerable student population identified or defined at your institution?

Which specific administrator or office determines how a vulnerable student population is defined at your institution?

How is the amount of resources available to vulnerable student populations determined?

How would you define an undocumented student?

Are you aware of any campus policies that specifically support or discourage undocumented students?

Do you feel undocumented students are discriminated against at your institution?

If you have been in the position of helping an undocumented student in your office how did that/those student(s) find you or your office?

With what issue(s) do those students most frequently come to you for help?

What resources or services for undocumented students do you or your office currently offer?

What resources or services do you think they need most?

Is there any additional information specific to your university that would help the researcher understand the relationship between university resources and retention rates for undocumented students?

Appendix E
Questions for administrators



The rising STAR of Texas

Institutional Review Board Application

Certificate of Approval

Applicant: michelle sotolongo

Application Number : 2014B7732

Project Title: In Limbo: Bringing Stability to Undocumented Students Enrolled at Institutions of Higher Education in Central Texas

Date of Approval: 04/22/14 10:06:19

Expiration Date: 04/22/15

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Blands".

Assistant Vice President for Research
and Federal Relations

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr. Linda L. Jones".

Chair, Institutional Review Board

Appendix F IRB Approval

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