

Undocumented Students in Higher Education: *Struggling to Achieve the American Dream*



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Abstract

There are 65,000 undocumented high school students that graduate each year, with only approximately 5-10% of these students going on to attend a college or university. This paper discusses the struggles and barriers undocumented students face while applying to college and during their college experience. Some of these hardships include but are not limited to: citizenship status, social economic status, financial aid, immigration reform, education policies, and belonging to an existing minority group (Latinos) that is underrepresented in higher education. Lastly, an interview with an undocumented student supports the findings from literature review and allowed the student to tell his story and struggles to achieve the “American Dream.” There are thousands of determined undocumented college students who unlike their American-born or legalized peers, are burdened with the added pressures of finding ways to fund their educational endeavors, while facing a variety of social and educational challenges. Immigration policy and financial aid regulations are constraining vulnerable populations deemed undesirable and undeserving. Despite these challenges the students persevere and continue in their pursuit of a college education.