

Illinois State University

ISU ReD: Research and eData

Theses and Dissertations

3-6-2023

Lo Bueno Y Lo Malo – Assessing Admissions Staff and Practices Supporting Undocumented Students at Illinois’ Four-Year Public Universities

Dave Marcial

Illinois State University, dmarcial2@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/etd>

Recommended Citation

Marcial, Dave, "Lo Bueno Y Lo Malo – Assessing Admissions Staff and Practices Supporting Undocumented Students at Illinois’ Four-Year Public Universities" (2023). *Theses and Dissertations*. 1686. <https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/etd/1686>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by ISU ReD: Research and eData. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ISU ReD: Research and eData. For more information, please contact ISUREd@ilstu.edu.

LO BUENO Y LO MALO – ASSESSING ADMISSIONS STAFF AND PRACTICES
SUPPORTING UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS AT ILLINOIS’ FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC
UNIVERSITIES

DAVE MARCIAL

118 Pages

Illinois has enacted legislative policies to provide access to higher education and state funding opportunities for undocumented students. Public Act 093-0007, Illinois RISE Act, and Illinois House Bill 3438 all have implications for Illinois four-year public universities and community colleges.

This dissertation focused on understanding the training, knowledge, and support of the admissions staff at all twelve public four-year universities. A survey was created with the assistance of content experts to gauge admissions staff institutional training and knowledge as it pertains to supporting undocumented students. Approximately 90 admissions staff were identified for the study and 57 participants responded from all twelve Illinois public universities. The findings provide admissions and enrollment management professionals with an opportunity for improvement along with learning best practices to support undocumented students pursuing higher education.

KEYWORDS: undocumented students; admissions staff; enrollment; training; Illinois four-year public universities, Illinois Legislation; Undocumented Critical Theory

LO BUENO Y LO MALO – ASSESSING ADMISSIONS STAFF AND PRACTICES
SUPPORTING UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS AT ILLINOIS’ FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC
UNIVERSITIES

DAVE MARCIAL

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Educational Administration and Foundations

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

2023

Copyright 2023 Dave Marcial

LO BUENO Y LO MALO – ASSESSING ADMISSIONS STAFF AND PRACTICES
SUPPORTING UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS AT ILLINOIS’ FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC
UNIVERSITIES

DAVE MARCIAL

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Mohamed Nur-Awaleh, Chair

Beth Hatt

Lydia Kyei-Blankson

Maura Toro-Morn

Sandy López

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to take the time to thank and acknowledge my parents, Guadalupe and Florinda Marcial. Even typing your names brings tears to my eyes. I will never know the true experience you endured to come to this country. I thank you every day for the sacrifices you made to make a life for us. Everything I do is to honor you and make you proud.

My life would be incomplete without my wife, Nelly. Words cannot explain my love, affection, and gratitude to you. You have experienced the highs and lows during this process and supported me through this journey. Together we learned the significance of our marriage vows when it says, “in sickness and in health.” You blessed me with Natalia and Joaquín and my life with you keeps getting better. *Y si vivo cien años, Cien años, pienso en ti. A mis niños, Natalia y Joaquin*, all that I do is for you. Always remember that I love you. I cannot forget our first child, Butters Mantequilla Marcial. You are by my side even now that I am writing. You are a loyal companion. Thank you, Butters, for being a good “big sister” to your human siblings. To my *suegros*, Roberto and Adelina, I am grateful for your love and support. You have embraced me as a son and my life is better because of you.

Steve, Nancy, and Vanessa you guys are ok. As siblings, we support each other when needed and humble each other as well. I could not ask for better siblings. Vic and Anthony, thank you for being kind and caring to both of my sisters. Raiden Remy and Kain Odin, I love your curiosity and kind nature. Your *Tio* Dave loves you both.

My experience at Illinois State University (ISU) would not have happened without Dr. Patrice Olsen. Google is the reason that I found ISU in 2004 but you were the reason I did not give up after my first semester as a graduate student in the history program. Latisha Baker and Augustus, your friendship is one I cherish tremendously. You even helped me find a job at ISU

and my first apartment in Normal, IL. Team Leopold von Ranke will always have a special place in my heart. Thank you, Dr. Sally Heinzl, Matthew Clifford, Salman Khan, and Katherine Pole.

My career in higher education would not be complete without those that contributed to my learning, training, and success. Thank you, Tanya Cabrera. I have been blessed to have earned your trust, respect, and friendship. You have always been available to help when needed and provided support. I cannot forget my friend Mayra Lagunas. We met at your first event working at the University of Illinois and traveled to countless high school events. Your friendship is one that I cherish. I cannot wait to meet baby Lagunas Leija. Tanya and Mayra, you are both family now and I would not have it any other way. Dr. Melissa Fischer and Laura Pietruskza, we all bonded through a traumatic time in education and supported each other. Gracias Dr. Aliza Gilbert, Paul Welsh, Brian Hodges, Rey Diaz, Audrey Barrientos, Marlon Snipes, Patrick Walsh, Samantha Meranda, Keena Griffin, Fabby Kallas, Norma De La Rosa, and Ziggy Blackwell. I feel like we have been in admissions together for a long time and can count on each other for assistance. I am forever thankful to those admissions representatives that took the time to complete the survey.

To my previous dissertation chair, Dr. Beth Hatt, thank you for continuing to guide me through the dissertation process. Thank you for saying “yes” to my initial request to be the first chair of my committee even though you had a full caseload. I have a profound appreciation for everything you have done for me. Dr. Mohamed Nur-Awaleh, you recruited me to the doctoral program, taught me doctoral courses, and now you helped me complete the journey as the current chair. Thank you for taking the chance on working with me. Dr. Lydia Kyei-Blankson, you are a brilliant educator and a kind person. You helped me put into words those data points to have meaningful research. Dr. Maura Toro-Morn, it is a small world how we got to know each

other. I had the opportunity to work with you when I was a staff at ISU and witness firsthand your passion for education. Thank you for advocating for the Latino/a students at ISU. You help them find their voice on a predominately white campus. Dr. Sandy López, I am forever grateful for meeting you as an ILACHE Board member. You yelled at me, laughed at me, and laughed with me. You reminded me of my siblings, and I see you as a family now. Thank you for answering my random panic texts, sending funny memes, and talking through situations. You truly understand the work that I am trying to do and you help push the work forward. You do it not for personal recognition but because it is the right thing to do.

Tio Rey and Tio Alejandro gracias por su apoyo. You are great examples of a caring uncle, father, and husband. You have given me an example of how to be a caring father. I also need to thank my *Tia Hila* for helping raise me. The list of cousins would be too long to name but I will make it short. Oscar, Alex, Rey, Brenda, and Marlen, we grew up together and have had shared experiences growing up. I am better because of you. Thank you for being part of the family Irasema, Laura, and Julio.

I have lost family that helped shape me. *A mi Tia Raquel, te amo. No hay palabras que puede escribir para explicar cuanto te extraño.* Your spirit has helped as part of this process. Especially when I felt like giving up. *A mi Tia Ana, gracias por sus consejos.* Your last words to me were, “*Cuida tu familia.*” I have not forgotten that advice and think of it every day.

Thank you to the Moraine Valley Community College. I have an amazing and supportive leader in Dr. Normah Salleh-Barone. I learn from your guidance, advice, and mentoring. I work with the best enrollment team in Illinois. Thank you Kate Wachtor, Andrew Sarata, Veronica Wade, Simon Siczka, Lupe Cuellar, and Tasha Campbell. A special shot out to my colleagues

Dr. Chet Shaw, Dr. Scott Friedman, Dr. JoAnn Jenkins, and Kent Marshall. Your continued support while I transitioned to Moraine helped motivate me to complete this degree.

At the core of the work that I am wanted to accomplish is to support undocumented students and their families. I have witnessed firsthand the struggle to access college opportunities. It is the reason that I want to provide the best possible training for the staff that provides the information to the prospective students. I want to ensure dignity, respect, and transparency throughout the college selection process for undocumented students. It is the right thing to do.

D.M.

CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	i
CONTENTS	v
TABLES	viii
FIGURES	ix
CHAPTER I: FAMILIA, TRADICIÓN, COMPASIÓN, Y EL PINCHE PROBLEMA	1
Introduction	1
Relationship of Study to Personal Experience and Knowledge	2
Relationship to Professional Experience	6
Statement of the Problem	9
Research Questions	11
Kind of Study	11
Significance of Study	12
Theoretical Framework	13
Summary	15
CHAPTER II: HISTORY, POLICY, Y EXPLICANDO EL PINCHE PROBLEMA	16
Introduction	16
Historical Relationship: México and United States	16
Policies: Lo bueno y lo malo	19
Socio-Economic Status and Criminalization of Undocumented Immigrants	27
Gap in the Literature: Undocumented Students and Enrollment Management Staff	28
Summary	33

CHAPTER III: EL PINCHE PROBLEMA Y LA IMPORTANCIA	34
Introduction	34
Research Ethics	35
Research Methods	35
Participant Selection	35
Instrumentation	37
Data Analysis	38
Significance of the Study	39
Summary	40
CHAPTER IV: ANDAMOS CON EL PINCHE PROBLEMA	41
Developing a Survey and Participants	42
Description of Admissions Staff Survey Respondents	43
Institutional Training	45
Resources and Support	47
Attitudes and Beliefs	50
Knowledge	53
Supports and Policies	53
Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)	59
Findings and Observations	62
Lo Bueno	62
Lo Malo	64
En Medio	66
Summary	67

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS, PROFESSIONAL IMPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH	68
Introduction	68
Statement of the Problem	70
Research Questions and Theoretical Framework	71
Epiphany	76
Professional Implications	77
Research Limitations	80
Future Research	80
Final Reflection	82
REFERENCES	83
APPENDIX A: RESEARCH SURVEY	95
APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM	117

TABLES

Table	Page
1. Four-Year Illinois Public University Contacts	36
2. List of Illinois Public Universities and Demographic Information	37
3. Profile of Illinois Public Universities Admissions Staff Survey Respondents	44
4. Coding responses to the question: What training have you received to support undocumented students?	45
5. Response to decision-making abilities for content to assist undocumented students.	47
6. Coding responses to the question: What financial resources specifically for undocumented students are available at your institution (beyond state aid)?	48
7. Type of Training Received by Admissions Staff	49
8. Survey Questions	51
9. True and False Survey Questions	52
10. Coding Common Responses	54
11. Legislative Questions as it pertains to undocumented students	55
12. Coding responses to the question: Can undocumented students in the State of Illinois pay in-state tuition?	56
13. Coding responses to the question: Can undocumented students in Illinois receive federal financial aid?	57
14. Coding responses to the question: Can undocumented students in Illinois receive state financial aid?	58
15. DACA Renewal Cost	59
16. DACA Renewal Frequency	60
17. DACA Protections	61

FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Dave Marcial – Hope Lutheran School Yearbook – 1994	3
2. Mateo Marcial’s Bracero Identification Card	4
3. Guadalupe Marcial – [Pilsen Neighborhood in Chicago, IL] – Thursday, February 26, 2015	7
4. Guadalupe Marcial – [Collage - Retirement Day from Burke Beverage] – Friday, December 29, 2017	8
5. Laws & Policies Improving Access to Higher Education for Immigrants	23

CHAPTER I: FAMILIA, TRADICIÓN, COMPASIÓN, Y EL PINCHE PROBLEMA

Para mis padres: Está carbón. Vamos apoyar nuestra gente y comunidad. Gracias por sus sacrificios y su ejemplo. Te amo.¹

Introduction

Much has been written about the experiences of undocumented students college access and completion (Diaz-Strong & Meiners, 2007; Garcia & Tierney, 2011; Pérez, 2009; Pérez, 2012; Pérez & Cortés, 2011), yet little to no research has examined the training and knowledgebase of higher education staff. Stebleton and Aleixo (2015) state, “Less is known about how undocumented students interact with faculty members and institutional agents, and whether their documentation status is a factor that affects their overall college experience” (p. 258). My research aims to fill this gap in the literature by exploring the training and knowledge that enrollment management staff on college campuses have about supporting undocumented students and their families. Through this research, I hope to provide greater understanding regarding the training necessary on college campuses for supporting undocumented students, especially within enrollment management.

There are approximately 11.4 million undocumented immigrants currently in the United States (Baker, 2021). Approximately 16.2 million live in a mixed-status family (National Immigration Forum, 2020). When using the term, “undocumented,” I am referring to anyone residing in any given country without documentation. It includes people who entered the U.S. without inspection and proper permission from the government, and those who entered with a visa that is no longer valid (Immigrant Rising, 2020). A “mixed-status family” is a family whose

¹ I begin each chapter with a brief summary section for my parents in their native language, breaking it down in a way they would understand and appreciate.

members include people with different citizenship or immigration statuses (National Immigration Law Center, 2014).

Within this dissertation, I will first describe how my personal and professional experiences have led me to the research topic followed by a discussion of my research questions and proposed methodology. In Chapter Two, I cover the historical context of immigration and being undocumented in the United States along with current research related to the experiences of undocumented students on college campuses. Finally, in Chapter Three I will provide an in-depth discussion of my proposed methodology. Next, I will share my personal experience and knowledge about undocumented immigrants in the United States.

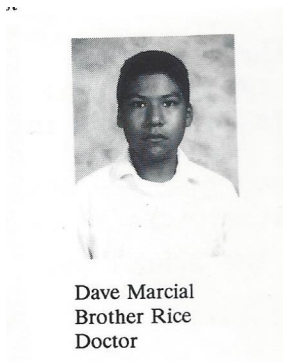
Relationship of Study to Personal Experience and Knowledge

I am the son of undocumented immigrants with roots in Oaxaca, México. As an eighth grader at Hope Lutheran School in Chicago in 1994, I dreamed of becoming a medical doctor as exemplified in my middle school picture in Figure 1. I felt that becoming a medical doctor would be a way of helping my family situation financially. I wanted to serve my Latino community by being a bilingual doctor from the Southside of Chicago.

My siblings and I were often the de facto translators for my parents due to the lack of Spanish-speaking doctors. I hear similar stories from other Latino/a friends and colleagues regarding the same language barrier issues. Although I am not a medical doctor, I am at the end of my journey to earning a Doctor of Philosophy. The topic of undocumented immigrants is an extremely personal one due to my parent's experience and consequently has fueled my desire to research and address this topic.

Figure 1

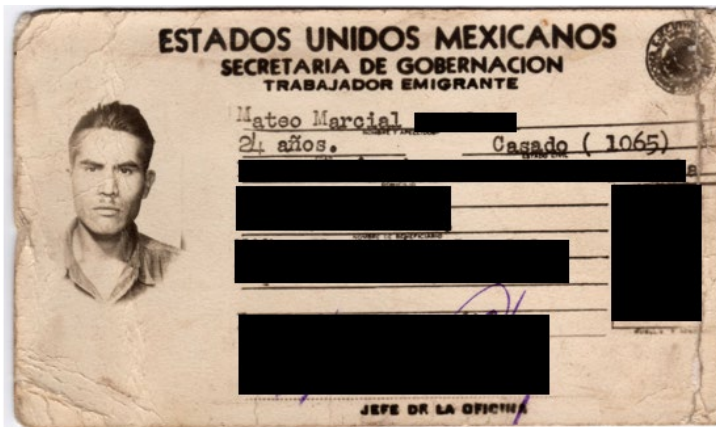
Dave Marcial – Hope Lutheran School Yearbook – 1994



The story of my family in the United States (US) begins with my maternal and paternal grandparents, who were both part of the Bracero program, which began in 1942. According to Gutiérrez (1995) says, “Under the terms of the initial agreements, the Emergency Farm Labor Program (soon dubbed the Bracero Program after a Spanish term for farm laborer) was to guarantee the rights of both American citizens and Mexican workers” (p. 134). During the early 1950s, Braceros came to the United States working as temporary agricultural workers. My grandparents came to the country to work and provide for their family in México through a formal agreement between México and the US. I am blessed that our family still has the original Bracero documents. In Figure 2, I have included the migrant worker identification card of Mateo Marcial, my paternal grandfather.

Figure 2

Mateo Marcial's Bracero Identification Card



Note: [Redacted to remove personal information]

He would later encourage my father, Guadalupe, to come to the country for work in places such as California and Illinois. My father found work through informal networks of other undocumented workers. He eventually returned to México and married my mother, Florinda. In 1976, my parents left Tlacolula de Matamoros, Oaxaca, México and traveled 2,245 miles to Chicago, Illinois, United States of America. They crossed through the border of México and made it to a new country with a new status as undocumented. My parents have only shared their experience with my siblings and I once in my life. I was in my early teenage years when they shared their experience and the pain, anguish, physical, and mental trauma were apparent. Chicago became home and where they worked, lived, and raised a family. The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, under President Reagan, allowed them to become United States citizens. The Immigration Reform and Control Act made any immigrant who had entered the country before 1982 eligible for amnesty (Chang, 2018). Approximately 2.7 million immigrants gained citizenship through the Act including many members of my extended family (Rojas, 2013). The legislation positively impacted the lives of my family and many others in the United

States but also introduced civil and criminal penalties to employers who knowingly hired undocumented immigrants or individuals unauthorized to work in the U.S.

As a first-generation *Mexicano* with indigenous features, my status in this country has come into question. It is exhausting having to “prove” that you “belong” in your own country. It reminds me of the term “Born Suspect” used by Chris Rock (1991) on his first album. Rock (1991) states, “All black people, born a suspect. Came out my mother’s stomach. Anything happen in a three-block radius, I was a suspect!” I personally relate to this sentiment as a Brown man because I often feel singled out by the color of my skin. I recall many discriminatory experiences in my life, but one is vivid because it left me speechless for how it reinforced structural racism/discrimination in Bloomington/Normal, IL. It was one of the many reasons that I left Bloomington/Normal and Illinois State University. The event happened at a movie theater in Normal, Illinois when I went to the concession stand to place an order. The teenager working the stand commented after the transaction was complete, “Your English is really good.” This left me speechless because this teenager had an immediate preconceived perception of me based on the few words that came out of my mouth. I believe it was his view of Latinos and his privilege to pass judgement that stunned me and this microaggression still bothers me to this day. I was being judged and profiled based on my physical appearance.

This experience reflects how in the United States, being “American” too often is conflated with being white (Vargas, 2022). Martinez (2007) further explains, “Thus, for much of our nation’s history, immigration law and policy expressly stated that ‘white persons’ were the sort of people that the country wanted or desired as citizens” (p. 336). In the age of the Trump presidency and post-presidency, Latinos are born suspect and are guilty until proven innocent. It felt like I was a suspect through a small seemingly inconsequential interaction with that teenager.

I am fortunate to be in a situation in which I can provide my citizenship status if questioned by any authorized agency. I am proud to be the son of immigrant parents that have sacrificed so much to thrive in the United States. I was assigned nine digits that has been used to validate my presence in this country. I was born a suspect because of my skin color, language, and family background. My presence in this country has been one of struggle due to the structural discriminatory practices my family has faced as undocumented immigrants. Out of the struggle has come the resilience to push through adverse conditions that could have negatively impacted my family. In sum, the experiences of undocumented students on college campuses are personal to me because of my own experiences growing up with undocumented parents and feeling targeted by hateful immigration rhetoric, regardless of my citizenship status. My personal experiences are where my interest in this research topic originally arose. Next, I will discuss how the study relates to my professional experience.

Relationship to Professional Experience

I reflect on my entry into higher education which was not a linear trajectory but rather accidental. After receiving a master's degree in history, my desire was to become a Chicano historian earning a Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Texas at Austin. The plan was to seek full-time job opportunities while studying for the GRE. Unfortunately, I was not successful in achieving the goal of being accepted to the school nor in finding a job that utilized my master's degree from Illinois State University (ISU). The job that I did find was as a temporary worker at beverage distributor, Burke Beverage, with my father. I gained a whole new appreciation and respect for the work my father did to support the family. The physical labor, extreme weather conditions, and long hours did not deter him from doing his job. He demonstrated pride in his work as shown in the two pictures below (See Figures 3 and 4). One

picture is from a winter day in Chicago and the following is a collage of my father's retirement day from working at Burke Beverage. He is proud of his accomplishments and ability to support the family for 25 years as a delivery driver.

The most important trait that I learned from my father is pride. Pride in being the top driver in his company with neatly ironed clothes each workday. He demonstrated pride in ensuring his customers had neatly organized and fully stocked rows of beverages. He was proud of earning a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and navigating a 20-ton truck loaded with 18 full pallets of beverages through the City of Chicago. I learned to have the same passion and pride in my work as my father.

Figure 3

Guadalupe Marcial – [Pilsen Neighborhood in Chicago, IL] – Thursday, February 26, 2015



Figure 4

Guadalupe Marcial – [Collage - Retirement Day from Burke Beverage] – Friday, December 29, 2017



In 2008, a close and personal friend, LaTisha Baker, forwarded me a job opportunity at ISU as an Admissions Counselor. I proudly interviewed with my alma mater and was offered the position. The primary focus of the job was the recruitment and outreach to underrepresented student populations in the Chicagoland area. I also had a recruitment territory that included Central Illinois, Quad Cities, and Rockford. After a couple months of working at ISU, I started noticing a discrepancy between what was said and what was actually being done on the college campus. For example, the college was creating marketing material that alluded to a safe environment and welcoming opportunities for Black and Latino families but the demographics on campus did not mirror marketing efforts. As the only Latino staff member on the admissions staff, I was always pulled to other divisions on campus to translate for Spanish speaking families or to be another “diverse” tokenized face when needed. I eventually left this position in enrollment management but have continued to work in various capacities within the same field.

To date, I have worked in higher education recruitment for 12 years. Currently, I am at Moraine Valley Community College in Palos Hills, IL as the Dean of Enrollment Services.

Within my professional life, I have tried to be the person that advocates for the most vulnerable populations such as minoritized families, those demonstrating high financial need (often called low-income), and undocumented families. I have felt conflicted over the years recruiting for institutions whose rhetoric and stated values of “diversity” did not translate into equitable practices regarding enrollment and retention of marginalized students. I have personally witnessed and experienced conversations dealing with undocumented students debating whether to award institutional aid because it might take away from a student that will “actually” enroll. *¡Estoy enfadado!* I am tired of undocumented students being seen as cash cows because they pay in full their college tuition with the least amount of aid. For these reasons, I believe I am the right person to conduct this research.

I have received a state award and national award (Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling, 2020) for creating a training program for enrollment management professionals with two of my colleagues. We saw a gap in the training of underrepresented professionals and addressed it with two cohorts. Hence, my research also builds upon my professional experience in enrollment management. I am doing this research not only to honor my parents’ experience, but also to support other undocumented students as they live and learn in the United States.

Statement of the Problem

Enrollment Management (EM) is a division on campus that is responsible for the recruitment and matriculation of college students through offices (Hossler, Bontrager, & Tom, 2015) such as admissions, financial aid, advising, orientation, and scholarships. According to

Hossler and Bean (1990), “Enrollment management has two goals. The first is to exert more control over the characteristics of the student body, and the second is to control the size of the student body” (p. 5). EM varies across every institution. Part of enrollment management’s function involves increasing overall student headcount, which is extremely important to the work done on college campuses for increasing net tuition revenue. Admissions staff actively and deliberately recruits undocumented students to college campuses but often without fully realizing or acknowledging what it means to be undocumented, and the specialized students supports needed to make it to graduation and find work post-graduation. One specific gap is within admissions. Stebleton and Aleixo (2015) claim, “[A]cademic institutions need to coordinate admissions policies to better support undocumented immigrant students” (p. 269). It is important that enrollment management divisions provide accurate, realistic, and ethical information to support the pursuit of higher education for undocumented students.

Aside from an institutional Strategic Plan, a Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan may also be created to the objectives of the institution. Hossler and Bean (1990) identify three main characteristics in strategic enrollment planning, which include engaging the entire institution, environment scanning of student market, and part of overall strategic planning. SEM plans outline their targeted student populations, list goals, and allocate resources to matriculate students to the college campus. I would use the word intentionality when discussing SEM plans because institutions have identified their targeted student academic characteristics, demographics, and geographic populations. Supporting undocumented students’ needs to include training those institutions agents in enrollment management divisions. It can result in an increase of enrollment and retention with the ultimate goal of increased graduation.

Yet little research exists on this topic. The majority of higher education research has focused on the experiences of undocumented students, but little research exists regarding the training of enrollment management staff in working with undocumented students (Serna, 2017; Stebleton & Aleixo, 2015). In my professional experience in enrollment management, institutions often overpromise accessibility for all students and later underdeliver holistic support for undocumented students. EM staff require proper training and understanding of how to serve their students. Adding structured and holistic training to support undocumented students should be ongoing and available to staff. My study will explore admissions staff's training and expertise related to supporting undocumented students at the Illinois 12 public four-year universities.

Research Questions

Based on the above research problem, my research questions are as follows:

1. What are the attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge bases regarding undocumented students and their families held by admissions professionals at Illinois public colleges and universities?
2. What is the nature of training provided by Illinois public colleges and universities for their admissions professionals to recruit and retain undocumented students?

Kind of Study

Utilizing an interpretivist lens, the research will be conducted by surveying admissions professionals in enrollment management divisions within Illinois' public university system. The survey will collect both quantitative data and open-ended questions. For the purposes of the research, I will be defining enrollment management professionals as staff in the Offices of Admissions that are responsible for direct recruitment and outreach. The research is timely due

to the recent passage of Illinois House Bill 3438, which addresses a shortfall in support for undocumented students on college campuses. The bill mandates,

Beginning with the 2022-2023 academic year, requires the governing board of each public university and community college district to designate an employee as an Undocumented Student Resource Liaison to be available on campus to provide assistance to undocumented students and mixed status students within the United States in streamlining access to financial aid and academic support to successfully matriculate to degree completion. (2021),

As a part of the survey, the staff member completing the survey may be the appointed Undocumented Student Resource Liaison or may identify the staff member from another area of campus. The Undocumented Student Resource Liaison will not be the priority of the study if they are not in EM.

I will recruit participants through two state organizations: Illinois Association for College Admissions Counseling and from the publicly available contact information directly from the university website. I aim to have a minimum of 27 (30%) participants of the 90 identified admissions staff from all 12 four-year public institutions in Illinois. The goal is to better understand how state institutions in Illinois are training and supporting admissions staff to successfully work with undocumented students and their families.

Significance of Study

Illinois has approximately 400,000 undocumented individuals living in the state, which is one of the highest undocumented state populations in the nation (Rush University Medical Center and Rob Paral & Associates, 2022). As they reach college age, barriers exist as they seek post-secondary education. The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) has addressed the

importance of equity and access for marginalized populations. IBHE Strategic Plan (2021) has a section called Strategies for a Thriving Illinois Equity as it relates to underrepresented students, which includes undocumented students. I envision the study to examine the training, understanding, and advocacy of undocumented students through enrollment management departments in Illinois' public universities.

Theoretical Framework

Undocumented Critical Theory (UndocuCrit) arises from emerging research narrowly tailored to the undocumented student experience. It is an amalgamation of Critical Race Theory (Crenshaw, 1989), Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit), and Tribal Critical Theory (Brayboy, 2005). UndocuCrit provides the right theoretical framework for my research in that, “UndocuCrit’s main commitment is to investigate and share the stories of resilience and success despite adversities, highlighting experiences encountered by undocumented individuals and documented family members who defy the legal versus illegal narrative through differing and nuanced realities” (Aguilar, 2019). Aguilar (2019) introduces the tenants of UndocuCrit as:

1. Fear is endemic among immigrant communities.
2. Different experiences of liminality translate into different experiences of reality.
3. Parental *sacrificios* become a form of capital.
4. *Acompanamiento* is the embodiment of membership, academic redemption, and community engagement (p.2).

Through this lens, I want to talk about the strength of undocumented students and their families through the experience of those professionals in enrollment management at Illinois public universities.

As stated above, Undocumented Critical Theory (UndocuCrit) is influenced by Critical Race Theory, Latino Critical Race Theory, and Tribal Critical Race Theory. Critical Race Theory theorizes the ways racism and white supremacy are embedded within all institutions of U.S. society – criminal justice, education (Perez Huber, 2010). Yosso (2006) differentiates LatCrit by adding immigration, language, and surname in the ways society maintains hegemonic control over Latinos. I elaborate on the use of UndocuCrit shortly, but its merits fit the population of the study. Aguilar (2019) says, “Although some critics may deem UndocuCrit as quixotic and repetitive vis-à-vis CRT and its off-shoots, UndocuCrit seeks to validate and honor the experiences and identities of our undocumented communities” (p. 6). Understanding their experience through UndocuCrit will provide a better understanding of the many challenges facing Latino undocumented students in higher education.

Aguilar (2019) credits the influence of Tribal Critical Theory in the creation UndocuCrit. He references two tenants from Tribal Critical Theory developed by Dr. Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy: capitalism and assimilation as the influences for UndocuCrit regarding individuals and communities. It questions the legitimacy of one’s culture and identity in the United States. European “illegal” immigrants forcefully colonized the land that is currently recognized as the United States. Those same Europeans imposed their values, such as Manifest Destiny (Meier & Ribera, 1994) in order to validate their actions that have had a long-term negative impact to Native Americans and other populations (Gonzales M. G., 2000). Brayboy (2005) writes:

This process highlights a divergence in the ways that White Settlers and Indigenous peoples viewed the relationship between people and land. Semantically, this plays out in a distinction between the concepts of habitation and ownership, which is evident in the actions of White settlers. (p. 431).

European perspective has become the dominant way in which ownership is constructed and differs from native populations. It values the communal past differently and rewrites their history beginning with a focus on the European perspective.

In sum, UndocuCrit highlights the key experiences in being undocumented in order to shed light on undocumented individuals' specific experiences. The external variables that negatively impact undocumented immigrants on a day-to-day basis build resilience and determination. Their family, friends, and network of advocates are an important form of capital. UndocuCrit highlights the positive takeaways of undocumented immigrants to demonstrate their resilience and strength in the United States while also naming the reality of constant fear and experience of liminality. Turner (1970) describes liminality is when undocumented immigrants “are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremony” (p. 4).

Summary

The life and experience of my family is one of struggles, determination, luck, and hope. We are U.S. citizens and can take advantage of the benefits associated with this status. *El pinche problema sigue*. We have undocumented students and their families living and thriving in this country without a clear path for citizenship. Students are graduating from high schools with the hopes of obtaining employment or post-secondary opportunities. I believe that colleges and universities have a moral responsibility to learn, understand, and assist undocumented students through their college selection process. Enrollment management staff at public universities in Illinois should have the information and training necessary to recruit and retain undocumented students on their campus. My intent is to address current enrollment management practices to understand how to recommend future changes.

CHAPTER II: HISTORY, POLICY, Y EXPLICANDO EL PINCHE PROBLEMA

Para mis padres: Los mexicanos tenemos una gran historia de resiliencia. Hemos sacrificado mucho y lo seguiremos haciendo. Nos hemos ganado nuestro lugar en este país.

Introduction

Although not all undocumented immigrants in the United States are Mexican, the majority are from México (Gonzales R. G., 2016). For this reason, I focus on the immigration from México to the United States to provide context regarding immigration issues as presented in literature. The overarching thought and idea that comes to my mind in explaining Chapter Two is legislation and policies, which have been created at the highest level of the United States Supreme Court regarding access to K-12 education for undocumented students. I will also discuss the policies that influence access to post-secondary education to undocumented students at a state level. I intend to demonstrate *que si hay un pinche problema*. Higher education was not designed to support this student population from the recruitment process to graduation. I will begin with historicizing the relationship between México with the United States.

Historical Relationship: México and United States

The relationship between the United States and México is one of aggression, domination, and conquest that resulted in Westward expansion of the United States territory and has continued today through U.S. imperialism in México (Meier & Ribera, 1994). The concept of Manifest Destiny has been a driving factor for the United States' need for continued domination. Chicano Historian Gonzales (2000) states:

Mexican American is a term devoid of meaning before 1948. The number of Mexicans residing in the United States before the Mexican Cession was negligible. Yet it would be

a mistake to begin this history with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, for the roots of Mexican-American history are buried in the distant past (p. 8).

The roots of Mexicans living in what is now the United States are indigenous (Acuña, 2003). With forced colonization by the Spanish, indigenous history and identities have been erased and marginalized (Schwartz, 2000). The colonization of the Southwest proved to be the beginning of the injustices toward the Mexican people.

The relationship between the United States of America and México can be explained by the myth of exceptionalism which perpetuated the concept of Manifest Destiny (Acuña, 2003; Gutiérrez, 1995). Manifest Destiny is the perceived domination over all people, cultures, and land in the United States (Acuña, 2003). The United States colonized land, people, and cultures to expand its empire from coast to coast. American exceptionalism is predicated on whiteness and transferred to the colonized people (Gutiérrez, 1995). Horrendous atrocities were committed against the native population and justified by European settlers through Manifest Destiny. The Mexican-American war resulted in formal treaties as a way of resolving appropriated land by the United States. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo arose from the war and is an example of unfulfilled agreement between the two countries (Acuña, 2003).

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 was intended to formalize a transaction of currency, land, and citizenship between the United States and México. México ceded much of its northern territory to the United States (Acuña, 2003). According to Gonzales (2000), “Mexicans in the conquered territory were guaranteed ‘all the rights of citizens of the United States’ including ‘free enjoyment of their liberty and property’” (p. 79). Mexicans in the conquered territory were given the alternative of moving south into Mexican territory but only about 2,000 of the 100,000 eligible candidates chose to leave” (Gonzales M. G., 2000). When current-day

immigrant rights activists in the southwest chant, “We didn’t cross the border, the border crossed us,” they are referring to the U.S. invasion of México and the forceful taking of Mexican land that now includes the states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, parts of Utah, and parts of Colorado (Acuña, 2003). The treaty between the United States and México can be summarized as one of aggression and unfulfilled promises. The turbulent relationship between both countries is an important example in understanding the effects of colonialism on the Mexican people.

The immigration of Mexicans to the United States has varied depending on push-and-pull factors of the time. Immigration from México to the United States has occurred in multiple waves of immigration during the late 19th century and mid-to late-20th century (Gonzales M. G., 2000). The geographic proximity of México allows for regular migration to the United States. Mexicans have traditionally been experienced miners, railroad and agricultural workers, skilled, and semi-skilled workers. Therefore, they have been used as a source of cheap and abundant labor. The United States has exploited immigrants ranging from Chinese, Japanese, and Caribbean workers as well. Acuña (1972) writes that, “Many Anglo-Americans believed the Chinese would totally replace the Mexican as the dominant work force of Arizona” (p. 92). Agribusiness and industrial centers have continued to use Mexicans as cheap, expendable, and abundant labor.

During the Depression, the United States government illegally repatriated Mexican-Americans to México through programs such as “Operation Wetback.” Gutiérrez (1995) says:

Apparently designed both to stem the influx of undocumented workers into the United States and to pressure the Mexican government to agree to renew the bracero agreement, Operation Wetback instituted widely publicized sweeps of suspected illegal aliens, especially in the Southwest. (p. 163).

The context of repatriation was to provide and maintain jobs supposedly needed for American workers in the 1950s. The historical context provides a glimpse into the modern dependency between each country. The United States has historically recruited and then deported the same workers. The legacy of conquest remains and continues to impact the undocumented workers entry into the United States. Next, I will discuss educational policy and undocumented students' access to education.

Policies: Lo bueno y lo malo

Access to public education has been one of the most pressing historical issues facing undocumented students. Educational opportunities for undocumented students were directly addressed by the United States Supreme Court in 1982, in which it ruled that the state of Texas could not deny K-12 public education to undocumented students (Weeden, 2015). Gonzales, Heredia, and Negrón-Gonzales (2015) state, "In his majority opinion, Justice William Brennan noted that while education is not a fundamental right, denying K-12 education to undocumented children amounted to creating a lifetime of hardship for this population and a permanent underclass of individuals" (p. 319). In the simplest terms, the Supreme Court declared that undocumented children cannot be denied K-12 public education based on citizenship status. Weeden (2015) says, "Under the rationale of Plyer, the Equal Protection Clause grants undocumented, bona fide resident immigrants of the country to equal access to free elementary and secondary public education" (p. 198). Through this ruling, the United States government acknowledged the presence of undocumented immigrants and their protected rights for education. Readings on the topic of undocumented students in higher education have led me to understand that all roads begin and come back to the *Plyer v Doe* court case.

The established policy of the Supreme Court Case, *Plyer v Doe*, helps frame the intersectionality (Gonzales, Heredia, and Negrón-Gonzales, 2015; Pérez & Cortés, 2011; Rincón, 2008; Weeden, 2015) of scholarship dealing with undocumented students and access to higher education, which begins in the K-12 educational landscape. The Supreme Court case remains the pivotal moment in which the United States government decided that undocumented children in K-12 public schools had a right to education from 1982 to the present. The interpretation of the United States Constitution's Equal Protection Clause in the Fourteenth Amendment led to the majority decision of allowing undocumented students access to K-12 public education. Rincón (2008) says, "The Court recognized that the exclusion of children from public education reinforced their minority status. Most important, the justices acknowledged that although the undocumented were not authorized to be in the United States, they were nevertheless protected under the provisions of the Fourteenth Amendment by their very presence in the country" (p. 213). Unfortunately, the current governor of Texas, Greg Abbott, has recently stated he plans to dismantle the ruling and the rights of undocumented children to K-12 education in the United States (Chappell, 2022).

The *Plyer v. Doe* decision only addressed the issue of public K-12 education in the United States. Consequently, many undocumented youth in the United States struggle in transitioning to adulthood because of limited access to higher education. Rincón (2008) says:

In general terms, anti-immigrant forces seek to undermine immigrants' struggle for equal access to institutions of higher education because they recognize a basic truth: All measures tending toward equal rights for immigrants are apt to strengthen their sense of worth and equality, with broader implications for the labor market and society as a whole (p. 212).

As Rincón states above, ensuring undocumented students have access and success in higher education is a civil rights issue that works to empower all immigrant communities. Community colleges are typical pathways for undocumented students based on their affordability (Pérez, 2009). For those who do not want this to happen, they work hard to deny and restrict access to higher education for undocumented youth.

In 1996, under President Clinton, the legislation titled Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWORA) and Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) federally limited access to government aid for undocumented immigrants. IIRIRA and PRWORA (Gonzales R. G., 2016) directly and indirectly limited access to resources such as food stamps and other social benefit programs. The legislation also contributed to increased border patrols surveillance (Rincón, 2008) and detention (Abrego, 2011) of undocumented immigrants. Section 505 of the IIRIRA is important with regards to higher education. Rincón (2008) states, “Section 505 of the act addresses postsecondary benefits. The wording of the provision is especially important because immigration opponents argue that it prevents states from extending in-state tuition eligibility to immigrants” (p. 60). However, Section 505 (Rincón, 2020) allowed state’s the ability to make its own criteria (Enyioh, 2019) for eligible undocumented students to receive in-state tuition. Garcia (2013) says, “IIRIRA maintains that states cannot offer higher education benefits to undocumented students without offering the same benefits to U.S. citizens and legal residents” (p. 15). If benefits are offered to undocumented families, the same benefits need to be available for any U.S. citizen.

As a result of this legislation, the access and support undocumented students have to higher education varies widely by state. Peña (2021) states, “The lack of uniform decision-making at the State and Federal Level, coupled with the divisiveness of such a controversial

issue, has contributed to the confusion for both undocumented students and institutions of higher learning” (p. 34). Financing higher education can be especially challenging when considering undocumented students do not qualify for federal financial aid or student loans. The National Conference of State Legislatures (2021) state, “Three states—Arizona, Georgia and Indiana—specifically prohibit in-state tuition rates for undocumented students, and two states—Alabama and South Carolina—prohibit undocumented students from enrolling at any public postsecondary institution.” But there are many states that now allow undocumented students to be charged at the in-state tuition rate. According to the National Immigration Law Center:

Currently, at least twenty-three states and the District of Columbia have laws or policies allowing students who meet specific requirements, regardless of their immigration status, to pay in-state tuition rates at public postsecondary institutions: Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and Washington. The University of Michigan’s Board of Regents adopted a similar policy for its campuses. (2022)

In-state tuition provides some relief compared to out-of-state options. Figure 5 provides the detail on the states that allow undocumented students access and financial aid.

Figure 5

Laws & Policies Improving Access to Higher Education for Immigrants



Note: (National Immigration Law Center, 2022)

A total of 16 such as Illinois, Texas, and California now allow undocumented students to receive state based financial aid (National Immigration Law Center, 2022).

In 2012, President Barack Obama and Department of Homeland Security signed executive order Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA). It is important to understand how this executive order created benefits for only a segment of the undocumented students who qualified for DACA. The Department of Homeland Security (2019) details the origin and description of DACA as:

On June 15, 2012, the Secretary of Homeland Security announced that certain people who came to the United States as children and meet several guidelines may request consideration of deferred action for a period of two years, subject to renewal. They are also eligible for work authorization. Deferred action is a use of prosecutorial discretion to defer removal action against an individual for a certain period of time. Deferred action does not provide lawful status.

In the most simplistic terms, DACA recipients are still undocumented however, “DACAmented,” individuals cannot be immediately removed from the country. They are also able to legally work in the United States with a valid social security number. The DACA program has several eligibility criteria that must be met and verified by the United States government to be granted DACA status. The Department of Homeland Security (2019) defines DACA eligibility as:

You may request DACA if you:

- 1) Were under the age of 31 as of June 15, 2012;
- 2) Came to the United States before reaching your 16th birthday;
- 3) Have continuously resided in the United States since June 15, 2007, up to the present time;
- 4) Were physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012, and at the time of making your request for consideration of deferred action with USCIS;
- 5) Had no lawful status on June 15, 2012;
- 6) Are currently in school, have graduated or obtained a certificate of completion from high school, have obtained a general education development (GED) certificate, or are an

honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States;
and

- 7) Have not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, or three or more other misdemeanors, and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety.

The program is exclusionary by design because of the strict guidelines and criteria that must be met by the individual. The program also requires a processing fee and must be renewed every two years. Lorraine T. Benuto (2018) says, “DACA does not provide protection to family members of recipients, nor is it a pathway for citizenship for recipients, creating a constant state of uncertainty” (p.270). Nevertheless, thousands of undocumented individuals applied and qualified for the program. DACA recipients are still considered non-citizens and cannot apply for federal financial aid. It is important to understand national trends as well as state trends in the topic of undocumented students. DACAmented recipients are still considered undocumented but with the benefits mentioned above. The executive order did not provide a path toward citizenship is not part of the legislation. Benuto (2018) says, “Instead, DACAmented individuals are working toward a goal that can never be achieved, which diminishes their hope and may cripple their ability to reach their full potential” (p. 272). The future of the DACA program is in crisis due to the lack of legislative action by the United States government.

The State of Illinois permits undocumented students the opportunity to attend public higher education and pay in-state tuition rates through Public Act 093-0007. The obvious benefits include a reduced tuition cost in comparison to out-of-state or the international student rate. Illinois State University (2021) tuition and fees for Illinois residents is \$15,319 and for non-residents is \$26,843. The in-state options are significantly lower, but the total cost of attendance still needs to be considered. The financial aid gap widens and is an additional barrier for

undocumented students attending institutions that do not have policies in place to address this financial aid. For a student to qualify for Public Act 093-0007 (2003), the following criteria must be met:

- 1) The individual resided with his or her parent or guardian while attending a public or private high school in this State.
- 2) The individual graduated from a public or private high school or received the equivalent of a high school diploma in this State.
- 3) The individual attended school in this State for at least 3 years as of the date the individual graduated from high school or received the equivalent of a high school diploma.
- 4) The individual registers as an entering student in the University not earlier than the 2003 fall semester.
- 5) In the case of an individual who is not a citizen or a permanent resident of the United States, the individual provides the University with an affidavit stating that the individual will file an application to become a permanent resident of the United States at the earliest opportunity the individual is eligible to do so.
 - b) This Section applies only to tuition for a term or semester that begins on or after the effective date of this amendatory Act of the 93rd General Assembly. Any revenue lost by the University in implementing this Section shall be absorbed by the University Income Fund.

Since 2020, undocumented students have been able to qualify for state funding due to the Retention of Illinois Students & Equity (RISE) Act. The Illinois Student Assistance Commission (2020) says, “The Retention of Illinois Students & Equity (RISE) Act allows eligible

undocumented students and transgender students who are disqualified from federal financial aid to apply for all forms of state financial aid.” Merit aid and institutional funding from institutions are also available to students. The State of Illinois has opened the door for undocumented students to receive state aid. Finally, as discussed in Chapter One, recent legislation in Illinois, HB3438, now requires every public university to have an undocumented student liaison. Each public institution in Illinois will have staff trained to support topics and issues facing undocumented students and their families.

Socio-Economic Status and Criminalization of Undocumented Immigrants

One of my favorite comedians has a sketch regarding affirmative action and opportunity that was performed during the George W. Bush presidency. In my opinion, Chris Rock’s comment resonates deeply when I think opportunities for undocumented students. Rock (2004) says, “A Black C student can't do shit with his life. A Black C student can't be a manager at Burger King. Meanwhile, a white C student just happens to be the President of the United States.” We are often taught in school that our hard work and merit will lead to a better quality of life. Undocumented families immigrate to the United States and work hard to provide basic necessities for their family. The types of work are difficult to gauge because it is done in a covert manner due to the worker/employer relationship often occurring in a cash transaction. It is likely that workers are taking low-skilled or semi-skilled jobs. The ephemeral nature of employment may never result in obtaining the “American Dream” for undocumented families. The concept of American dream was popularized by James Truslow Adams (1931) which says “that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man, with opportunity for each according to his ability or achievement” (p. 404). The opportunity cost of denying undocumented students an opportunity to live and learn in a safe environment is immeasurable because students

may never harness their full potential during their educational pursuit due to limitations of access. We may never know the actual population of undocumented students that enter our educational system which include K-12 and higher education. A meritocratic society appears unattainable based on the stratification of race, class, and gender.

The 45th President of the United States attempted to create his own qualifier for citizenship which is “merit.” Trump staged rallies for “pro-American” immigration policy. In those rallies he (2019) said, “The ‘Build America Visa’ will use a clear, fair point-based criteria—one that prizes extraordinary achievement and potential to contribute to our Nation—to determine who should be issued a green card for permanent residence in the United States.” It appears that he was searching for those people that have the “potential” to contribute to this country. I believe that his plan of elitism is masking racism for patriotism. Nguyen and Martinez Hoy (2015) say, “Today’s ‘Jim Crow’ laws no longer come in the form of racially explicit terms; instead, states use other race-neutral, color blind labels such as ‘immigration status’ to explicitly discriminate” (p. 356). Undocumented immigrants that are currently contributing to this country and their talent should not remain hidden. Based on his political messages during his presidential run, I am cautiously optimistic that President Biden will herald action to undocumented immigrants soon. I am also realistic the change will is difficult in the current political climate. Nevertheless, the struggle continues for undocumented students in the United States.

Gap in the Literature: Undocumented Students and Enrollment Management Staff

Accessing higher education is a convoluted and stressful process for many students regardless of socio-economic status. Students go through college applications, financial aid applications, meeting deadlines, submitting deposits, and other processes that may result in selecting their best college. This process is especially stressful for undocumented students. Pérez

(2009) says, “Only one in five of those who graduate from high school continues to battle the daily challenges, the financial worries, and the ongoing struggle in pursuit of higher education” (p. 147).

“Born a suspect” resonates when dealing with issues of accessing higher education for undocumented students and families because institutions are not fully equipped to address the barriers for these students; therefore, they cannot provide adequate attention to the issues and support them. As a “suspect,” options to finance higher education from the enrollment management departments are limited. Serna (2017) says, “The numerous financial and policy obstacles impacting higher education access for undocumented students can often result in limited education opportunities for this population” (p. 45).

The financial burden and constraints of higher education is a reoccurring theme in the research about undocumented college students (Garcia, 2013; Conger and Chellman, 2013; Pérez 2012). Undocumented student narratives all point to the stress of paying for college. Diaz-Strong and Meiners (2007) say:

Lack of financial resources was a central barrier for all of the undocumented students. In order to qualify for financial aid, students must be citizens or permanent legal residents, and being undocumented disqualified these students from any federal grants or loans (p.8).

Some financial barriers have allowed students to receive some state funding, but federal funding is still elusive. Historically, institutional financial aid options may not necessarily be readily available. Diaz-Strong and Meiners (2007) state, “Many schools ‘piggyback’ on the requirements of federal financial aid for scholarship monies, disqualifying undocumented students from receiving most scholarships” (p.8). Legislation such as the RISE Act has provided

some assistance but fully funding higher education for undocumented students but accessing financial aid continues to be an obstacle (Garcia, 2013) for undocumented students because they realize that they are going to personally finance their pursuit of higher education.

Finally, even if undocumented students manage funding for higher education and persist to graduation, they quickly learn that their employment opportunities are extremely limited and may not be sustainable too (Diaz-Strong & Meiners, 2007). Regarding undocumented college students, Garcia (2013) states, “They require long-lasting and reliable access to scarce and often clandestine information about in-state academic fee policies and undocumented-friendly scholarships and employment opportunities” (p. 24). The Retention of Illinois Students & Equity (RISE) Act provides some financial relief to all undocumented students. New arrivals to the United States do not meet the eligibility criteria. Attending and graduating from an Illinois high school for three years is a disqualifier for undocumented students. In sum, undocumented students require specialized support and knowledge not only for funding college but also what careers may be available to them, regardless of their degree. This is where enrollment management professionals and their training regarding the special needs and supports of undocumented students are essential.

Nienhusser and Espino (2017) state, “With regard to staff knowledge, the more informed institutional agents were of access-oriented policies for undocumented students, the more likely they were to admit and offer these students financial aid” (p. 2). Reliable college information (Hossler, Bontrager, & Tom, 2015) has an impact in a student’s applying and matriculating to college. Enrollment management divisions on college campuses encompass many of the stages that students go through to fully matriculate at an institution.

Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plans may also be created to the objectives of the institution. SEM plans outline their targeted student populations, list goals, and allocate resources to matriculate students to the college campus. Hossler, Bontrager, and Tom (2015) explain, “As the education market becomes more competitive, universities can no longer base their decisions on assumptions and personal judgements, regardless of the decision makers’ experience. Well-crafted, accurate, and timely research is indispensable to a successful enrollment strategy” (p. 110). Colleges and universities have their targeted markets and strategize how to maximize their recruitment efforts. Stebleton and Aleixo (2015) say, “[A]dmissions staff and institutional research professionals need to find strategic ways to identify, recruit, and more fully support undocumented students” (p. 269). It can result in increased enrollment and retention with the ultimate goal of increased graduation. Chellman and Conger (2013) say, “Overall, undocumented students perform well in the short-term, earning higher grades and higher rates of courses and associate degree completion than their U.S. citizen counterparts. But undocumented students are less likely to earn their bachelor’s degree within four years” (p. 1). These students need help and guidance (*y lo merecen*) as they matriculate from K-12 education to higher education. Supporting undocumented students’ needs must include training those institutions agents in enrollment management divisions.

Training and developing enrollment management professional on issues facing undocumented students is important in providing the wrap-around services to recruit and retain them. Nienhusser and Espino (2017) conducted a research study regarding institutional agents and undocumented students in higher education. One of their findings, “While absent in previous training, many participants mentioned working with undocumented/DACAmented students should now be included in professional preparation programs such as student affairs and higher

education” (p. 8). Stebleton and Aleixo (2015) found that undocumented students struggled to develop relationships with staff. They state:

For a host of reasons, many of the students had not formed close relationships with non-faculty institutional agents, such as academic advisors and support staff. They noted that there are often restrictions of what you can say to others, and it is difficult to know where instructors and advisors often stand on immigration issues. (p. 263).

As the quote describes, assisting enrollment management staff in understanding how to build relationships with undocumented students and family is lacking and very much needed.

Newell (2019) writes, “In order to effectively support undocumented students, there is a need to increase the number of higher education professionals who have the awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary” (p. 6). Newell was discussing the support during academic advising but the same is true for enrollment. A limited number of studies have called on enrollment management professionals to have better training for working with and supporting under-represented and minoritized students. Hossler and Bean have written about issues of enrollment and retention of students. They (1990) say, “Most research on minority students has been done with Black students, with only a few studies having been done of Hispanic, Asian American, or Native American students. (p. 167). I see the need to conduct research that focuses on support for undocumented students. However, no research has specifically examined the depth of knowledge and training of enrollment management professionals in working with and supporting undocumented students and families. My research aims to fill this gap in the literature.

Summary

The westward expansion of the United States was to the detriment of México. Land, people, and resources were forcefully taken to reinforce America's concept of Manifest Destiny. Mexicanos continued to migrate to the United States during the late 19th and early 20th century. The exploitation of the Mexican people continued through legitimate and illegitimate government policies. Different waves of immigration to the United States followed during the early 20th century and continues. Undocumented immigrants have overcome immense obstacles in order to survive in the United States. K-12 public education granted from political legislation was granted through the *Plyer v Doe* Supreme Court case. Undocumented children have rights and access to formal K-12 education in this country. Post-secondary opportunities may be available but with limited financial options. Nevertheless, undocumented students face adversity and determination to push forward in order to continue with their desire to complete their degrees.

Financial aid is often limited and narrowly tailored based on citizenship status. The political climate of the United States greatly impacts undocumented immigrants because they are still living in limbo. Changes in state policies can provide some hope for the near future. Training and information for higher education practitioners is important in making the meaningful changes necessary. My research aims to address this issue. Next, I will discuss my proposed research methodology and survey instrumentation.

CHAPTER III: EL PINCHE PROBLEMA Y LA IMPORTANCIA

Para mis padres: Quiero hacer lo que pueda para los estudiantes y familias indocumentado.

Asegurarme de que obtengan el apoyo en sus estudios en la universidad. Gracias por los sacrificios que hicieron para nosotros.

Introduction

The term *el pinche problema* directly translates to [the damn problem] but it means more colloquially when used in Spanish. In this case, *el pinche problema* is that undocumented students have little recourse available as they navigate through higher education, nor do they have a path toward citizenship. According to Pérez and Cortés (2011), “In the absence of national legislation, local municipalities across the country have attempted to pass and enforce ordinances that restrict and criminalize undocumented persons” (p. 2). Within this often-hostile environment, undocumented college students must leverage their cultural wealth (Yosso, 2006) to continue their academic journey to their highest potential.

As part of this study, I want to understand the knowledge of admissions staff along with the training offered to support undocumented students and families. My goal is to improve training, personnel, and process for admissions professionals as they work to support undocumented students. I intend to address the following questions:

1. What are the attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge regarding undocumented students and their families held by admissions professionals at Illinois public colleges and universities?
2. What is the nature of training provided by Illinois public colleges and universities for their admissions professionals to recruit and retain undocumented students?

To date little research exists on this topic. I believe the results of my research will be of interest to admissions leaders in Illinois. Hopefully, the results of this research will be used to encourage more training for admissions professionals and other enrollment management divisions to improve the experiences of undocumented students in higher education in Illinois.

Research Ethics

I plan to focus on admissions staff at the four-year Illinois public universities. As a former admissions counselor, it is a tight group of professionals that communicate regularly. I believe that participants will want to participate in the study to provide a voice and platform for issues dealing with undocumented students. The most important part of the research is the safety and confidentiality of the participants. I will not compromise the identity nor upward mobility of the staff that participate in the study. I completed the refresher CITI program and received research for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval on August 31, 2022.

Research Methods

The research method proposed is a descriptive survey. The questions asked are non-identifiable demographic information to learn of the participant's employer. Follow-up questions were designed to learn of their basic understanding of topics facing undocumented students. The remaining questions were designed to learn of the institutional practices at their respective university. Several questions have open-ended responses so that the respondent can detail as much or as little information.

Participant Selection

Participants were recruited from Illinois four-year public universities due to the diversity in geography and size of the institutions. I searched all public university websites' Office of Admission for the contact information. The primary staff that I searched for are the individuals

that are responsible for recruitment territory. The targeted staff are those that are front facing and primarily responsible for recruitment and outreach.

I utilized the College Advising Database (2022) for Undocumented Students created by the Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling (IACAC), which sends annual updates to institutions so they can update contact information. Currently some of the public universities have contact information listed in the database as a resource for undocumented student. I sent information via the active listserv available to all current members. The total number of eligible participants was approximately 90 admissions staff as of June 2022. I need 27 respondents to have a 30% response rate. Included is the current list of four-year public universities along with the number of admissions staff identified for the research.

Table 1

Four-Year Illinois Public University Contacts

Illinois Four-Year Public University	Eligible Participants
University of Illinois, Chicago	14
Eastern Illinois University	12
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign	11
Western Illinois University	11
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale	9
Northern Illinois University	9
Illinois State University	6
Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville	5
University of Illinois, Springfield	5
Governors State University	4
Chicago State University	2
Northeastern Illinois University	2
Grand total	90

Note: Staff information was collected in June 2022 from each Illinois public university website.

I verified attendees after receiving approval by IRB and survey questions were approved for dissemination.

Instrumentation

The use of open-ended (Johnson & Christensen, 2008) questions helped participants express their opinions and elaborate on questions. I had at least one participant from each of the 12 institutions. Based on information collected from the National Center for Educational Statistics (2022), I have compiled demographic information of the Illinois public universities displayed in the table below.

Table 2

List of Illinois Public Universities and Demographic Information

Institution	Location	Founded	Total Enrollment	Undergraduate Enrollment
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign	Urbana-Champaign	1867	52,679	33,683
University of Illinois, Chicago	Chicago	1982	33,518	21,921
Illinois State University	Normal	1857	20,720	17,987
Northern Illinois University	DeKalb	1895	16,769	12,277
Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville	Edwardsville	1957	12,860	9,942
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale	Carbondale	1869	11,366	8,299
Eastern Illinois University	Charleston	1895	8,626	6,969
Western Illinois University	Macomb	1899	7,490	5,854
Northeastern Illinois University	Chicago	1867	7,119	5,220
Governors State University	University Park	1969	4,650	3,022
University of Illinois, Springfield	Springfield	1969	4,146	2,654
Chicago State University	Chicago	1867	2,644	1,685

Note: Information was collected from National Center for Educational Statistics in 2021.

According to enrollment data from the 2020 IPEDS report, Illinois public universities serve a total of 182,587 students and 131,412 undergraduate students. An estimated 427,000 undocumented students (Higher Ed Immigration Portal, 2021) in the United States are enrolled in higher education, with even more being part of a mixed status family. I capitalized on the size

and reach of the public universities because, I estimated there were approximately 200 enrollment management professionals out of these 12 institutions.

The survey focused on the current services, training, and knowledge of the admissions representatives. I used Qualtrics from my Illinois State University account. Questions were multiple choice and some questions had conditional logic that allowed for open-ended responses based on the initial response. I wanted the participants to share their thoughts about the support and training that are currently offered to them or their offices along with their personal experiences. Johnson and Christensen (2008) say:

Open-ended questions are valuable when the research needs to know what people are thinking and the dimensions of a variable are not well defined. Because the participants respond by writing their answers in their own words, open-ended questions can provide rich information. (p. 177).

All participants responses can share their thoughts about their support and training about their respective institution anonymously.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data was analyzed while the qualitative data was coded for themes. I analyzed the responses to understand commonalities and gaps in the responses given by participants along with the open-ended responses. The goal of creating the survey (Vogt, Vogt, Gardner, & Haefele, 2014) was to have responses that could be coded for analysis to ensure validity of the survey.

Based on the responses from the participants, I provided recommendations that highlight the support undocumented students need during their journey through higher education. I believe this is important to establishing ethical practices in higher education.

Significance of the Study

Policy and legislation have a direct impact on our daily lives. Illinois House Bill 3438 requires higher education to react and name an Undocumented Student Resource Liaison that will coordinate supports for undocumented students and mixed status families. As an unfunded mandate that went into effect in July 2022, institutions are making decisions how to create the undocumented student liaison. I am not confident that changes will be made in the admissions department which, along with financial aid is a critical student-facing departments in enrollment management. As an administrator in higher education, I believe that training and mentoring staff is extremely important, and I want to learn from the EM staff across the 12 public universities in Illinois about their training and knowledge of undocumented students. It's student-centered because this issue is not going away, and future students can benefit from the information learned and implemented here. Pérez (2012) says,

Even if the U.S. border were hermetically sealed today, the immigration patterns of the past 20 years mean that U.S. high schools will be graduating undocumented students for at least the next 15 to 20 years, which raises the policy question of what to do with such students when they do finish high school or college” (p. 131-132).

In sum, undocumented students are a student population that is here to stay. As ethical higher education practitioners, we must be able to support students as they come for assistance. This student-centered approach will also provide the EM staff with tangible knowledge for potential upward mobility. I want to shed light on the current practices in training EM staff to support undocumented students (*lo bueno y lo malo*). I believe this research can provide the necessary information to have meaningful changes in EM departments in Illinois. Our

undocumented students and families deserve detailed information from EM staff as they enter higher education.

Summary

Undocumented students are matriculating and graduating from post-secondary institutions. The admissions departments on campus are responsible for the recruitment of students. The State of Illinois provides in-state tuition along with in-state financial aid opportunities for undocumented students. Admissions staff should have the training, knowledge, and information available to undocumented students and mixed-status students. I want to hear directly from the admissions department. A mixed-method survey will provide a holistic understanding of the successes and areas of opportunities for colleges and universities. Illinois House Bill 3438 requires an Undocumented Student Resource Liaison on college campuses. However, the roll out of the bill may not result in a liaison in enrollment management but should have training available to each department. The research will learn *lo bueno y lo malo* being done to serve undocumented students.

CHAPTER IV: ANDAMOS CON EL PINCHE PROBLEMA

Para mis padres: Escuchemos a los que realmente están haciendo el trabajo.

Undocumented students in the United States face hardships in accessing higher education. Some states prohibit entirely undocumented students from matriculating to public universities. In other instances, opportunities available to students, such as financial aid, are a challenge for undocumented students because they do not qualify for federal aid (Serna, 2017; Stebleton & Aleixo, 2015; Gonzales, 2016; Rincón, 2018). Illinois along with several other states provides in-state financial aid to undocumented students that meet specific qualifications such as graduate from Illinois high school (Illinois Student Assistance Commission, 2020). Due to the myriad issues facing undocumented students, exploring enrollment management staff's training and expertise in supporting undocumented students at public 4-year universities is essential. The current study focuses on understanding the knowledge and training of admissions professionals at Illinois four-year public universities. The research questions posed in the study are as follows:

1. What are the attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge regarding undocumented students and their families held by admissions professionals at Illinois public colleges and universities?
2. What is the nature of training provided by Illinois public colleges and universities for their admissions professionals to recruit and retain undocumented students?

Staff should know the institutional priorities along with the vision and mission of the department. Admissions staff are often the first connection point to prospective students and families. Their knowledge of resources on campus for undocumented students can increase and stabilize enrollment. Students and families seek accurate and up-to-date information from the admissions team. Findings from this research are, therefore, crucial.

Developing a Survey and Participants

Participants of this study included admissions staff at Illinois four-year public universities who are directly involved in the outreach and recruitment of prospective students. A survey was created with the assistance of Tanya Cabrera, Illinois Dream Fund Chair, and Dr. Sandy López, Director of the Northern Illinois University (NIU) Undocumented Student Resource Center, to assess this group of participants' attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, and training regarding undocumented students and their families. The survey comprised of three components: basic institutional information, understanding current knowledge regarding undocumented students, and institutional knowledge regarding undocumented students. IRB approval for the study was granted on August 31, 2022. The Qualtrics survey was administered by email on September 6, 2022. The email included an invitation to complete the survey and a Participant Consent Form. The initial communication was sent to all 90 Illinois admissions staff at four-year public universities responsible for admissions and recruitment outreach. The admissions staff did not have to be the primary staff member designated to assist undocumented students at their institution.

I distributed the survey to admissions staff through two organizations: The Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling (IACAC) and Chicago Regional Representatives (CARR). The survey was open from September 6, 2022, to September 23, 2022. Qualtrics recorded 57 survey respondents; 49 participants submitted complete responses to the survey item, and an additional eight surveys were started but not completed. The response rate for the study is 65%.

Description of Admissions Staff Survey Respondents

Of the 57 admissions staff who completed the survey, nine (16%) were designated the primary contact for undocumented students in their institution's admissions department.

Participants from Southern Illinois University Carbondale were the most represented with a total of twelve responses, while Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, had only one participant complete the survey (See Table 3).

The survey resulted in the collection of eight out of the 12 primary contacts for undocumented students from the admissions department. Out of the eight primary contacts in admissions for undocumented students, none of them received a pay increase for the responsibility. The names of the institutions will not be referenced to maintain the anonymity of participants. I included the question regarding a pay increase because I wanted to learn if an added responsibility would result in direct financial compensation to the participant. Especially since the Illinois House Bill 3438 (Illinois General Assembly, 2021) requires an Undocumented Student Liaison and the staff member may have an added responsibility.

Table 3*Profile of Illinois Public Universities Admissions Staff Survey Respondents*

Illinois Four-Year Public University	Number of Participants	Percentage Response	Distribution of Experience			
			1-4 Years	5-10 Years	10-15 Years	15+ years
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale	12	21%	11	0	1	0
University of Illinois, Chicago	10	18%	8	1	1	0
Northern Illinois University	7	12%	2	2	2	1
Illinois State University	5	9%	3	2	0	0
Western Illinois University	5	9%	4	0	0	1
University of Illinois Springfield	3	5%	1	0	0	2
Governors State University	3	5%	3	0	0	0
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign	3	5%	2	0	1	0
Chicago State University	3	5%	2	0	0	1
Eastern Illinois University	3	5%	1	1	1	0
Northeastern Illinois University	2	4%	1	0	0	1
Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville	1	2%	0	1	0	0
Grand Total	57	100%	38	7	6	6

Each participant was asked to list a range that would denote the number of years in their current role. A majority of the participants, 38 (67%), have 1-4 years of admissions experience in the current role at their respective institution. Eight participants (14%) had between 5-10 years of experience, five participants (9%) had between 10-15 years of experience, and finally, six participants (11%) had more than 15 years of experience in admissions. A total of 29 (51%) participants indicated they would stay in admissions for the next five years. Twenty (35%) participants did not respond to the question, and eight (14%) had no plans for staying. The participants' years of experience were diverse, along with their ability to speak more than one

language. Twelve (21%) of the admissions staff indicated that they spoke more than one language, eleven of the staff members spoke Spanish; one participant spoke Spanish and Portuguese along with English. Based on these characteristics, it reinforces a diverse admissions staff with years of training and proficiency in multiple languages.

Institutional Training

When asked what specific institutional training they had received from their respective institutions, out of the 57 responses, nine participants (16%) indicated they had received no training at all from their institution (see Table 4). The Sharing the Dream Conference offered by the Illinois Association for College Admissions Counseling was cited by five admissions staff.

Table 4

Coding responses to the question: What training have you received to support undocumented students?

What trainings have you received to support undocumented students?	Responses	Percentage
No Response	20	35%
No Training	9	16%
Some Training	4	7%
Unsure	4	7%
Undocumented Ally Training	2	4%
General Training	2	4%
Undocumented Ally Training; Sharing the Dream Conference	2	4%
Immigration Law; Social and Emotional Training; Healthcare; LGBTQ	1	2%
Sharing the Dream; IACAC; NACAC; CBOs	1	2%
ISAC; IACAC; NACAC	1	2%
Sharing the Dream; NACAC	1	2%

(Table Continues)

(Table Continued)

What trainings have you received to support undocumented students?	Responses	Percentage
Built into Onboarding	1	2%
Training from External	1	2%
Undocumented Student Ally; Update from Undocumented Student Services	1	2%
Undocumented Ally Training; Conferences	1	2%
Center Of International Education	1	2%
General Training; Twice a Year	1	2%
Alternative Application, General Training	1	2%
Workshops	1	2%
Optional Training; Sharing the Dream	1	2%
Professional Organizations	1	2%
Grand Total	57	100%

One admissions staff with 10-15 years of experience in their current roles stated:

“Overviews on immigration law. Social/emotional needs of undocumented students.

Undocumented student options in healthcare. Being LGBTQ and undocumented.” Another participant referenced “Sandy López Training.” Most of the responses listed training that was available through external entities. The information provided by participants did not offer a clear understanding of the institutional training available to staff.

Regarding their ability to make decisions on content and information provided to undocumented students helpful in the overall matriculation of the student, it was disappointing to find out that only four (7%) out of the 57-admissions staff checked yes, while 16 (28%) said they have some ability (see Table 5).

Table 5

Response to decision-making abilities for content to assist undocumented students.

Do you have decision making abilities in the content that is produced for undocumented students? For example, print publications, media, website, presentations	Responses	Percentage
No	22	39%
Some	16	28%
No Response	15	26%
Yes	4	7%
Grand Total	57	100%

As a follow-up to their response, one admissions staff with 15+ years of experience said, “I am not the final decision maker, but I can add suggestions, and then the final say is made above my position.” It was surprising that the experienced participants with the most time in the admissions profession have minimal influence on the content being created by the college. All other participants indicated that providing suggestions is the extent of their decision-making abilities.

Resources and Support

Financing higher education has traditionally been a barrier for undocumented students pursuing higher education. Financial resources can be a primary reason a student will or will not matriculate and persist through their collegiate experience. Illinois has recently provided favorable opportunities to undocumented students that qualify to receive in-state tuition benefits and state funding. Other than financial support, the admissions staff were asked to provide information about the resources available at their respective institutions for undocumented students. Their responses are coded and presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Coding responses to the question: What financial resources specifically for undocumented students are available at your institution (beyond state aid)?

What financial resources specifically for undocumented students are available at your institution (beyond state aid)?	Responses	Percentage
Scholarships for Undocumented Students	20	35%
No Response	15	26%
Unsure	9	16%
Website	3	5%
Scholarships for Undocumented Students; Grants	2	4%
Scholarships for Undocumented Students; Illinois Alternative Application	1	2%
Scholarships for Undocumented Students; Website; Personal Appointments	1	2%
Scholarships for Undocumented Students; Unsure	1	2%
Financial Aid; Undocumented Resources Department	1	2%
Emergency Funds; Undocumented Student Support Office; Scholarships for Undocumented Students	1	2%
Scholarships for Undocumented Students; Grants; Emergency Fund	1	2%
Center for International Education	1	2%
Scholarships for Undocumented Students; Automatic Scholarship	1	2%
Grand Total	57	100%

Specific institutional scholarships have been either created to support undocumented students. Two admissions staff also referenced emergency funding. An admissions staff member from the University of Illinois at Chicago with 1-4 years of experience wrote:

We have a list of external scholarships on our website and some of them support undocumented students at scholarships.uic.edu. We also have resources at dream.uic.edu.

We highly encourage undocumented students to set an appointment with us to discuss more personalized options.

The response focused on personalized attention to decimate information to undocumented students.

The following survey results address research question: What is the nature of the training provided by Illinois public colleges and universities for their admissions professionals to recruit and retain undocumented students?

Understanding student populations and proper training in admissions are important for increasing the student body. The survey asked if admissions staff received formal training to support undocumented students specifically. In total, 36 (63%) indicated yes, 19 (33%) said no, and two (4%) did not respond. I grouped the 36 survey responses into five categories based on the type of training (See Table 7).

Table 7

Type of Training Received by Admissions Staff

Please explain the type of training you have or will received	Responses
Institutional Training	20
External/Institutional Training	6
External Training	5
No response	4
Unknown	1
Grand Total	36

The majority of the admissions staff (20 participants) referenced institutional training as the most form of training they had received. Those 20 respondents that listed institutional training received training from various departments on campus. Six of the participants indicated they received training from the Office of Undocumented Student Support or the Director of Undocumented Student Services, while five referred to the Undocumented Student Ally Training. Three respondents listed financial aid as the primary source of training. One of those

that listed financial aid also included the Office of Inclusion and Academic Engagement. Respondents that listed institutional training seemed to have departments on campus trained to assist students. Other sources of information are obtained by colleagues on campus along with other departments not specifically listed. Four respondents are new and assume they will be receiving some training for undocumented students.

All six participants who referenced External Training and External/Institutional Training said they were trained through the Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling (IACAC). The Sharing the Dream Conference which is offered by IACAC was also referenced. The IACAC (2022) website describes the purpose of the conference: “[H]osted hundreds of educators and advocates ... to learn how to best support undocumented students on the path to a college degree and beyond.” Two individuals referenced the Illinois Student Assistance Commission. A participant mentioned that Tanya Cabrera and Dr. Sandy López were brought to campus for training at their institution. Undocumented Ally training was offered to three participants. Other training courses referenced by the admissions staff included the National Association for College Admissions Counseling (NACAC), Community-Based Organizations, webinars, and other departmental programs.

Attitudes and Beliefs

The following survey results addresses research question: What are the attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge regarding undocumented students and their families held by admissions professionals at Illinois public colleges and universities?

As part of the research, I wanted to understand the attitudes and beliefs of admissions professionals because they are often the first point of contact for prospective students and families. When asked about their attitudes and beliefs regarding undocumented students, the

majority (47 participants), indicated they saw obstacles for undocumented students to attend college (See Table 8) On the other hand, seven of the admissions staff said they did not see any obstacles for undocumented students attending college. Three admissions staff did not respond to the survey item.

Table 8

Survey Questions

Questions	Yes	No	I don't know	No Response
Do you see any obstacles to attending college for undocumented students?	47	7	0	3
Does every college student have DACA?	1	38	10	8

Again, for the admissions staff who had said they saw obstacles, 40 further explained what they meant. Most of the responses pointed to the cost of education and limited support in navigating through higher education as obstacles to undocumented students attending college. One participant who self-reported having 10-15 years of experience stated:

Over my 10+ years of working in admissions I have seen undocumented students hide their status for fear of what might happen if they reveal their lack of citizenship or that of their parents. They have dealt with uneasiness about revealing their status, the stigma attached to being in this country illegally, the inability to gain employment and a lack of financial support. Many of my undocumented students have been helping support their families financially or help care for family members. They are most often first-generation students who may be unaware of who to turn to for help while feeling safe and protected. I have seen this change and become a more positive experience at UIC but we still have much work to do.

Additional obstacles that were referenced include employment barriers, lack of support, and language barriers.

When asked whether they believed every undocumented college student has Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) status, 18 (31%) of the admissions staff said they did not know or did not respond to the question. As students navigate through their college process, admissions professionals in Illinois need to understand the status and implications of future applicants, especially their students who are undocumented.

Again, when asked whether it was true or false that 1. Immigrants create a higher rate of crime than U.S. citizens and 2. It is a felony to come into the United States without inspection, all admissions staff answered ‘False’ to Question 1. However, most of the admissions staff skipped or chose not to respond to Question 2 (See Table 9).

Table 9

True and False Survey Questions

Questions	True	False	No Response
Immigrants create a higher rate of crime than U.S. citizens.	0	41	16
It is a felony to come into the United States without inspection.	7	14	36

Finally, when asked about what they desired to change when it came to their role to support undocumented students, 31 out of the 57 admissions staff said training and knowledge were the top changes that they would like to be made. Six others indicated a change in financial options as a way to support undocumented students. One admissions staff with over 15 years of experience responded:

The toughest thing for UIS is that we are not in an area in the state, where there is a high number of undocumented students that can live at home and attend. Many can afford

tuition and fees, that is not the problem, it is the campus housing and meals. I know, and data shows, that students that come to UIS have a higher chance to graduate, so finding a way to support these students in leaving home and being able to afford that choice would be huge.

Other participants referenced researching opportunities for undocumented students. Additional support on campus was mentioned by three participants. One admissions staff said, “I wish I had an opportunity to work closer with University leadership to understand their plans to help support undocumented students through the admissions process.” This statement was made by an admissions professional with 1-4 of years of experience in their current role and they plan to stay in enrollment management for the next five years

Knowledge

The survey asked questions to assess the knowledge of admissions staff pertaining to undocumented students. The knowledge items focused on state and federal policies that directly impacted the options available to undocumented students. The questions also provided individual context for future training for admissions staff at any college and university in Illinois.

Supports and Policies

When asked “How have you learned to support undocumented students?” 14 (25%) of the 57 admissions staff provided specific responses which were coded (See Table 10).

Table 10

Coding Common Responses

How have you learned to Support Undocumented Students	Responses
Asking Colleague	4
Department on Campus; Professional Development	1
Department on Campus; Specific Person on Campus	1
Little Training	1
No Training	1
Online Conference	1
Online Resources; IACAC	1
Previous Employer	2
Scholarships	1
Resources On Campus	1
Grand Total	14

Two of the admissions staff referenced their experience at a previous institution. Both are currently employed at the same university. One of them wrote, “I learned how to support undocumented students from previous years in higher education at an HSI.” Their previous experience at another institution provided them with an understanding of how to support undocumented students. They did not elaborate on whether their previous institutions provided formal training as part of their onboarding. Asking a colleague was the most notable response to the survey question.

I have added the following four questions on Table 9 because of their responses of Yes, No, or I Don’t Know. The admissions staff were also asked about their knowledge of the following current federal and state policies established as of September 2022:

1. Illinois Public Act 09-0007 (2003), which allows undocumented immigrants to receive in-state tuition.
2. Retention of Illinois Students & Equity (RISE) Act (2020), which allows undocumented students to qualify for state aid.

3. Temporary Visitor Driver’s License (Office of the Illinois Secretary of State, n.d.), which allows undocumented immigrants in Illinois may driving rights

Finally, the admissions staff were asked about their knowledge of student loans. The admissions staff’s responses are summarized in Table 11.

Table 11

Legislative Questions, as it pertains to undocumented students

Questions	Yes	No	I Don't Know	No Response	Totals
Can undocumented students in the State of Illinois pay in-state tuition?	41*	2	0	14	57
Can undocumented students in Illinois receive state financial aid?	32*	9	0	16	57
Can undocumented students in Illinois receive federal financial aid?	7	32*	13	5	57
Can undocumented immigrants in the state of Illinois receive a driver’s license?	34*	2	0	21	57
Can undocumented students in Illinois receive a student loan to pay for college?	20*	29	0	8	57

Note: An * denotes the correct answer to the question.

The survey responses provide an understanding of the admissions representatives. A majority of the respondents selected the correct responses. However, between 22-30% of responses were either “I Don’t Know” or “No Response” for four of the five questions. The lack of knowledge on the part of some of the admissions staff can have detrimental implications for undocumented students as they could share or submit inaccurate information to concerning state or federal agencies.

Additional questions were posed to the admissions staff. For instance, when asked the question, “Can undocumented students in the State of Illinois pay in-state tuition?” 41 of the

admissions staff marked “Yes.” Thirteen (31%) also indicated an affidavit was required along with additional procedures (See Table 12).

Table 12

Coding responses to the question: Can undocumented students in the State of Illinois pay in-state tuition?

What is the procedure for students to apply for this benefit at your institution	Responses
Acevedo Bill; Affidavit	1
Acevedo Bill; Form, Transcripts	1
Affidavit	8
Affidavit; Application Question; Internal Review	2
Affidavit; Undocumented Student Support Office	1
Application Question	2
Application Question; Illinois Alternative Application	1
Application Questions	2
Automatic	6
Illinois Alternative Application	2
No Response	8
Office of Undocumented Support	1
Online Resource	1
RISE Act Application	1
Unsure	4
Grand Total	41

The responses to the question of state aid detailed the institutional procedures such as completing affidavit after application was completed. Some of the institutions did not have to apply for the benefit and was automatic.

When asked, “Can undocumented students in Illinois receive federal financial aid, several of the admissions staff indicated the in-state tuition procedure included the completion of the Illinois Alternative Application for financial aid. Seven of the admissions staff responded to the follow-up question, “What conditions must be met to receive federal financial aid?” Two of the admissions staff did not provide a response and one indicated their response was in error. Two

indicated the institutional financial aid options of their respective universities along with the Illinois Alternative Application as a response. The remaining two participants, coincidentally, are from the same university with similar responses. Both indicated “alternative FAFSA” as an option for this question focusing on federal financial aid for undocumented students (See Table 13).

Table 13

Coding responses to the question: Can undocumented students in Illinois receive federal financial aid?

What conditions must be met to receive federal financial aid?	Responses
Alternative FAFSA	1
No Response	2
Wrong Response	1
Institutional Aid; RISE Act/Illinois Alternative Application	1
RISE ACT/Illinois Alternative Application	1
Alternative FAFSA; Illinois Dream Fund	1
Grand Total	7

The misuse of the terminology “alternative FAFSA” can be problematic for students and families unfamiliar with the college process as they may inadvertently complete the wrong form. One of the admissions’ staff members made a clarifying statement when responding and stated, “They need to fill out an alternative FAFSA to receive aid for Illinois students, so technically, they can’t receive federal aid, but they can receive aid from the state. There is also assistance from the Illinois dream fund.” The opportunity for assistance through the Illinois Dream Fund is available for undocumented students but not applicants for the scholarship receives financial assistance.

Overall, the responses to the follow-up question demonstrated admissions staff have sufficient knowledge about in-state tuition benefits in Illinois, however, as previously mentioned, the misuse of terminology can be problematic.

As in the example above, participants were asked open-ended questions based on their response to the question, “Can undocumented students in Illinois receive state financial aid?” The open-ended question was only asked if the response was “Yes.” Out of the 32 admissions staff who responded “Yes,” 26 provided feedback, and many of the responses directly addressed the RISE ACT or the Illinois Alternative Application to receive state financial aid (see Table 14).

Table 14

Coding responses to the question: Can undocumented students in Illinois receive state financial aid?

What are the criteria a student must meet to receive the aid?	Responses
RISE Act/Illinois Alternative Application	21
Criteria	5
No Response	3
Alternative FAFSA	1
Not Sure	1
Financial Need; Merit Aid	1
Grand Total	32

Three participants detailed the specific criteria that would qualify for the state aid but did not necessarily state the Illinois Alternative Application. For example, an admissions staff wrote:

- graduate from a U.S. high school or obtain a GED in the U.S.?
- attend school in the U.S. for at least three years as of the date you graduated or the date you received the equivalent of a high school diploma (Attendance doesn't have to be consecutive. Transcripts are required.)
- live with your parents while you attended high school in the U.S.

Another once again referenced the “alternative FAFSA,” and another participant wrote financial need and merit aid without referencing the Illinois Alternative Application.

The survey responses provided a basic understanding of the current knowledge of policies and support impacting undocumented students. Admissions staff responded based on their knowledge of federal and state policies. They also had the opportunity to respond with supplemental information that would add to their response. The open-ended questions allowed participants to elaborate on their specific responses.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)

One of the specific policy benefits of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals status is that it offers recipients certain protections such as work authorization, a Social Security number, and deferred deportation from the United States (Department of Homeland Security, 2019). Illinois has its own legislation to provide in-state tuition through Public Act 093-0007 (Illinois General Assembly, 2003). I wanted to learn the extent of the participant's knowledge of federal policy. For instance, did they know that the benefits of DACA must be renewed every two years and cost \$495 (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, n.d.). Only 40% of the admissions staff responded correctly to this query and the cost of DACA renewal (see Table 15).

Table 15

DACA Renewal Cost

How much does it cost to renew a DACA application?	Responses	Percentage
I don't know	25	44%
\$495*	22	39%
No Response	8	14%
\$545	1	2%
Free	1	2%
Grand Total	57	100%

Note: An * denotes the correct answer to the question.

Almost half, (47%), of the participants did not know the correct answer or responded incorrectly to whether DACA recipients must reapply for the benefit every two years (See Table 16). Additionally, almost half of all participants (49%) did not know the correct answer or responded incorrectly when asked about the frequency of DACA renewal. It is important to know the renewal frequency because no new applications are being accepted. A lapse in renewal will result in reapplying as a first-time application. New or first-time applications are not being accepted.

Table 16

DACA Renewal Frequency

How often does a DACA recipient need to reapply?	Responses	Percentage
Every two years*	20	35%
I don't know	20	35%
No Response	8	14%
Every year	6	11%
Every three years	2	4%
Every five years	1	2%
Grand Total	57	100%

Note: An * denotes the correct answer to the question.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals has been available since June 2012. The incorrect responses or non-responses demonstrate that admissions staff need additional training in this area.

Again, when asked, “What protections does Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) provide to college students?” (the respondents were prompted to check all that apply), the majority (30%) of the admissions staff matched their responses correctly to the protection from deportation and work authorization. Only a few matched their answers correctly to options such as Social Security for Job, and work authorization (see Table 17).

Table 17*DACA Protections*

What protections does Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) provide to college students? (check all that apply)	Responses	Percentage
Protection from deportation, Work authorization*	17	30%
Pathway to citizenship, Protection from deportation, Work authorization	11	19%
No Response	8	14%
Pathway to citizenship	4	7%
No benefit	3	5%
Pathway to citizenship, Social Security for Job, Work authorization	2	4%
Pathway to citizenship, Work authorization	2	4%
Protection from deportation, Social Security for Job, Work authorization*	2	4%
Automatic citizenship, Pathway to citizenship, Protection from deportation, Social Security for Job, Work authorization	2	4%
Pathway to citizenship, Protection from deportation	2	4%
Automatic citizenship, Protection from deportation, Work authorization	1	2%
Pathway to citizenship, Protection from deportation, Social Security for Job, Work authorization	1	2%
Automatic citizenship, Social Security for Job	1	2%
Pathway to citizenship, Protection from deportation, Social Security for Job	1	2%
Grand Total	57	100%

Note: An * denotes the correct answer to the question.

Understanding the fundamental benefits is important because admissions professionals should not guide students to the wrong resources. Pathway to citizenship and automatic citizenship were not part of the executive order. A DACA recipient who receives a Social Security number for a job should not use that to complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application. Misinformation such as DACA leading to a path to citizenship is extremely dangerous because an undocumented student may be inadvertently encouraged do something that is not available to them. Gillan Law Group (Gillan Law Group, n.d.) says. “A

false claim to U.S. citizenship, even if innocent or unintentional, may lead to severe immigration consequences down the road. A false claim to U.S. citizenship can jeopardize a non-citizen's ability to naturalize and may render a non-citizen deportable." Therefore, training and understanding of issues facing undocumented students is important because of the potential long-term consequences.

Admissions staff have demonstrated a limited knowledge and understanding of federal and state policies. Policies such as in-state financial aid, in-state tuition rate, and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) protections. The overall training can address recruitment tactics and initiatives for undocumented students. It directly address the obstacles that undocumented students face pursuing higher education.

Findings and Observations

Lo Bueno

The State of Illinois has implemented legislative policies to provide in-state tuition, state funding, and a dedicated undocumented student liaison for undocumented students seeking higher education (Illinois General Assembly, 2003; Illinois General Assembly, 2021; Illinois Student Assistance Commission, 2020). The twelve Illinois four-year public universities are legislatively obligated to provide services and support to undocumented students at their respective campuses. The support provided is structured differently at each campus. Admissions staff at the twelve Illinois four-year public universities each have their distinct function and purpose ranging from active student recruitment to admissions processing. I did not concentrate my research on the staff that reviews and processes the admissions application for students. I focused on the staff that are directly involved in the outreach and recruitment of prospective

students as part of the survey to learn from their training and knowledge supporting undocumented students.

Admissions staff are important in implementing the Strategic Enrollment Management institutional priorities and enrollment strategies (Hossler & Bean, 1990). They regularly interact with prospective students and families during their recruitment outreach activities. The survey's goal was to learn from the frontline staff and their knowledge and training to support undocumented students. One research question asked, "What is the nature of the training provided by Illinois public colleges and universities for their admissions professionals to recruit and retain undocumented students?" Based on the responses from the participants, the training focuses on knowing where to look for information resources on campus. Interdepartmental knowledge is shared between multiple departments such as financial aid, advising, and the international office. The overall institutional training provided to the admissions staff appeared to be minimal and inconsistent. Nevertheless, some training is provided to staff at Illinois public four-year universities.

The other research question asked participants, "What are the attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge regarding undocumented students and their families held by admissions professionals at Illinois public colleges and universities?" Overall admissions staff demonstrated a basic understanding of obstacles facing undocumented students, including financial limitations and access to jobs. Most staff were knowledgeable about legislative policies about the in-state tuition option for undocumented students that met the criteria eligibility. Participants of the study understood DACA benefits but did not have a full understanding of the implications. For example, some of the participants indicated that DACA resulted in a path to citizenship. Overall,

most participants seemed to know that undocumented students need help as they navigate through the admissions process.

Northern Illinois University (NIU) is the only four-year public university with the Undocumented Student Resource Center. All seven responses regarding whom to contact on campus from the NIU participants specifically named Dr. López or the Office of Undocumented Student Support. It appears that training for admissions professionals is directly infused in their admissions training. NIU is a model of how college should be an undocumented-friendly institution (López, 2022). NIU's a model that harnesses the intended legislative outcomes of Illinois House Bill 3438.

Lo Malo

The survey provided some perspective regarding the internal practices that are involved in supporting undocumented students. It appears an overreliance on external entities is the primary way admissions professionals learn how to support undocumented students through the admissions process. While the turnover of staff cannot be predicted but the onboarding process can provide basic training to prepare the admissions staff as they enter peak periods. The perception of undocumented students as international students can be detrimental to a student's long-term success. These are topics that should be addressed with universities.

The Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling (IACAC), Sharing the Dream Conference, Dr. Sandy López, and Tanya Cabrera were referenced as impacting the training admissions staff in the survey results. Repeatedly participants referenced IACAC along with the Sharing the Dream Conference (STDC) as a source of training. IACAC's training was, at times the only source of training offered by an institution. STDC is not an undocumented ally training but rather a conference. A conference is only as good as the presenters and topics that are

provided for the day. Although helpful and necessary, it should not supplement specific training that is custom-tailored for each respective university.

The overall survey results yielded 38 participants (67%) who were new to their role which was, 1-4 years, at the university. The admissions staff appeared to have a high turnover from June 2022 (when the list of potential staff was compiled) to September 2022 (when the list was distributed). The uncontrollable part of training is the turnover of staff. Approximately 51% of participants indicated they will remain in enrollment management for the next five years. The training of new staff should be timed to coincide with recruitment season and include basic training to support undocumented students and other basic institutional priorities.

Undocumented students are not international students and should not be treated the same. Institutions that provided resources through any international student office should cease. It is not just *lo malo* (the bad) but rather *lo peor* (the worst). International student offices have Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) reporting requirements that are communicated to federal entities. According to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (2023). website:

Federal laws and regulations require the Designated School Official (DSO) to update and maintain the SEVIS records of nonimmigrant students in F and M visa categories. If the DSO does not complete the required actions within the legal time limits, SEVIS automatically updates the student records.

I highly recommend that any university that uses the international studies office as a resource for undocumented students to change this immediately. The change is necessary to not send mixed messages to students but also to minimize any reporting to government entities that can have a profound negative impact on undocumented students.

From a consumer perspective, the lack of consistency for prospective students is severely lacking. A potential investment of \$60,000 in net tuition revenue from an undocumented student does little to create a sense of urgency for admissions leadership to provide adequate and regular training to their frontline staff.

En Medio

The University of Illinois, Chicago has the Office of Diversity, Equity & Engagement. The position of Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Inclusion is held by Tanya Cabrera in which she “[F]ocuses on our undocumented immigrants and those directly impacted by changing immigration policies” (The Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois, 2023). Eight out of the 10 total participants from UIC were between 1-4 years. They indicated their recent hire to the position with hopes of training in the near future. Their reference to Tanya Cabrera as a contact demonstrates exposure to information about undocumented student support at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

I became curious about the responses from staff that were not employed at Northern Illinois University (NIU) nor the University of Illinois, Chicago (UIC) but did mention Dr. Sandy López and Tanya Cabrera's training. The survey results pointed to external training occurring, but I am interested in what capacity. NIU's website has a request for information form to provide Undocumented Student Ally Training. The website (2023) says, “For non-NIU requests, we ask that you submit your form at least three weeks before your preferred request date.” Tanya Cabrera is the Chair of the Illinois Dream Fund Commission. The Illinois DREAM Fund Commission (State of Illinois, 2023) Task Force Council List website says:

Establishing and administering training programs for high school counselors and counselors, admissions officers, and financial aid officers of public institutions of higher

education. The training programs shall instruct participants on the educational opportunities available to college-bound students who are the children of immigrants, including, but not limited to, in-state tuition and scholarship programs.

Colleges and universities have the opportunity to obtain training services from two content experts. The depth of the training and services provided by Dr. López and Tanya Cabrera is unclear based on the information provided by the participants. Some of the participants may have had a full Undocumented Ally training session or presentation at a conference such as Sharing the Dream Conference. The context and audience are a bit unclear, as well. However, the frequency of the training needs to be examined based on the high turnover of the admissions staff.

Summary

The survey was designed to understand the extent of training (if any) provided to admissions staff who assist undocumented students at institutions of higher education. As noted above, undocumented students seeking higher education options in Illinois can receive benefits to reduce the financial barrier to attending college. Illinois has favorable legislative policies for undocumented students as they pursue post-secondary option, however the 12 Illinois four-year public universities have not demonstrated adequate support to train admissions staff. Most of the institutions are doing the bare minimum but much more work is required to become undocumented-friendly institutions. The recruitment staff should be trained to know the basic information to support their recruitment population.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS, PROFESSIONAL IMPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Para mis padres: Gracias Florinda y Guadalupe por todo que sacrificaron para nosotros. Hay mucho hacer para nuestra gente. Merecemos dignidad y derechos humanos.

Introduction

Florinda and Guadalupe Marcial, my parents, made a life in the United States to benefit our family. I am not an undocumented immigrant but will always be mindful of their personal experiences in the country. I began my career in higher education in the Admissions department of Illinois State University, where I found that helping students navigate the process to become a student was a deeply personal experience. Now, as an administrator at an Illinois community college, I know the importance of training and mentoring staff so that the vision of the department is aligned with the strategic plan of the college. My goal is to help the families of undocumented or immigrant status find dignity, respect, and space as they seek out options in higher education.

Undocumented students in the United States must overcome many barriers as they pursue and achieve their goal of earning an undergraduate degree and possibly beyond (Garcia, 2013; Conger and Chellman, 2013; Pérez 2012; Rincón, 2008). Barriers can be as overt as simply completing an admissions application and receiving a decision promptly or financing the total cost of attendance through their entire collegiate years (Diaz-Strong & Meiners, 2007; Garcia & Tierney, 2011; Pérez, 2009; Pérez, 2012; Pérez & Cortés, 2011). Doing everything “right” does not immediately result in the personal, academic, and economic success that was intended (Chang, 2018). Undocumented students are “born suspect” (Rock, 1991) as they live in the

United States and remain in limbo (Gonzales R. G., 2016) until long-term solutions become available.

Enrollment Management (EM) is responsible for the recruitment and matriculation of college students through offices (Hossler, Bontrager, & Tom, 2015), therefore their understanding of university policies and procedures is essential to helping students navigate through the college selection process (Hossler, Bontrager, & Tom, 2015). Their work results in the matriculation of a student, which will generate tuition revenue for the institution.

Undocumented students have historically been limited to paying out of pocket for college (Garcia, 2013; Conger and Chellman, 2013; Pérez 2012) because of legislative barriers. Illinois legislation has opened some opportunities for undocumented immigrants, such as Public Act 093-0007 (Illinois General Assembly, 2003), which provides in-state tuition, and RISE ACT (Illinois Student Assistance Commission, 2020), which provides in-state financial aid. However, the total cost of attendance may still be unrealistic for undocumented students and their families. A goal for Illinois public four-year universities should be to become undocumented-friendly institutions (López, 2022). This is why I decided to conduct a study that explored the admissions staff training and expertise related to supporting undocumented students at the 12 public four-year universities in Illinois.

I created a survey with content experts Dr. Sandy López and Tanya Cabrera, then distributed the survey to 90 admissions staff members at four-year Illinois public universities. The survey was left open from September 6, 2022, to September 23, 2022. Qualtrics recorded a total of 57 survey respondents; 49 participants submitted complete responses to the survey item, and an additional eight surveys were started but not completed. The overall response rate for the study was 65%. I used descriptive analysis to review and understand the survey results. The

responses from the participants were reviewed based on attitudes and beliefs followed by institutional knowledge. All participants' information remained anonymous to allow open and honest responses to the survey.

Statement of the Problem

Enrollment Management (EM) is a division of college administration that is responsible for the recruitment and matriculation of college students through offices (Hossler, Bontrager, & Tom, 2015) such as admissions, financial aid, advising, orientation, and scholarships. According to Hossler and Bean (1990), "Enrollment management has two goals. The first is to exert more control over the characteristics of the student body, and the second is to control the size of the student body" (p. 5). EM varies across every institution, though part of its overall function involves increasing overall student headcount, which is extremely important to the work done on college campuses for increasing net tuition revenue. Admissions staff actively and deliberately recruit undocumented students to college campuses but often without fully realizing or acknowledging what it means to be undocumented, and the specialized student supports needed to make it to graduation and find work post-graduation. One specific gap is within admissions. Stebleton and Aleixo (2015) claim, "[A]cademic institutions need to coordinate admissions policies to better support undocumented immigrant students" (p. 269). Enrollment Management divisions must provide accurate, realistic, and ethical information to support the pursuit of higher education for undocumented students.

Aside from an institutional strategic plan, a Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan may also be created for the objectives of the institution. Hossler and Bean (1990) identify three main characteristics in strategic enrollment planning, which include engaging the entire institution, environment scanning of the student market, and part of overall strategic planning.

SEM plans outline their targeted student populations, list goals, and allocate resources to matriculate students to the college campus. I use the word *intentionality* when discussing SEM plans because institutions have identified their targeted student academic characteristics, demographics, and geographic populations. Supporting undocumented students must include training the institutional agents of an institution in EM divisions (Stebbleton & Aleixo, 2015). It can result in an increase of enrollment and retention with the ultimate goal of increased graduation.

The majority of higher education research has focused on the experiences of undocumented students, but little research exists regarding the training of enrollment management staff in working with undocumented students (Serna, 2017; Stebleton & Aleixo, 2015). In my professional experience in Enrollment Management, institutions often overpromise accessibility for all students and later underdeliver holistic support for undocumented students. EM staff require proper training and understanding of how to serve their students. Adding structured and holistic training to support undocumented students should be ongoing and available to staff. My study will explore admissions staff's training and expertise related to supporting undocumented students at the 12 Illinois public four-year universities.

Research Questions and Theoretical Framework

Based on the literature review, I created research questions to understand the formal training provided to admissions staff by the Illinois four-year public universities to support undocumented students. I focused on the admissions staff members that are responsible for recruitment and outreach activities, not just those designated to support undocumented students.

The theoretical framework Undocumented Critical Theory (UndocuCrit) guides the study. The origins of UndocuCrit are a blending of Critical Race Theory (Crenshaw, 1989),

Latino Critical Race Theory (Yosso, 2006), and Tribal Critical Theory (Brayboy, 2005).

UndocuCrit framework focuses on the undocumented student experience, and notes (Aguilar, 2019) the following:

1. Fear is endemic among immigrant communities.
2. Different experiences of liminality translate into different experiences of reality.
3. Parental *sacrificios* become a form of capital.
4. *Acompañamiento* is the embodiment of membership, academic redemption, and community engagement (p.2).

Although my research did not directly center on undocumented students, it addressed aspects of the framework. The rationale to use the framework is to establish best practices in order to ameliorate the situation for undocumented students. Establishing allies and advocates for undocumented students as they pursue higher education can make the process more realistic.

Undocumented students and their families live in fear based on several factors, which include, but are not limited to, fear of deportation, financial insecurity, and job insecurity (Garcia, 2013; Gonzales, 2016; Rincon, 2008). Fear can be exacerbated as they graduate from high school and seek post-secondary options. Establishing meaningful policies, practices, training, and knowledge will result in building a communal understanding of the undocumented students' experience in higher education. It will not solve the fear faced by many students, but it will create a safe and welcoming environment that is needed.

My research also addressed another core framework of UndocuCrit, which is *acompañamiento*. Aguilar (2019) writes, "To be *acompañados* as UndocuCrit scholars means to create knowledge that is accessible and relatable for our communities by exposing it in such a

way that matches their experiences” (p.6). Therefore, the training of admissions staff is important to supporting undocumented students and establishing communities of support on a college campus. I believe that it is important to learn from the admissions staff that are responsible for recruitment and outreach so that we can find ways to make meaningful changes. Establishing undocumented-friendly practices on campus can address some of the issues of fear that are endemic to immigrant communities. The responses to my research questions resulted in a better understanding of the training and support provided by the admissions staff to support undocumented students.

The first research question asked participants to reflect on their knowledge and beliefs as it pertains to undocumented students. The question asked, “What are the attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge regarding undocumented students and their families held by admissions professionals at Illinois public colleges and universities?”

Participants demonstrated some basic knowledge as it pertains to undocumented students. The consensus of the survey participants is that there are obstacles for an undocumented student attending college and most respondents acknowledged that the cost of attending college remains the biggest obstacle. Based on the response of the participants, the primary form of training that occurs is based on one-on-one relationships with their respective colleagues. I would have liked to learn more from the admissions staff that responded with “No Response” or “I Don’t Know” responses to learn more about why they responded in that way. One theory is that admissions staff may feel that an incorrect response may inadvertently reflect negatively on their institution.

The second research question asked participants to respond to the institutional training provided by their respective institutions. The question asked, “What is the nature of training

provided by Illinois public colleges and universities for their admissions professionals to recruit and retain undocumented students?”

Another survey question asked, “What training have you received to support undocumented students?” and the question resulted in 33 responses (58%) that had no response, no training, or were unsure. That means less than half of 42% of participants received training to support undocumented students. After further questioning, the consistency and quality of the training are not completely clear. Based on the survey results, my overall analysis of the question is that training for admissions staff to support undocumented students is limited. Higher education needs admissions staff that are knowledgeable and trained to provide accurate information to undocumented students (Newell, 2019). Undocumented students are a vulnerable population that needs additional support from an institution to fully them from recruitment through graduation. (Stebleton & Aleixo, 2015). Undocumented students benefit from well-informed admissions staff who provide information as it pertains to college access and financial aid (Nienhusser & Espino, 2017; (Hossler, Bontrager, & Tom, 2015). Limited federal financial aid options have been elusive to undocumented students and state financial aid opportunities are limited (Garcia, 2013; Diaz-Strong & Meiners, 2007; National Immigration Law Center, 2022).

Illinois public four-year universities rely on external entities to provide training for the admissions staff to support undocumented students. The role of the Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling (IACAC) in facilitating the Sharing the Dream Conference (STDC) is one source of training for admissions staff. IACAC does have a website for undocumented students, however, the content is limited because it is a repository of information that is not updated regularly. STDC addresses consistent issues that impact undocumented students throughout the day-long event, including financial barriers, legal services, ally training,

and legislative updates (Diaz-Strong & Meiners, 2007; Garcia, 2013; Conger and Chellman, 2013; Pérez 2012; Serna, 2017). The STDC occurs once a year at a host institution in Illinois. Conferences agenda, topics, and presenters always change and the participant's level of proficiency may not be enough to support undocumented students, but STDC still remains a much-needed resource for many staff in higher education because it fulfills training that is not provided by an institution. Each university should create training based on its respective needs and strengths as a resource available on campus to support undocumented students.

By infusing the theoretical framework of Undocumented Critical Theory (UndocuCrit) with this research, key issues—*acompañamiento* and fear—are addressed to better serve undocumented students. Through community engagement in higher education, the situation for undocumented students can improve access (National Immigration Law Center, 2022; Rincón, 2020) and financial aid options (Garcia, 2013; Conger and Chellman, 2013; Pérez, 2009; Serna 2017) through quality training from Illinois' four-year public universities. Based on this information, I believe that the research elucidates the need to work with undocumented students and become their allies and resources. *El problema sigue* and Illinois is in a position to improve access and financing opportunities for undocumented students and their families in higher education (Illinois Student Assistance Commission, 2020). University admissions staff can be the allies and advocates to provide undocumented students with the necessary support needed to begin the college process (Newell, 2019). Ally training and advocacy can address an additional aspect that impacts undocumented students, such as fear of deportation or detention (Abrego, 2011). The fear can be reduced in a higher education setting by providing a safe and welcoming environment because the staff can address barriers facing undocumented students (Stebbleton &

Aleixo, 2015). Therefore, addressing a key component of UndocuCrit of *acompañamiento* and fear can positively impact an undocumented student's experience in higher education.

Epiphany

Illinois' four-year public universities represent large populations of students with varying characteristics. Dr. Sandy López and the undocumented students of DREAM Action NIU have made Northern Illinois University an undocumented-friendly institution through hard work, dedication, and support. Although not an official designation, it is demonstrated through the responses from other staff in this study. Through this research, I believe that Illinois four-year universities are placating legislative mandates by doing the bare minimum. Others boast dedicated staff but do little to train them accordingly. I knew that the Illinois Association for College Admissions Counseling was an important tool, but the study solidified its importance. Currently, the Sharing the Dream Conference may be the only source of training for admissions staff.

I was pleasantly surprised to hear that admissions staff used their professional networks at the college to search for information to support undocumented students. My professional friends would call, text, and email after each communication notification to admissions staff to ask what else they can do to assist. The call to action from admissions colleagues to complete the survey and their willingness to encourage other staff members to do so was humbling to witness.

In my mind, I thought of the survey as a summative assessment of admissions staff, and I believe that regular staff training is part of good leadership practice. If institutions are committed to equitable recruitment, basic knowledge of undocumented students should be part of the training. Training can consist of asking pointed questions, such as whether all undocumented students have Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and the benefits of DACA,

provides information about where training is needed. Staff will have the basic knowledge necessary to support undocumented students.

Professional Implications

The message I want to send to Vice Presidents of Enrollment Management and Directors of Admissions is that training staff on a basic understanding of undocumented students should be part of the robust Strategic Enrollment Management plan. Undocumented students deserve attention not only to recruit but also to retain. Until recently, their tuition dollars were paid upfront in cash. State aid was not available to undocumented students and had limited institutional aid options. Illinois now allows eligible undocumented students to qualify for state aid. However, training frontline staff is key to providing this necessary information to students and their families.

Recruitment is the job of the entire college. I would challenge administrators to go through undocumented ally training to truly understand their student population. They can help personalize the admissions experience and humanize the college selection experience. One of my mentors once told me to be process-dependent, not person-dependent. When staff leaves an institution, the institutional knowledge of the employee often leaves with the individual. I have learned to rely on the training of all staff rather than just one person. This is how I see the initiative to facilitate basic undocumented student training for all admissions teams at all institutions. Approximately 50% of the participants indicated that they planned to stay in enrollment management for the next five years. Institutions want diverse staff with preferred skills such as bilingual proficiency. And while none of the participants of the survey received additional compensation for their work with undocumented students, perhaps this additional training should be budgeted for in order to get the necessary training.

Illinois House Bill 3438 requires all public institutions to have an Undocumented Student Liaison (Illinois General Assembly, 2021). The intent is to establish an Undocumented Student Resource Center on each respective campus. I would like leaders in Enrollment Management to reflect on the basic training of their admissions staff; a liaison in admissions is needed. The state mandate should not mean that you pass responsibility to other people. To paraphrase what William Perez wrote in 2012, even if the border was sealed today, high schools will still be graduating undocumented students for decades more (Pérez, 2012). A recent article (Savendra, 2023) that highlighted Chicago Public Schools said, “CPS and its charter schools were already struggling with a lack of bilingual staff and resources before asylum-seekers were sent to Chicago, CTU leaders said. It's unclear how many school-aged migrant children have come to the area.” The need to support the undocumented will continue to post-secondary education, which will require staff training for decades. The demand for qualified admissions staff will be necessary to meet the students that will be searching for higher education in the upcoming years and decades.

In the Strategies for a Thriving Illinois Equity plan, the Illinois Board of Higher Education (Illinois Board of Higher Education, 2021) included undocumented students, noting that colleges and universities should consider the ethical implications of admitting an undocumented student by reevaluating the resources on their campus. Undocumented students are one of the most vulnerable populations on a college campus. Misinformation can have a detrimental long-term impact on the lives of undocumented students on their families, such as deportation (Gillin Law Group, n.d.). Colleges have a legislative requirement through House Bill 3438 (Illinois General Assembly, 2021) to identify an Undocumented Student Liaison. It is not enough to comply with the mandate but rather to expand upon the accurately trained staff on

campus. It should be an ethical responsibility and priority of the university to maintain a safe environment for its student populations. Undocumented students deserve the time and attention to feel supported on a college campus.

I have lived in Illinois all my life and have no intention of leaving anytime soon. I can appreciate the legislative steps that have been taken to provide in-state tuition (Illinois General Assembly, 2003), in-state financial aid (Illinois Student Assistance Commission, 2020), and creating the Undocumented Student Liaison mandate (Illinois General Assembly, 2021).

However, undocumented students continue to be excluded based on the eligibility criteria, such as living in Illinois for three years and graduating from an Illinois high school. I would encourage legislators to create policies that improve college access and financial aid opportunities for undocumented students. The students should have access to job opportunities on campus regardless of whether they have DACA status. Finally, I believe that legislators and post-secondary institutions should take greater responsibility for advocating for a path toward citizenship. Undocumented students that will go through the K-12 education setting followed by post-secondary education will have limited options based on their citizenship status. When examining the rationale for *Plyer v Doe*, the intent was to avert a lifetime hardship and create a permanent underclass (Gonzales, Heredia, & Negrón-Gonzales, 2015). Undocumented students have been waiting too long for a long-term solution that will lead to a path toward citizenship.

As a final reminder to higher education administrations, undocumented students should not be treated as international students. Offices supporting undocumented students should not be considered part of the International Affairs department or any such area because of the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) reporting to government entities (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 2023). The lives of undocumented students can be

negatively affected by maintaining the international affairs office as the primary resource for undocumented students.

Research Limitations

I conducted a holistic, manual website search of the admissions staff at each of the public four-year universities in Illinois in May 2022. The high turnover rate became apparent after the survey was distributed in September 2022. Several admissions representatives that were listed as the primary contact had transitioned from their respective institutions. I would have liked all 12 primary contacts from the four-year public universities in Illinois instead of the eight that responded. Unfortunately, only one admissions staff from Southern Illinois, Edwardsville completed the survey. Their geographic location to Missouri may have offered additional insight into their training tactics to support undocumented students.

The survey was meant to understand the knowledge and comprehension of the admissions professionals who work with undocumented students. For participants that did not answer questions, I am curious about the rationale for skipping the questions, whether it was intentional or if it was from concern over providing a wrong response. All survey responses retained anonymity and participants were informed of this before beginning the survey.

Future Research

As mentioned in this dissertation, little has been written that has focused on enrollment management (Serna, 2017). My survey provided a quantitative perspective from admissions professionals through a survey. A qualitative approach to the same population can provide additional context from the admissions staff. Hearing directly from the staff and asking additional probing questions can add more depth to the training occurring in the Admissions department. Adding demographic information about the admissions staff, such as race/ethnicity

and gender can add context to whom is serving prospective students and provide additional opportunities to learn from the experience of the admissions staff. Future research can also include the over 40 community colleges in the state of Illinois. Community colleges potentially serve the largest population of undocumented students depending on their geographic location in the state.

As part of this research, I focused on the undocumented student experience from a Latina/o perspective, though certainly the undocumented student experience has racial and ethnic diversity. Educational Trust (2023) writes, “Eighty percent of undocumented students attend public institutions, and they are a diverse group: 49% are Latino, 24% are Asian American and Pacific Islander, and 13% are Black” (p.10). A study that examines the non-Latina/o experience will add to the much-needed research necessary to support undocumented students.

In my professional opinion, I believe the future of research needs to focus on the Enrollment Management division starting with Vice Presidents, Directors of Admissions, and other senior administrators. I believe they need firsthand knowledge and experience of working with undocumented students to make meaningful changes. The survey indicated that none of the participants had direct decision-making abilities for undocumented students. Change does not occur with the individual interaction of the frontline staff. It will occur with an introspective reflection of the recruitment strategy, and then, will be one step close to becoming an undocumented-friendly institution. A recent online article from HigherEdJobs (Scott, 2023) writes:

At a time when higher education is losing enrollment due to declining high school graduation numbers, reduced birth rates, and limitations on international student recruitment, undocumented students who live in the U.S. represent a substantial pool of

potential candidates for colleges and jobs—and they have demonstrated their commitment and ambition.

Serving undocumented students can add to recruitment strategies which will increase enrollment and increase tuition revenue. Enrollment Management administrators' knowledge and understanding of undocumented students can also enhance Strategic Enrollment Management plans by making it a student recruitment and retention initiative.

Final Reflection

This dissertation was a labor of love. I enjoy my role working in enrollment services and I appreciate the opportunity to serve students as they look for options in higher education. Undocumented students are a vulnerable population due to their current status. Recent legislative actions in Illinois offer more options to access funding in college. Admissions professionals should be trained to understand the basic information so they can more fully help prospective families. I remain optimistic that we can make strides in providing equitable and fair access to information for undocumented students through adequate training of admissions staff. We cannot wait for legislative mandates to force higher education to do the right thing. Undocumented students and their families deserve dignity and respect.

REFERENCES

- Abrego, L. J. (2011, June). Legal Consciousness of Undocumented Latinos: Fear and Stigma as Barriers to Claims Making for First- and 1.5-Generation Immigrants. *Law & Society Review, 45*, 337-369. Retrieved November 2019, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23012045>
- Acuña, R. (1972). *Occupied America; the Chicano's struggle toward liberation*. San Francisco: Canfield Press.
- Acuña, R. (2003). *Occupied America: A history of Chicanos* (5th ed.). Boston: Longman.
- Adams, J. T. (1931). *The epic of America*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company.
- Aguilar, C. (2019). Undocumented Critical Theory. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies, 19*(3), pp. 152–160. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708618817911>
- Baker, B. (2021). *Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2015–January 2018*. https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/immigration-statistics/Pop_Estimate/UnauthImmigrant/unauthorized_immigrant_population_estimates_2015_-_2018.pdf: Department of Homeland Security. Retrieved May 10, 2022
- Benuto, L. T. (2018). Undocumented, to DACAmented, to DACAlimited: Narratives of Latino Students with DACA Status. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 40*(3), 259-278.
- Brayboy, B. M. (2005). Toward a Tribal Critical Race Theory in Education. *Urban Review: Issues and Ideas in Public Education, 37*, 425-446. Retrieved April 30, 2020, from <http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.ilstu.edu/10.1007/s11256-005-0018-y>

- Chang, A. (2018). *The Struggles of Identity, Education, and Agency in the Lives of Undocumented Students: The Burden of Hyperdocumentation* (1 ed.). Chicago, IL: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Chappell, B. (2022, May 6). *Texas governor says the state may contest a Supreme Court ruling on migrant education*. Retrieved May 10, 2022, from NPR: <https://www.npr.org/2022/05/06/1097178468/texas-governor-says-the-state-may-contest-a-supreme-court-ruling-on-migrant-educ>
- Chellman, C. C., Conger, D., & New York University. (2013). *Undocumented College Students in the United States: In-State Tuition Not Enough to Ensure Four-Year Degree Completion*. IESP Policy Brief No. 01-13. *Institute for Education and Social Policy*, 1-10. Retrieved September 7, 2015
- Chicago Area Regional Representatives. (2020). *Chicago Area Regional Representatives*. Retrieved October 20, 2022, from Chicago Area Regional Representatives: <http://www.carrnet.org/>
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(8), 139-167. Retrieved from <http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8>
- Department of Homeland Security. (2019). *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*. Retrieved November 10, 2019, from Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA): <https://www.uscis.gov/archive/consideration-deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca>

- Diaz-Strong, D., & Meiners, E. (2007). Residents, Alien Policies, and Resistances: Experiences of Undocumented Latina/o Students in. *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies*, 3(2), 1-20. Retrieved August 2018, from <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0671r1x2>
- Enyioh, J. C. (2019). College Access for Undocumented Students and. *Educational Considerations*, 45(1), 1-11. doi:<https://doi.org/10.4148/0146-9282.2168>
- Garcia, L. D. (2013). *Undocumented and Unwanted: Attending College Against the Odds*. El Paso: Lfb Scholarly Publishing Llc.
- Garcia, L. D., & Tierney, W. G. (2011). Undocumented Immigrants in Higher Education: A Preliminary Analysis. *Teachers College Record*, 113(12), 2739-2776. Retrieved July 2019, from <http://www.tcrecord.org.libproxy.lib.ilstu.edu/Content.asp?ContentId=16204>
- Gillin Law Group. (n.d.). *False Claim to U.S. Citizenship*. Retrieved March 2023, from Gillin Law Group: <https://gillinlaw.com/false-claim-to-us-citizenship/#:~:text=Inadmissibility%20waivers%20exist%20for%20nonimmigrants,be%20eligible%20for%20a%20waiver>.
- Gonzales, M. G. (2000). *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States*. Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Gonzales, R. G. (2016). *Lives in limbo : undocumented and coming of age in America*. Oakland: University of California Press.
- Gonzales, R. G., Heredia, L. L., & Negrón-Gonzales, G. (2015). Untangling Plyler's Legacy: Undocumented Students, Schools,. *Harvard Educational Review*, 85(No. 3), 318-341.
- Gonzales, R. G., Sigona, N., Franco, M. C., & Papoutsis, A. (2019). *Undocumented Migration*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

- Guitérrez, D. G. (1995). *Walls and Mirrors Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity*. University of California Press.
- Higher Ed Immigration Portal. (2021). *Higher Ed Immigration Portal Illinois*. Retrieved May 08, 2022, from Higher Ed Immigration Portal:
<https://www.higheredimmigrationportal.org/state/illinois/>
- Hossler, D., & Bean, J. P. (1990). *The Strategic Management of College Enrollments*. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass.
- Hossler, D., Bontrager, B., & Tom, L. (2015). *Handbook of strategic enrollment management*. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass.
- Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling. (2020, May 13). *2020 Business Reports & Recordings*. Retrieved April 10, 2022, from Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling: <https://www.iacac.org/2020/05/2020-business-reports-recordings/>
- Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling. (2022). *College Advising Database for Undocumented Students*. Retrieved April 14, 2022, from Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling: <https://www.iacac.org/undocumentedlist/>
- Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling. (2022). *Homepage*. Retrieved October 20, 2022, from Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling:
<https://www.iacac.org/>
- Illinois Board of Higher Education. (2021). Retrieved March 19, 2022, from Strategies for a Thriving Illinois Equity: https://ibhestrategicplan.ibhe.org/SP_Equity_Introduction.html
- Illinois General Assembly. (2003, 05 20). *Public Act 093-0007*. Retrieved January 24, 2021, from Illinois General Assembly:
<https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=093-0007>

- Illinois General Assembly. (2021, August 20). *Bill Status of HB3438*. Retrieved December 29, 2021, from Illinois General Assembly:
<https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/BillStatus.asp?DocNum=3438&GAID=16&DocTypeID=HB&SessionID=110&GA=102>
- Illinois State University. (2021). *Cost of Attendance Tables*. Retrieved January 30, 2021, from Illinois State University Financial Aid Office:
<https://financialaid.illinoisstate.edu/paying/cost/table-group-7.php>
- Illinois Student Assistance Commission. (2020, September 30). *Retention of Illinois Students & Equity (RISE) Act and Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid*. Retrieved December 20, 2020, from Illinois Student Assistance Commission:
<https://www.isac.org/students/before-college/financial-aid-planning/retention-of-illinois-rise-act/>
- Immigrant Rising. (2020). *Defining Undocumented*. Retrieved May 8, 2022, from Immigrant Rising: <https://immigrantsrising.org/resource/defining-undocumented/>
- Institute of Education Sciences - National Center for Educational Statistics. (2022). *College Navigator*. Retrieved April 14, 2022, from Institute of Education Sciences - National Center for Educational Statistics: <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>
- Johnson, R. B., & Christensen, L. B. (2008). *Educational Research: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Approaches* (3 ed.). Los Angeles, California: SAGE Publications.
- Krogstad, J. M., Cohn, D., & Passel, J. S. (2019). *5 facts about illegal immigration in the U.S.* Pew Research Center. Retrieved 2019, from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/06/12/5-facts-about-illegal-immigration-in-the-u-s/>

- Kuczewski, PhD, M. G., & Brubaker, MD, MS, L. (2015, February). Equity for “DREAMers” in Medical School Admissions. *AMA J Ethics*. doi:10.1001/virtualmentor.2015.17.2.pfor1-1502.
- López, S. W. (2022). Nothing for Us, About Us, Without Us, Dream Action Niu: (Re)formation of Undocumented and Mixed-Status Students’ Identities of Resistance. 249. Available from Dissertations & Theses @ Illinois State University.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.30707/ETD2022.20220606094401282783.999977>
- Martinez, G. A. (2007). Immigration and the Meaning of United States Citizenship: Whiteness and Assimilation. *Washburn Law Journal*, 46(2), 335-344.
- Meier, M. S., & Ribera, F. (1994). *Mexican Americans/American Mexicans From Conquistadors to Chicanos*. Hill and Wang.
- National Conference of State Legislatures. (2021, June 09). *Undocumented Student Tuition: Overview*. Retrieved December 19, 2021, from National Conference of State Legislatures: <https://www.ncsl.org/research/education/undocumented-student-tuition-overview.aspx>
- National Immigration Forum. (2020, August 12). *Fact Sheet: Mixed Status Families and COVID-19 Economic Relief*. Retrieved from National Immigration Forum: <https://immigrationforum.org/article/mixed-status-families-and-covid-19-economic-relief/#:~:text=Mixed%20status%20families%20are%20families,in%20a%20mixed%20status%20family.>

- National Immigration Law Center. (2014, December). *FAQ: The Affordable Care Act & Mixed-Status Families*. Retrieved May 8, 2022, from National Immigration Law Center: https://www.nilc.org/issues/health-care/aca_mixedstatusfams/#:~:text=A%20%E2%80%9Cmixed%2Dstatus%20family%E2%80%9D,mixed%2Dstatus%20families%20is%20growing.
- National Immigration Law Center. (2022, November). *Toolkit | Access to Postsecondary Education*. Retrieved from National Immigration Law Center: <https://www.nilc.org/issues/education/eduaccesstoolkit2a/>
- Newell, M. (2019). Motivating factors of academic advisors supporting undocumented students in higher education. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/2142/105800>
- Nguyen, D. H., & Martinez Hoy, Z. R. (2015). "Jim Crowing" Plyler V. Doe: the Resegregation of Undocumented Students in American Higher Education through Discriminatory State Tuition and Fee Legislation. *Cleveland State Law Review*, 63(2), 355-371.
- Nienhusser, K. H., & Espino, M. M. (2017). Incorporating Undocumented/DACAmented Status Competency into Higher Education Institutional Agents' Practice. *Journal of student affairs research and practice*, 54(1), 1-14. Retrieved December 2021
- Northern Illinois University. (2023). *Undocumented Student Ally Training*. Retrieved January 2023, from Northern Illinois University: <https://www.niu.edu/undocumented/education-and-training/ally-training.shtml>

- Office of the Illinois Secretary of State. (n.d.). *Temporary Visitor Driver's License (TVDL) For Undocumented (Non-Visa Status) Individuals Driver Services*. Retrieved January 16, 2023, from Office of the Illinois Secretary of State:
<https://www.ilsos.gov/departments/drivers/TVDL/home.html>
- Passel, J. S., & Cohn, D. (2011). *Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends 2010*. Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center.
- Peña, J. (2021). Undocumented Students: History and Implications for Higher Education Administrators. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 20(1), 33-35. Retrieved December 2021
- Perez Huber, L. (2010, Winter). Using Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) and Racist Nativism to Explore Intersectionality in the Educational Experiences of Undocumented Chicana College Students. *The Journal of Educational Foundations*, 24(1/2), 77-96.
- Pérez, W. (2009). *We are Americans: Undocumented Students Pursuing the American Dream*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.
- Pérez, W. (2012). *Americans by Heart : Undocumented Latino Students and the Promise of Higher Education* . New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Pérez, W., & Cortés, R. D. (2011). *Undocumented Latino College Students : Their Socioemotional and Academic Experiences*. El Paso, Texas: LFB Scholarly Pub.
- Rincón, A. (2008). *Undocumented immigrants and higher education: Si se puede!* LFB Scholarly Pub.
- Rincón, A. (2020). Immigrants' Efforts to Access Public Schools and Higher Education in the United States. In: *Papa R. (eds) Handbook on Promoting Social Justice in Education*, 1-28. doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-74078-2_93-1

- Rock, C. (1991). *Born Suspect* [Explicit]. Atlantic Records.
- Rock, C. (Performer). (2004, March 24-26). *Chris Rock : Never Scared*. New York, NY.
- Rodríguez Presa, L., & Callesteros, C. (2022, March 15). *Aging in the shadows: A crisis of older undocumented workers awaits Illinois*. Retrieved March 15, 2022, from Chicago Tribune: <https://www.chicagotribune.com/people/ct-chicago-undocumented-health-care-housing-20220315-3bzw7sedfraota3pf7eg2qvwsj-story.html>
- Rojas, I. (2013, May 5). *The 1986 Immigration Reform Explained*. Retrieved May 8, 2022, from ABC News: https://abcnews.go.com/ABC_Univision/Politics/1986-amnesty/story?id=18971179
- Rush University Medical Center and Rob Paral & Associates. (2022). *A Collaborative Report on the Aging Undocumented Population of Illinois*. Retrieved from https://aging.rush.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/FINAL_A-Collaborative-Report-on-the-Aging-Undocumented-Population-of-Illinois-1.pdf
- Savedra, M. (2023, February 24). *Chicago's Undocumented Students And Teachers Need More Protections, Better Bilingual Services, Teachers Union Says*. Retrieved February 26, 2023, from Block Club Chicago: <https://blockclubchicago.org/2023/02/24/chicagos-undocumented-students-and-teachers-need-more-protections-better-bilingual-services-teachers-union-says/>
- Schwartz, S. B. (2000). *Victors and Vanquished: Spanish and Nahua Views of the Conquest of Mexico*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

- Scott, R. A. (2023, March 15). *Don't Forget DACA -- A Key Player in the Future of Higher Ed and Our Country*. Retrieved from HigherEdJobs:
<https://www.higheredjobs.com/Articles/articleDisplay.cfm?ID=3385&Title=Don%E2%80%99t%20Forget%20DACA%20--%20A%20Key%20Player%20in%20the%20Future%20of%20Higher%20Ed%20and%20Our%20Country>
- Serna, G. R. (2017). Undocumented Students and Strategic Enrollment Management: Guidance and Considerations for Finance Policy, and Inclusive Practice. *Strategic enrollment management quarterly.*, 5(1), 38-47. Retrieved December 14, 2021
- State of Illinois. (2023). *Illinois Board, Commission, Task Force and Council List*. Retrieved February 17, 2023, from State of Illinois Appointments:
<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/bac/SitePages/AppointmentsDetail.aspx?BCID=807>
- Stebbleton, M. J., & Aleixo, M. B. (2015). Examining Undocumented Latino/a Student Interactions With Faculty and Institutional Agents. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 14(3), 256-273. Retrieved December 2021
- The Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois. (2023). *Office of Diversity, Equity, & Engagement*. Retrieved February 26, 2023, from University of Illinois at Chicago:
<https://diversity.uic.edu/profiles/cabrera-tanya/>
- The Education Trust. (2023). *Higher Education and Success for Undocumented Students Start with 9 Key Criteria*. Retrieved March 28, 2023, from https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/UndocuReport_Combined_FINAL_2.pdf

- Turner, V. W. (1970). *The forest of symbols: Aspects of Ndembu ritual*. Cornell University Press.
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. (n.d.). *Don't Let Your Work Permit Expire; Follow These DACA Renewal Tips*. Retrieved February 4, 2023, from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services: <https://www.uscis.gov/archive/dont-let-your-work-permit-expire-follow-these-daca-renewal-tips>
- U.S. Department of the Interior. (n.d.). *Minority Serving Institutions Program*. Retrieved May 11, 2022, from U.S. Department of the Interior: <https://www.doi.gov/pmb/eeo/doi-minority-serving-institutions-program#:~:text=MSIs%20are%20institutions%20of%20higher,whereas%20others%20serve%20urban%20neighborhoods>.
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. (2023, February 2). *SEVIS Reporting Requirements for Designated School Officials*. Retrieved February 26, 2023, from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement: <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/dso-requirements>
- Vargas, J. A. (2022). *Jose Antonio Vargas*. Retrieved May 10, 2022, from Jose Antonio Vargas: <https://joseantoniovargas.com/>
- Vogt, W. P., Vogt, E. R., Gardner, D. C., & Haeffele, L. M. (2014). *Selecting the Right Analyses for Your Data Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods*. New York: Gilford Press.
- Weeden, L. (2015). Good public policy occurs under plying when in-state college tuition rates are awarded to undocumented bona fide resident immigrants. *George Mason University Civil Rights Law Journal*, 25(2).
- White House. (2019, May 21). *White House*. Retrieved July 21, 2019, from White House: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/articles/president-trumps-bold-immigration-plan-21st-century/>

Yosso, T. J. (2006). *Critical Race Counterstories along the Chicana/Chicano Educational Pipeline*. New York: Routledge.

APPENDIX A: RESEARCH SURVEY

ILLINOIS FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC UNIVERSITY — ADMISSIONS COUNSELORS SURVEY

Survey Flow

Block: Default Question Block (11 Questions)

Standard: Understanding current knowledge regarding undocumented students (19 Questions)

Standard: Institutional knowledge regarding undocumented students (11 Questions)

Page Break

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q1 Name of Illinois four-year public university

▼ Chicago State University (1) ... Western Illinois University (12)

Q2 What population of students do you work with at your institution?

High School Students (FTIC) (1)

Transfer Students (2)

Both (3)

Q44 Number of years in current role

▼ 1-4 Years (1) ... 15+ years (4)

Q6 Are you planning to stay in admissions for the next five years?

▼ Yes (1) ... I don't know (3)

Q7 Are you the primary contact in admissions for undocumented students? (Please note, you do not have to be the primary contact for undocumented students to complete survey.)

▼ Yes (1) ... No (2)

Display This Question:

If Are you the primary contact in admissions for undocumented students? (Please note, you do not hav... = Yes

Q8 Did you receive an increase in pay as the primary contact for undocumented students?

▼ Yes (1) ... No (2)

Q9 Are you fluent in another language than English?

▼ Yes (1) ... No (2)

Display This Question:

If Are you fluent in another language than English? = Yes

Q10 What languages are fluent in speaking?

Q11 Have or will you receive formal training to support undocumented students?

▼ Yes (1) ... No (2)

Display This Question:

If Have or will you receive formal training to support undocumented students? = Yes

Q12 Please explain the type of training you have received or will receive.

Display This Question:

If Have or will you receive formal training to support undocumented students? = No

Q13 How have you learned to support undocumented students?

End of Block: Default Question Block

Start of Block: Understanding current knowledge regarding undocumented students

Q14 Do you see any obstacles to attending college for undocumented students? Beliefs

▼ Yes (1) ... No (2)

Display This Question:

If Do you see any obstacles to attending college for undocumented students? = Yes

Q15 Please explain any obstacles for undocumented students.

Q16 Can undocumented students in the state of Illinois pay in-state tuition? Knowledge

▼ Yes (1) ... I don't know (3)

Display This Question:

If Can undocumented students in the State of Illinois pay in-state tuition? = Yes

Q17 What is the procedure for students to apply for this benefit at your institution?

Q18 Can undocumented students in Illinois receive federal financial aid?

▼ Yes (1) ... I don't know (3)

Display This Question:

If Can undocumented students in Illinois receive federal financial aid? = Yes

Q19 What conditions must be met to receive federal financial aid?

Q20 Can undocumented students in Illinois receive state financial aid?

▼ Yes (1) ... I don't know (3)

Display This Question:

If Can undocumented students in Illinois receive state financial aid? = Yes

Q21 What are the criteria a student must meet to receive the aid?

Q22 Rank the regions below in terms of the number of undocumented people in Illinois represented by each. For example, move the country with the highest percentage at of undocumented people in Illinois at the top of the list with the lowest percentage last.

_____ Africa (1)

_____ Asia (2)

_____ Caribbean (3)

_____ Europe/Canada/Oceania (4)

_____ Mexico and Central America (5)

_____ South America (6)

Q23 Immigrants create a higher rate of crime than U.S. citizens. Attitudes/Beliefs

True (1)

False (2)

I don't know (3)

Q24 Undocumented immigrants do not pay income taxes.

- True (1)
 - False (2)
 - I don't know (3)
-

Q25 It is a felony to come into the United States without inspection. Attitudes/Beliefs

- True (1)
 - False (2)
 - I don't know (3)
-

Q26 Can undocumented immigrants in the state of Illinois receive a driver's license?

Yes (1)

No (2)

I don't know (3)



Q27 What protections does Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) provide to college students? (Check all that apply)

- Automatic citizenship (1)
 - Pathway to citizenship (2)
 - Protection from deportation (3)
 - Social Security for Job (4)
 - Work authorization (5)
 - No benefit (6)
-

Q28 How much does it cost to renew a DACA application?

- Free (1)
 - \$295 (2)
 - \$345 (3)
 - \$495 (4)
 - \$545 (5)
 - I don't know (6)
-

Q29 How often does a DACA recipient need to reapply?

- Every year (1)
 - Every two years (2)
 - Every three years (3)
 - Every five years (4)
 - I don't know (5)
-

Q30 Does every college student have DACA?

- Yes (1)
 - No (2)
 - I don't know (3)
-

Q31 Can undocumented students in Illinois receive a student loan to pay for college?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Display This Question:

If Can undocumented students in Illinois receive a student loan to pay for college? = Yes

Q32 List criteria for undocumented students to receive a student loan to pay for college.

End of Block: Understanding current knowledge regarding undocumented students

Start of Block: Institutional knowledge regarding undocumented students

Q33 What financial resources specifically for undocumented students are available at your institution (beyond state aid)?



Q34 Who do you contact on your college campus to ask questions on how to support undocumented students?

Q35 List three best practices at your institution to support undocumented students.

Q36 Do you have decision making abilities in the content that is produced for undocumented students? For example, print publications, media, website, presentations.

- Yes (1)
 - No (2)
 - Some (3)
-

Display This Question:

If Do you have decision making abilities in the content that is produced for undocumented students?... = Yes

Or Do you have decision making abilities in the content that is produced for undocumented students?... = Some

Q37 Please describe your decision-making abilities.

Q38 Does your institution have a undocumented student committee on campus that discusses recruitment/retention of undocumented students?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Display This Question:

If Does your institution have an undocumented student committee on campus that discusses recruitment/... = Yes

Q39 How was the committee created and what divisions on campus are represented (if you know)?

Q40 What trainings have you received to support undocumented students?

Q41 Tell me what changes (if any) you would make in your role to support undocumented students. Attitudes/Beliefs

Q42 How many hours do you estimate a week that you dedicate to undocumented students?

Q43 Would you like to receive more training in how to support undocumented?

Yes (1)

No (2)

End of Block: Institutional knowledge regarding undocumented students

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Dave Marcial for dissertation topic LO BUENO Y LO MALO – ASSESSING ADMISSIONS STAFF AND PRACTICES SUPPORTING UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS AT ILLINOIS’ FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES. Principal Investigator is Dr. Lydia Kyei-Blankson in the Educational Administration & Foundations department at Illinois State University. The purpose of the study is to better understand the preparedness of admissions staff in supporting undocumented college students.

Why are you being asked?

You have been asked to participate because you are currently employed in admissions at a public, four-year higher education institution in the state of Illinois. All participants will be over the age of 18. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You will not be penalized if you choose to skip parts of the study, not participate, or withdraw from the study at any time. You are ineligible to participate if you are currently within the European Economic Area.

What would you do?

If you choose to participate in this study, you will complete a survey. You will complete a survey that asks about various factors that influence preparedness of admissions staff as well as some basic demographic questions. In total, your involvement in this study will last approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

Are any risks expected?

We do not anticipate any risks beyond those that would occur in everyday life.

Will your information be protected?

Your responses will be anonymous; nothing that will identify you will be linked to your responses. The findings from this study may be presented in the dissertation. After your data has been deidentified, your data may be used in other research projects.

Who will benefit from this study?

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study, however the goal of the research is to better understand the preparedness of admissions staff in supporting undocumented college students and to provide recommendations to 4-year public universities as they support undocumented students.

Whom do you contact if you have any questions?

If you have any questions about the research or wish to withdraw from the study, contact Dave Marcial at dmarcial2@gmail.com or Lydia Kyei-Blankson at lkyeibl@ilstu.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, contact the Illinois State University Research Ethics & Compliance Office at (309) 438-5527 or IRB@ilstu.edu.

Documentation of Consent

Consent is given by clicking the survey.

[Take the Survey](#)

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

https://illinoisstate.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0DmFIxaoUroaEzY

You can print this form for your records.