

# SUPPORTING OUR UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS

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What about the  
children?



# Supporting Undocumented Students



**Disclosure** is the act of *giving* someone new or secret information; it entails revealing such information and thus making it known.

- Why might disclosure be beneficial?
- Why might disclosure be constraining or problematic?
- What might prevent a student from disclosing their undocumented status?
  - What might enable (or help) a student disclose their status?
- What kind of fears do you think our undocumented students have?



# Paul: CSU Student, Business Major



- Paul was one of the first undocumented students I interviewed

He:

- Was brought from **South Korea** when he was one year old
- Entered the United States with a **visa**; along with his parents
- Hardly spoke Korean; **identified as American**; and *distanced himself* from the “immigrant label”
- *Presented* himself as an **AB540 Student**
- **Worried** about being deported to a country he had no connection to
- Had **limited** *open communication* with his parents: they would not discuss any details
- Had not been able to adjust his status even though his parents did
- **Did not have to pay** for tuition or his car; parents were able to cover those costs
- Reflected and spoke about being *more* **privileged** than his undocumented peers

# Theme #1: Diversity

- There is so much **diversity** within our undocumented student population:
  - racial, ethnic background
  - socioeconomic status
  - mixed status family structure
  - age of arrival
  - fluency in English
  - parents' education level

\*Some undocumented students are not first generation college students.

\*Having a mixed status family structure might lead to increased resources.

- Race & fluency can help someone *pass* as “American” and avoid disclosure.
  - Can further alienation and exclusion or enable inclusion.
  - Ultimately, there is an *intersectionality* of resources and statuses that can impact our lived experiences.

# Theme #2: Connection Varies

- **Disclosure** of undocumented status and **connection** to immigrant label or group *vary*.
  - Some *distance* themselves from the larger group by adopting “Undocumented American” [Dreamer] narrative: *raised in the U.S. who want to academically and financially contribute to our society*.
  - Others seek to eliminate the worthy/unworthy narrative and embrace the label and status of being undocumented.
  - ❖ Some identify as American; others do not. Some might identify as Dreamers, AB 540 students, Immigrants, “Undocumented and Unafraid”, humans, etc.



as opposed  
to:





# Theme #3: Shared Vulnerabilities

- Regardless, undocumented students and immigrants are bound by their experiences with illegality or **liminal legality** (some access to protection, social resources/benefits may exist) that translate to *shared vulnerabilities*.

## Shared vulnerabilities include:

- Limited ability or inability to work legally; seek internships; travel; pursue graduate school
- Limited access to financial aid and/or economic stability
- Risk of deportation for self and others
- Bullying; exploitation; harassment
- Emotional distress
- Limited federal and state help during COVID





# Theme #4: Inconsistent Communication with Parents

- Some undocumented students have limited communication with their parents and thus – limited information regarding their legal status; some are not informed of their undocumented status until the end of high school.



# Theme #5: Stress & Trauma

- Undocumented students can experience stressors and **trauma**.
  - “Trauma results from an **event**, **series of events**, or **set of circumstances** that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.” –Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration, 2020
- Stressors and trauma can happen *before*, *during*, or *after* migration (Franco 2018).
- *What might be some examples?*



# Emotional Invalidation & Dismissive Positivity

- Necessary to avoid dismissive (toxic) positivity and emotional invalidation.
  - a. Emotional Invalidation: statements or actions that negate experiences and/or feelings. They can happen verbally and nonverbally.
  - b. Dismissive (Toxic) Positivity: a cognitive bias and an unconscious mental strategy to avoid often painful, unresolved, uncomfortable, and problematic emotions at all costs.



El and DP can be well intended and **not** malicious.

- 1) **What might these behaviors reflect?**
- 2) **Why might people engage in these behaviors?**

## Validation and Hope

This is hard. You've done hard things before and I believe in you.

I know there's a lot that could go wrong. What could go right?

All vibes are welcome here.

It's pretty normal to have some negativity in this situation.

## Toxic Positivity

You'll get over it!

Just be positive!

Good vibes only!

Stop being so negative!

Who can engage in these types of behaviors?

Why is it important to refrain from EI and DP?

# Theme #6: Stigma, Coming Out, and Fear

- Research suggest that undocumented students confront **stigmas** that present or label them: as job takers, criminal, an economic drain, abusers of “the system” and even uneducated and deficient (Chang et al. 2017: 190).

*What is a stigma?*

- **Stigma**: a permanently spoiled (negative) identity. Especially used for immigrants who are labeled “unworthy.” Work in conjunction with stereotypes.

# Theme #6: Stigma, Coming Out, and Fear

- Stigma can both discourage and encourage individuals to come out.
- Awareness of stigma can create **fear**.
  - For some, this exposure begins in childhood (fosters concealment).
- Research suggests that undocumented youth begin experiencing feelings of fear, criminality, and invisibility as they become young adults; leading them to feel like outsiders who cannot disclose their true identities or statuses (Chang et al. 2017, Munoz 2016, Perez Huber et al. 2009).
- Fears about deportation, family separation, putting employers at risk influence:
  - *If, how, and who* students disclose their legal status to (Munoz 2016).



# Fear: Rejecting It

- While many students do experience **fear**; some try to overcome and reject fear and come out.
- Overcoming fear can give individuals a sense of agency or control that being undocumented “seems to take away” (De la Torre and Germano 2014: 454).
- Living with fear can be fluid (Munoz 2016) – fear is a spectrum.

Afraid ↔ Unafraid

Individuals do not simply come out once become eternally unafraid.

*Which situations may revive fear?*







# Complexities and Negating Stigma

- Individuals do not always accept or internalize stigmas – they are socially constructed and we can be aware of that and reject them.
- However, we can still be impacted by stigmas we do not internalize or adhere to.
- Negating a stigma or embracing an identity *does not* shield or protect us from institutionalized oppression or disadvantage.
- Students who are openly out as undocumented must still deal with the ramifications of their legal status and the limitations their undocumented status brings. Ultimately, those embedded practices of discrimination are a reality.
- Examples?

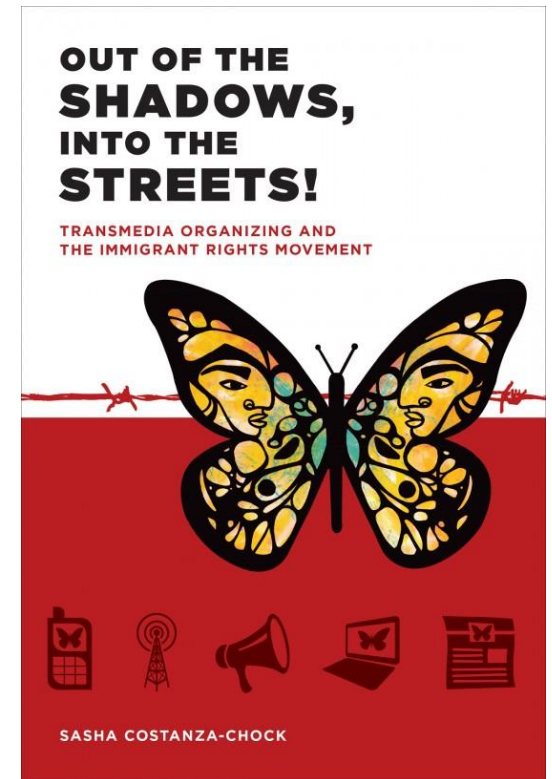


# Complexities and Negating Stigma

- Regardless of how much agency undocumented students have or engage in, there is a limit to what they can achieve in the context of the law (Chang et al 2017: 190).
- “... is an amazing place to organize and meet with other DREAMers,” Daniela explained to us, “but we don’t have the space to talk about taking care of ourselves. We need a space where we can be weak and share feelings. We can put on a brave face but when you go home at night it sucks to be undocumented” (De la Torre and Germano 2014:455).

# Undocumented Closet

- Undocumented students “come out” (De la Torre III and Germano 2014, Munoz 2016).
- Being undocumented can be or feel like a secret (De la Torre III and Germano 2014).
- Not unlike “coming out” (that is, revealing one’s sexual orientation or gender identity) in the LGBT community, many young people now “come out as undocumented” to their close friends, at rallies and protests and online (De la Torre III and Germano 2014: 450).



# Coming Out: A Cost-Benefit Analysis

- Coming out (the decision to disclose personal, vulnerable identities or statuses) is a **choice** and often a **product** of a cost-benefit analysis (Munoz 2016).
- There are risks and benefits associated with disclosing one's legal status. Students reveal their status when it works in their favor and conceal it in situations when they feel it could be used against them. (Perez 2012: 27).
- Risk is first identified. There is cautious decision-making around self-disclosure of legal status (Chang et al 2017: 204 )
- The decision to disclose personal, vulnerable identities or statuses is a strategic act (Munoz 2016).
- Coming out can be empowering!



# Audience: Who do we come out to?

A student shares:

“ ... (I come out) to my friends, to my teachers, and most importantly coming out to myself. We must accept the fact that we're undocumented.”

(De la Torre and Germano 2014: 463)

- Coming out to ourselves: Chang et al. (2017) also finds that individuals have a *self image* and not only do we tell others who we are, *we also tell ourselves*.

# General Emotions

- Undocumented students can experience feelings of **pain, shame, and anger** especially when they feel misunderstood or “inappropriately defined by stereotypes” (Chang et al. 2017:202).
- Feelings of **anxiety, depression, isolation,** and **emotional distress** have also been documented in research (Villegas-Sandoval 2014). **Concern** for suicide also exists (De La Torre III and Germano 2014).
- However, these feelings can be channeled into acts of resistance and defiance and become embedded into their **hope** (Chang 2017).
- Undocumented students can feel **empowered** to push boundaries, take risks, and confront fear (Munoz 2016).

# Emotional Consequences of Disclosure or Concealment

- Feel **bad** for lying to individuals, especially close friends (Munoz 2016).
- **Awkward** disclosing their status.
- For some, the coming out experience can be **humiliating** especially when they were pessimistic and not supportive of their legal status.
- However!!

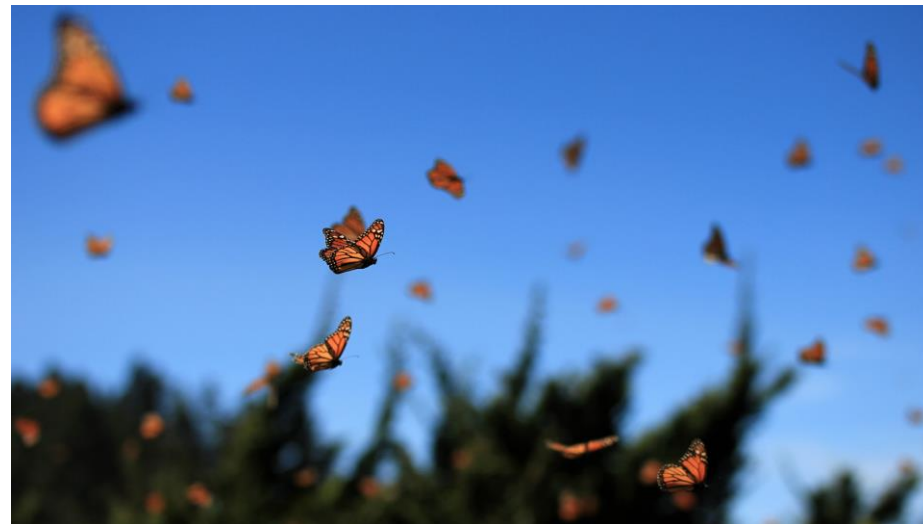
# Emotional Consequences of Disclosure or Concealment, continued.

- Some undocumented youth and students feel **ENCOURAGED** and have higher sense of control.
- Coming out can be **LIBERATING** (Munoz 2017, Galindo 2012).
- "Disclosure became more than a political act, but rather it became a way for these undocumented students to humanize themselves and to accept their legal status as a powerful identity (Munoz 2016: 727)."
- Such data reminds us to consider the spectrum of experiences that can exist!! 😊

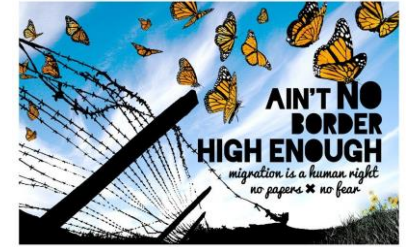


# Why all the butterflies?

- 1) Why do we so often see butterflies in material for and/or about undocumented students and immigrants?
- 2) What do you think they symbolize?
- 3) What parallels might exist between butterflies and immigrants?



# Why all the butterflies?



The **Monarch butterfly** is often used to symbolize:

- 1) undocumented immigrants in the United States
  - 2) allies and “safe spaces” for our undocumented community
  - 3) support and awareness for undocumented immigrants.
- It is often used in material for our undocumented students and present in demonstrations, college centers, and more.
  - The monarch butterfly is used because it migrates from Latin America to the United States and Canada without being constrained by borders; it symbolizes that migration is natural and beautiful. Beyond that, it symbolizes resiliency and the fact that migration is done to survive. The wings of butterflies are not clipped; we understand that their migration is natural and a response to the environment. *Why do we clip the wings of humans?*



# Post-Secondary Education & Undocumented Students

- Undocumented students can experience difficulty with identifying *supportive* and *informed* college administrators whom they can trust with their legal status (Muñoz 2014; Perez Huber 2010; Villegas-Sandoval 2014) ). This is important as environment can impact disclosure, wellbeing, and access to resources.
- But colleges can also be sites of political activism and can promote civic engagement via student groups and clubs (Gonzalez 2008) → Can lead to recruitment, social networking, and critical thinking!
- Students report professional relationships with their teachers, professors, and counselors “as important sources of support and guidance, whether through acts of empathy and emotional support, advice on navigating legal and logistical complexities as a student, or simple gestures of human solidarity” (Chan 2017: 206).
  - However, “class climate” can overshadow the support of professors.



# Practical Tips for Staff, Friends, & Allies



- 1) Complete professional development trainings and/or modules.
- 2) Create and maintain peer support groups for students.
- 3) Be aware of external service providers and resources and link students to them.
- 4) Don't make assumptions about their lived experiences or identities: they are complex
- 5) Don't "out" someone: maintaining privacy is important for many.
- 6) Be trustworthy and empathetic so students can disclose important information and reach necessary resources.
- 7) Provide an outreach program that can provide services.
- 8) Provide a list of scholarships and opportunities on syllabus, Canvas, etc.
- 9) Encourage them! Review personal statements and write letters of recommendation.



# Being an Ally

At its core:

- Allyship exists on a spectrum.
- Allyship means following and listening; respecting the actions and wishes of the communities we want to help and allow *them* to take the lead.
- Reflect on your own access to resources: time, energy, finances.
- It is not rooted in “savior complex”: It is not for ego or performance.
- Allyship is a continuous practice; it is a series of behaviors; a willingness to learn and take accountability for any mistakes or hiccups.



# Being an Ally



- It means Supporting ALL undocumented immigrants; liberation is interconnected. We cannot fully support our undocumented students without helping their undocumented siblings, parents, community members.
- Keep in mind: you're going to get things wrong. Be graceful and humble. Learn.
- Be flexible with our students: some have unreliable access to internet, computers, free time. Some live in crowded living conditions, poverty and might be ashamed to turn on screens or microphones during our Zoom meetings.
- Allow yourself to disengage
- Engage in self care to prevent compassion fatigue and burnout. We cannot give from an empty well. All we can do is our best. Individually, we cannot save the world but we can impact the lives of our students. Seek help if needed (such as counseling) – sometimes when we listen to others we can experience re-victimization of our own trauma or experience vicarious/secondary trauma.
- Support our street vendors.
- If you are in a position to do so, contribute financially to organizations, scholarships, undocumented communities/individuals, and movements.

# Resources to Review



1. **Log onto** California Community Colleges' Vision Resource Center and complete the following two modules: **Supporting Undocumented Students** and **Trauma-Informed Care** @ <https://visionresourcecenter.cccco.edu/>
  2. **Review** being "Undocu-Friendly" at a an institutional and individual level: 10 Ways to Support Undocumented Students: [https://immigrantsrising.org/wp-content/uploads/Immigrants-Rising\\_Top-10-Ways-to-Support-Undocumented-Students.pdf](https://immigrantsrising.org/wp-content/uploads/Immigrants-Rising_Top-10-Ways-to-Support-Undocumented-Students.pdf)
  3. **Visit** College of the Canyons' Dreamers Together Home Page: <https://www.canyons.edu/student-services/enrollmentservices/dreamers/index.php>
  4. **Read** Important Points for Allies: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NKpWjSeqEpAIYrS4qS2S22xKFb3FsetyszyXJC7jXY/edit?usp=sharing>
- This information is relevant to many student populations – veterans, LGBTQI+, students with invisible disabilities, etc.
  - Following these practices make us better practitioners. Our goal is to reach equity for ALL students.



# Resources in the Community

1. College of the Canyons' Student Health & Wellness Center:  
<https://www.canyons.edu/studentservices/health/index.php>
2. 211\*: <https://www.211la.org/search-resources> & <https://www.211la.org/immigration>
3. CHIRLA (Coalition for Humane Immigrant Right): <https://www.chirla.org/>
4. ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union), Antelope Valley Chapter:  
<https://www.aclusocal.org/en/chapters/antelope-valley-chapter>

- \*Can provide or locate mental health services.





# *Lives In Limbo* Reading Group

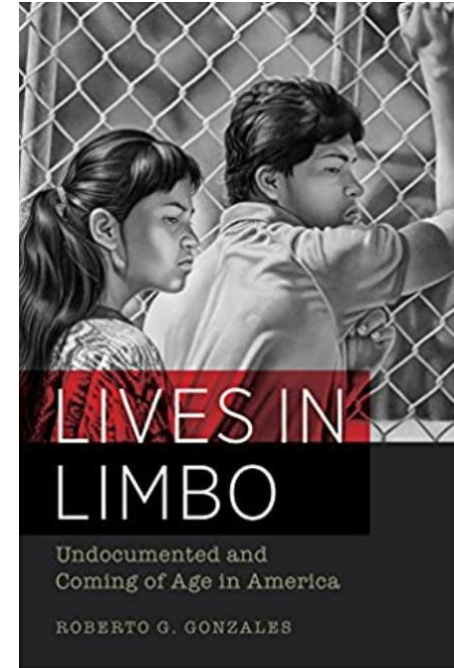
Please join Dr. Hernan Ramirez and Dr. Juan Buriel as they lead:



- *Lives in Limbo*: Undocumented and Coming of Age in America by researcher Roberto G. Gonzalez
- *Lives in Limbo* mines the results of a twelve-year study that followed 150 undocumented young adults in Los Angeles.
- The group meet from noon to 1pm every other Friday, starting on September 18:

The schedule is as follows:

- Friday, September 18, 12:00pm-1:00pm: Chapters 1 and 2
- Friday, October 2, 12:00pm-1:00pm: Chapters 3 and 4
- Friday, October 16, 12:00pm-1:00pm: Chapters 5 and 6
- Friday, October 30, 12:00pm-1:00pm: Chapters 7 and 8
- Friday, November 13, 12:00pm-1:00pm: Chapter 9 and wrap-up



**Dr. Hernan Ramirez**  
**Sociology Instructor**

- Study of race
- Latino/a sociology
- Informal economy
- Immigrant Economic Social Mobility
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**English Instructor**

- Comparative Literature
- Chicano Literature
- Critical Theory
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# California Community Colleges: Promising Practices and Shared Challenges in Meeting the Needs of Undocumented Students

Alonso Garcia, MPPA  
Foundation for California Community Colleges

# CCC DREAMERS PROJECT OVERVIEW & RESULTS

## California Community Colleges **Dreamers Project**

Strengthening Institutional Practices  
To Support Undocumented Student Success

### COMPLETE REPORT



Project funded by



The James Irvine  
Foundation

In partnership with



California  
Community  
Colleges



FOUNDATION *for* CALIFORNIA  
COMMUNITY COLLEGES

**IMMIGRANTS  
RISING**  
TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH EDUCATION

## **CCC Dreamers Project**

- Dreamers Advisory Group
- Statewide Comprehensive Survey of
  - Over 200 valid responses from 111 colleges
- Eight regional meetings
  - Four to gather data
  - Four to share findings
- Final Report published March 2019
  - Statewide Challenges
  - Promising Practices
  - Recommendations

## **CCC Dreamers Report**

- [Executive Summary](#)
- [Complete Report](#)

## **One Page Specific Recommendations**

- [Administrators](#)
- [Financial Aid](#)
- [DRC Coordinators](#)
- [Students](#)

<https://foundationccc.org/What-We-Do/Equity/Dreamers-Project>

## Statewide Trends

- Top Challenges:
  - Financial Support
  - Legal & Mental Health Services
  - Identifying Students/Outreach
- Lack of Institutional Support
- Limited Resources for non-AB 540/  
non-DACA students
- Need for cross-campus collaboration



## **CCC DREAMERS PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Improve identification, student data protection and outreach
2. Increase staff training and support
3. Formalize support for dedicated stakeholders, staff, & space at each campus
4. Improve access to financial support for all undocumented students
5. Expand strategies to promote student retention
6. Ensure CCCCO's statewide guidance and policy support

# CHAMPIONING INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES

## California Community Colleges Dreamers Project

Strengthening Institutional Practices  
To Support Undocumented Student Success

A collaborative effort between the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO), the Foundation for California Community Colleges (Foundation), and Immigrants Rising, the Dreamers Project lays the groundwork for a longer-term program and initiatives needed to meet undocumented students' needs. The project includes a landscape analysis undertaken through an online survey of community colleges and four regional meetings, as well as guidance from an Advisory Group and a final report submitted to the CCCCCO.

In the full finalized report, the Foundation and Immigrants Rising present identified, shared challenges in serving undocumented students. Recommendations about how to better serve undocumented students, paired with promising practices underway, are provided for implementation at the individual, group, and institutional levels to create systemic change that benefits California.

**For questions about the  
Dreamers Project, contact:**

**Iris Aguilar**

Senior Director, Equity and Community Impact  
[iaguilar@foundationccc.org](mailto:iaguilar@foundationccc.org)

Project funded by



In partnership with



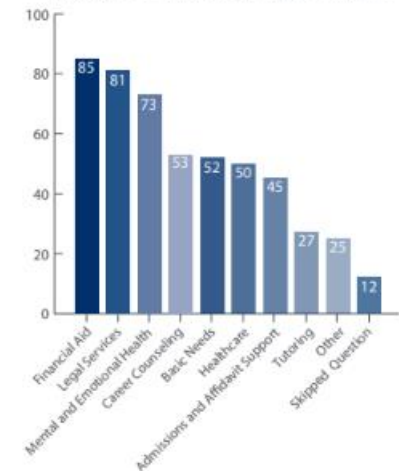
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### Undocumented Students' Most Pressing Needs

Among 111 Participating Colleges Surveyed



## 50,000-70,000

ESTIMATED UNDOCUMENTED  
STUDENTS ENROLLED



# Framework for Conceptualizing Institutional Support

Individual  
✱ Foundational



Group of People  
✱ Emerging



Institutional  
✱ Comprehensive



From [UndocuCollege Guide and Equity Tool](#)  
(2016)



# Ensure Website Information Is UP-TO-DATE & Accurate

## Admissions Website

- Include contact information for questions on AB540 application
- Update all forms
- Include link to Undocumented Student Resources websites (if available)
- List forms and requirements on main page

## Financial Aid Website

- Include financial aid contact for CADAA applications
- Include resources like an overview
- Update all requirements and forms
- Embed links to Immigrants Rising resources
  - Scholarship list
  - In-state tuition tool

# Increase staff training and support

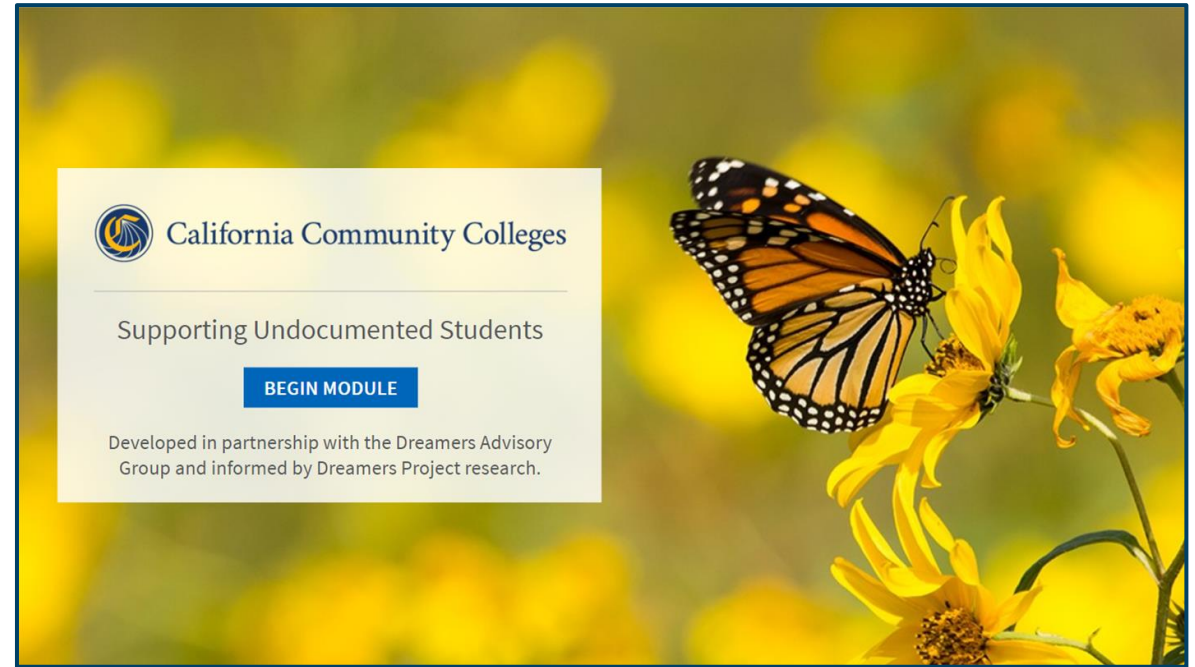
Ensure all CCC personnel are adequately trained to build institutional practices that promote compliance with California state laws and educational codes.

- Campus-wide UndocuAlly Trainings
- Department trainings such as Admissions, Financial Aid, Admissions, etc.
- Focused training & support for those who directly support undocumented students
- Cross-campus learning and networking
- Systemwide digital hub (Vision Resource Center)

# Increase Staff Training and Support

## Learning Module: Supporting Undocumented Students

- 30-50 minute module
- For administrators, staff, faculty, and student leaders on your campus
- Provides:
  - Overview of undocumented students in CA Community Colleges
  - Promising practices and resources to support them



*Please encourage Staff, Faculty and Administrators to Complete this.*

<https://visionresourcecenter.cccco.edu>

# Improve access to financial support for undocumented students

Increase undocumented students' ability to receive all financial aid and scholarships for which they are eligible.

- AB 540/SB 68 Eligible:
  - Trainings for front-line staff regarding in-state tuition and CADAAA
  - Financial aid checklists for CA Dream Act
- Non-AB 540/SB 68 Eligible:
  - Implementation of Educational Code 76140-76143, Article 9
  - Inclusive campus scholarships and/or dedicated scholarships

# Ensure CCCCCO's statewide guidance and policy support

Provide systemic oversight regarding equitable implementation of state laws, alignment with CCCCCO initiatives, and sustained advocacy.

- Standardize the CCCApply application process regarding citizenship
- Develop and share early identification promising practices for incoming undocumented students while protecting student data
- Advocate for statewide legislation supporting undocumented students
- Declare annual Undocumented Student Week of Action Third Week of October
- Dedicated staff centralized within system to ensure all campuses are compliant
- Create a training module for onboarding new CCC staff to support undocumented students' success
- Collaborate with California Student Aid Commission to analyze Cal Grant and CA Promise Grants disbursements to increase award rates

**NEXT STEPS**  
  
**at**  
  
**YOUR COLLEGE**

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**What's YOUR  
COMMITMENT?**



# Announcements: Future Events & Meetings



- **DREAMERS TOGETHER TASKFORCE MEETING:**  
August 19, 2020, 4:00pm – 5:30pm
- **DREAMERS TOGETHER FINANCIAL TOWNHALL:**  
September 16, 2020, 1:00pm -2:00pm

PLEASE  
→ join us ←

