BACKGROUND

- Immigration remains a controversial topic dominating domestic and international conversations about borders, migrants, and human rights.
- The undocumented student movement and identity evolved from the immigrant rights movement of the early 2000s.
- Undocumented students are those who identify as undocumented and queer.
- According to the Perez (2014), approximately 80,000 undocumented teens turn 18 every year, with 65,000 graduating from high school (cited by the Department of Education 2015, p. 3).
- Only 54% of undocumented teens earn a high school degree, compared to 82% of their peers who earn it.
- Extant research on this topic is limited; most of the research conducted on undocumented students does not overtly mention gender and sexuality, even though sexuality and gender are important parts of social identities.
- Yang (n.d.) finds “prejudice and discrimination in schools creates a stigmatizing and stressful social environment for undocumented and queer students.” Because the intersections of these two identities can compound the impact of this environment, resulting in an unmet need for support and nurturance as “one of the most poorly accounted for groups on campuses” (Yang, p. 2).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS & METHODS

- Guiding Research Questions:
  - Are undocumented students being served? If not, how can institutional practices alter to provide aid and support?
  - Are institutions of higher learning helping undocumented students excel, survive, and thrive in the face of seemingly insurmountable sociopolitical and economic obstacles?
- Methods
  - This research paper analyzes resources, programs, and institutional practices that serve undocumented students at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and University of California, Irvine.
  - A literature review was conducted to assess current climate for undocumented student in higher education. Higher education journals, government documents, and articles from nongovernmental organizations were accessed.
  - Conducted a feminist case study on two institutions to evaluate current university practices and whether they are addressing the needs of UndocuQueer students.
  - Research was guided by feminist perspectives and Latinx critical race theory.

DATA ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>University of California, Irvine</th>
<th>University of Nevada, Las Vegas</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do these schools create open and welcoming environments to undocumented and undocuqueer students?</td>
<td>Yes. The UCI Dreamers website and office are easily accessible while they do not specifically address undocumented students, they do not provide this site for undocumented students.</td>
<td>No. A student-run organization has been created and an office within the Student Engagement and Diversity Office has facilitated three events centered on these identities, UNLV does not openly advocate for undocumented or undocuqueer resources.</td>
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<td>Do these schools provide services and resources to help guide undocumented students?</td>
<td>Yes. On the Dreamers website, students are able to navigate financial and educational advice geared towards undocumented students. The site does not directly address the needs of undocumented students specifically.</td>
<td>No. The university does not provide information pertaining to financial resources, psychological support, or even an official position on undocumented students within the school.</td>
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<td>Do these schools communicate and demonstrate support for undocumented and undocuqueer youth?</td>
<td>Yes. Janet Napolitano, the president of University of California schools has made it a mission to provide financial, educational, and legal support to students. The UC system will earmark $8.4 million a year through the 2018-2019 school year.</td>
<td>No. Unlike UC Irvine, UNLV provided an event centered in the intersectional identity of an undocumented student in Fall 2015. In addition, it also held two events on undocumented students. While these events can serve to introduce and initiate support for students, these events in the same number of years does not facilitate or create a supportive environment.</td>
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<td>Do these schools provide peer-to-peer support and relationship-building opportunities?</td>
<td>Yes. Within the UCI Dreamers Resource Office, student coordinators (some of which identify as undocumented) can offer support and advice to other students. Students also facilitate the ally training program.</td>
<td>No. No support provided. The UNLV UndocuNetwork (a registered student organization) was created in Fall 2015. Students are able to able to join and meet students, staff, and faculty who are allies and advocates.</td>
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<td>Do these schools build staff capacity and knowledge of relevant issues?</td>
<td>Yes. The UCI Dreamers Resource Office facilitates an &quot;AB540 and Undocumented Student Aby Training&quot; for staff and faculty.</td>
<td>No, as mentioned above, while events have been held, these do not effectively build staff capacity or knowledge in a continual or sustainable manner.</td>
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RESULTS

- Universities are influenced (and restricted) by geographical location; that is, policies affect how individual states create and administer resources.
- In California, policy changes allow institutions to foster resources to support undocumented students (and undocumented students indirectly), financially and from a student support perspective.
- In Nevada, the lack of official state policy provides a liminal space; while UNLV doesn’t restrict or support undocumented (much less undocumented students) some students are able to navigate this in order to secure some funds.
- In the university setting, undocumented students receive support from different on campus resources. Institutional support is an area of particular interest as undocumented students require guidance and support.

CONCLUSION & FURTHER RESEARCH

- The U.S. Department of Education believes the most vulnerable student population in its education system are undocumented students.
- This comparative case study on two institutions of higher learning demonstrates the need for additional resources for undocumented students.
- UC Irvine provides many accessible resources by emrasing and celebrating its undocumented student population, it has not provided space or resources specifically for undocuqueer students.
- UNLV has attempted to raise awareness over the last few years by hosting events and allowing student organizations for undocumented students to exist, but maintains a dire need to address and recognize this student population in an intentional and official capacity.
- Financial barriers coupled with legal, psychological, and social roadblocks demand additional attention from scholars and students supports services.

SELECT REFERENCES