A Perilous Path: Undocumented Immigrant Students and the College Pipeline

Paz M. Olivérez

Abstract

Undocumented immigrant students are a growing population in our nation's urban high schools, colleges and universities. Prior to and upon entering institutions of higher education, these students require college preparatory information, support, and guidance. Accordingly, this article discusses the challenges undocumented students encounter as they move through the college pipeline and provides practical recommendations for how high schools and colleges can work together to improve these students' access to higher education.

Today's schools and universities are becoming increasingly diverse and serve students who come to campus with varied backgrounds and life experiences (Olivas 2004). As campus demographics change, those responsible for providing guidance and support to students ought to consider how best to ensure that all students' needs are addressed. As students move through the academic pipeline, they require different types of assistance. Each student possesses characteristics that can impact their potential for academic success. Undocumented immigrant students, who face educational, professional, and institutional challenges and restrictions, are among the students who face the greatest number of difficulties and consequently require timely and accurate information about the opportunities and supports available to them.

In this article, I describe the educational experiences of undocumented immigrant youth who (a) entered the United States without inspection or with fraudulent documents, or (b) entered legally as a nonimmigrant, but then violated the terms of his or her status and remained in the United States without authorization (Badger and Yale-Loehr 2006). I do so in order to provide a contextual basis for the argument that K-12 schools, colleges, and universities must partner in developing systematic programs and practices to better serve this growing population of students.

Undocumented immigrants currently constitute nearly twelve million members of the U.S. population (Passel 2005). Approximately sixty percent migrated to the country from Mexico, with another twenty-five percent coming from portions of Latin America. Asians make up approximately ten percent of the undocumented immigrants currently residing in the United States. The two states that house the largest number of these migrants are California and Texas, which house twenty-five percent and fourteen percent of the population, respectively (Passel 2005). Roughly half of the undocumented students who attend school in the United States do not graduate from

high school. Of those that do, however, nearly fifty percent go on to attend some college. When undocumented immigrants persist through the academic pipeline, they often do so with great success (Olivérez 2006). College-ready undocumented students are a growing population in our nation and educational institutions and therefore, require our attention.

In the discussion to follow, I describe the legal landscape related to undocumented students' access to higher education in the United States. I then go on to explain how these policies play out as undocumented students endeavor to transition from high school to college. Finally, I conclude by offering recommendations for how the systems of K-12 and higher education can work together to improve college access for undocumented immigrant students.

Background: Undocumented Students and Higher Education

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that of the twelve million undocumented immigrants residing in the United States, in the year 2000 approximately 2.5 million of them were youth under age eighteen. Although reliable numbers are difficult to find, estimates by several researchers (Passel 2001; Propaltsis 2005) indicate that more than fifty thousand of these young people graduate from U.S. high schools each year and among this group, thousands are eligible to attend college. Across the nation, thousands of undocumented students are admitted (Passel 2001).

American sentiment toward immigrants has varied greatly over the country's history. Currently, state and federal policies conflict with regard to undocumented immigrants' right to access a variety of benefits including financial aid for college. Beginning in 1982 with *Plyler v. Doe*, which holds it illegal for a state to deny school-aged undocumented students the right to a free public education, undocumented students gained the right to a K-12 education. Years later, undocumented students' ineligibility for state and federally-sponsored financial aid was established by Section 505 of the federal *Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996* (IIRIRA) which states:

> An alien who is not lawfully present in the United States shall not be eligible on the basis of residence within a State...for any postsecondary education benefit unless a citizen or national of the United States is eligible for such a benefit (in no less an amount, duration, and scope) without regard to whether the citizen or national is such a resident (Title 8, Chap.14, Sec. 1623).

Any state allowing undocumented immigrants to pay in-state tuition must provide the same right to out-of-state residents. However, whether or not the IIRIRA prohibits individual states from passing legislation (such as in-state tuition policies) that would provide undocumented students with greater access to higher education is under debate at both the state and national levels.

As the debate continues, America's urban schools and universities must work together to develop systematic mechanisms to address the influx of large numbers of undocumented students to their institutions. As students move through high school and into college, institutions need to partner to meet students needs at different points along the pipeline. While laws for serving students in the K-12 system are more clear, how higher education institutions deal with these students depends on multiple factors, including whether or not the state in which the college or university is located has a policy to improve or prohibit undocumented students' access to higher education. In some states without explicit policies, institutions are left to make their own decisions about how to deal with undocumented students.

Undocumented students face many hurdles in applying to college, but new financial concerns arise after they are admitted due to their ineligibility for state and federal financial aid. Some undocumented students are able to find financial assistance through scholarships, though most private scholarships require proof of U.S. citizenship. The few open to undocumented students are often sought by many, making them more competitive and difficult to attain. While some states have policies in place that allow these students to pay in-state tuition, many undocumented families still lack the funds to pay in-state rates (Badger and Yale-Loehr 2002). Due to a variety of limitations resulting from their residency status, the typical undocumented adult earns under $8,500 a year (Government Accounting Office 2000). These limitations prohibit many undocumented students from pursuing higher education and indicate another area where schools and universities can partner to improve undocumented students' opportunities to secure funds for college.

As recently as the winter of 2006, the battle over whether undocumented immigrants should be provided with the right and financial support to attend public higher education institutions raged on in the state of California. As with a similar case recently filed and subsequently thrown out of court in Kansas, the plaintiffs argued that state policies granting undocumented immigrant students the right to pay in-state resident college tuition fees violate federal policy and discriminate against out-of-state students who are U.S. citizens (National Immigration Law Center 2005). However, judges in both states ruled that the in-state tuition policies were not in violation of any law.

Undocumented students in California, Texas, and eight other states, are eligible to pay in-state tuition if they have attended high school in the state for three years or more. In June 2001, Texas passed House Bill 1403, enabling immigrant students to qualify as state residents for in-state tuition and to receive state-sponsored financial aid if they graduated from and attended high school in Texas for at least three years prior to graduation. Similarly, in October 2001, California passed Assembly Bill 540, making undocumented students meeting comparable criteria to that established in Texas exempt from paying out-of-state tuition costs. In recent years, states like California, Kansas, and New York-where in-state tuition policies exist to help make college more affordable for undocumented students-have faced court cases like those described above as well as a barrage of proposed legislation that would repeal such laws.

Undocumented students in ten states are currently eligible to pay in-state tuition fees. Texas and Oklahoma, however, are the only states in the country where undocumented students are also eligible for state-sponsored financial aid. The TEXAS Grant ranges from $735 to $2,375 per semester depending on the type of institution (two-year, four-year, vocational) the student will attend, while Oklahoma's grant program covers seventy-five percent of the cost of college enrollment or $1,000 to $1,300 per year, whichever is less. Attempts to pass legislation in California that would allow AB540-eligible students to receive a CAL Grant were vetoed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. Information about bill numbers and dates of enactment of the ten existing in-state tuition policies are provided in the table below.

STATE	BILL NO.	YEAR OF ENACTMENT
California	AB 540	2001
Illinois	HB 0060	2003
Kansas	KSA 76-731a	2004
Nebraska	LB 239	2006
New Mexico	SB 582	2005
New York	SB 784	2003
Oklahoma	SB 596	2003
Texas	HB 1403	2001
Utah	HB 144	2002
Washington	HB 1079	2003

While some states have passed legislation to ease the passage of undocumented students into higher education, other states have taken the opposite approach. In 2004 Virginia passed House Bill 156, which forbids the enrollment of undocumented students at Virginia's public colleges and universities. Legislators in Arizona, Kentucky, and Tennessee have also attempted to enact legislation that would prohibit undocumented students from accessing higher education by restricting their eligibility to attend postsecondary institutions and for in-state tuition benefits and financial aid (National Immigration Law Center 2006). To date, only Virginia has been successful in doing so. However, Georgia, Colorado, and Arizona have recently passed sweeping legislation that severely restricts the rights of undocumented immigrants in those states, but implications with respect to their access to higher education remain to be seen.

New federal legislation called the DREAM (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) Act, which would repeal the federal provision that bars states from providing in-state tuition to undocumented immigrants and provide students with an easier path toward legalization, is currently under consideration in Congress. The DREAM Act would grant undocumented immigrant students the opportunity to obtain

legal status, making them eligible to pay in-state tuition and for state and federal financial aid. Despite bipartisan support for the legislation in both the House and Senate, at the end of the second session of the109th congress the legislation had yet to be introduced for a vote.

Policies, rules, and regulations that shape undocumented students' ability to attend colleges and universities exist on the local, state, and federal levels. They make navigating the high school-to-college transition particularly cumbersome for undocumented students. High school, college, and university staff people are not being trained to work with undocumented students. Undocumented high school students are often told that they cannot go to college because those charged with counseling and advising them possess little or no information about their postsecondary options. Later, when undocumented students apply to and enroll in college, they are sometimes asked to show proof of residency, a social security number, and/or government-issued identification by uninformed college and university staff people. These factors along with undocumented students' ineligibility for financial aid make the road to and through higher education especially difficult.

Making the Transition

State and federal policies shape undocumented students' access to higher education and determine how difficult it will be for them to transition from high school to college. Several challenges arise during this process, beginning with the college application process and ending when the students graduate from college, particularly if they have yet to obtain legal residency status. Schools and universities must be well informed about how these policies impact undocumented students on their campuses. By working together to assist students as they move along the college pipeline, these institutions can help ensure that undocumented students are aware of their postsecondary options and how to reach their educational goals. In this section, I provide a chronological description of the various obstacles and processes that undocumented students must traverse as they move from high school to higher education. The information in this discussion derives from several years working closely with undocumented students at various points along the college pipeline and highlights where educational institutions can concentrate their efforts in order to improve students' potential to move through the process successfully.

Preparing for college

Low-income Latino and immigrant students in America's urban communities experience schooling in ways that largely prohibit their access to higher education. The educational engagement of these students is negatively influenced by the poor quality schools they attend and the substandard resources, attention, support, and preparation that these schools provide (Henig et al. 1999). This situation is exacerbated by the fact that many low-income Latino students are the children of immigrants and/or come from homes where English is not spoken, neither parent has attended college, and there is little knowledge about the formal educational system in the United States

(Stanton-Salazar 2001; Valenzuela 1999). These factors determine the funds of knowledge that students bring to school and in many instances leave them at a great disadvantage (Kao and Tienda 1998). Their poor academic outcomes and low college-going rates are evidence of their lack of access to adequate preparation (McDonough 1997).

This lack of access to college preparation results in the low numbers of Latino students who are academically ready to pursue higher education. For example, the U.S. Census indicates that for every one hundred Chicano/a students that enter elementary school, forty-six will graduate from high school, eight will go on to earn a Bachelor's degree, two will earn a graduate or professional degree and less than one will earn a doctorate. These numbers demonstrate that simply getting into and through college is difficult for the average Latino student. Now consider the experience of the undocumented Latino student who must overcome all of the challenges noted and several more as they endeavor to pursue a college education.

Applying to college

The lack of information available regarding undocumented students' postsecondary options makes it all the more impressive when these students complete high school eligible to attend college. Although some students are not entirely sure they can even attend college, many excel in comparison to their peers, some even graduating as valedictorians. When these students begin the process of researching and applying to colleges, they make numerous considerations such as whether or not they are eligible to attend one institution or another. Undocumented students, who tend to come from low-income families, will consider college affordability as well. As students make these considerations, they benefit a great deal from the guidance of well-informed counselors and mentors. When these supports are not available through their high schools and/or local colleges and universities, the students are more likely to make decisions that are not in their best interest.

Once the students determine which colleges they will apply to, they begin completing their college applications. During the application process, many undocumented students face two primary challenges. First, they must correctly respond to questions in the admissions application regarding their residency status and possession of a social security number. This can be of particular concern to the students and their families, many of whom have spent several years in the U.S. fearful of being discovered as undocumented and deported back to their native countries. As a result, students are sometimes hesitant to respond to these questions honestly. With the proper guidance from high school and college-based counselors and advisors, students are more likely to be made aware that in some cases, they can leave these questions blank.

School and university-based counselors and mentors can serve an important role during this process by helping students understand that the information they provide to educational institutions is protected by law. Educational institutions at the K-12 and college levels should possess information regarding students' rights under the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA) and make efforts to disseminate this

information to undocumented students and their families. Because fear is a key factor during the application process, informed support and guidance to assist undocumented students as they respond to residency questions is especially significant. However, education professionals must be aware of what rights students in their state or institution have when completing applications. Inaccurate or absent information can determine where students apply to college and if they apply at all (Olivérez 2005).

The existing disconnects between high schools, colleges, and universities are the primary conditions that lend to this lack of information. Efforts by the University of California system to provide timely and accurate information to high school and community college counselors have begun to address this issue. Every fall, the UC Office of the President sends high school and community college counselors a memorandum with up-to-date information about undocumented students' eligibility for application fee-waivers and tips for completing the UC admissions application. This one-page memo serves as a vital resource for students, counselors, and college-based professionals and is an example of how, when colleges work with high schools, they can eliminate major barriers in the college application process.

The second major challenge undocumented students encounter during the college application process results from the combination of two factors: (1) their limited financial means, and (2) their ineligibility for government-sponsored financial aid. Undocumented students make the first of many considerations of their financial situation when determining the number of colleges they will apply to. College application fees tend to be $50 or more per application and despite their families' low incomes, undocumented students are sometimes ineligible for the application fee-waivers available to other low-income students. Consequently, undocumented students must determine how many college applications they can afford to submit. These students will also consider which schools they have the greatest chance of being admitted to as well as which schools they can afford to attend if admitted. Without any form of financial assistance, undocumented students are unlikely to be able to afford the costs of college tuition and housing. Most undocumented students apply to a limited number of colleges that are the least expensive and the closest to where they live.

University policies regarding application costs and tuition fees impact students' perceptions of affordability. Often, these students do not know that application fee waivers may be available to subsidize tuition costs and some forms of financial aid, like scholarships and grants, can help them pay for college. As university policies change, this information must be provided to those individuals on high school campuses charged with preparing students for college. While high school counselors are charged with informing students about their postsecondary options, many do not possess information specific to undocumented students. Colleges and universities may not be doing enough to share relevant information with their counterparts in the K-12 system. As long as this is the case, undocumented students' college choices will continue to be limited.

Choosing a college

The decisions undocumented students make about where to attend college are highly influenced by the financial resources available to them. They spend a significant amount of time weighing their options to determine what college they can afford to attend. Regardless of their academic abilities and achievements, whether or not students can afford both tuition and housing at the schools they are admitted to tends to be their first consideration. Because college housing can double if not triple the cost of college attendance, many undocumented students opt to attend local community colleges or universities that will allow them to remain living at home and significantly decrease their college costs.

Even when choosing among the local colleges they have been admitted to, financial considerations continue to play an important role. Undocumented students may choose to attend a less prestigious institution than they might like to because it is less expensive. Undocumented students are forced to make these difficult decisions due to their limited financial means and the high costs of college. In the discussion below, I highlight the fact that the challenges undocumented students encounter do not end when they get to college; they simply encounter new ones.

Paying for college

Due to their ineligibility for financial aid, undocumented students face a greater challenge in securing funding for college. While their U.S.-born peers complete FAFSAs, undocumented students engage in the daunting process of researching and applying for scholarships. In doing so, they encounter three major obstacles. First, many private scholarships require that applicants be U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents and/or provide a social security number, so undocumented students must make a serious effort to find scholarships for which they are eligible. Many organizations currently provide lists of scholarships for undocumented students, but even these lists become out-dated soon after they are produced, leaving students to determine which information is still valid.

Once undocumented students find useful scholarships, they engage in a process of filling out applications, writing essays, and securing letters of recommendation. Because scholarships are awarded for a variety of reasons such as academic performance, community service, participation in sports and student government, and intended major or career, undocumented students can apply for them as long as they do not have residency requirements. The competition for these limited funds is great, however, and undocumented students are rarely able to secure enough scholarship money to fully fund their college education.

The growing costs of college and the limited funds available to them mean that undocumented students must be creative about raising money to pay for college. Some students put together portfolios with personal statements, resumes, letters of recommendation, and copies of their transcripts that they use to solicit funds from friends, family, teachers, and local businesses. Other undocumented students,

particularly at the college level, form student organizations that hold fundraisers to provide scholarships to their members. As I will discuss in the next section, undocumented students encounter a new set of challenges as they endeavor to persist through college.

Getting through college

Once students choose a college to attend, in states like California, where in-state tuition policies exist, they must identify themselves as eligible for in-state tuition. This identification determines the tuition that these students will be responsible for paying. If students fail to identify themselves, they will be charged much higher fees. Unfortunately, the process through which undocumented students must identify themselves is often unclear to both students and staff in college admissions and registrars' offices. When college-based professionals are unaware that in-state tuition policies exist, do not know how to handle the admission and registration of an undocumented student, or hold negative perceptions of immigrants, enrolling in college can be particularly challenging for undocumented students.

In states where no explicit tuition policies exist related to undocumented students or where prohibitive policies exist, this process is even more difficult, requiring perseverance on the part of the student and a great deal of advocacy and guidance by supportive individuals. In some instances, undocumented students may be charged additional fees, asked for additional information like a government-issued ID, or be prevented from enrolling in college because individuals at the college level are not well-informed about how to process them. This reality indicates disconnects in two major areas: (1) those between schools and universities, and (2) those between colleges and universities in the same system. Without systematic processes for educating high school- and college-based professionals about the college enrollment process for undocumented students, these discrepancies will persist.

After undocumented students enroll in college, they must then pay their tuition. For students who have secured scholarship funds, it might appear that they would have an easier time getting through college. However, they face additional challenges because scholarship funds are awarded to students in multiple ways that may make utilizing these funds difficult for undocumented students. Scholarship awards can be provided directly to students or filtered through the institution's financial aid office. The problem that sometimes arises when monies are filtered through financial aid offices of state colleges and universities is that these monies become state funds, for which undocumented students are ineligible. For this reason, undocumented students must question how scholarships will be awarded to ensure that they can access them. College counselors at the high school level can help to facilitate this process by communicating with scholarship providers and the financial aid offices of local colleges and universities.

The discussion above sought to highlight the variety of challenges encountered by undocumented students as they move through the college pipeline and beyond, noting

some of the areas where high schools, colleges, and universities can work together to improve college access for these students. It also demonstrated the multiple factors that might prevent these students from pursuing higher education at all or moving successfully through college. However, there are also several steps that can be taken to ease undocumented students' paths to and through college. In the final section, I offer recommendations for how K-12 and higher education can work together to develop relationships and processes to provide undocumented students with greater access to higher education.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Undocumented immigrant students in the United States face challenges that shape their educational attainment and the likelihood that they will graduate from high school and/or attend college. Institutional, state, and federal policies determine the educational and financial opportunities available to them while individuals in the K-12 and higher education systems play a key role in whether or not these students are aware of the options they have. When high school- and college-based professionals do not possess reliable information about college and financial aid options for undocumented students, these students are also likely to be uninformed.

In states where in-state tuition policies exist, U.S. citizens may benefit more from the laws than the undocumented students for whom they were intended. For example, a 2006 report by the University of California Office of the President discussing the impact of California's in-state tuition policy stated that, "Documented students accounted for approximately seventy percent or more of the AB 540 recipients in every year since the program's introduction. The proportion of documented students is particularly high among graduate students, where they comprise over ninety-six percent of the total in every academic year." The fact that the majority of students benefiting from in-state tuition policies intended for undocumented students are U.S. citizens is an indication of how savvy and better-prepared students are able to access certain resources and information while undocumented students, who often operate on the educational margins, are not.

In the final section of this paper, I summarize three key challenges to undocumented students' access to higher education and provide recommendations for how high schools, colleges, and universities can work together to address them.

Uninformed K-12 and higher education professionals

The first issue prohibiting undocumented students' access to higher education is that school- and college-based professionals are not trained to provide guidance, information, and support to undocumented students. There is a great need for systematic education of K-12 and higher education professionals about the postsecondary opportunities available to undocumented students. These individuals must be trained in how to respond to the diverse needs of the growing college-ready undocumented student population as these students deal with a unique set of

challenges resulting from their residency status. Once teachers, counselors, admissions and financial officers, and registrars are better informed about options for undocumented students, they will be well-equipped to educate, counsel, and support these students at each point along the college pipeline. In doing so, they should provide undocumented students with information and guidance so they are aware of what the college preparation, college application, and college-going processes entail. Due to the cumbersome nature of the college and scholarship application processes, undocumented students require a great deal of individualized support. As such, the support and information they receive at school plays a large role in determining whether or not they successfully apply to college and secure financial support. Because undocumented students are often not expected to attend college and are less likely to come from families that possess the necessary college knowledge, the guidance they receive from teachers and counselors is particularly crucial. When undocumented students receive timely and accurate information about their postsecondary options, they are much more likely to prepare for, apply to, and persist through college.

Educational institutions serving students in a given geographic area often develop partnerships to create some coherence and consistency to their work with students. Elementary schools partner with middle schools, middle schools partner with high schools, and high schools partner with colleges and universities. These school-university partnerships can be particularly beneficial when they involve a systematic exchange of information about state, federal and system-wide policies that shape college and financial aid opportunities for undocumented students. To address this need, some universities host professional development workshops on how to serve the educational needs of undocumented students in their area. Audience members include staff members from the hosting campus as well as counselors, admissions, financial aid, outreach, and minority program staff people from nearby universities, community colleges, and high schools. Workshops are typically facilitated by local experts who possess up-to-date information about policies that shape undocumented access to college and who are able to share best practices for serving this unique population. When these experts do not exist in a particular area, advocates must look elsewhere. An online search can be useful in finding individuals with information and expertise about postsecondary opportunities for undocumented students. Such activities can help ensure that college access professionals at every level possess the same information about postsecondary opportunities available to undocumented students. These activities also create a mechanism for gathering and disseminating new information when state, federal, and system-wide policies change and should be included in all existing professional development activities related to college access and financial aid.

Lack of information

The situation described above has resulted in a second obstacle-a serious lack of access to fundamental resources and information that prevent undocumented students and their families from understanding the students' postsecondary options. Once educational institutions at the secondary and postsecondary levels have this information, they need to work together to provide it to undocumented students and

families as early as possible. Because the undocumented immigrant population in the U.S. has existed in the shadows for so long, it is imperative that they are made aware of the institutions and individuals that can provide them with support and greater opportunity. This population is less likely to seek this information, so they must be sought out and informed by local schools and colleges. Just as educational institutions provide special services to other populations, in areas where large populations of immigrants exist, information must be made available to them regarding the naturalization process, opportunities for legal employment, higher education opportunities, and funding for college.

Numerous college preparation and support programs exist in high schools and colleges throughout the nation. These programs provide information and support services to low-income and first-generation students as they move through the college pipeline, serving them while in high school and once they enter college. Because college preparation and support programs operate in the majority of high schools and universities, they could serve as a vehicle for disseminating information regarding college and financial aid opportunities for undocumented students and offer support to them as needed. By including relevant information in their printed materials and as part of their program curricula, more students would be made aware of their postsecondary options. Unfortunately, many of these programs are federally-funded TRIO programs, making them inaccessible to undocumented students because they are considered public benefits. Some program staff people admit that undocumented students access their services when residency information is not requested, but most do not due to residency requirements. Undocumented students, consequently, have limited access to the kinds of college information and support available to other low-income, first-generation college-goers. Making the programs and support services provided by TRIO available to undocumented students would fill many of the gaps in the college pipeline by providing consistent and systematic guidance to undocumented students while in high school and after they transition to college campuses.

Limited funding for college

The financial difficulties that undocumented students encounter are their third and most difficult obstacle to overcome. Indeed, when asked about their greatest challenge in pursuing higher education, both students and those who work with them contend that undocumented students' ineligibility for financial aid combined with their families' limited financial means are most prohibitive (Olivérez 2006). Even in states like California, where in-state tuition policies make college more affordable for undocumented students, many of them are unable to afford a university education. Schools at every level need to develop a strategic plan for systematically raising funds to support undocumented students who wish to attend college.

Currently, high school teachers, counselors, and a variety of higher education professionals are helping undocumented students fundraise for college. Still, there is more that can be done. Schools with access to private funds or the ability to solicit private funds can work together with local organizations and businesses to develop

scholarship funds specifically for undocumented students. This is of particular importance because much of the money available through public institutions is considered government funds and, therefore, unavailable to undocumented students. In instances when private funds are available, undocumented students are sometimes able to receive financial support. Some private scholarship providers also deem undocumented students ineligible for their awards, leaving a clear need for advocacy to make these funds available to undocumented students.

If schools form partnerships with the intent of soliciting or developing scholarship funds for undocumented students, their efforts could play a critical role in providing these students with greater financial access to higher education. This would also make students and families more confident that financial support would be available if and when the students reach higher education.

Many scholarship providers are unaware of the challenges to college access that undocumented students encounter. School- and college-based professionals can work with groups and individuals in their area who provide financial support to college students to make sure they understand why extending this aid to undocumented students is crucial. This type of advocacy could lead to greater funds being made available to undocumented students on their campuses.

By addressing the three major obstacles to college access for undocumented students noted above, high schools, colleges, and universities can eliminate many of the barriers that currently prevent these students from applying to, getting admitted to, and persisting through college. By taking steps like partnering to provide professional development, systematically disseminating relevant information to undocumented students and their families, expanding TRIO program services to target undocumented students, and soliciting scholarship funds to provide financial support to undocumented students, educational institutions can help to facilitate greater access to higher education for this growing population.

References

Badger, E., and S. Yale-Loehr. 2002. Myths and realities for undocumented students attending U.S. colleges and universities. *Journal of College Admission* 174:10-15.

Badger, E., and S. Yale-Loehr. 2006. *They can't go home again: Undocumented aliens and access to U. S. higher education.* www.millermayer.com.

Government Accounting Office. 2000. *Child labor in agriculture: Changes needed to better protect health and educational opportunities.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Henig, J. R., R. C. Hula, M. Orr, D. S. Pedescleaux. 1999. *The color of school reform: Race, politics, and the challenge of urban education.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996. Title 8, chap. 14, sec. 1623.

Kao, G., and M. Tienda. 1998. Educational aspirations of minority youth. *American Journal of Education* 106:349-384.

McDonough, P. 1997. *Choosing colleges: How social class and schools structure opportunity.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

National Immigration Law Center. 2006. *Basic facts about in-state tuition for undocumented immigrant students.* www.nilc.org/immlawpolicy/DREAM/intate_tuition_basicfacts_041706.pdf.

National Immigration Law Center. 2005. *Immigrant's rights update.* 19 (5).

Olivas, M. A. 2004. IIRIRA: The DREAM Act, and undocumented college student residency. *Journal of College and University Law*, 30 (2): 435-464.

Olivérez, P. M. 2005. College-ready but undocumented: The challenges of college access for undocumented students in the U.S. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Canada.

Olivérez, P. M. 2006. Ready but restricted: An examination of the challenges of college access and financial aid for college-ready undocumented students in the U.S. PhD diss., University of Southern California.

Passel, J. S. 2001. *Demographic information relating to H.R. 1918: The student adjustment act.* Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

Passel, J. S. 2005. *Estimates of the size and characteristics of the undocumented population.* Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center.

Protopsaltis, S. 2005. Undocumented immigrant students and access to higher education: Federal and state policies. *Issue Brief.* Denver, CO: The Bell Policy Center.

Stanton-Salazar, R. 2001. *Manufacturing hope and despair: The school and kin support networks of U. S.-Mexican youth.* New York: Teachers College Press.

University of California Office of the President Student Financial Support. 2006. *Annual report on AB 540 tuition exemption 2005-06 academic year.* UCOP.

Valenzuela, A. 1999. *Subtractive schooling.* New York: SUNY Press.

Author Information

Dr. Paz Maya Olivérez is a researcher with the Educational Policy Unit of the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education, Research Associate with the Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis at the University of Southern California, and conducts informational workshops for students, parents, practitioners, and advocates on post-secondary opportunities for undocumented students. Her research interests encompass issues of college access and financial aid for low-income first-generation college-goers with a focus on the high school to college transitions of undocumented immigrant students.

Paz M. Oliverez, Ph.D.
6721 Leland Way #24
Los Angeles, CA 90028
E-mail: poliverez@sbcglobal.net
Telephone: 310-923-0803
Fax: 213-740-3889