

Recommendations to UW from Undocu Task Force

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Undocumented students are one of the most vulnerable populations on our campus today. Even though UW has been doing a lot to support undocumented students since 2000 (see narrative, [A History Told of Undocumented Students at the UW: Coming Out of the Shadows](#)), more can be done to help succeed at the university. Changes in policy and attitudes after the election of President Trump make them even more vulnerable, and make it even more urgent to provide additional support services and programs that have the ability to be quick to react to policy changes in the future. UW has an opportunity to dedicate **more real and committed resources** to support undocumented students. These programs need to be broadly defined to benefit diverse, vulnerable populations, in order to avoid attracting undue attention from contrarian forces opposing support to undocumented students.

UW is undoubtedly doing a lot: there are 336 undocumented students who received financial aid in 2016-17, and the total number of undocumented students on campus is actually higher (exact number unknown), including students attending UW that do not receive WASFA (Washington Application for Financial Aid) or qualify for in-state tuition (paying Out-of-state: \$34,791). The Office of Minority Affairs & Diversity (OMA&D), in particular through Multicultural Outreach & Recruitment (MOR) and Leadership Without Borders, provide important services to undocumented students. They provide a lending library, a peer-to-peer support network (purple group), workshops and networking events, knowledgeable staff, connections and referrals to on and off-campus partners, and resources and support, funded through Student Activity Fees and fees for Undocu Ally Training workshops. In addition, Schools & Colleges, along with student facing Divisions such as Enrollment Management, Undergraduate Academic Affairs, Student Life, and the Graduate School, all have some programs and services specifically for undocumented students, including \$5.4 million in financial aid in the 2016-17 academic year (average about \$16,000 per student, from state, UW, and private sources). See more details on what programs and services UW currently offers for undocumented students in [UW Task Force Inventory of Services for Undocumented Students](#).

Undocumented students share the financial, academic and emotional challenges of many college students, but their vulnerability is exacerbated by uncertain legal status; inability to work legally; exclusion from federal financial aid, student loans, and many scholarships; emotional, legal and financial problems in their families; social stigma and marginalization; and real fear instilled by the current political climate. Undocumented students report the most important barriers to their success are lack of funding, and lack of information about financial aid; housing, career planning, and counseling (academic, emotional, legal). See results of anonymous survey to undocumented students, [Barriers for UW Undocumented Student Success](#), conducted in Feb 2017; 65 responses.

Despite all these programs and services, there is important room for improvement. The Undocu Task Force recommends UW dedicate more real and committed resources to strengthen support and services

to undocumented students in the following four areas (not presented in priority order but from simplest to most complex; all are needed and reinforce each other):



Strengthening UW support and services for Undocumented Students

- 1. Information site:** expand and maintain a single web site with current info for undocumented students, including financial aid, housing, student services, academic services, mental health, legal services, and other opportunities. The most comprehensive site currently available is hosted by the Office of Admissions at <http://www.washington.edu/admissions/undocumented/> but needs to live in a top level UW domain (for example, www.washington.edu/undocumented/), structured for higher SEO (search engine optimization), expanded to cover missing topics, with a clear path for constant updates from all units involved with undocumented students, and including clear guidelines on how the University will help undocumented students navigate changing immigration policies and support those facing removal proceedings. Invite all units to revise their web sites to reflect current situation and link to the central web site for undocumented students.

Application form: simplify and clarify information online and admissions application form (undergrad and graduate) to allow undocumented students to self-select under HB1079 eligibility for residency.
- 2. Require Undocu Ally Training for Student-Facing Staff:** Undocumented students are pursuing their education across all colleges and schools within the University, and ensuring that they have the same opportunities for success as their peers requires that all categories of student-facing staff have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the needs and challenges that come with undocumented status. The completion of the full six-hour Undocu Ally Training workshop, offered by the Leadership Without Borders program, should be an onboarding or professional development requirement for staff in appropriate divisions across the various offices overseeing undergraduate and graduate life and academic performance, including those overseen by the Office of Student Life (Career and Internship Center, Counseling Center, Health and Wellness, Housing and Food Services, and UWPD); the Office of the Provost (Student Financial Aid, the Registrar's Office, and Undergraduate Admissions); the Office of the Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School (Graduate Admissions and GO-MAP) and the Office of the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Academic Affairs (Undergraduate Advising, First Year Programs, and Center For Teaching and Learning). We likewise recommend that academic departments and programs be encouraged to require such training of their student advising staff. In addition, it should be recommended for all faculty and available in-person or online.
- 3. Fundraising for Scholarships and enhanced support to undocumented students:** While UW offers important amounts of financial aid to undocumented students, they are mostly limited to 60% of cost of attendance. UW dorms are too expensive for most low-income students, and housing is particularly challenging for undocumented students. Students are often forced to commute up to 2-3 hours a day for classes, which takes away from their ability to be successful

in academics. Vulnerability of undocumented students make the 40% not covered through financial aid particularly challenging. Additional funds for undocumented graduate students are also needed, as GoMAP funds are very limited. Furthermore, undocumented students currently have very limited opportunities for internships, fieldwork and jobs. These can be cultivated through partnerships with local industry and businesses. Building on the expertise and network of UW Development teams, we recommend that **UW dedicate professional fundraising efforts to secure private donations and offer scholarships for undocumented students. These scholarships would supplement existing financial aid to help undocumented students cover the cost of attendance**, replacing the loans and income they cannot legally obtain. Fund-raising will also provide well-resourced offices to oversee holistic programs and services in support of undocumented students. Also, UW should create an emergency fund to assist with DACA application costs and other short-term emergencies faced by undocumented students. University Advancement will need to work creatively within the legal constraints on fund-raising for this population.

4. **Holistic Program with campus-wide visibility and support: A stronger, dedicated team is needed to provide the holistic level of service and support (including mental health and legal services) from recruitment to graduation, as well as an expanded level of Undocu Ally Training for UW staff and faculty.** The Leadership Without Borders initiative is vital, but its staff and resources are insufficient to meet current and growing needs of undocumented students and Undocu Ally Training. UW needs to help scale up the capacity of ECC with dedicated team to provide and coordinate holistic program and services across personal, academic, professional, mental/emotional, and legal support for undocumented students. Based on Undocu Ally Training, help ECC to redesign the curriculum and delivery of the training program so it is available in person and online to all student-facing staff, and to all interested faculty. Strengthen student services and academic services by increasing staff awareness and sensitivity to the particular needs of undocumented students through Undocu Ally Training and ongoing coordination of efforts provided by a well-resourced Leadership Without Borders team, so that UW offers undocumented students specific support getting into, through, and beyond the college experience. There is a growing need for mental health and legal help specifically for undocumented students; campus-wide mental health and student legal services are insufficient and don't address the specific needs of undocumented students. **Suggested:** add 1 new FTE counseling services coordinator paid by UW, to focus on support to students and relations with student services (academic counseling left with academic services team, especially strengthened with Undocu Ally Training). In addition, fund an on-going legal clinic and a 1/day a week mental health clinic, plus access to legal representation for students who are facing removal proceedings and/or who are apprehended by immigration officials.

To ensure sustainability of this holistic program for undocumented students, create an **advisory or working group** with representatives from across campus (potential for future to include all three campuses) to inform, guide and integrate evolving needs of undocumented students and departments.

Recommendations prepared by UW Undocu Task force members (undocu-taskforce@uw.edu):

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