

in international business and obtain a Ph.D. in psychology. I plan to come back and serve the youth in my community and someday work for the US Embassy in France.

I will never forget that Friday evening while I was at school studying for my AP Physics test, when my mother called me and said I was placed on a waiting list for Pitzer and I had been denied by Occidental. I shed tears of frustration and lost a lot of hope. My mother and I cried together, but I admitted my reality and knew I had to be strong and I had to move on no matter what. That same night while I lay on my friend's couch, something forced me to check my email and there it was, the application for Santa Clara's scholarship. I had to submit the scholarship application by the following Friday. It was a week after the deadline, Good Friday, when I received a call saying that I had been one of the 18 out of 60 finalists who had been carefully reviewed and that they wanted to interview me on the upcoming Friday. With the little money my father had, he arranged bus tickets for me to go to my interview. I took an eight-hour bus ride from 11:00 p.m.–6:00 a.m. and once I was there, I felt really intense.

On the week of interviews, I received news that my 20-year-old cousin in Mexico had committed suicide. I felt really frustrated and anguished to know that I could not even be at my cousin's funeral due to my citizenship status, let alone with my loved ones. Yet, before me I had an opportunity of a lifetime and I did not want to lose it. I kept my faith and hopes higher than ever and I prayed to God that it would be his will whether I received this scholarship or not. After four intense interviews, I left the school with hopes that maybe I had been good enough for them. Three days later on April 21 at 2:00 p.m. I received a call that has changed my life and my family's. I had received the Hurtado Scholarship, my dream had finally come true.

My gate to the American Dream had finally been open, my prayers were answered, my hard work had paid off, and my gratitude had grown larger than ever. I believe in miracles and, to me, this was a miracle. On the day my college opportunities had gone from many to none, a Catholic school asked me to apply and soon it would become my future school.

At the same time, I am saddened to know how many good kids, who have college potential, will not be attending because this country requires a number to qualify for financial aid. It was not our decision to come here, and I find this an injustice of our society, and for that I will never forget where I come from, and I will dedicate myself to those in need.



CARLOS GOMEZ is a freshman at Santa Clara University (CA) majoring in psychology. He is involved on campus as an executive board member of the Multicultural Center and Freshman Representative for M.E.Ch.A. (Chicano Student Movement of Aztlán). He was recently selected as an ambassador to work with the admission office.

Talking to Undocumented Students about Sensitive Subjects

by **Katharine Gin** (biography on page 20)

What NOT to Say	What to Say
Going to college isn't really an option for you.	Going to college is going to be difficult for you, but it is possible. Thousands of other talented, hard-working undocumented students have already graduated from college.
You're not going to be able to get any money for college.	You're not eligible for most forms of government financial aid. However, you might be eligible for in-state tuition, and there are some private scholarships you can apply for.
Why don't you just legalize?	Have you talked to an immigration attorney to find out if you can legalize? There may be immigration remedies that you and your family don't know about already.
Even if you get a college degree, you're never going to be able to work legally.	Getting a college degree isn't going to change your immigration status, but it will open up many opportunities for you once you're able to legalize. The DREAM Act is a proposed federal bill that will give many undocumented students a path towards citizenship if they graduate from high school and go on to college. Because of strong bipartisan support in Congress and support from President Obama, the DREAM Act is very likely to pass in the near future.
Why don't you go back home and get a degree?	If you have family and connections in another country outside the United States, it might make sense for you to consider pursuing educational opportunities elsewhere. Remember, however, that you would be separated from your family in the U.S., and you could be barred from returning for 10 years.
In order to apply to college, you're going to have to reveal everything.	In order to apply to college, you're going to have to be honest about your immigration status. At first this may seem scary to you and your family. Remember that federal law (specifically FERPA) will protect your privacy and prevent colleges from releasing your information unless under court order.

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Top 10 Ways College Counselors Can Help Undocumented Students

by Katharine Gin

1. Make information and resources about undocumented students easily available to all students. Don't ask students to self-identify. Many students will be too scared to reveal their immigration status. Some students might not even know about their status.
2. Be open-minded. Don't make assumptions about which students may or may not be undocumented. Undocumented students aren't all Latino, Spanish-speaking, or enrolled in ESL classes.
3. Be knowledgeable about specific government and college admission policies that affect undocumented students.
4. Support the federal DREAM Act and other state-based legislation to support undocumented students.
5. Identify private scholarships that don't require citizenship/residency.
6. Encourage private scholarships to allow undocumented students to apply.
7. Identify private sponsors who can provide financial support to undocumented students.
8. Help undocumented students create lasting support networks that can offer ongoing mentoring and advice, even after the college admission process.
9. Identify older undocumented students to serve as role models.
10. Refer students to qualified legal counsel to investigate possible immigration remedies.



KATHARINE GIN is co-founder and executive director of Educators for Fair Consideration (E4FC), a nonprofit that supports low-income immigrant students in higher education. A fifth-generation Chinese

American, Katharine was born and raised in San Francisco, and later received her undergraduate degree from Yale University (CT). For more than 15 years, she has worked to improve arts and education opportunities for low-income youth.

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The country he has not visited or lived in?
The country of which he has no memory?

Undocumented students fit the profile of the first-generation student as well as the low-income student. They have an underdeveloped sense of postsecondary education—they know that a college degree will help them get a “good job,” but if pressed to define a ‘good job,’ struggle with the answer. Their parents are fervent believers in the importance of a college degree, but look to the high school to define what that means and how their child can get there. Parents are open about their lack of resources—both financial and social—to support their child’s college education.

The college guidance counselors discuss Xavier’s situation. “What can we do?” is the question everyone asks. The reality is that his college options, like his options in living in our affluent area, are severely limited by his citizenship status. A few options are discussed: attend a public California college or university and pay in state tuition. Hope for enough merit-based aid at a private college. Find a donor to sponsor him, a donor who understands that Pell Grants, Cal Grants and federal loans are not available to this young man.

More limitations surface: he cannot get a driver’s license. He cannot fly home for holidays or summer break. He will not be able to choose his college based upon his accomplishments and dreams. He will not be able to use the financial aid system enjoyed by his classmates to help him pay for his education. Another

dilemma: once he graduates from college, what then? Who will employ him without a Social Security number?

College counselors at public, private and charter schools along with college admission officers across the country are already struggling with the reality of undocumented students. It is our challenge, and our responsibility, to offer realistic college options. Currently undocumented students are eligible to pay in-state tuition in 10 states across the United States: California, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin. Some private colleges and universities have scholarship funds available for undocumented students, but there is usually more demand than funds available. With precious few institutional dollars, they reason, “we can fund one student totally, or provide three or four students

partial funds to supplement federal and state grants and loans.” Private scholarships that do not require a Social Security number are available, and while a student may spend a lot of time submitting numerous applications, this effort may be time well-spent.

As college counselors we realize that until laws change, this is our reality. These are good students who are kind, generous, hard working and bright. Any of them have the potential to be great leaders but more importantly good friends and neighbors in our community. Our reality and our responsibility is to work together with them to arrive at the best situation possible, even if it means revising students’ dreams and constructing educational work-arounds with the help of colleges and donors if possible. Xavier and others like him depend on us, and deserve a better life in our land of dreams.



SONYA ARRIOLA is the director of diversity outreach at Bellarmine College Preparatory in San Jose, California. She provides student and parent support to first-generation college bound, low-income students. Arriola graduated from Stanford University (CA) with honors in education and received her masters in education from Harvard University (MA). She lives in San Jose with her husband and two small children.



KATY MURPHY is the director of college counseling at Bellarmine College Preparatory in San Jose, California. She came to Bellarmine four years ago after serving as a dean of admissions/enrollment at four private colleges in California. Murphy graduated from Whittier College (CA) and attended graduate school at Washington University in St. Louis. She has been very active in WACAC and NACAC during her career.

Five Secrets to Success for Undocumented Students

by **Katharine Gin** (biography on page 20)

1. Get comfortable asking for help. You can’t do this alone.
2. Find older students who can be role models and mentors. They may just be a few years older than you!
3. Form strong relationships with teachers and mentors with whom you can speak honestly and openly about your challenges.
4. Be creative. Be entrepreneurial. Don’t take no for an answer.
5. Believe in yourself. Know that you have value to your family, your community, your classmates, and your country.

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Today, he sees the importance of having someone guiding along the way. And he encourages counselors to “Ask questions. Don’t ignore the issue. Be proactive, and most of all, be open to letting these students know that they are welcome to speak to you. Nothing is more important than an image of acceptance.”

Forgetting Stereotypes

Undocumented immigrants are usually thought to be the ones who have crossed the Mexico-US border illegally, however, the reality is that many of these non-Latino undocumented students have entered the country legally, but fell out of immigration status for different reasons.

Kel, 23, was born in Germany, of Indian nationals, and brought to the US at the age of five. His father brought his family over legally through an employment visa, but last year, his family lost its legal status, and they are currently facing deportation.

Kel mentions that undocumented students are, on the outside, just your average student. There is no way to know that someone is undocumented just by looking at them. It is not just a Latino issue. “The only difference is internally, they’re torn, they’re fighting every day in ways no one can understand, hoping they don’t lose their family, their friends, their home,” says Kel.

It is especially important for counselors who are working with these students to know to put the politics of it aside. As Kemi, points out, it is important to create open dialogue, not one that “criminalizes or dehumanizes the student and the situation.”

As Kel says, “be understanding. Undocumented students just want to be a part of America, they want to settle down, follow their dreams. But unfortunately, a large number of them won’t get the chance. The key is to be there. No matter how you look at it, the kids are the victims. It’s easy to say ‘leave when you’re 18 and then

come back,’ but it’s not that simple. Coming back requires money, requires a ton of time, especially in countries where a lot of people apply for visas. Any counselor knows you don’t blame the victim.”

Success, Despite Struggles

Although for several of these students, coming out to their counselors was a failed attempt, there are some success stories. By and large, however, many undocumented students do feel that they are alone on their path to college. And this is especially the reality of non-Latino undocumented students.

For Irene, Ju, Martin, Kemi, and Kel, the “Latino-issue” stereotype has allowed them to navigate American society without being profiled as undocumented, but it has not come without a price. Because of the backlash that undocumented students face, for many of them, it feels safer not to expose one’s immigration status. But this means, never opening up and asking for help.

Because of this fear, it is important that counselors are more proactive in reaching out to this population by making information readily available and maintaining an environment of open dialogue, where no student feels judged.



As the daughter of Chinese immigrants in Brazil and an immigrant herself in the United States, **BELEZA CHAN** has experienced the struggles and difficulties of newcomers. Chan works towards social justice by teaching at-risk youth in San Francisco, writing about ethnic issues, and organizing students for passage of immigration reform. She is a graduate advisor with Educators for Fair Consideration (E4FC).

Telltale Signs: Tips for Identifying Undocumented Students

by **Katharine Gin** (biography on page 20)

Undocumented students do NOT only...

- Come from Mexico or Latin America
- Have strong accents
- Take ESL classes

Undocumented students OFTEN...

- Use passports as their primary form of identification
- Refuse to participate in prestigious programs despite their high academic achievements
- Resist applying for government financial aid even when they’re low-income
- Fail to get driver’s permits even though they’ve passed driver’s education

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Why these Students?

by **Katharine Gin** (biography on page 20)

College counselors have more students and responsibilities than they can handle. Because of their financial and legal obstacles, undocumented students require additional time and assistance than other students. When budgets are tight, resources are limited, and students are more in need than ever, why should college counselors put the extra effort into helping undocumented students?

Undocumented students have proven their ability to succeed.

College-bound undocumented students constitute a small group of extremely talented and motivated students who have already overcome multiple obstacles. They've had to leave their homelands and everything they knew as children. They've had to learn English and assimilate to a new culture. They've excelled in school despite having few (or no) family members to guide them. Their desire and readiness to go to college shows their tremendous perseverance and potential for future success.

It's a waste of our already-spent resources if undocumented students don't go to college.

Since most college-bound undocumented students were brought to the United States when they were young, we've already invested considerable resources in their primary and secondary educations. In order to realize this investment, we should help undocumented students pursue higher education so they can work and participate meaningfully to our society. With college degrees, they'll be able to contribute substantially more in taxes, support their families, and be less likely to receive government assistance.

Undocumented students affirm our belief in the value of hard work.

College-bound undocumented students are not asking to be given anything. They just want the same consideration as other students who've also studied hard and are now ready to apply to college. Helping them pursue their dreams of higher education proves that the United States is still a country that values hard work and rewards that hard work with increased opportunities.

Undocumented students are powerful role models.

College-bound undocumented students are role models for younger family members, friends and neighbors, many of whom are legal permanent residents and US citizens. Through their success and determination, undocumented students in-

spire a whole generation of students to do well in school, think positively about their communities and neighborhoods, and become engaged, informed members of society.

Undocumented students desperately want to contribute meaningfully to this country.

Most college-bound undocumented students consider themselves American, and desperately want to become US citizens or permanent residents. Unfortunately, even though most came to the United States when they were very young, they are still unable to legalize their immigration status. The application process for residency is often long, unpredictable, and inequitable. Many students tell us they expect to wait more than 15 years. Despite the obstacles they've faced, college-bound undocumented students still believe in the American dream. They appreciate the many opportunities this country has given them, and want to give back by becoming productive, contributing members of society.

When the DREAM Act passes, undocumented youth who have gone to college will have a path towards legal residency and work.

Strong bipartisan support in Congress and support from President Obama suggest that the DREAM Act is likely to pass in the near future. The DREAM Act will give certain undocumented students who have graduated from high school and gone to college in the United States a path towards legal residency. Getting a college education will enable these students to live and work legally here in the future.

We want the best and brightest students to attend our colleges.

Making it difficult for undocumented students to attend college in the United States encourages them to consider college options elsewhere. With US colleges and universities competing to attract talented international students from all over the world, why should we encourage our brightest American students to study elsewhere? We should hold onto undocumented students – some of our best and brightest homegrown talents.

We need undocumented students to take care of us when we get old.

The coming decades will see a significant shortage of highly skilled workers in the labor force. We need undocumented students to graduate from college, get well-paying jobs and pay taxes, and take care of us when we get old.

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