

William Perez, Ph.D.  
Claremont Graduate University  
November 24, 2009



# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AMERICAN?

# Undocumented Students

- 3.1 million undocumented children and young adults under the age of 24
- 1.5 million were enrolled in grades K-12 in 2008
- 65,000 high school graduates a year (The Urban Institute, 2003)
- Among undocumented youths under age twenty-four who have graduated from high school, 49% are in college or have attended college. The comparable figure for U.S.-born residents is 71% (Passel and Cohn 2009).

# Uncertain Outlook

- After they finish high school undocumented youth are met with extreme challenges despite having lived most of their lives in the U.S.:
  - Undocumented students do not qualify for any type of federal financial aid regardless of their academic accomplishments.
  - They can not legally work.
  - In most states they must pay international student tuition fees.
  - They may be deported at any time.

# Historical & Legal context

- In Plyer v. Doe the Court held that, while undocumented children are present in the United States they should not forfeit their education because of their parents' decision to immigrate illegally.
  - Denying education to these children, who can affect neither their parents conduct nor their own status, would impose a lifetime hardship on a discrete class of children not accountable for their disabling status.
- Instead, the Court decided that educating children, regardless of their immigration status, is essential for creating individuals who can function in society and contribute to the development of the United States.



# Undocumented Research Study

Developing Talent





# The Study

- Participants
  - 182 Latina/o participants completed an online questionnaire
    - 66% female
    - 57% grew up in two-parent household
  - 102 in-depth interviews

# Academic

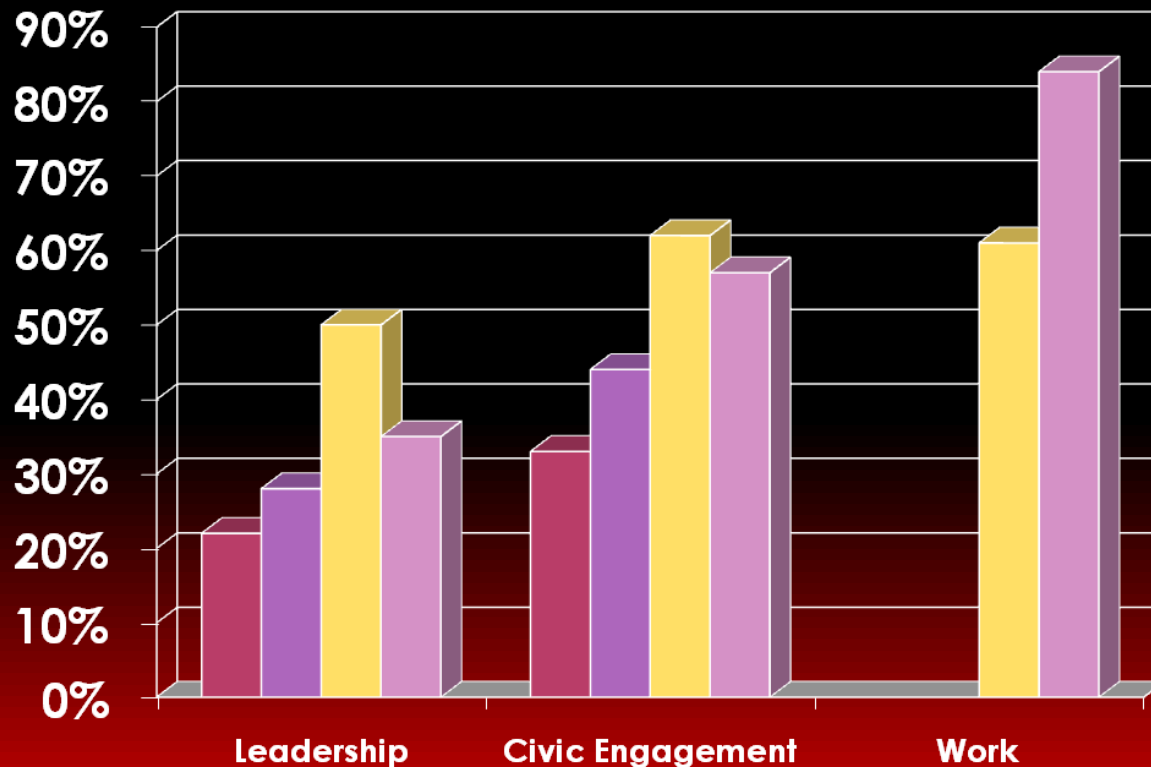
	Community College	University
Age at time of study	20.7	20.9
Age at time of immigration to U.S.	6.8	7.6
Mother's Level of Education	8.2	8.5
Father's Level of Education	9.3	10.0
High School GPA	3.2	3.7
College GPA	3.1	3.1
Number of AP/Honors courses	2.1	5.3
High School Hours worked/week	20.7	21.1
College Hours worked/week	33.1	26.7

# Extracurricular

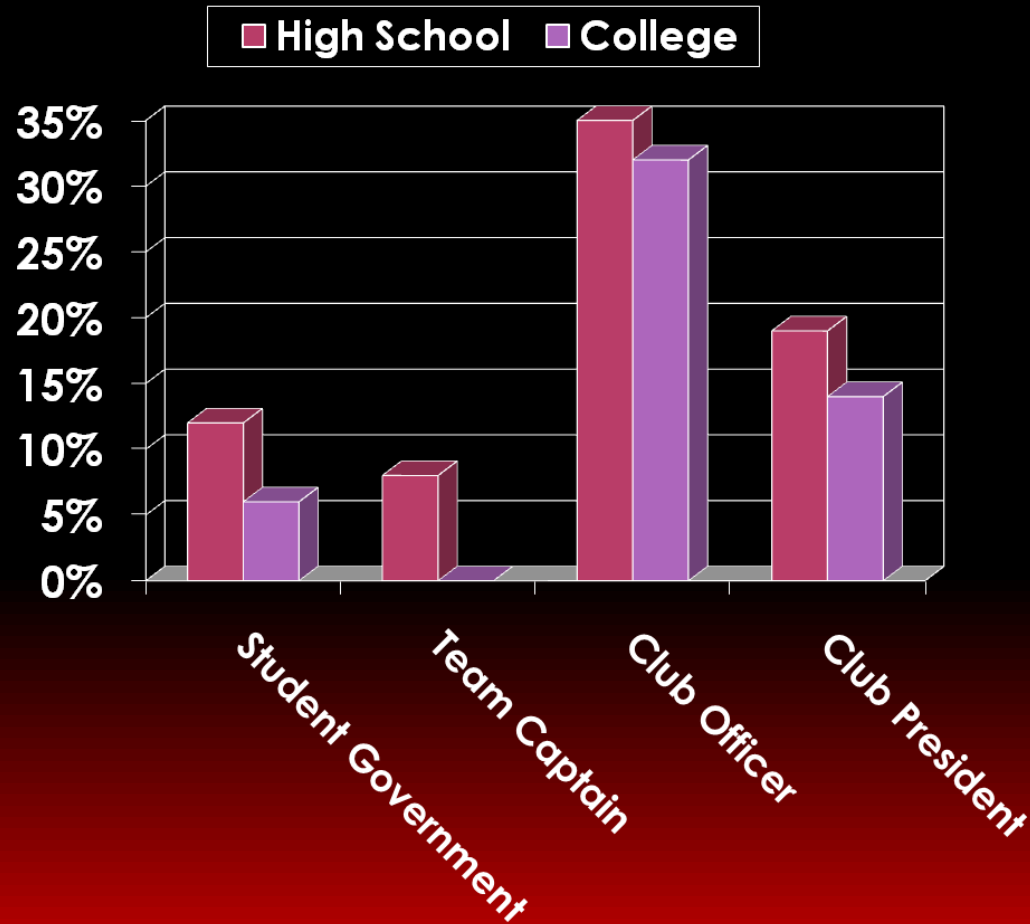
	Community College	University
High School Extra-curricular activity participation	79%	84%
High School Leadership role	47%	54%
High School Volunteer/Community Service	66%	74%
College Leadership role	40%	44%
College volunteer/community service	61%	65%



# Accomplishments



# Leadership



# Leadership and Academic Achievement

- “I graduated in the top ten of my class. I received a scholarship for volunteering with the California Scholarship Federation. I got a gold tassel for taking many Science classes. I also got awards related to volunteer work and doing well academically. I was also MVP of my basketball team at school and I was the captain of the volleyball team. I was an academic athlete scholar and that is when you play sports and your G.P.A. is above a 3.5”
- -Alma



# Civic Engagement

- Results suggest that despite their legal, social, and political marginalization, undocumented students in this study demonstrated a strong commitment to civic participation.
- Undocumented youth channel their feelings of exclusion and marginalization into political mobilization, activism, advocacy and service on.
- Undocumented students in this study reported much higher levels of civic engagement than reported in the literature (Faison & Flanagan, 2001).

# Future civic leaders?

- Membership in organizations during youth has been reported to predict membership and leadership in community organizations well into adulthood.
- Youth volunteers that participated in civil rights activities during the 1960s continued to be active politically both at the local and national levels.
- Participating H.S. government is linked with political participation in adulthood.
- When service is the formative youth experience, the effects produce politically active citizens who vote and lead other citizens to take critical stands toward the status quo.



# The College Experience

- Difficulty balancing work with school
- Institutional Challenges
- Perseverance



# Balancing Work & School

- It's been rough. I have been having to pay everything on my own. I have had to take off a couple of quarters because of no money. It's a lot harder than high school. You have to study on your own. You have to find the time and the place (Nailea).

# Stress

- “Working and going to school is difficult. Other college students that are not undocumented work about ten hours but I have to work three times as much in order to sustain myself because I don't get financial aid. I have to work twice as much to pay my rent, my bills, for food, and everything else. I work two jobs; I work at a restaurant and my second job is working at a movie theater. My first year I got an award for entering the honors program, but I got out of the program because I have to work so much that there is less time for me to study. There's not enough time for me to focus in school. I see that my grades tend to drop because of that. My first two quarters here I commuted 100 miles every day and it was insane!”(Ismael).



# Administrative Challenges

- I went back to my community college to request a transcript and she asked for an I.D. and I said, "Oh, OK," and I showed her my school I.D. and she said, "No, you need a California I.D.," and I'm like, "No, I don't need a California I.D. I'm showing you an I.D. This serves the same purpose," and she's like, "Well, we need a valid I.D.," so I showed her my passport and she said, "OK, well where's your social security number?" And I'm like, "I don't have to have a social security number!" (Dulce).

# Frustrations

- “It's also just little things that others take for granted, most college students have ID's and drivers licenses. I remember one time I took a midterm, and the teacher required that after you turn in your test you show your ID. That day I didn't have my school ID, so the TA kept asking me, “Where's your school ID? Do you have anything else?” So I had to stay there and wait for someone to come identify me as the person who took the test. So it's just little things like that... Going to class I have to worry about staying awake. Not because I was partying late at night, but because I had to wake up at 5:00 in the morning to take the bus. Also we have to worry about family issues on top of everything else. Now that my dad has been deported, everything just crumbled. It made me realize how quickly things could go wrong.” (Jennifer)

# Uncertainty

- “I have to deal with the uncertainty of not knowing what will happen with my status or how to pay for college. It is really hard just finding ways to find money. I can't apply to a lot of scholarships, or get any financial aid. You don't know what will happen in the future, even if you get a M.A. or Ph.D. I got some offers for internships in Washington because of my grades and I really wanted to do that because I love politics. Sometimes I get very disappointed because I can't do so many things, like traveling to see where I was born, or like going to New York to volunteer, there are a lot of things I can't do”(Beatriz).

# Perseverance

- I think that I am incredibly motivated. I will stick by my books and I will keep studying until I understand it. In fact, that has helped me a lot. Although maybe I don't have natural smarts or things like that. I will sit down and I will study until it comes to me. (Selma)
- ...I am very persistent. So when I want something I go after it. I work hard. (Rubi)

# Economic Contributions

- Undocumented laborers contribute more in taxes than they cost in social services (Lipman, 2006).
  - Their labor brings down the costs of goods and services for all, makes firms and sometimes entire industries more competitive.
  - Restaurant prices are lowered by undocumented labor in the kitchen, low fruit and vegetable prices by undocumented field hands, and new-home prices by undocumented construction workers.
- The tens of thousands of undocumented nannies in the Los Angeles area lower the cost of child care, freeing many mothers to return to work. This in turn increases families' incomes, which encourages spending and fuels the economy (Orrenius & Zavodny, 2004).

# Economic Contributions

- Many undocumented workers are contributing to Social Security without the right to receive payments.
  - The U.S. Social Security Trust Fund reported a surplus of more than \$49 billion in 2000 from payroll collections from persons with invalid social security identification numbers. (Social Security Administration, 2002).
- In 2001 undocumented workers in the Chicago metropolitan area alone spent \$2.89 billion which stimulated an additional \$2.56 billion in local spending. This spending, in turn, sustained 31,908 jobs in the local economy (Center for Urban Economic Development, 2002).

# Policy Implications

- Due to the Plyer decision, undocumented students are politically socialized through education educational system and civic institutions to become active citizens in American society
  - Immigrants embrace their role as civic participants
  - Immigration legislation reform must provide a path for legalization and full citizenship status

# Intervention Opportunities

- High School outreach and coordination
- Financial Aid from non-government sources
- Institutional funding for AB540 student organizations
- Examine and modify administrative procedures that may inadvertently stigmatize undocumented students
- Dissemination of information on resources for Undocumented Students
- Educating faculty, staff, administrators
- Provision of social and psychological support services for undocumented students
- Coordination with community colleges to support higher transfer rates to 4-year universities



# Outreach

- College outreach personnel should discuss AB540 student issues with high school counselors to ensure that AB540 students receive information about college enrollment, navigating college as an AB540 student, the transfer process, study skills, and availability of student support groups/clubs for undocumented students.
  - In particular, high achieving undocumented students should be informed about academic support/development programs.

# Financial Aid

- Financial challenges are the most frequently cited obstacles by AB540 students.
  - CSU's could engage in fundraising to increase scholarships and book grant opportunities.
    - an AB540 faculty committee/task force can be established as a "think tank" for fundraising ideas and social support networks.
    - Establish connections with the business sector to raise funds for scholarships that AB540 students are able to access.

# Funding for Student Clubs

- Our data suggest that AB540 clubs play a critical role for students.
  - Helps students develop connections with other AB540 clubs at 4-year universities
    - Access to peer role models who have successfully transferred
    - Students are able to share information with each other and with clubs from other colleges
  - Clubs do extensive fundraising for scholarships
  - Provides a sense of empowerment and official recognition from the institution
  - Vehicle for student activism and advocacy

# Fundraising Activities

- Food sales (tamales, burritos)
- Fundraising dinners with keynote speakers
- Book sales
- T-shirts, merchandise
- Fundraising partnerships with restaurants
- Informational play
- Scavenger hunt
- Show tapings
- Raffles
  - Businesses or individuals donate products to raffle
- Social networking websites
- Film screenings
- Art Silent auctions
  - Artists donate their art
- Car washes
- Yard sales
- Baseball game tickets

# Examine & Modify Administrative Procedures

- Update online application to help facilitate AB540 student enrollment process
  - Allow to submit application without SS#
- Modify procedures that may inadvertently stigmatize undocumented students

# Dissemination of Information to Students

- Dissemination of information (print/online)
- Strategic placement of print information resources
  - Counseling office
  - Admissions office
  - Financial aid office
  - Student affairs
  - Scholarship office
  - Library



# Educating Personnel

- Develop a mini-workshop for staff, faculty, and administrators to educate them about undocumented students
  - Provide historical and legal context
  - Provide current information on recent/pending legislation at the state and federal level
  - Provide concrete procedures on how to better serve undocumented students

# Talent Loss

- Among those prevented from working legally or continuing on to higher education are:
  - valedictorians
  - honors students
  - academic and athletic award winners
  - other student leaders



# Policy Change Arenas

- Federal policy
- State policy
- Institutional policy
  - Scholarship/financial assistance
  - Student outreach and education
    - Information guide

# The Dream Act

- It is a bill that would provide conditional permanent residence to a select group of students who are long term U.S. residents, and pursue a college education or enlist in the military. Eligibility criteria include:
  - Came to the U.S. before the age of 15 years
  - Resided in the U.S. at least five years before the date of the bill's enactment
  - High school diploma, GED or acceptance to college

# The Dream Act

- conditional permanent resident status would allow students to work and drive
- Students would not be eligible for Pell Grants or other federal financial aid grants
- They would be eligible for federal work study and student loans
- States would not be restricted from providing their own financial aid

# The Dream Act

- At the end of the conditional period, unrestricted lawful permanent resident status would be granted if:
  - Graduated from a two-year college or certain vocational colleges, or studied for at least two years toward a B.A. or higher degree, or
  - Served in the U.S. armed forces for at least two years.

# State Legislation

- Since 2001, 11 states have passed laws permitting certain undocumented students who have attended and graduated from their primary and secondary schools to pay the same tuition as their classmates at public institutions of higher education.
  - The states are Texas, California, Utah, Washington, New York, Oklahoma, Illinois, Kansas, New Mexico, Nebraska, and Wisconsin.

# Organizations Supporting Federal Legalization Initiatives

- National Association for College Admissions Counseling (NACAC)
- American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU)
- National PTA
- California Federation of Teachers AFL-CIO
- National Education Association
- Microsoft Corporation
- The College Board
- Harvard University
- Stanford University
- Brown University
- UC University System

# Institutional Funding

- Texas and New Mexico are the only states that provide state funding in addition to in-state tuition to undocumented students.
- A handful of private colleges and universities provide full scholarships for undocumented students derived from private donations and unrestricted funds.
- Northern Virginia Community College has created community and privately funded scholarships for undocumented students.

# Institutional Funding: Southern California

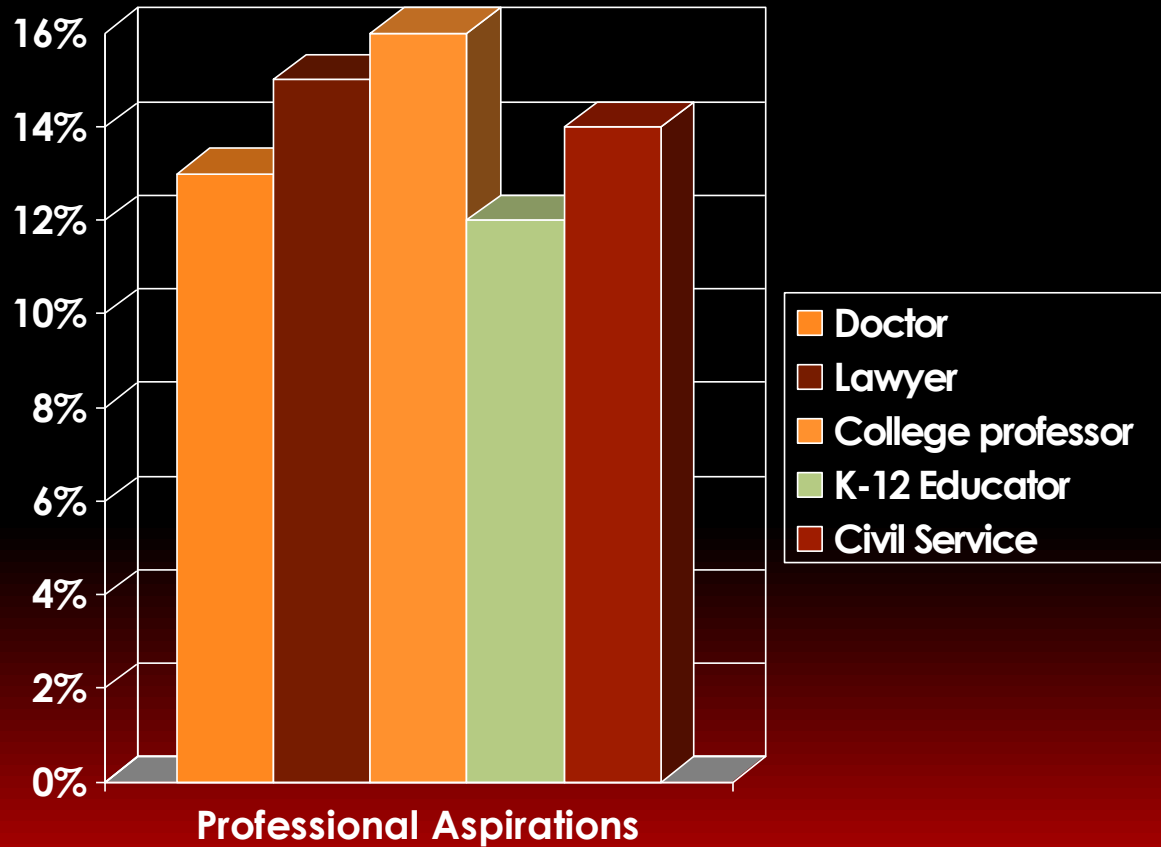
- Santa Monica City College
  - Book voucher programs and reserves textbooks in the library.
- Glendale City College/CSUF
  - Faculty have the option of a monthly deduction from their paycheck for the AB540 scholarship fund.
- Santa Ana College
  - Institutional scholarships that do not exclude undocumented students.



# Economic Impact

- The obstacles to post-secondary education inherent in current federal law is creating a subclass of citizens who otherwise are fully capable of becoming successful individuals-i.e. skilled professionals-and thus, significant taxpayers.
- Instead of gaining advanced educations and contributing richly to the U.S. economy, undocumented children are caught in a cycle of perpetual poverty, rather than contributing tax revenues.

# Professional Aspirations





# Proposed Alternatives to Legalization

- Cost of a mass deportation estimated to be \$206-230 billion (Goyle & Jaeger, 2005).
- Cost of 700-mile border fence estimated to be \$6-8 billion.

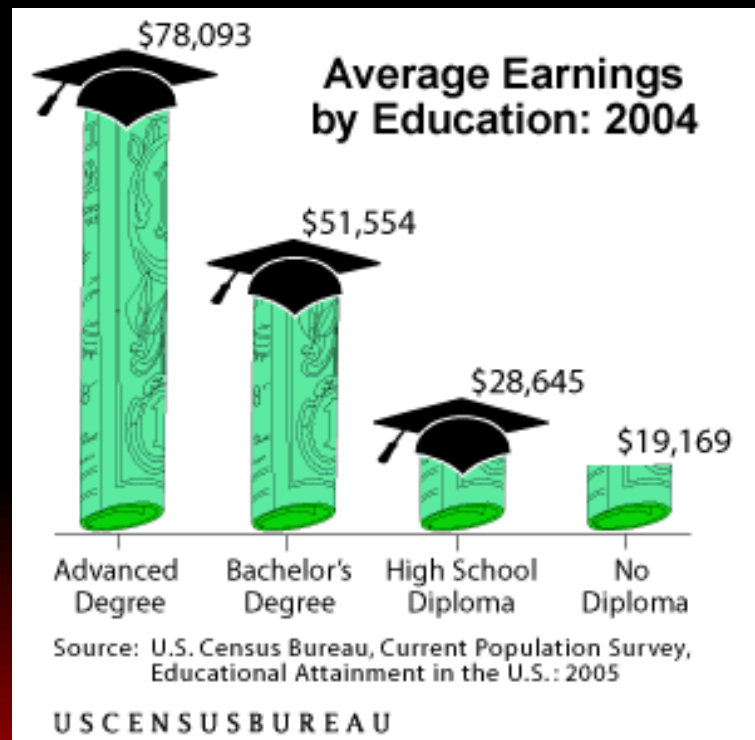
# Economic Impact

- Before Texas passed its in-state tuition bill in 2001, the Texas House of Representatives Research Organization estimated the long-term implications of NOT helping immigrant students to get an education at \$318 Billion.
- Further, the Texas Comptroller estimated that every one dollar invested in these students' education returns more than \$5 into the economy.

# Higher Education Investment Returns

- Effect of education on lifetime earnings (Day & Newburger, 2002):
  - A high school graduate will earn \$1.2 million over his or her working life.
  - Some college will raise that amount to \$1.5 million.
  - An Associate's Degree to \$1.6 million.
  - A Bachelor's Degree to \$2.1 million.

# Higher Education Investment Returns



# Higher Education Benefits

	PUBLIC	PRIVATE
ECONOMIC	Increased Tax Revenues	Higher Salaries and Benefits
	Greater Productivity	Employment
	Increased Consumption	Higher Savings Levels
	Decreased Reliance on Government Financial Support	Personal/Professional Mobility
	Reduced Crime Rates	Improved Health/Life Expectancy
	Increased Charitable Giving/Community Service	Improved Quality of Life for Offspring
SOCIAL	Increased Quality of Civic Life	Better Consumer Decision Making
	Improved Ability to Adapt to and Use Technology	More Hobbies, Leisure Activities

SOURCE: Institute for Higher Education Policy. 1998. *Reaping the Benefits: Defining the Public and Private Value of Going to College.*

# Public Opinion

- Even if they have ambivalent attitudes about undocumented persons, most Americans favor providing a path to legalization.
  - As recent as April 2009, A CBS/New York Times Poll indicated that 65% of Americans favor providing legal status to the undocumented population
  - An ABC News/Washington Post poll also conducted in April 2009 finds that 61% support legalization.
  - In 2006, A FOX News/Opinion Dynamics Poll similarly reports 63% of Americans favoring legalization for the undocumented population.



# Contact Information

William Perez, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor

CLAREMONT GRADUATE UNIVERSITY

150 East Tenth Street, Harper 212

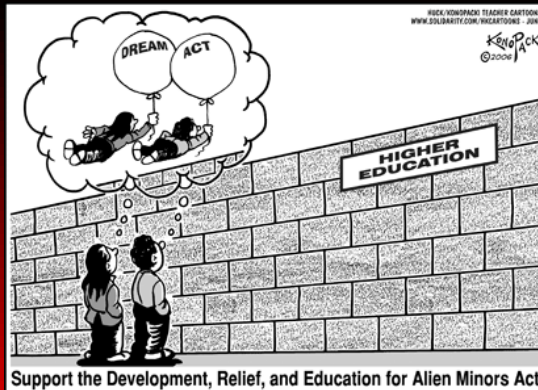
Claremont, California 91711

323-610-2074 Phone

William.Perez@cgu.edu

www.williamperezphd.com

www.cgu.edu/faculty/perezw



Support the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act

