

## Chapter 4

# Culturally–Responsive College Application Advising for Undocumented Immigrant Students

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter examines the implication of implementing culturally responsive pathways to college for undocumented students. The chapter provides an overview of the barriers students face, unique needs to consider, and outcomes for school counselors, or those supporting students in the college application process to go beyond the traditional practice of application completion. This chapter also includes a brief literature review of culturally responsive pedagogy and its application within a culturally responsive advising framework. Additionally, best practices and challenges are discussed.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

As schools become increasingly multicultural, minoritized students and those experiencing issues surrounding their immigration status often do not receive **culturally responsive advising**. This chapter provides an overview of barriers and introduces a culturally responsive framework for college advising void of schoolcentric and meritocratic practices. The presented framework will review Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CPD) and introduce a **Culturally responsive advising** (CRA) Framework, as part of the college application completion process.

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## **BACKGROUND**

According to the National Immigration Law Center, undocumented individuals are foreign nationals who entered the United States without inspection or proper documents, or entered legally as a nonimmigrant but violated the terms of their status and remained in the US without proper authorization. The term **undocumented immigrant** student refers to immigrant children and youth who, without the benefit of legal documents, entered the United States (U.S.) with family members who decided to move for better jobs or educational opportunities, or with the intent to reunite with family members (Fong, 2007). The term undocumented student will be used throughout the chapter. Today, approximately 100,000 undocumented students graduate from high school every year (Zong & Batalova, 2019) and less than 10 percent enroll in an institution of higher education (Arbeit, Staklis & Horn, 2016). According to new estimates by the New American Economy, undocumented students account for two percent of students enrolled in higher education (Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education, 2020). Of those enrolled, forty-seven percent arrived as children (ages 0-12), thirty-nine percent as adolescents (ages 10-16), and fourteen percent as adults (ages 22 and above). Currently, there are 216,000 DACA-eligible students enrolled in higher education. Additionally, forty-six percent are Hispanic/Latinx, twenty-five percent are Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI), fifteen percent are Black, twelve-percent are White, and two percent account for biracial and multicultural students. The majority of undocumented students reside in California, Texas, Florida, New York, Illinois, New Jersey, Maryland, Georgia, Washington, Virginia, and North Carolina (Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education, 2020).

### **Access to Higher Education**

Although federal law does not prohibit undocumented students from attending U.S. colleges or universities, they are not eligible for most federal loans, financial aid, and scholarships (Konet, 2007). As undocumented youth are affected by their legal status in their ability and decision to finish high school or apply to college, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement allows states to decide for themselves the ability for undocumented students to enroll in public postsecondary institutions. Irrespective of federal efforts, advocates have sought to address enrollment gaps by advocating for the allocation of resources and support staff, funding, and the establishment of DREAM Centers and dedicated student clubs.

While the Title IV of the Higher Education Act does not prohibit undocumented students from enrolling in higher education, it does forbid them from accessing federal financial aid to cover tuition, fees, housing, and books (Enyioha, 2019). Similarly, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Responsibility Act prohibits undocumented students from accessing government assistance, including financial aid.

The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act permits states to establish eligibility criteria for undocumented students to access postsecondary benefits. Most eligibility criteria require that students have attended a public high school in the state for three years leading to high school graduation, have earned a high school diploma or a General Educational Development (GED) certificate in the state, and have lived in the state 12 months before the date of the student's enrollment in their first semester at the postsecondary institution (Gildersleeve & Hernandez, 2012). At the state level, funding support options include in-state college tuition (Perez et al., 2010) and access to state-level financial aid (National Conference for State Legislatures, 2019). To date, there are nineteen states with provisions

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