

Committee on Diversity
Minutes
March 11, 2013

Committee members in attendance: John Lear, Aislinn Melchior, Czarina Ramsey, Amy Ryken (Chair), student member Hannah Smith, George Tomlin, Carolyn Weisz,

Guests: Donn Marshall, Pepa Lago-Grana

Chair Ryken called the meeting to order at 8:33 AM. Minutes for the previous meetings, Feb. 11 and 25, were approved with minor corrections.

Announcements:

Ryken announced that our next meeting will be March 25 in the Library McCormick Room. Ellen Peters will join us to consider possible questions about diversity and the curriculum to use with graduating seniors in focus groups interviews in April 2013.

Ramsey announced:

- The Lavender Graduation speaker will be Harry Velez-Quiñones, May 17, from 4-6.
- The Students of Color Graduation speaker will be Mayor Marilyn Strickland, May 18, from 4-6:30.
- Multicultural Student Services (MCSS) is seeking applications for a scholarship for returning students engaged in leadership around LGBT issues. Deadline March 29.
- MCSS has four positions open for student staff for next year. Deadline April 5.

Donn Marshall and Pepa Lago-Grana joined us for a discussion of the final report of the Undocumented Students Work Group (submitted with these minutes). Marshall recounted how the report emerged out of the experience of undocumented students' experiences at Puget Sound and summarized some of the key aspects of the report, noting that the financial challenges for these students are huge, that unlike many states, WA allows these students to pay resident tuition, and the state legislature is currently considering allowing them access to state work-study funds. Most undocumented students at Puget Sound are of Asian birth, unlike patterns at other regional schools which tend to have undocumented students who are of Latin American birth.

To the question of whether the new CDO might move this issue forward, various suggestions were made for greater university efforts: the need for Puget Sound to be more outspoken in declaring its values and public support for undocumented students; packaging resources better for these students, perhaps online where students don't have to reveal themselves, and including welcoming language on the Puget Sound admissions page; educating faculty and staff to direct undocumented students to available resources; reaching out to local immigrant communities and affinity groups (Centro Latino, NWIRP, NW Detention Center Roundtable) to make clear Puget Sound support for these

students; and working with the student employment office to facilitate information on opportunities for employment that do not require social security numbers.

It was noted that the language we use and the policies we pursue will necessarily be in flux as immigration laws and executive decrees may change the status of undocumented students.

There was a general sense that we should endorse some statement of support for undocumented students in university diversity statements, but there were also uncertainties: How can we add terminology of inclusion without using stigmatizing language (“undocumented”)? Is there a potential contradiction for us to include statements of support as part of our ideal of diversity, even as university policy does not allow the hiring of faculty or staff without documentation? It was agreed that Marshall and Ryken would collaborate with Human Resources staff to work with university legal counsel on the proper language.

Those attending voted unanimously to endorse the report and its specific recommendations. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

John Lear

Undocumented Students Work Group Final Report – November 2011

On February 23, 2011, on behalf of the President's Cabinet, Vice President of Student Affairs Mike Segawa appointed a work group of staff and faculty to examine issues related to undocumented students. Dean Segawa charged the work group with the following:

- 1) Identify the issues and challenges with this topic;
- 2) Research relevant existing laws and policies;
- 3) Articulate the values that should drive a consistent institutional approach;
- 4) Identify the best practices based upon these factors;
- 5) Recommend practices and policies for Cabinet consideration.

Undocumented Students Work Group: Group Composition and Process

Work group membership was solicited to widely represent campus support services. The group met four times in the spring of 2011 and concluded the work of drafting this report in the fall. In addition to information sharing in the meetings, group members read relevant literature, interviewed staff and faculty from several campus departments, and conducted phone interviews with colleagues from five northwest peer institutions. The findings of the work group are presented below, concluding with recommendations for the Puget Sound community to consider in practices related to our work with undocumented students.

Key findings

We discovered no universally accepted language describing the population of non-U.S. citizen students who do not have a current visa or other immigrant documents. Terms like "illegal" and "alien" are often considered offensive or biased. In some publications the term "1079 Students" is used, describing students who might qualify for in-state tuition under Washington State law. The term "undocumented" is not universally accepted, but became the term of choice for this work group.

From the Literature

- Undocumented students face significant unique emotional challenges.
 - They must hide important parts of their identities. Disclosure could lead to life-altering consequences for students and their families.
 - These students often have demanding commitments off campus, including jobs and family responsibilities. These factors likely limit the depth of connections undocumented students develop with potential friends on campus, and often limit engagement with the campus outside the classroom.

- Undocumented students often feel a sense of isolation, as there are likely to be few students of their status on campus, particularly at four year colleges and universities. Since most of these students are the first in their families to go to college, they often feel like their experiences are increasing their separation from familial connections in unanticipated ways, and families may not support or want that separation to occur.
- Because of their fear of discovery, undocumented students often do not trust offices on campus that might offer them support and guidance.
- Undocumented students face great uncertainty about potential employment options following graduation.
- Undocumented students often have high financial need which cannot be met since they typically are not eligible to work, and are not eligible to receive most financial aid.
- Undocumented students are often resilient, capable, and enjoy close family and community connections.

There are several paths to becoming an undocumented college student. Some arrive as small children when their parents migrate to the U.S., either without documentation or with temporary visas which they overstay. In both of these cases, these children grow up in the U.S. culture, attending U.S. schools, creating U.S. friendships, absorbing U.S. customs, and developing U.S. expectations. Many of these students are indistinguishable from native-born U.S. citizens in terms of achievement, ability, and aspiration. Some international students arrive in the U.S. and overstay their visas. We have not found the latter pathway to be common among Puget Sound students.

National Legal Context. Although it is beyond the scope of our institution to directly change national policies, it is within the context of those laws that Puget Sound operates. We found several laws and policies that affect undocumented students.

- The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act: First introduced in 2001, the DREAM Act has been reviewed and revised several times, but not enacted by congress. A recent version of the DREAM Act would provide undocumented students, or young people enlisting in the military, some legal protections and a pathway leading to citizenship, and would explicitly allow states to extend education benefits (i.e., in-state tuition).
- Financial aid: Federal and state aid in most states is not available to students who are not U.S. citizens, although in October 2011 California passed legislation that makes state aid available there. Private scholarships are available, but this funding is limited. Private colleges and universities may make institutional aid (merit and/or need-based) available.
- Inconsistent state laws: Washington, California, and Texas are among the states at present that allow undocumented students who graduated from public schools in that state to get in-state tuition rates at state colleges and universities. Other states, most recently Alabama, oblige state colleges to certify citizenship for all students, effectively making higher education unavailable even for the undocumented students who could afford the cost.

Washington State Legal Context. Washington House Bill (HB) 1079 provides that high school graduates (or those who complete a GED) who are undocumented, but who have lived in Washington for three years prior to receiving their diploma, and lived in our state “continually” since graduating, and who otherwise meet admission requirements, may attend state colleges and universities at the resident cost. No federal law requires discrimination in college admission based on citizenship status, and our state law is structured to encourage higher education among undocumented residents.

We find that Puget Sound has no legal obligation to report known or suspected undocumented status of our students to any state or national authority.

From Northwest Colleges

Of the five private, liberal arts colleges consulted, outside offices of admission, none have written policies guiding institutional practices. All of these campuses seem to admit students without regard to immigration status. Seattle University has been most public about support for undocumented students. The SU president published an opinion piece in support of education for these students, and has made public statements of support at campus gatherings.

All but one college representative was aware of having undocumented students currently enrolled. Numbers of these students ranged from “a couple” to “several dozen.”

All but one of these colleges make institutional aid (merit and/or need-based) available to undocumented students. One school representative cautioned that these funds may not be secure during economically difficult times.

Undocumented students do not seem to utilize career counseling services on most campuses, either because they do not trust those staff members, or because they do not believe they have real options to consider. (One campus representative said, “They would never go to career counseling.”) On graduation most undocumented students seem to target continuing their education or look for work in progressive non-profit organizations. For students that do pursue advanced degrees little is known about what they do beyond that goal.

The typical undocumented student attending these colleges tends to be from the local area, most often living at home or with extended family. (Seattle University seems to be the exception to this trend, enrolling a significant number of students from the Yakima valley.) Many of these students living with family work in family businesses, often for many hours each week. These factors often limit campus engagement for undocumented students, making their experience of higher education significantly different than that of their peers.

For undocumented students who move away from home to attend college, transportation to return home during breaks or for family emergencies can be challenging. Cost of travel can be prohibitive if not budgeted for, and traveling by commercial airlines requires a government-issued identification. In Washington state students can acquire state-issued

identification or a driver's license by showing proof of residency (a bank account statement, cell phone bill, utility bills, or documentation of enrollment at Puget Sound with current residential address should suffice). Students from out of state may not be familiar with, or confident about, the process of obtaining that documentation.

Puget Sound Experiences and Practices

In the course of the work of this group we learned that there were seven students identified as undocumented during the 2010-11 year. Although relatively small in their numbers, the concerns of undocumented students are not hypothetical at Puget Sound – these students are represented on our campus.

Members of this work group interviewed staff from many offices on campus. Most offices indicated that the immigration or citizenship status of a student would not affect the service received by that department. Many staff expressed doubt that they would be aware of a student's status at all. Staff in the offices of International Programs, the Chief Diversity Officer, and Multicultural Student Services reported that they make an effort to outreach specifically to undocumented students.

To our knowledge, only Admission has a relevant written policy, one that was endorsed by the President's Cabinet in 2004. In that policy the institution affirms its commitment to non-discrimination and states that admission decisions will be based on "a review of the undocumented student's academic credentials, other indications of the student's preparation for college and the student's ability to contribute to the university community." The policy ends by stating that an undocumented student will be "treated as a non-resident alien."

Specific concerns for undocumented students that have been brought to the attention of Puget Sound staff and faculty include negotiation of cultural dynamics and accessible resources on campus, finances, post-graduate opportunities (including post-graduate study and employment), privacy, travel limitations (unable to fly domestically without government-issued identification, and being unable to consider study abroad opportunities), commitment to family support during their years of study, need for off campus employment, and need for legal counsel.

For consideration for financial aid, undocumented students cannot submit a FAFSA to the federal processor because of their citizenship status. However, undocumented students can submit the CSS Profile to the College Board, and the CSS Profile also computes federal methodology (FM) need. Puget Sound uses the CSS Profile results as the basis for determining financial need and to award undocumented students according to institutional aid program policies. Puget Sound ensures that undocumented students are considered for institutional need-based assistance in a manner consistent with other underrepresented populations.

Puget Sound policy prohibits the awarding of institutional aid in amounts that exceed the cost of tuition. Even with an award that is equal to the cost of tuition, an undocumented student often faces a significant gap or level of unmet need for which funding sources are

very limited. Although state and federal financial assistance is not available to undocumented students here, some non-government-based aid (examples include Access to College, Achiever's Scholarship, College Success Foundations Leadership Award, the George Edgar Martinez Scholarship, the Asian-Pacific Islander Scholarship, and community-based scholarships) is available.

In the course of the last year, partly in response to the conversations raised by this work group, some adjustments were made in Puget Sound awareness and practices. A student called attention to not being able to access certain listings for off-campus employment without responding to a question about work authorization, thus restricting undocumented students from that information. CES changed that process, no longer giving employers the option to ask this question on the job listing. Counseling, Health & Wellness Services investigated eligibility of undocumented students for the institutionally-offered student health insurance, and is now better informed.

(Undocumented status is not a barrier to accessing the health insurance benefit.)

Discussion in the Registrar's office led to a change in how undocumented students are labeled. In the past the race of these students was coded as "foreign" (consistent with federal requirements). That odd coding ("foreign" not being a race) has now been changed and these students are given the race designation with which they identify. This serves to increase these students' privacy by not drawing attention to their citizenship status.

Key Recommendations

In light of the discussion above, until national and state laws are consistent and clear, we propose the following as directions for the University of Puget Sound with regard to our work with undocumented students.

1. We commend and endorse the 2004 Admission policy that grants admission to Puget Sound without regard to immigration status. In order to be more welcoming, we recommend that Admission review that policy statement to update language to describe these students as "undocumented" rather than as "non-resident alien."
2. Because of fear of discovery, it is not enough for us to know that our offices serve these students, and protect their identities, when approached. We recommend that Puget Sound staff and faculty make efforts to be visible in our support. Overt messaging about support, along with culturally relevant images and displays of related reading materials, can signal a wary student that an individual or an office might be trusted.
3. Because undocumented students do not advertise their status in their interactions, most faculty and staff who work with these members of our community do not recognize their presence. Since they are present on our campus, we recommend that college messaging about welcome to our community include reference to undocumented students along with other historically underrepresented and marginalized groups. Identifying individual students is not recommended since doing so would put them and their families at risk, but institutional messaging can help communicate a climate of acknowledgment and welcome. As one step

- toward this goal we recommend that appropriate departments and committees consider adding undocumented students to the Puget Sound definition of “social diversity.”
4. Many undocumented students currently seek support and advice from known allies Sally Sprenger, International Programs, and Abigail Taitano, from the office of the Chief Diversity Officer. These staff members, along with Czarina Ramsay in Multicultural Student Services, are well positioned to serve as contacts and referral agents to other resources on and off campus. We recommend making it known to key staff in student affairs, academic advising, registrar’s office, SAG, etc. that Ms. Sprenger, Ms. Taitano and Ms. Ramsay are available so we can effectively connect undocumented students with trusted support.
 5. As the college makes plans to move toward a two-year live-in requirement, and knowing that most undocumented students live off campus with family, we should carefully consider how such a policy will affect these students. We recommend that the college consider giving these students priority in petitions to live off campus when they make such a request.
 6. We recommend that faculty and staff working with undocumented students encourage those students to obtain government-issued identification. For undocumented students without a current passport we recommend encouraging them to take their state issued identification to the consulate or embassy of their home country in order to obtain a passport. Doing so will facilitate their return to their home country should they need to do so in the future.
 7. Because of uncertainties undocumented students face upon graduation, academic advisors, CES, and other mentors are limited in the options they can propose. We recommend support for continuing education for these college officials so we all might become better informed and up to date with the rapidly changing legal and social environments in which our undocumented students function.

References

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Web sites:

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- <http://www.weareoneamerica.org/>
- <http://www.semy.org/resources/1079brochurefinal.pdf>
- <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/24/magazine/24DreamTeam-t.html>
- <http://www.dailynorthwestern.com/campus/in-focus-undocumented-at-northwestern-1.2460851>

Undocumented Work Group Membership

Donn Marshall, Division of Student Affairs (Chair)

Sally Sprenger, International Programs & Admission

Pepa Lago-Graña, Foreign Languages and Literature

Mona Lawrence, Career and Employment Services

Kelli Delaney, Academic Advising

Maggie Mittuch, Student Financial Services

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