

Developing a Strong Undocumented Student Task Force on Your Campus



TASK FORCE DEFINITION

An Undocumented Student Task Force is a small group, usually four to twelve people, that brings together a specific set of skills to build or institutionalize support for undocumented students. Task Forces within higher education institutions can be created on an “as needed” basis or appointed by campus administration.

A Successful Task Force:

- Commits to addressing roadblocks and building inclusive institutional practices.
- Identifies and prioritizes short-term and long-term SMART goals.
- Clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of each member.
- Has a standing meeting time that allows for maximum participation.
- Appoints co-chairs for the Task Force (if possible). Does not rely solely on the coordinator of undocumented student services to drive institutional progress.
- Ensures representation of front-line staff, administrators, and faculty from key departments¹ that directly affect student enrollment, retention, and success.
- Has diverse membership that extends beyond Latinx support services and/or programs.
- Ensures participation of undocumented students to foster their empowerment and center the task force around their lived experiences.
- Seeks buy-in from campus administration and trustees to maximize impact.

POTENTIAL AREAS OF FOCUS

These areas of focus have been gathered from colleges and universities across California. They are categorized according to important aspects of support. However, you do not have to complete all the items in each category before moving on the next. Work with your task force members to identify your campus needs and priorities. Start by choosing one or two areas and work from there.

Professional Development

1. Review the [UndocuCollege Guide & Equity Tool Executive Summary](#) to identify and prioritize institutional models of success.
2. Read [A Guide to Building On-Campus Undocumented Student Programs](#), complete the benchmark checklist, and create an action plan.
3. Participate in external trainings, webinars, and conferences by [Immigrants Rising](#), [Presidents Alliance on Higher Education & Immigration](#), [United We Dream](#), and others.

Student Leadership

4. Foster undocumented student community and leadership by supporting and promoting a student club.
5. Create possibilities for Task Force members to act as mentors to undocumented students.
6. Advocate for and facilitate leadership by connecting students with professional development opportunities, such as conferences, workshops and webinars.

Institutional Practices

7. Develop and deliver UndocuAlly trainings to ensure staff, faculty, administrators and student ambassadors are trained to effectively support undocumented students.
8. Ensure collaboration between key departments and undocumented student/dream center on campus (if one is already established) to address institutional practices.
9. Review or develop key campus websites to ensure accurate and accessible information online for students and campus community.

¹ Key Departments can include: Admissions, Outreach, Financial Aid, Counseling, Cashier/Bursar, EOP or EOP&S, Career Center, Equity, ESL, Student Life, Transfer Center, Administration, Adult School/Noncredit, CBOs, etc.

10. Elevate and streamline the process of submitting the nonresident tuition exemption (AB 540) and the California Dream Act application (CADAA) on your campus. Use [Championing Equity: Systemwide AB 540](#) to ensure students get the same answer at every college and university.
11. Work with departments of institutional research to implement FERPA protected outreach strategies and conduct milestone analysis.

Campus Climate

12. Create visual materials (posters, t-shirts, buttons, etc.) that foster a sense of pride for undocumented students on campus.
13. Create and publish an “UndocuAlly list” and encourage allies to display their support.
14. Participate in or develop your own “Undocumented Student Week of Action.”
15. Foster relationships with faculty & staff associations and unions, student government, administrators, and the academic senate to increase their understanding of the need for undocumented student support.
16. Advocate for the administration to send messages of support for the undocumented community to all faculty, staff, and students.

Financial Support

17. Initiate a campus-specific scholarship or emergency fund through fundraising and employee giving campaigns.
18. Create a strong relationship with college or university foundations to jumpstart philanthropic opportunities.
19. Evaluate district funds and identify possible sources of funding to allocate to undocumented programming using equity metrics.

Student Services & Outreach

20. Ensure information on all outreach materials includes accurate and up-to-date information on AB 540, CA Dream Act, data protection, and available services.
21. Amplify the reach of your campus support/services or student club by promoting it on social media.
22. Increase awareness at feeder schools by providing UndocuAlly trainings to high school teachers, counselors, principals, administrators, and community members.

Student Programming

23. Coordinate provision of undocumented student programming on campus, including community-building events, legal services, and mental health support. Be sure students are aware of the immigration legal services offered through the [CCC](#), [CSU](#) & [UC](#).
24. Develop referrals to trusted, low or no-cost legal and mental health resources/services for specific cases.
25. Promote [entrepreneurship](#) as an opportunity for income generation, regardless of immigration status.

Student Safety & Data Protection

26. Ensure FERPA is understood by all campus enrollment personnel and that protections are adequately communicated to incoming and current students. See [Protecting Student Data in CA](#) for promising practices.
27. Assure [model policies established by CA Attorney General](#) (AB 21 guidelines) have been adopted at your college or university.
28. Develop a campus-wide action plan for when emergency situations occur (i.e., a student gets detained, DACA rescission, etc.).

CLOSING

Undocumented Student Task Forces have been instrumental in creating important institutional practices for undocumented students across the nation. Don’t forget that these types of changes require a lot of effort and commitment, and that progress is often incremental. To ensure your Task Force is able to achieve its goals, remember to stay focused on the SMART goals you created, seek institutional champions, and celebrate your successes! Together, we rise!