"Education, Not Deportation": A Pilot Study of Undocumented Student Experiences in Law and Medical Degree Programs

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Abstract

Increased numbers of culturally competent professionals in the legal and medical fields are urgently needed in a diverse society like the United States. This is largely due to the decisive role legal and medical services play in the everyday lives and well-being of communities of color. Due to recent developments in federal immigration policies and educational association policies, increased numbers of immigrant students, in particular undocumented students, are enrolling in professional degree programs. Little is known, however, regarding undocumented students' experiences applying to and studying in these professional degree programs and how their experiences compare to that of other immigrant student populations. Employing the use of a mixed methods approach consisting of a national survey of immigrant law and medical degree students, this paper describes the findings from a pilot project examining the effect of legal status on students' educational trajectories and workforce experiences. In doing so, this work sheds light on the role of immigration status plays on immigrant students' pursuit of post-graduate education and offers critical interventions in scholarly discourse, policy, and practice.

Keywords: immigrant legal status; professional degree enrollment; educational access and equity

INTRODUCTION

In May 2019, Jirayut "New" Latthivongskorn became the first undocumented student to graduate from the University of California, San Francisco's School of Medicine. Born in Thailand, New immigrated to the United States as a young child along with his family. New completed the program in Medical Education for the Urban Underserved and will start his residency training in family and community medicine at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital. A co-founder of the organization Pre-Health Dreamers, which seeks to support undocumented students pursuing careers in the health professions, New and the pipeline of other future health professionals that his work has helped pave the way for, represent an important subset of the U.S. immigrant community whose experiences warrant closer examination.[1]

In 1982, the Supreme Court ruled in the landmark case, *Plyler v. Doe*, that undocumented students could not be excluded from accessing a free, public K-12 education (Olivas 2012; Rincon 2008). While this victory did a great deal to secure the educational opportunities afforded to undocumented students, the case left higher education—at both the undergraduate and graduate levels—an open question (Gonzales, Heredia, and Negrón-Gonzales 2015). Today, an estimated 98,000 undocumented students graduate from high school each year with some of those students continuing on to attend college and to attend graduate and/or professional school (Zong and Batalova 2019).

While it may seem that the number of undocumented students pursuing graduate and/or professional degrees is small, as New's case demonstrates, the number of undocumented students pursuing professional degree programs is growing. In fact, this development has led national associations, such as the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), to host a DACA student seminar and issue a statement urging the Trump administration to fully reimplement the DACA program or find an alternate path for these students to adjust their immigration status (AAMC 2017).

Advocacy efforts to build equity in higher education for undocumented students has primarily focused on students' access to an undergraduate education and rightly so, considering that the transition from high school to college is often fraught with multiple challenges and barriers for members of this student population (Abrego 2006; Abrego and Gonzales 2010). Recently, as a result of powerful activism of undocumented immigrant students, colleges and universities have begun to implement programs and create mechanisms to support undocumented students in their pursuit of an undergraduate education. Scholarly literature on undocumented student experiences in higher education has mirrored this trend with a focus on student persistence and social movement activism at the undergraduate level (Gonzales 2008; Muñoz 2015; Negrón-Gonzales 2017).

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[1] https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/UCSF-Medical-School-graduates-first-undocumented-13902326.php?psid=8vOcf.

As the field of research on undocumented students and higher education continues to follow the educational trajectories of students beyond the undergraduate degree level, it is imperative to look to the next frontier of access and success: graduate and professional degree programs. Policy and practice in graduate schools is also often governed differently from undergraduate programs and these programs are more closely linked to the career fields in which students plan to seek employment.

Taking this cue, this project focuses on undocumented students' experiences in two professional degree fields—law and medicine—in asking the following set of research questions:

1) What motivations do undocumented students have for the pursuit of graduate and/or professional degrees?
2) What barriers and/or challenges do undocumented students face in the pursuit of a law and/or medical degree?
3) How do these barriers and/or challenges at the professional degree level compare with those that students experienced at the undergraduate degree level?
4) How have undocumented law and medical students overcome barriers to applying and matriculating into these programs?
5) What effect does immigration status have on undocumented law and medical students' plans after graduation?

Based on previous ethnographic fieldwork that Escudero conducted and in-depth interviews that Freeman completed, we hypothesize that there are multiple circumstances under which undocumented immigrant students might elect to pursue graduate and/or professional degrees. These circumstances include buying time until the federal government develops a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, being interested in a career field that requires additional training and licensure, and/or being interested in continuing to benefit from mentoring relationships and draw upon pre-existing support networks developed during students' undergraduate degree experience. In this project, we explore these and other reasons why undocumented students might consider the pursuit of a graduate and/or professional degree. Additionally, given the significant proportion of the undocumented population nationally that hail from Latin America, approximately seventy five percent, and Asia, approximately eleven percent, we hypothesize that in terms of barriers and challenges along the educational pipeline, these students will experience marginalization due to their immigration status and racial/ethnic identity (Passel and Cohn 2009).

UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: CURRENT RESEARCH AND FUTURE TRENDS

Scholarship on equity and access in higher education has primarily focused on students' undergraduate experiences with "literature regarding the academic experience of graduate students from underrepresented populations [being] comparatively meager" (Howard-Hamilton et al 2009: 1). Research on undocumented students' experiences in

higher education, in particular, has highlighted the pivotal role that legal status plays in the educational opportunities available to immigrant students and their progression along the K-20 educational pipeline (Covarrubias and Lara 2014; Gonzales 2015; Olivas 2012). As this work has noted, a critical juncture in students' progression along the educational pipeline is the transition from high school to college (Abrego 2006; Abrego and Gonzales 2010; García Bedolla 2010). During this time students face multiple challenges including difficulties obtaining funding to pursue college and finding the necessary support networks both during the application process and once they enroll in bachelor degree programs (Enriquez 2011; Gonzales, Heredia, and Negrón-Gonzales 2015; Negrón-Gonzales 2017). To facilitate this transition, undocumented immigrant students have spearheaded efforts at the state level to pass legislation that would assist students in attending college. These efforts culminated in the passage of in-state tuition bills providing undocumented students with the ability to pay the same tuition rates as their legal permanent resident and U.S. citizen peers when attending public colleges and universities provided they met certain requirements (Olivas 2012; Rincón 2008). Such requirements often entail students graduating from a state high school and meeting certain residency requirements (Olivas 2012).

While this work has importantly concentrated on the experiences of undocumented students as they enroll in college, little is known about these students' experiences after graduation as they enter the workforce or continue on to graduate and/or professional degree programs (Abrego 2006; Muñoz 2015). Scholars and advocates alike have underscored the importance of further research examining the transition from college to the work force and/or into a graduate/professional degree program (Abrego and Gonzales 2010; García Bedolla 2010; Stebleton and Diamond 2016). Seeking to address this need in the literature and to connect this research to the interests of university administrators and policy makers, this project aims to understand students' motivations for pursuing graduate and/or professional degree education, how these students' experiences compare with their undergraduate experiences, and the effect of their immigration status on their graduate/professional degree program experiences.

LEGAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT: THE CONTINUED IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBFEDERAL GOVERNMENT

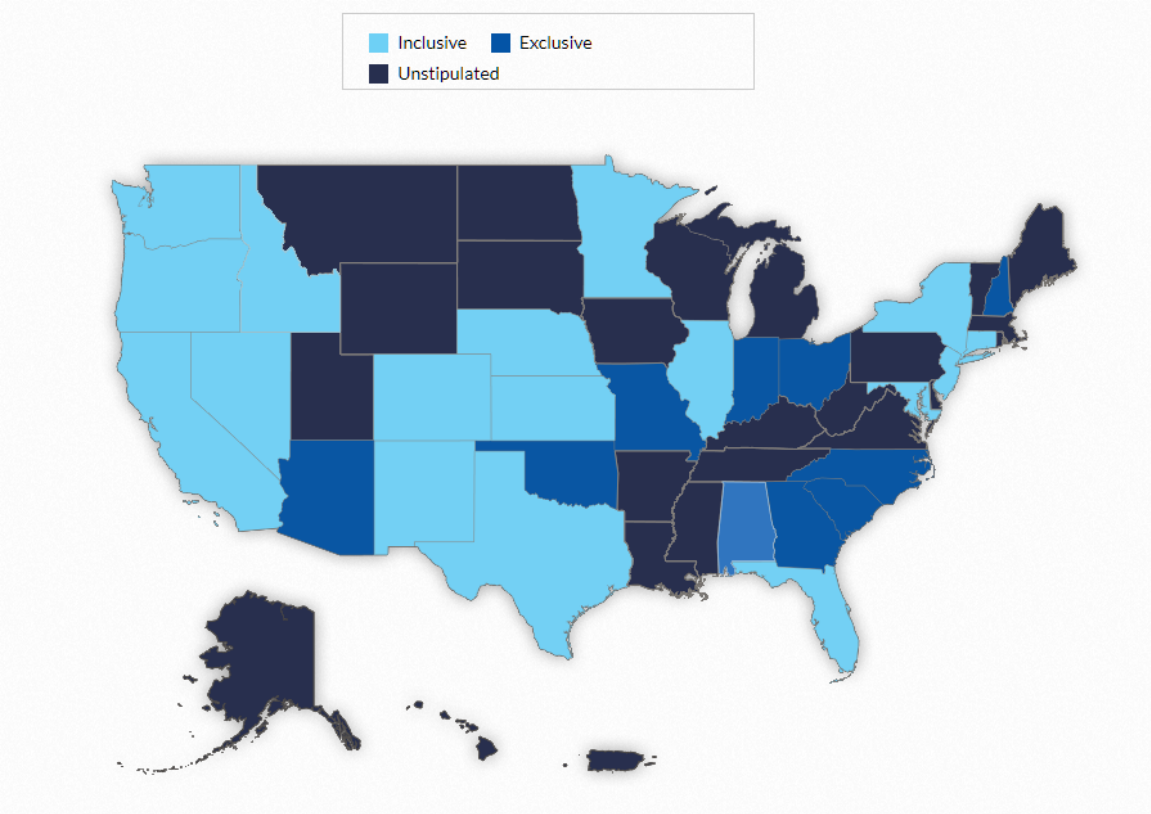
Complementing the scholarly literature on undocumented immigration and immigrant students' experiences in higher education, legal researchers have noted three areas in which subfederal laws and policies have an important impact on students' educational experiences and in shaping the potential pathways these students choose to pursue. These three areas consist of: (1) in-state tuition policies; (2) access to state and federal financial aid; and (3) professional licensure. Regulated at the state level, these three areas have been the site of important and innovative ways that state and other subfederal entities have, in a piecemeal fashion, constructed an alternative mode of citizenship for liminally legal immigrant students in U.S. higher education.

In-State Tuition Policies

As mentioned earlier, in certain states undocumented students have been afforded the opportunity to pay in-state tuition rates when attending public colleges and universities provided they meet a given set of state specific requirements (Olivas 2012). These requirements, often codified in state legislation, include residence in the state for several years and graduation from a state high school (Olivas 2012; Rincón 2008). While the majority of these bills have focused on addressing students' access to an undergraduate education, some universities such as the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, have clarified that these benefits extend not only to undergraduate students but also to graduate and professional degree students at their institutions.

According to the uLEAD Network (and illustrated in the table below), "an online community of university leaders committed to broadening postsecondary access and support for all students, regardless of immigration status," seventeen states across the U.S. are classified as inclusive in terms of their treatment of undocumented students in the college admissions process.

Figure 1. Map of the U.S. Coded by In-State Tuition Policies for Undocumented Immigrant, Post-Secondary Students



Source: uLEAD Network (2018)

While this map is particularly useful for illustrating state policies concerning undocumented students pursuit of undergraduate degrees, further elaboration may be necessary for discerning whether in-state tuition policies benefiting undocumented students pertain to a student's undergraduate, graduate and/or professional degree, or both. In future research we plan to closely examine university websites, such as those captured below (see Figure 2 and Figure 3), to build upon the foundational work that the folks at uLEAD have undertaken.

Figure 2. University of California Berkeley Law School Tuition Eligibility Chart for Immigrant (Documented and Undocumented) Students

PERTINENT TUITION AND AID APPLICATION ELIGIBILITY	DOMESTIC* U.S. Citizen/Eligible non-citizen AB540[a]: √	UNDOCUMENTED AB540[a]: √ DACA: X	UNDOCUMENTED AB540[a]: √ DACA: √	UNDOCUMENTED AB540[a]: X DACA: √ (CA Non-Resident) Applicable for students in their 1st year	UNDOCUMENTED AB540[a]: X DACA: √ (CA Resident)[b] Applicable for students in their 2nd year	UNDOCUMENTED AB540[a]: X DACA: X
Pay equivalent of in-state tuition/fees at CA public institutions	√	√	√		√	
Can apply for Federal Financial Aid using FAFSA	√					
AVAILABLE FUNDING						
Federal Aid (Grants, Loans, and Work-Study)	√					
Institutional Gift Aid and Loans	√	√	√			
Institutional Fellowships: (Grad Div funding, CA State Funds, Gift/Endowed/Private funds without citizenship restrictions)	√	√	√			
Employment (Academic & Non-Academic; does not include federal work study)	√		√	√	√	

Source: University of California Berkeley, School of Law

Figure 3. University of Michigan Law School Admissions "FAQ" Webpage on Undocumented Immigrant Students

UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS AND DACA

If I am undocumented, can I be considered for admission?

The University of Michigan generally, and the Law School in particular, are committed to supporting undocumented and DACAmented students. All undocumented individuals are eligible for admission to any degree program at the University of Michigan Law School. When you are completing the JD application, for "U.S. Visa type, if any," simply write "none" or "N/A."

What about financial support?

Undocumented applicants are eligible to apply for a fee waiver based on economic hardship. All undocumented admitted students will be considered for merit-based awards, whether or not they have been granted Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) status. In addition, applicants who meet specific criteria (such as attending school in Michigan, and graduating from a Michigan high school) may also qualify for in-state tuition through the Residency Classification Office.

Do you have any other resources you can point me to?

Here is a list of external resources that may be some help:

- United We Dream is the largest immigrant youth-led organization in the nation and seeks to address the inequities and obstacles faced by immigrant youth. They believe that by empowering immigrant youth, they can advance the cause of the entire community—justice for all immigrants. United We Dream also runs programs to advocate for access to higher education: stop the deportations of undocumented youth and their parents; and strengthen alliances and support for DREAMers at the intersection of queer and immigrant rights.
- MyDocumentedLife.org is dedicated to providing up-to-date information and resources for undocumented immigrants. Here, you will find the latest on scholarship opportunities, immigration news, ways in navigating the educational system, and more.
- TheDream.US is a new multimillion dollar National Scholarship Fund for DREAMers, created to help immigrant youth who've received DACA achieve their American Dream through the completion of a college education.
- Educators for Fair Consideration (E4FC) is dedicated to empowering undocumented people to pursue their dreams of college, career, and citizenship in the United States. They provide direct support, leadership and career development, community outreach and education, creative expression, and advocacy.
- U.S. Department of Education: Resource Guide Supporting Undocumented Youth: A Guide for Success in Secondary and Postsecondary Settings.

[Back to the top]

Source: University of Michigan Law School

Access to State-Based Financial Aid

States with large numbers of immigrant students, in particular undocumented students, attending public schools—high schools and college—have built upon their in-state tuition policies by providing limited, but crucial access for undocumented students to state financial aid. This development has led to the creation of increased incentives and

infrastructure to support undocumented students in their pursuit of higher education. Like the case of mobilization for the passage of in-state tuition bills, these state based financial aid policies were also the result of student lobbying and political activism in conjunction with the support of state political leaders. For an overview of the table listing states that provide undocumented students with access to in-state tuition (25 states) and those that also provide access to state based financial aid (17 states), see Table 1 below.

Table 1. Summary of State Policies for Public Higher Education Access by Undocumented Students

STATE	IN-STATE TUITION	FINANCIAL AID / SCHOLARSHIPS
Alabama	HB 56: Prohibits enrollment of undocumented students	
Alaska	--	--
Arizona	Prop 300: Prohibits in-state tuition	
Arkansas	--	--
California	AB 540	AB 130; AB 131
Colorado	SB 13-033	
Connecticut	HB 6844	HB 5031
Delaware	Determined by school	--
Florida	HB 851	--
Georgia	HB 492: Prohibits in-state tuition	
Hawaii	YES (Determined by governing board of public university system)	
Idaho	SB 1280	--
Illinois	HB 0060	SB 2185
Indiana	HB 1402: Prohibits in-state tuition	
Iowa	--	--
Kansas	HB 2145	--
Kentucky	YES (Determined by governing board of public university system)	
Louisiana	--	--
Maine	--	--
Maryland	SB 167	--
Massachusetts	--	--
Michigan	YES (Determined by governing board of public university system)	
Minnesota	Minnesota DREAM Act	Minnesota DREAM Act
Mississippi	--	--
Missouri	NO (State budget prohibits in-state tuition)	HB 390: Prohibits provision of financial aid
Montana	--	--
Nebraska	LB 239	--

Nevada	--	--
New Hampshire	HB 1383: Prohibits in-state tuition	
New Jersey	S-2479	No
New Mexico	SB 582	
New York	SB 7784	SB 1250
North Carolina	No	No
North Dakota	--	--
Ohio	YES (Determined by governing board of public university system)	
Oklahoma	YES (Determined by governing board of public university system)	
Oregon	HB 2787	
Pennsylvania	--	--
Rhode Island	YES (Determined by governing board of public university system)	
South Carolina	HB 4400: Prohibits enrollment of undocumented students	
South Dakota	--	--
Tennessee	NO (Determined by governing board of public university system)	
Texas	SB 1403	
Utah	HB 144	SB 253
Vermont	--	--
Virginia	YES (Determined by Attorney General)	--
Washington	HB 1079	
Washington, DC	Determined by school	--
West Virginia	--	--
Wisconsin	AB 40: Prohibits in-state tuition	
Wyoming	--	--

Sources: uLead Network; National Conference of State Legislatures; Connecticut General Assembly

Professional Licensure

In a similar vein to in-state tuition and state based financial aid, professional licensure for undocumented students is also administered individually at the state level. These policies have provided a critical pathway for undocumented graduates of professional degree programs, including law and medicine, to practice in their chosen career fields. Combined with the previous two policies, all three have in a piecemeal fashion provide a means to support undocumented student persistence along the educational pipeline and into the U.S. workforce.

Table 2. Summary of State Policies for Professional Licensing for Undocumented Immigrants

STATE	PROFESSIONAL LICENSING
Alabama	
Alaska	--
Arizona	--
Arkansas	--
California	AB 1024 (Attorneys)
Colorado	--
Connecticut	--
Delaware	--
Florida	HB 775 (Attorneys)
Georgia	--
Hawaii	--
Idaho	--
Illinois	SB 0023 (Attorneys)
Indiana	--
Iowa	--
Kansas	--
Kentucky	--
Louisiana	--
Maine	--
Maryland	--
Massachusetts	--
Michigan	--
Minnesota	--
Mississippi	--
Missouri	--
Montana	--
Nebraska	LB 947 (All Professions)
Nevada	--
New Hampshire	--
New Jersey	--
New Mexico	--
New York	NY State Supreme Court ruled to permit someone into NY state bar
North Carolina	--

North Dakota	--
Ohio	--
Oklahoma	--
Oregon	--
Pennsylvania	--
Rhode Island	--
South Carolina	
South Dakota	--
Tennessee	--
Texas	--
Utah	--
Vermont	--
Virginia	--
Washington	--
Washington, DC	--
West Virginia	--
Wisconsin	--
Wyoming	HB 0214 (Attorneys)

Sources: uLead Network; Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.; National Conference of State Legislatures

THE IMMIGRANT STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECT (ISRP)

Launched in 2018 by Kevin Escudero the Immigrant Student Research Project (ISRP) combines a focus on the role of legal status in mediating immigrant graduate and professional students' experiences in the U.S. higher education system with an analysis of the critical role these future professionals play in the creation of a workforce that specifically aims to reduce social inequality. With funding from AccessLex, the Association for Institutional Research, and seed funding from Brown University's Office of the Vice President for Research, this project aims to collect original data concerning immigrant students' experiences in graduate and professional degree programs across legal statuses.

The project's pilot phase, supported by a grant from AccessLex/AIR, was carried out by Escudero and a team of graduate student research assistants and a recent undergraduate alumnus. The team included Anne Fosburg (Brown University A.B. '17), Marco Antonio Flores (Williams College A.M. '19), Rachel E. Freeman (UCLA Ph.D. candidate in education), Tina M. Park (Brown University Ph.D. candidate in sociology), and Vania Pereira (Brown University A.M. '19). Together, team members, each with unique areas of

research expertise, supported the project's various components: community outreach, data collection, research design, and data analysis.

A scholar of undocumented immigration social movements, and law, Escudero brings extensive experience to the project having conducted ethnographic fieldwork and in-depth interviews with undocumented immigrant organizers in San Francisco, Chicago, and New York City. Fosburg graduated from Brown University in 2017 with an independent concentration in Critical Pedagogy and brought extensive experience researching issues of educational access and equity. A master's candidate in Art History and individual who had conducted interviews with undocumented and queer, or undocuqueer activists, Flores assisted in devising the project's outreach component and development of the survey questions. Freeman is a Ph.D. candidate in the Social Sciences and Comparative Education Program at UCLA and has worked to build education equity through advocacy and research initiatives in collaboration with immigrant and undocumented young adults in Washington, D.C., Boston, Oakland, and Los Angeles. Park is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Sociology at Brown University and offers expertise in survey design and methodology. Her research focuses on data and methodological bias in the social scientific study of race and racial inequality. Pereira, a Master's degree candidate in the Department of American Studies at Brown University has done research around access and success for undocumented students. In addition, she is an organizer and an advocate implementing policies and practices to accept, support and protect undocumented students in higher education.

For the pilot study, the research team prioritized gathering information about the experiences of immigrant—documented and undocumented—law and medical students enrolled in degree programs in the Northeastern United States. Focusing on the legal and medical professions was both a timely and appropriate choice given these professions' roles in mediating access to resources and services that play central roles in the (re)production of inequality and efforts to counteract such inequality as well as recent calls for a more diverse workforce in these two professions. Scholars and members of the two national bodies regulating these fields have identified the urgent need for a diverse workforce and cultural competency among both lawyers and physicians given the heterogeneity of the communities served by these professions (Kripalani et. al. 2006; Association of American Medical Colleges 2005; ABA Presidential Initiative Commission on Diversity 2010). Additionally, limiting the pilot study to the geographic region of the Northeastern United States assisted members of the research team in building on pre-existing contacts and relationships with staff members at colleges and universities in the region and in making the dissemination of the initial survey more manageable.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

To answer the questions posed for this pilot project, we drew upon the use of a mixed methods approach combining an online survey fielded among immigrant law and medical students in the Northeastern United States and opt-in follow up interviews with survey

participants. In doing so, this project is part of our broader efforts to develop the first comprehensive data set of immigrant students' educational experiences at the professional degree level across legal status.

The online survey, administered from October 2018-January 2019, explored immigrant students' experiences in college, during the application process, and their time in their professional degree programs. Survey participants were recruited through flyers distributed across all accredited law and medical degree programs by identifying contacts at each campus' diversity and inclusion student affairs offices in the Northeastern U.S. defined as the states of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire. To supplement these efforts we also reached out to campus' Latino Medical Students Association (LMSA), Asian Pacific American Medical Students Association (APAMSA), other student organizations and international students offices. Survey respondents were provided with a $25 gift card sent to the student electronically after verified completion of the survey.

The project's in-depth interview component will delve into these themes to further illicit discussions of students' educational experiences and the factors and/or individuals that have assisted them in their educational trajectory. At the time of the writing of this paper, we were in the process of carrying out these interviews with participants in the online survey. Given the additional time required to complete and analyze the interview data, for the purposes of this paper, we focus solely on the findings from the project's survey component.

PRELIMINARY PILOT SURVEY FINDINGS

General Overview

In this report we focus on findings regarding the experiences of undocumented students making comparisons with other immigrant student populations when helpful in contextualizing the experiences of undocumented students. The survey captured the experiences of a broad array of immigrant students including naturalized U.S. citizens, legal permanent residents, international students, and undocumented students with and without DACA status.

After accounting for incomplete surveys, those initiated by ineligible respondents (e.g., are U.S. citizens by birth or an individual not currently enrolled in a professional degree program), and those which did not pass validation screening (e.g., time to complete the survey was determined to be significantly less than the average time or respondents gave inconsistent answers to certain repetitive validation questions in the survey), we had a total of 156 complete, validated surveys.

Legal Status of Respondents

Of respondents approximately 24 law students and 31 medical students identified as currently and/or previously undocumented. The use of existing resource and support networks for undocumented and DACAmented students resulted in a greater proportion of undocumented and formerly undocumented students among our respondents than we had originally expected (35% of the overall sample).

Table 3 summarizes the immigration status of the respondents by professional degree program:

Table 3. Immigration Status by Professional Degree Program

	LAW DEGREE	MEDICAL DEGREE
Naturalized U.S. Citizen	14	30
U.S. Permanent Resident	21	9
Previous DACA Recipient	*8*	*3*
Current DACA Recipient	11	18
Undocumented Immigrant	5	10
Previous DACA Recipient	*2*	*0*
International Student (Non-Citizen/Non-Resident)	4	34
TOTAL	**55**	**101**

Racial/Ethnic Identity of Respondents

Respondents reported 25 different countries of birth, including China (37%), Argentina (15%), and the United Kingdom (12%). Most respondents who reported being enrolled in a law degree program originated from the United Kingdom (24% of law school enrollees) and China (18%). Those who reported being enrolled in a medical degree program largely originated from China (48% of medical school enrollees) and Argentina (21%).

Over a third of those who reported being undocumented or a DACA recipient either at the time of the survey or previously reported their country of origin as China. In fact, two-thirds of respondents who reported being undocumented or a DACA recipient reported an East Asian country (e.g., China, Japan, or Korea) as their country of origin.

Geographic Distribution of Survey Respondents

Although survey outreach efforts focused exclusively on accredited law and medical schools located in the Northeastern region of the United States, survey respondents reported attending law and medical schools across the country. In fact, states such as California, Florida, and Texas had the highest representation of respondents across degree programs. This was largely due to the fact that to supplement outreach to individual

accredited institutions in the region members of the research team relied on online networks, including student organization and universities' student service listservs in addition to the project's own social media accounts to recruit participants (Facebook pages and Twitter accounts run by the research team).

Moving forward we will revise our outreach materials to clarify the necessary requirements for participation in the project though we most likely will not encounter this same particular challenge given that the survey will be national in scope.

The geographic distribution of respondents by immigrant status is provided in Table 5.

Table 4. Location of Law and Medical Programs Attended by Respondents by Immigrant Status

	Naturalized U.S. Citizen and Permanent Resident[1]	International Student[1]	Undocumented Immigrant or DACA Recipient[2]
Alabama	2	0	0
Alaska	1	0	0
Arizona	0	0	1
California	14	1	9
Colorado	0	0	2
District of Columbia	2	0	0
Florida	3	34	10
Georgia	2	0	7
Hawai'i	2	0	0
Idaho	0	0	1
Illinois	0	0	1
Indiana	0	0	1
Iowa	0	0	2
Kansas	0	0	1
Kentucky	1	0	1
Maryland	0	0	3
Massachusetts	6	3	0
Nevada	0	0	4
New Jersey	2	0	0
New York	5	0	9
Ohio	1	0	0
Pennsylvania	2	0	1
Texas	18	0	0

Washington	2	0	2

Note:
1/ Excludes anyone who ever received DACA.
2/ Includes respondents who were naturalized U.S. citizens or received permanent residency at the time of the survey, but previously was a DACA recipient.

Resources and Support Networks

On average, respondents reported receiving approximately $42,000 in funding support from a variety of sources, including private and university scholarships, private donors, state and federal financial aid, federal and private loans, and financial assistance from family members. Nearly a quarter reported drawing from personal savings to pay for their law or medical school degrees. Almost all students (90%) received some amount of financial assistance from their family, in many cases relying on family assistance to pay for a large component of their education.

Given the overall set of respondents' immigration status, only a small proportion of respondents (less than 5 percent) reported receiving federal loans. Respondents who reported receiving financial assistance from their university (20%) were also naturalized U.S. citizens or U.S. permanent residents.

Of those respondents who identified as undocumented or DACA recipients, they reported also attending school in Florida and New York, states that are able to provide some limited financial assistance to undocumented students.

The majority of all respondents reported having a professional mentor (75%) or an academic mentor (48%) at their professional degree institution. The rates of reporting an academic mentor at their graduate institution is higher for documented students (naturalized citizens and permanent residents) than undocumented students, with 67% of documented students reporting having an academic mentor compared to 56% of undocumented students.

However, only about a quarter of survey takers reported having a personal mentor at their professional degree institution; nearly 40% reported not having a personal mentor from either their graduate or undergraduate programs. The difference between documented and undocumented students with regards to having a personal mentor is very stark: while 59% of documented students report having a personal mentor at the graduate institution, only 5% of undocumented students reported having one. In fact, 85% of undocumented students reported not having a personal mentor at all (neither at their graduate or undergraduate institutions).

It is encouraging that respondents report having support from other arenas of their life. Nearly all respondents reported engaging with community-based organizations to seek resources and other forms of support, as well as from a network of personal friends. Nearly a quarter also reported meeting with a counselor or therapist for support.

Political Engagement

The majority of respondents reported not participating (69%) in activist or advocacy efforts as a professional degree student. However, this non-participation was not even between medical and law students. Whereas only about half the respondents who are enrolled in law degree programs reported not participating in any activist or advocacy efforts, nearly three-quarters of medical students reported non-engagement. There are also notable differences in engagement between respondents of different immigration statuses. While the majority of naturalized U.S. citizens (82%) reported not participating in any advocacy or activism, only half of current DACA or undocumented students reported not participating. Nearly all international students (non-citizen, non-resident) students reported not engaging in any activist or advocacy efforts. This may be due to the fact that to persist in these professional degree programs undocumented students may

Future Planning

When asked whether they plan to stay in the United States after graduation, those who have legal status to remain in the U.S largely responded "Yes" (82% and 77% for naturalized U.S. citizen and legal permanent resident students, respectively). However, those without legal documentation to stay in the U.S. after graduation, including undocumented immigrants with and without DACA status and other non-citizens indicated they were largely unsure of where they would live after graduation (45%, 67%, and 95% for DACA recipients, undocumented immigrants, and other non-citizens, respectively). While over half (52%) of DACA recipients were certain they wanted to stay in the U.S. after graduation, the other half (45%) indicated they were unsure of where they would live afterwards.

Despite the challenges facing non-citizen, non-resident students related to professional licensing, the majority of respondents (73%) reported they would like to work directly in law or medicine. However, when analyzed by the degree program, medical students are more likely to report wanting to stay in their profession (81%) than law students (58%). This may be due to the policy differences regarding professional licensing: while medical students may continue their training in residency programs after graduating from medical school so long as they have work authorization, most law students may find it more challenging to find employers to sponsor work visas in order for them to complete their licensing process. Furthermore, with the exception of California, Florida, Illinois, and Wyoming, there is still a limited number of states that permit the licensing of undocumented immigrants as attorneys. This may be a consideration for immigrant law students, as many reported other possible occupations after completing their law degrees including continuing their education in another graduate degree program (31%), teaching in a faculty position (33%), and working in an administrative position at a university or college (24%).

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

As the preliminary findings from our pilot study have shown, despite numerous legal and structural barriers to pursuing a professional degree, immigrant law and medical students, including undocumented students, have succeeded in enrolling in rigorous professional degree programs. These students experiences present an important area of the higher educational pipeline for underrepresented students that warrant future study and attention. While we sought to limit the study to the Northeastern United States, it soon became clear from the demographics of survey respondents, that this issue is one that is not limited to a particular region of the country but rather is a growing concern for students across the country. During the process of fielding the pilot survey we also had undocumented masters and doctoral degree students inquire as to whether in the future we could include their experiences as well. Moving forward with the administration of the national survey this is definitely a factor that we plan to take into account.

Additionally, given the experiences of law and medical students across legal status, especially that of undocumented students, we find it important to call attention to the critical roles these institutions play in ensuring equity and inclusivity in higher education. Given the increased numbers of undocumented and other immigrant students enrolling in these programs, these institutions are uniquely situated in their ability to ensure the implementation of equitable policies and practices in the treatment of all immigrant students.

Taking the cue from national associations such as the Association of American Medical Colleges and the American Bar Association, universities are well situated to implement immigrant student specific programs that account for differences in legal status. This can potentially be achieved by establishing university wide admissions and financial aid policies that are proactively inclusive of students of all immigrant legal statuses. Professional degree programs can also work with their institutions to build scholarships specific to undocumented and other immigrant students. Once students matriculate, administrators, staff, and faculty can consider creating institutional infrastructure, such as task forces or committees that inform institutional change, and the development of staff positions specifically trained to provide informed academic and career guidance to members of this student population.

In addition to building equitable programs and implementing inclusive policies, higher education institutions and administrators can play a key role in building an equitable education system at the federal, state, and municipal levels. At the federal level, higher education leaders can advocate for legislation in favor of opportunities for all immigrant students and their families regardless of legal status. At the state level, higher education institutions can influence and advocate for state level policies such as access to in-state tuition, financial aid, and professional licensure. At the municipal and local levels, higher education institutions can partner with community based organizations to build stronger educational pipelines for undocumented students into the medical and law fields. Thus, as undocumented students continue their education along the K-20 educational pipeline and

enter the workforce as lawyers and physicians, these policy efforts can help ensure equitable and fair access to higher education and the sustainability of a diverse, culturally competent workforce for the future.

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