UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS POLICY: FAKE COLLEGE
ABOUT US
Fake College is a private, four-year undergraduate college in rural, Middle-of-Nowhere Town, NA. We are surrounded by luscious and vibrant farmland, maintained largely by our local community.

With 2000 (10% international) students in 18 degree programs, we provide a rigorous education to prepare students to become professionals in their chosen fields. Our well-rounded curriculum and coursework emphasizes diversity and learning. Students are encouraged to think beyond the classroom and apply their skills in real-world experiences. Fake College devotes a great deal of attention to the career-readiness of our students. Over 75% of our graduates have received offers of employment by the time of graduation.

As the community’s primary institution of higher education, we are proud to offer a competitive annual tuition of $35,000, including fees and room and board. In addition to our generous merit scholarships, our students can receive financial support from both federal and private loans and need-based institutional aid.

Our campus culture is devoted to promoting equal access to education. Our student body tends to be fairly liberal and actively engaged in regional politics. Our donor base is strong, with about 80% of alumni giving back in substantial amounts; parents and wealthy benefactors continue to support our endowments.

INSTITUTIONAL GOALS
In the next five years, Fake College has committed to:

1. Increase our on-campus diversity by bringing our multicultural student enrollment to 20%.
2. Nurture community relations through community involvement in campus activities and decisions.

Fake College has tasked the Diversity Task Force to create an action plan to achieve these goals. After much research and discussion, your team has decided to implement a recruitment strategy, among others, to address both goals: recruit college-ready students from our diverse local community.
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS

The term “undocumented” has a fairly broad definition and applies to a wide variety of circumstances. The most common assumption of undocumented status applies to people who have crossed the border into the United States “without inspection,” meaning they were not subject to inspection by customs authorities and entered the country unknown. “Undocumented” means they do not have any documents showing a legal right to be in the country at any time.

Other cases of residents who are undocumented are more complex. These cases include people who have entered the country with inspection and were allowed in legally, but their credentials are no longer in effect. This could be students whose student visas have expired but have stayed in the country beyond their anticipated departure date. Undocumented status can also apply to those with pending permanent residency cases. Some may identify as “pending immigrants” which can mean that they have requested a visa, that someone in their family has requested a visa or some kind of legal status, or that they have requested asylum in the United States (UC - Berkeley Undocumented Student Program).

There are an estimated 11.2 million undocumented immigrants of all ages currently living in the United States. Every year, approximately 65,000 undocumented students who have lived in the U.S. for at least five years graduate from high school. Of those, only an estimated 7,000 to 13,000 undocumented students currently attend college. Most of these students have learned English, lived in the United States for most of their lives, attended school in the United States, and have no way of becoming legal citizens. 77% of Latinos report that the high cost of education is the key reason for not attending college or not persisting in higher education. The cost of attending a private college for four years currently ranges from $80,000 to $200,000 (Pew Research).

EFFECT ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Currently, the federal government has not passed any laws that restrict or facilitate access to higher education for undocumented students, so it is up to individual states to make those decisions, and in some cases it is left to institutions to make these decisions (NAFSAA). Some states have passed restrictive laws that do not allow undocumented students to enter college, whereas others have passed supportive laws that allow undocumented students to receive state and other forms of financial aid for attending college. Unstipulated states have no laws that restrict or facilitate access for undocumented students and therefore, these decisions are left to individual institutions (NASPA).

Institutions tend to either restrict access by requiring proof of residency or citizenship in order to apply, or accept undocumented students as international students (NAFSAA). If accepted as international students, they are not eligible for state aid or for in-state tuition (in the case of public colleges and universities). This is also an identity issue for students who are viewed as international, despite having lived in the United States for most of their lives. Most undocumented students are unable to fully rely on a social support network of their peers and do not feel included in the larger campus community.

DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS (DACA)

DACA is a directive from the Department of Homeland Security that is in effect as of June 2012. This directive defers removal for some immigrants who meet a particular list of requirements. It does not confer lawful status, nor is it a path to citizenship or permanent residency, but it does give qualified students the right to work and live in the United States for a period of two years. The requirements to qualify for DACA are as follows:

- the person was under 31 years old as of June 15, 2012,
- the person came to the United States before his/her 16th birthday
- the person has lived in the United States continuously from June 15, 2007
- the person came to the United States without documents before June 15, 2007, or that lawful status expired as of that date
- the person is currently studying or graduated from high school or earned a certificate of completion or GED, or has been honorably discharged from the Coast Guard or military
- the person has not been convicted of a felony, certain serious misdemeanors (including a single DUI), or three or more misdemeanors of any kind (UC – Berkeley Undocumented Students Program)

At this point in time, DACA is almost at the end of its two year period and is up for possible renewal. Many residents are anxiously awaiting a decision from the federal government on what will happen to those who received DACA and whose temporary lawful status is about to expire. This complicates the issue for higher education administrators because they do not know how to proceed or counsel students. The DREAM Act is currently pending approval by Congress and, if passed, would give legal residency to people brought to the United States before the age of 16. Currently, an estimated 2.1 million undocumented students in the United States would be eligible for the most recent proposed version of the DREAM Act (S. 729 in the 111th Congress).

POLICY OPTIONS

1. Undocumented students’ status remains undisclosed by claiming “international” student status. 
   This option does not allow Fake College to make progress in diversifying our student population. With our commitment to demonstrating support for our community, maintaining the status quo is not an option. We have already identified the pitfalls of defaulting students to international status who do not feel they are, in fact, international students.

2. Allow undocumented students to submit an additional application for financial support after they have already been accepted and submitted deposit. 
   Our numbers for applications from undocumented students are already up, but enrollment has not increased because of financial constraints. We need to know as early in the admissions process as possible if an applicant is undocumented so that we can appropriately and equitably distribute financial resources to the applicants and to the needed services. An additional application process may discourage students from applying without the knowledge that additional financial support is available.

3. Distribute financial aid and support services to undocumented students through disclosure on the application for admission. 
   Although the institution does not have unlimited funding, and there is argument about whether it should be allocated to giving financial aid to undocumented students. In addition, FERPA does not protect applicant information so students are unlikely openly disclose their status without certainty that their status would remain confidential. As a result, students may not disclose their undocumented status, even given the opportunity for financial aid.

4. Students could apply for external funding, placing less financial burden on the institution. 
   This option is not in keeping with the institution’s current mission to increase diversity on campus. As it stands, students can apply for outside funding, but not much is available, and we are seeing extremely low rates of undocumented students enrolling at Fake College in proportion with the surrounding community.
POLICY RECOMMENDATION

We propose that this institution of higher education provide financial support to undocumented students to facilitate attendance and graduation from Fake College, despite challenging financial and legal circumstances. In order for the students to attend our institution, we should expand the options listed on our application form under Citizenship/Residency to include “undocumented.” Although this could place students in danger given that FERPA as it is currently applied at Fake College does not protect information on applications for admission. However, we can expand the definition of “students” to mean anyone who has submitted an application for admission to our institution. This would protect undocumented students and encourage them to disclose their status. Benefits of this policy include:

1. Disclosure of undocumented status will allow us to identify eligible applicants early. Fake College would be able to continue to notify applicants of acceptance and aid concurrently, leading to increased enrollment.

2. In order to appropriately allocate annual funding to the necessary student services, it is vital that we know how many of the incoming class will need to take advantage of those services. Disclosing status on the application will allow us to accurately anticipate the needs of our incoming class. Such funding would support program development, including: a “safe space” on campus for students to build community and training for a student affairs team to address the unique needs of undocumented students. An additional support network will consist of faculty, staff, advisors, counselors, and student allies on campus.

3. The credibility provided by rigorous data collection will contribute to our institutional ranking and document our support for increasing underrepresented students’ access to education. Accurate application and enrollment numbers will ensure proper monitoring of our progress in achieving institutional goals.

4. Once we have implemented this policy, our institution will be eligible to apply for additional funding sources that reward schools of higher education for their progressive policies and support of underrepresented students. Furthermore, our enrolled undocumented students will be able to apply for external funding, particularly when documentation of enrollment is required before disbursing funds.

5. Fake College will become a pioneer in institutional support of undocumented students. Currently, no other institutions enable applicants to disclose a status other than US citizen/resident or international student. With the growth of undocumented residents in the United States, institutional support will be crucial for ensuring a productive society.

6. Support from the community will increase, as many of our neighbors are undocumented and have few options for higher education. In addition, we may see increased completion of high school by undocumented students in the community, as they will have a feasible avenue for higher education. A better educated community leads to a better economy and to positive community development.

7. We can expect more donations from alumni and other donors who will be pleased with our instrumental support of undocumented students. Current students and alumni favor inclusive policies and therefore are likely to financially support this initiative.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, this two-pronged strategy of funding undocumented student tuition and undocumented student support services would be the most beneficial of all above-mentioned options to achieving our institutional goals. The simple act of including an “undocumented student” option on our application form would add value to the entire Fake College community.
REFERENCES


Undocumented Students Policy


Appendix A

Goal #1 of 5 Year Plan for Diversification: Undocumented Students

Within the institution’s 5 Year Plan for Diversification, we recommend that a major goal be inclusion of undocumented students, who make up a large part of our local community.

Goal #1: Increase Undocumented Student Enrollment (Admission and Retention)
Objectives: Find out who and how many undocumented students apply,
Get funding,
Outreach to community
Create institution-wide undocumented student support
Interventions: Surveyed current students (done),
Checkbox on application (disclosed status),
Create undocumented student safe spaces,
Advising and counseling support services

Appendix B

Undocumented Student Policy Figure 1