

AB 540 UNDOCUMENTED LATINO COLLEGE STUDENTS: SUCCESSES AND
CHALLENGES

Claudia L. Beltran
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AB 540 UNDOCUMENTED LATINO COLLEGE STUDENTS: SUCCESSES AND
CHALLENGES

A Project

by

Claudia L. Beltran

Approved by:

_____, Committee Chair
Francis Yuen, DSW

Date

Student: Claudia L. Beltran

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Division of Social Work

Abstract
of
AB 540 UNDOCUMENTED LATINO COLLEGE STUDENTS: SUCCESSES AND
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By
Claudia L. Beltran

This study utilized a multiple-choice survey questionnaire with Likert-type statements to explore the successes and challenges of AB 540 undocumented Latino college students in the Sacramento region. Study findings indicated that while demographic and background information distinctive of the Latino population contributed to the successes and challenges this student population encountered in their college education, educational and immigration policies aggregated to the myriad of challenges informing this student population. Implications for social work practice are limited to advocacy and community building, as a means to mobilize resources within the Latino community in order reduce the amount of challenges the AB 540 undocumented Latino college student experiences on a daily basis while increasing their stories of success.

_____, Committee Chair
Francis Yuen, DSW

Date

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

A college education is often synonymous of prosperity and upward mobility in this country. Undoubtedly, a college degree improves one's quality of life; as it paves the way to a brighter and much successful future to those who opt to pursue, and can afford it. Unfortunately and despite of the multiple financial resources available to those who choose to pursue a college education (such as Federal and State financial aid, university grants, scholarships, as well as student loans) undocumented Latino college-bound students cannot benefit from these resources. Their legal status has become their greatest obstacle; as it keeps a great majority of this subgroup of the undocumented Latino population marginalized, and oftentimes living as their parents do: in the shadows of a legal system and excluded by society.

Current anti-immigration federal policies limit undocumented students' educational access to only a K-12th public education. Once undocumented Latino students graduate high school, those who wish to pursue a post-secondary education have the burden to finance their college education. As a means to decrease college costs, while at the same time attempt to increase undocumented Latino college-bound student enrollment, the state of California enacted Assembly Bill (AB) 540, in 2002. AB 540 was designed with the undocumented college-bound student in mind (although other students with legal standing benefit from this piece of legislation.) The AB 540 law allows undocumented Latino college-bound students, residing in California, to qualify for

in-state tuition fees, as opposed to international student fees. Subsequently, any undocumented Latino student would have a greater opportunity to pursue a college education. Unfortunately almost ten years after the passage of AB 540, it is estimated that approximately only one percent of the undocumented Latino college-bound student population has significantly benefited from the passage of Assembly Bill 540 (Ferris, 2010).

California law AB 540 may not be after all the panacea to the myriad of challenges AB 540 Latino college students encounter on their plight towards a college education. Unfortunately, AB 540 has failed not increase student college enrollment rates as much as California colleges and universities previously anticipated; nor it has maintained a favorable retention rate of this target population (Gonzales, 2010). Assembly Bill 540 has only decreased some of the financial burdens AB 540 undocumented Latino college students face while attending college; however reduced college tuition rates do not encompass all of the other challenges this target population faces as college students.

Although there exists a dearth of literature and research on undocumented Latino college students, this newer “sub-group” of undocumented immigrants share similar challenges alike their documented Latino college peers, such as demographic information, socio economic status, possible language and academic deficiencies, poor schooling. However the perplexing mix of their undocumented status and family low-socioeconomic status (Gonzales, 2010) adds to the myriad of challenges this student population encounters as they work towards their college education.

Background of the Problem

California houses the largest population of undocumented Latino students. Approximately 40% of all undocumented Latino students reside in the State of California (Passel & Cohn, 2009). It is estimated that approximately 65,000 undocumented Latino students graduate U.S. high schools every year (Oliverrez, Chavez, Soriano, & Tierney, 2006). If the state of California houses 40% of the total high-school age population, then on average 26,000 undocumented Latino students graduate from California's High Schools every year. Unfortunately only 3,500 to 5,000 undocumented college-bound students enroll in California's public colleges and universities (Oliverrez et al, 2006).

Research shows that in March 2010, the total population of undocumented immigrants slightly dropped from 12 million to an estimated 11.2 million (Passel, & Cohn 2011). Latinos, however, continue to lead with the highest number of immigrants living here illegally, at 76%. The majority of the undocumented immigrants come from Mexico, at 7 million (Passel & Cohn 2009). Passel further indicated that although the number of undocumented immigrants might have AB unchanged since 2003, between 1.5 and 1.8 million (Passel, Cohn, & Lopez, 2011; Passel & Cohn 2009). State legislations, such as Assembly Bill 540, designed with the undocumented Latino college student in mind, is just as new as this emerging new sub-group of immigrants. AB 540 applies to any student who meets eligibility criteria, not only undocumented students. For the purpose of this study, the term is used as it applies to AB-540 eligible undocumented Latino students).

Most of the research and literature found on illegal immigration focuses on first and second generation adult immigrants; thus little attention has been focused on this younger immigrant population. Latino adult undocumented immigrants are the youngest amongst all other ethnic groups living in the United States, with a median age of 27 years (Passel, Cohn, & Lopez, 2011). Demographic characteristics show that Latino undocumented immigrants, especially Mexican undocumented immigrants, have the most needs as well as deficiencies. And inevitably face the most challenges amongst all of other ethnic groups (Passel, Cohn, & Lopez, 2011). This population has the lowest educational attainment rates, the lowest paying jobs, and the highest poverty rates (Passel & Cohn 2008) to only mention a few.

Unfortunately, ever increasing anti-immigration sentiments masked by this country's failed and unstable economy, as well as failed immigration reform policies, undocumented Latino immigrants are the most persecuted in this country. As undocumented Latino students graduate from high school, their future looks more like their parents' present, and their dreams for a brighter future diminish. Everything they worked so hard for, all of the sudden is unattainable because their social identity has the same value as their immigration status. Research found on demographic characteristics of undocumented Latino college students will show great diversity in the time of length residing in the United States, students' own social identity, as well as academic performance as well as the barriers they face while accessing higher education (Gildersleeve, & Ranero, 2010; Perez, 2010; Chavez, Soriano, & Oliverez, 2007).

Statement of the Research Problem

Great deal of literature has addressed risks and preventative factors limiting low post-secondary educational enrollment and retention rates amongst Latino college students. An emerging body of literature has shifted focus to the experiences and struggles of undocumented college students, such as the barriers and challenges caused by immigration policies and school practices preventing upward mobility to the undocumented Latino college student (Gonzalez, 2010; Perez, Cortes, Ramos, & Coronado, 2010; Contreras, 2009; Abrego, 2008). The Pew Hispanic Center (2008), estimates that the Latino immigration will triple by 2050, and it is estimated to account for the majority of this country's population growth. Latinos are expected to make up 29% of the U.S. population by 2050, as compared to 14% in the year 2005 (Passel & Cohn, 2008). As uncertainty grows over the fate of millions of undocumented immigrants, caused in part by failed federal immigration reform policies, and recent attempts to enact various anti-immigration laws across state lines, it is necessary to create awareness of this target population.

Future research needs to focus on identifying the AB540 undocumented Latino college student, as well as his/her challenges, barriers, successes, and needs, as means to create awareness of this newer sub-group of undocumented Latino immigrants. Since California houses the highest percentage of Latino immigrants, both documented and undocumented, and has enacted public policy that allows this population to access in-state tuition.

Purpose of this Study

This study will explore the challenges and successes encountered by AB 540 undocumented Latino college students as they work towards a college education. This study is limited to AB 540 undocumented Latino college students currently attending an institution of higher education in Sacramento, California. This specific population was chosen for two reasons: Sacramento, California counts with multiple institutions of higher education from the California State University System and several belonging to the California Community College System. The second reason is that there is a dearth in literature addressing AB 540 undocumented Latino college students from the central valley. A great deal of the literature on this student population, encompasses other states as well as other parts in California, such as southern California and northern California (Cantrell & Brown-Welty, n. d.; Gonzales, 2010; Hernandez, Hernandez, Jr., Gadson, Huftalin, Ortiz, Calleroz White, Yocum-Gaffney; 2010; Gildersleeve & Ranero; 2010; Perez, Cortes, Ramos, & Coronado, 2010; Perez, Espinoza, Ramos, Coronado, Cortes, 2009; Abrego, 2008). AB 540 Latino College students attending an institution of higher education in Sacramento, California will describe what types of challenges inform their college experience, as well as factors contributing to their successes considering the insurmountable barriers originated by their lack of immigration status.

Theoretical Frameworks

Theoretical perspectives that will inform this study are Critical Race Theory, Ecological and Resilience perspectives. Critical Race Theory (CTR) offers a critical perspective on race, and the causes as well as consequences of race, racism, inequity, and

the dynamics of power and privilege (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). From a schooling and legal perspective CRT will attempt to explain how systemic and institutionalized racism keeps AB 540 undocumented Latino college students from having equal schooling opportunities as their documented college-bound peers. Through Critical Race/Counterstorytelling, AB 540 undocumented Latino college students will inform the reader of the unique realities experienced by this student population and which narrate a story of continued subordination and marginalization despite of having been practically raised in American society with American values and beliefs.

From an ecological perspective, this study will inform the reader of demographic characteristics, socio-environmental factors affecting this student population, such as poverty, high rates of unemployment, parental low educational attainment as well as the way in which their legal status affects this student population's social environment. The Resilience perspective will address this student population's resiliency factors that encourage them to continue to pursue a college education, in spite of legal and educational barriers preventing them from accessing higher education. Individuals with resilience capacities can prevent, minimize, and even overcome diversity (Greene & Kropf, 2009).

In other words, these individuals have the inner as well as the protective capacities to turn something negative into a positive, and can thrive despite of the obstacles in place. According to Greene and Kropf, resilience promotes growth amongst those who face stressful situations (p. 148). AB 540 undocumented Latino college students have their unique and collective share of stress, caused predominantly by their

legal status. Their legal status denies them of any educational benefit past the high school. They are not guaranteed a college education, let alone employment after graduation. Additionally, the daily stressors affecting their lives (caused largely in part by their legal status and the risks of deportation and arrest they take on a daily basis) Yet these students in spite of having a legal system working against them, they still manage to find ways to complete a college education.

Definitions of Terms

AB 540: Assembly Bill 540 was signed into California Law on October 2001. This bill allows any student, including undocumented students, to pay in-state tuition at any California public college and university (UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education, 2007).

AB 540 eligibility requirements:

- “College-bound students must have attended a California high school for 3 or more years
- The student must have graduated from a California high school or attained a G.E.D.
- The student must have registered or currently be enrolled at an accredited institution of higher education in California.
- The student must have filed or will an affidavit as required by individual institutions, stating that you will apply for *legal residency* as soon as you are eligible to do so” (UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education).

College- bound undocumented students:

College-age students who are of undocumented status.

Latinos: People of Hispanic, especially Latin-American, descent, often one living in the United States. Of note: The term Latinos and Hispanics is used interchangeably.

Undocumented immigrants and unauthorized immigrants:

Are foreign-born, non-U.S. citizens who have entered the United States without authorization, or entered legally with a visa or passport, but stayed in the United States without obtaining legal residency.

Assumptions

This research study is being conducted under the premise that AB 540 undocumented Latino college students encounter challenges, and experience academic success uniquely and distinctively to their lack of legal status in this country. Although AB 540 Latino College students share same demographic characteristics as their legal immigrant Latino peers, such as low socioeconomic status, low academic preparation, and poor access to college-readiness and entrance information, their realities are informed by their lack of legal status. Another assumption being made is that this student population experiences greater challenges than any other college student population because of demographic characteristics inclusive of the overall Latino population. Additionally, this researcher assumes there are other significant challenges superimposing the educational experience of this target population, other than their need for financial aid.

Justification

AB 540 undocumented Latino College students is becoming a population with increasing challenges and unmet needs. Additionally undocumented college-age Latino youth is fairly a new topic of research and interest given the unique characteristics that sets them apart from the adult undocumented immigrant Latino population. Given the dearth of literature focusing on the challenges and successes AB540 undocumented Latino college students encounter as they pave their way through a post-secondary education, is imperative that close attention is placed in this new subgroup of undocumented immigrants. As public policies continue to ignore the dire needs of comprehensive immigration reform, this student population will continue to suffer the consequences of their parents' decision of migrating them illegally to this country. The Latino population continues to be the fastest growing minority in the United States. This minority group has the lowest level of education, as well as the highest poverty rates. Settling for a High School diploma no longer provides financial stability for anyone, especially for those populations with economic and socio-environmental deficiencies. The need of a college education is imperative for upward mobility in this country, especially for those marginalized and impoverished student populations.

Undocumented Latino college students have the lowest college enrollment and retention rates amongst any other college-age minority group. Their documented status prevents them from qualifying for any type of social services. In spite of approved educational policies at state level (such as California's AB 540) allowing undocumented students to pay in-state college tuition as opposed to international tuition fees. Student

populations, such as California's ABA 540 undocumented Latino college-bound students still face a myriad of barriers preventing them to even benefit from in-state tuition. These barriers continue to preclude an entire population of college-bound students living at the marginalization of a society, in which many believe they belong to. Their legal status and low academic attainment will most likely increase their likelihood of low paying jobs, low-employable skills, and the possibility of utilizing social services, as well as incarceration.

Although this study focuses on the educational-attainment goals of the student population, the Social Work profession will be able to identify systemic and institutionalized racist policies that intentionally keep this student population from upward mobility. This study will also inform the Social Work profession of the legal and educational barriers undocumented Latino college students encounter on a daily basis and how these barriers affect their overall college experience, as well as their uncertain futures. This population is greatly underserved and underrepresented due to their lack of legal status. The Social Work profession will benefit from this research study by identifying existing services and/or networks in place, or finding creative ways to provide and access services for this population through community building and partnership. The Social Work profession can also create public awareness as well as advocacy as a means to promote social change for this marginalized and socially excluded group of young individuals.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study seeks to address the unique challenges as well as successes experienced by a relatively newer sub-group of undocumented Latino immigrants, such as undocumented Latino College students. This study is limited to AB 540 undocumented Latino college students attending an institution of higher education in the Sacramento Region. However, it is important to address the challenges the overall Latino population encounters as they permanently settle in the United States. By addressing the overall challenges Latino immigrants encounter as a whole, the reader will better understand the unique challenges experienced by AB 540 undocumented Latino college students as they move through their college education. Furthermore, this researcher wishes to clarify that the population being studied is AB 540 undocumented Latino college students. However, because of the dearth of research and literature specific to the population being researched, the great majority of the literature herein may be inclusive of the Latino (documented and undocumented) population.

AB 540 undocumented Latino college students face unique challenges as well as uncertain futures. This population is currently standing at a crossroads between the legal and the educational systems that keep the great majority of this population from accessing higher education. While some undocumented Latino college-bound students manage to complete a college education, they still face an uncertain future. Their legal status prevents them from harvesting the fruits of their arduous labor: become working professionals due to their inability to obtain legal employment. Undocumented Latino

youth share many similarities with their documented peers, such as low socio-economic status, geographic and background characteristics as well as education deficiencies and barriers (Gonzales, 2010; Abrego, 2008). However, these students' unresolved legal standing in this country contributes to the staggering challenges they will continue to encounter as they move towards their post-secondary educational experience. Multiple failed attempts to address issues of immigration reform, as well as a collapsed economy, and staggering unemployment rates have served as the perfect concoction for a new breed of anti-immigration sentiment towards Latinos. The ambiguity on immigration reform, as well as the passing of anti-immigration laws at the state level, such as Arizona's Senate Bill 1070, adds to the uncertainty about the future of undocumented college students despite of the potential and desire they have for upward mobility. Nonetheless, undocumented Latino college students continue to pursue their dream of a college education in spite of the insurmountable challenges they face.

This chapter will address the historical contexts of Hispanic immigration as well as educational legislation that continues to limit upward mobility of AB 540 undocumented Latino college students. Additionally, this chapter seeks to address socio-environment factors that serve as barriers to this population as well as successes AB 540 undocumented Latino college students have found they move through their college education. This chapter will also address theoretical perspectives to better inform the daily challenges this group of young students face as well as the accessibility to resources and role service providers play in reducing college-related stressors.

Immigration Historical Overview

From the founding of this nation, the United States has enacted immigration policy indicative of nativist sentiment; geared towards limiting upward mobility of any minority group, and at any given point in this country's history. Beginning as early as 1790, with the passage of the Naturalization Act, the United States passed its very first immigration policy which was inclusive of free Whites only (Rincon, 2008). Future immigration policies would continue to target non-white minority groups, depending on which minority group appeared most threatening at the time. Up until 1952, federal immigration policy prohibited most non-white immigrants from full citizenship; hence were precluded from enjoying all political rights and freedoms this Nation offered to those considered US nationals (Rincon, 2008; Johnson 2005).

Numerous immigration policies exclusionary of minorities have been enacted to impose numerical quotas of certain immigrants, such as dark-skinned immigrants from countries such as Asia, Africa, Latin America and Mexico (Rincon, 2008; del Pinal & Singer, 1997). As most immigration policy has been implemented to benefit the vested interests of this nation, by either restricting legal entrance of a target minority group, such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, or to encourage migration, such as the Bracero Program of 1942, which was design to "import" cheap labor-force from Mexican Nationals to work in back-breaking low and unskilled jobs, such as farm-work. The last time the United States enacted a federally-mandated immigration policy was in 1986, with the enactment of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA). The purpose of IRCA was to curtail illegal immigration by allowing those who had been in this country

illegally since 1982 to legitimize their immigration status (Stevenson, 2005; del Pinal & Singer, 1997).

With the passage of the IRCA, approximately 2.8 million undocumented immigrants were able to legalize their immigration status which meant that those with families would also be able to apply for legal residency. Prior the 1986 IRCA, the United States usually granted amnesty on an “individual basis” (Rincon, 2008). Never in the history of the United States, had policy-makers ever imagined the true outcome of the IRCA. Instead of tapering down on illegal immigration, it set precedent to the waves of millions on undocumented immigrants coming into this country in the following two decades. The great majority of this wave of undocumented immigrants came from predominantly from Mexico, as well as other American countries (Stevenson, 2005; del Pinal & Singer 1997).

Latinos in the United States

Passel, Cohn, and Lopez report the 2010 Census counted 50.5 million Latinos currently living in the United States (2011). Further Census data estimates the Latino population grew 43% over the last ten years; accounting for 13.6% of the total U.S. population, which also accounted for most of the nation’s growth over the last decade, at 56% t (Passel, Cohn, & Lopez, 2011). Additional preliminary data from the 2010 Census shows that Latino children under the age of 17 and younger account for 17.1 million of the total Latino population in the United States, or 23.1% (Passel, Cohn, & Lopez, 2011). Therefore, it is estimated the number of Latino children grew 39% over the last decade.

The state of California continues to lead with the highest Latino population, at approximately 14 million (Passel, Cohn, & Lopez, 2011).

2000 census data reported that Latinos accounted for 12% of the total U.S. population (Therrien & Ramirez, 2001). At that time, 66% were of Mexican descent, followed by 14.5% from Central and South America, 9% from Puerto Rico, 4% from Cuba, and 6.4% from other Latino origins (Therrien & Ramirez, 2001). Estimates on the Latino population indicate that by the year 2050, Latinos will make up 25% of the total U.S. population and will be the largest minority group living in The United States with a projected number of approximately 100 million (del Pinal & Singer, 1997). Latinos in the United States, especially those of undocumented status, are disproportionately one of the most marginalized minority groups. Although Latinos are the youngest minority group, with 23.1% of the population being under the 18 years of age (Passel, Cohn, & Lopez, 2011) and with a median age of 27 years old (Passel & Cohn, 2010).

Latinos account for one of the poorest, undereducated, and unskilled labor force of any other minority group in the United States (Passel & Cohn, 2009; del Pinal & Singer, 1997). It is estimated that in 1999, 22.8% of Latinos lived in poverty, with 6.8% of the Latino population being unemployed, as opposed to non-Hispanic Whites with 3.4% of unemployment (Therrien & Ramirez, 2001). Additionally, Latinos were more likely to be employed in unskilled occupations, such as service industry, and farm-work labor, and least likely to be employed in managerial or professional occupations (Therrien & Ramirez, 2001). Latinos were also more likely to earn less in year-round employment

then their White counterparts with only 23.3% of the Latino population earning over \$35,000.00 (Therrien & Ramirez, 2001).

Adult Latino Immigrants in Education

In terms of educational attainment, Latinos also fall behind other minority groups. A great portion of the adult Latino immigrant population obtained very low levels of education in their countries of origin (Cantrell & Brown-Welty, n. d.). Additionally, the likelihood of resuming any form of education once they migrate to this country is unlikely (Cantrell & Brown-Welty, n. d.). Additional research indicates that the Latino population, ages 25 and older, were less likely to have completed High School with 57% over non-Hispanic Whites with 88.4% graduation rate (Therrien & Ramirez, 2001). Furthermore, to substantiate claims of Latinos having low levels of educational attainment, Therrien and Ramirez (2001) found that over a quarter of Latinos, or 27.3% of the Latino population over the age of 25 had completed less than a 9th grade level education, compared to their non-Hispanic Whites counterpart, at 4.2%.

Therrien and Ramirez (2001) further reported that Latinos have a much lower bachelor's degree attainment, at 10.6% as opposed to their non-Hispanic Whites counterparts, at 28.1%. It is important to point out that poverty levels as well as educational attainment vary among Latino groups as well as amongst generations; however, the Latino population oftentimes fairs worse than any other ethnic group in the United States.

Latino Youth and Higher Education

Passel and Cohen (2009) reported that Latino youth continue to account for low enrollment in U.S. educational institutions. Latino youth are often characterized by having high dropout rates and low college retention and completion rates (Cantrell & Brown-Welty, n. d.). Although second and third generations seem to have higher success rates than first generations, there is still exist a persistent gap in educational attainment amongst the Latino college-age population (Passel & Cohen, 2009). Approximately 48.9% of the Latino youth, between 16 and 24 years old were not enrolled in a college or high school in March 2009. Another 30.6% were enrolled in high school and 20.5% were enrolled in higher education (Passel & Cohn, 2009). In contrast to their non-Hispanic peers, only 41.6% of the entire nation's non-Hispanic youths were not enrolled in any academic institutions (Passel & Cohn, 2009), this is less than the Latino youth population.

These percentages are alarmingly high considering the greater portion of this population has legal documentation. Therefore, the financial barrier to higher education, such as federal aid, state and university grants, does not appear to be the only deterrent preventing Latin youth from accessing higher education. Further statistical information shows that foreign-born Latino youths have the highest dropout rates, at 32.2% over native-born Latino youths, at 9.9% (Passel & Cohn, 2009). College enrollment rates also show that foreign-born Latinos or first generation have the lowest college enrollment rates, at 29.1% over second generation Latino youths, at 46.2% (Passel & Cohn, 2009).

Undocumented Latinos in the United States

The Pew Hispanic Center for Research reports that in March 2010, an estimated 11.2 million of unauthorized immigrants were living in the United States, and approximately one million were undocumented children (2011). Mexicans continued to make up for the majority of the undocumented immigrant population, at 58% or 6.5 million. Other ethnic groups from Latin America account for 23%, or 2.6 million, while Asia accounts for 11% or 1.3 million (Passel & Cohn, 2011). Additionally, the Hispanic Center for Research reported that in 2008, about half of the nation's estimated 11.9 million undocumented immigrants lived in the following states: California, Texas, Florida, and New York (Passel & Cohn 2009). In regards to the age distribution of the undocumented population, this is rather different from that of the legal immigrant as well as the U.S. born population (Passel & Cohn 2009).

There is a smaller age distribution among the undocumented Latino population, which constitutes for a much younger male population ranging from 18 to 39 years old, and 35% of the total population of undocumented immigrants (Passel & Cohn, 2009). Additional societal and educational statistics from this study show that undocumented Latino immigrants are disproportionately more likely to have higher poverty rates, lower income and educational attainment, and are more likely to hold lower-skilled jobs than the documented Latino population, as well as to have higher unemployment rates (Passel & Cohn, 2009). Further, literature reiterates the findings reported by the Pew Hispanic Center for Research. According to Gildersleeve and Ranero (2010) most undocumented

families are considered working class or working poor. Great portion of these families live in poverty. Hunger, poor housing conditions, high unemployment rates, poor health, and underperforming schools are often linked with high poverty rates (Gildersleeve & Ranero, 2010). Ultimately whenever contrasting social, economic, and educational factors, the undocumented Latino immigrant population fairs much worse in every aspect.

Educational Policies for the Undocumented Immigrant

The landmark decision of Plyler v. Doe in 1982, established the legal right of undocumented youth to an education in the United States, under the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment (Harmon, Carne, Lizardy-Hajbi, & Wilkerson, 2010; Pabon Lopez & Lopez, 2010; Perez, et al, 2010; Contreras, 2009; Rincon, 2008; Drachman, 2006; Stevenson, 2005). This landmark decision preempted a Texas law that required undocumented children to pay a tuition fee to enroll in its k-12 schools. The Court found that barring undocumented students from public education would only add to the myriad of disadvantages this population already faced, such as poverty, marginalization, and racial prejudice (Lopez Pabon & Lopez, 2010). However, the Plyler Court ruling did not address same educational rights for higher education.

Access to higher education remains severely limited to undocumented Latino college goers. Federal policies from the past 45 years have prevented undocumented students from receiving any type of financial aid to attend college (Drachman, 2006). Under the federal Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, undocumented students were found to be ineligible for federal aid for postsecondary education (Rincon, 2008;

Drachman, 2006). Further in 1996, punitive anti-immigration policies such as the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) would further target undocumented students' access to higher education. The IIRIRA would go a step further to place limitations on this population by taking it to the state level. The IIRIRA would prohibit undocumented students from receiving any state and local aid for their higher education under the assumption that in-state financial aid, and university grants were considered social benefits and under PRWORA, social benefits were not extended to any one of undocumented status. (Pabon Lopez & Lopez, 2010; Guarneros, Bendezu, Perez-Huber, Velez,, & Solorzano, 2009; Rincon, 2008; Drachman, 2006).

While there does not exist any federal or state policies prohibiting undocumented students from attending college, socio-economic factors preclude many bright, intelligent and overly qualified undocumented Latino college-bound students from accessing higher educational institutions (Harmon, et al, 2010; Perez, et al, 2009; Drachman, 2006; Stevenson, 2005). In an attempt to address the inequalities of access to higher education and the undocumented youth, have been made at the federal level in the past decade through the Development Relief for the Education of Alien Minors Act or the D.R.E.A.M. act. This piece of federal legislation would enable qualifying undocumented students to become lawful permanent residents, and eventually eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship through several qualifying criteria, such as having graduated from a U.S. high school, and enrollment in institution of higher education (Pabon Lopez & Lopez, 2010; Rincon, 2008; Drachman, 2006; Stevenson, 2005). However efforts of affording

undocumented students equal rights to higher education have remained stagnant in the last decade. Due to failed efforts of the federal government to address this issue, states across the nation continue to introduce and repeal legislation regarding in-state tuition for. Other states have gone as far as implementing legislation to denied undocumented students any access to higher education such as the state of Arizona.

California's Educational Policies

The California D.R.E.A.M. Act. The state of California has its own version of the Federal D.R.E.A.M. act. The California D.R.E.A.M. Act proposes limited access to financial aid as well as scholarships; however it would allow greater access to undocumented youth into institutions of higher education. This piece of legislation has yet to be decided on an it is currently in the Assembly Appropriations Committee (istillhaveadream.org)

Assembly Bill 540 (AB 540). A more “successful” piece of legislation is Assembly Bill 540 which was enacted into law in 2002. This piece of legislation allows students to qualify for in-state tuition as long they attended a high school in the state of California for at least three years, graduated from a California high school or attained the equivalent of a high school diploma, are registered or currently enrolled in a California institution of higher education, and has filed or plans paperwork to legalize their immigration status (Harmon, et al, 2010; Abrego, 2008; Chavez, Soriano, & Oliverez, 2007; UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education, 2007). California's AB 540 aimed to improve undocumented youth's access to higher education since California accounts for the highest number of undocumented Latino immigrants (Passel, Cohn,

2009). Abrego (2008) reports Bartindale estimated in 2001, that approximately 5,800 and 7,450 undocumented students could potentially benefit from AB 540. Chavez, et al (2007), have stated that California's AB 540 legislation has failed to fulfill its expected outcome in its goals for undocumented students. The lack of information and guidelines, as well as failure to distribute appropriate informational materials to educational service providers has left many counselors and students uninformed or misinformed on the policy, oftentimes preventing students from qualifying for in-state tuition.

AB 540 undocumented Latino College Students

Gildersleeve and Ranero (2010) report that undocumented college students come from some of society's most vulnerable circumstances (p.19). Oftentimes this student population experiences are marked by systemic racism and poverty. Additionally, scholars inform that post-secondary enrollment and outcomes for undocumented Latino college-goers are difficult to assess due to the limited number of studies done on this population (Gildersleeve and Ranero, 2010; Gonzales, 2010; Perez, et al , 2010; Perez & Coronado, 2006). And the exact number of AB 540 undocumented Latino college students enrolled in California's higher education institutions is much more difficult to assess. The UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education estimates that approximately 26,000 undocumented college-age youth reside in the state of California (2007). Other scholars believe that an estimated 30,000 of undocumented Latino students enroll into California's Community College Systems annually and approximately an average of 5000 of undocumented Latino college-bound students enroll in California's

two public University Systems: University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) (Chavez, Soriano, & Oliverez, 2007).

A recent newspaper article published by the Sacramento Bee reported that AB 540 students made up less than 1% of the entire college student enrollment population in California's three higher educational systems for academic years 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 (Ferris, 2010). At the UC level, approximately three-tenths of a percent of 220,000 students were enrolled under the AB 540 waiver; while at the CSU level, 3,633 students filed AB 540 waivers from the 440,000 students enrolled in the 2007-2008 academic year (Ferris, 2010). Meanwhile at the community college level approximately 1% of their student enrollment, or 34,016 students enrolled as AB 540, out of 2.89 million students enrolled in the 2008-2009 academic year (Ferris, 2010).

The AB 540 undocumented Latino college student population brings in a mix-bag of complexities, challenges, barriers, and needs influenced by demographics as well as their undocumented status. This population's unresolved legal situation affects their daily lives and needs, which precludes them from accessing adequate resources, a college education, and ultimately upward mobility (Abrego, 2008). Furthermore their futures remain uncertain as they stand at a crossroads between failed legal and educational policies that continue to ignore the unique characteristics of this emerging sub-group of undocumented Latino immigrants (Howerdel & Asquith, 2006). Their legal status and poverty add to the daily challenges to this student's college experience. Currently AB 540 undocumented Latino college students are not eligible for financial aid, experience high levels of social isolation as well as feelings of stigma and shame and fear of legal

consequences oftentimes leaves them ambivalent to accessing on-campus resources. Additionally, misinformed service providers and a lack of knowledge about this student population adds to the challenges this student population encounter in their college experience (Gildersleeve & Ranero, 2010; Gonzalez, 2010; Hernandez, et al, 2010; Abrego, 2008).

The most area of research has been focused on the lack of financial available to this student population which prevents many from having a fair access to higher education (Gildersleeve & Ranero, 2010; Pabon Lopez & Lopez, 2010; Guarneros, et al, 2009; Jewell, 2009; Martinez-Calderon, 2009; Perez, et al, 2009; Rincon, 2009; Abrego, 2008; Drachman 2006; Horwedel & Asquith, 2006; Stevenson, 2005). Even with in-state tuition, many students cannot afford the staggering cost of a college education. Undocumented Latino college-bound students do not qualify for financial aid as well as the great majority of scholarships. This significant barrier deters many academically prepared and talented college aspiring Latino youth from accessing higher education. Those who decide to pursue a college education, struggle between work, academics, fears of deportation and added socio-economic stressors due to their legal status (Hernandez, et al, 2010; Perez, et al, 2009).

However challenges for this population surpass their need for financial aid. Martinez-Calderon (2009) reports that Duran and Weffer studied the effects of migration in young undocumented school-age immigrants in 1992, and found that this population encountered a myriad of challenges such as issues with acculturation, assimilation, poor substandard k-12 schooling, poverty, broken family ties, and loss of social support

networks. These findings are supported by other scholars who have studied the effects of migration on similar populations and have found that a great majority of undocumented Latino students struggle with acculturation, assimilation, poverty, inadequate housing, employment, and shifts in family roles, as well as the need to learn a foreign language while attempting to carry on with expected school work (Cantrell & Brown-Welty, n. d.; Hernandez, et al, 2010; Jewell, 2009; Fong & Greene, 2009; Perez, et al, 2009).

Once in the United States this population encounters legal uncertainties which become more pervasive as these young adults come of age in a country that continues to move toward harsher and punitive immigration policies caused in part by failed attempts of comprehensive immigration reform at the federal level (Lopez Pabon & Lopez, 2010; Stevenson, 2005). As these students turn into young adults, they can no longer fall back on a k-12th educational system which embraced them (many times unwillingly) due to the Plyler v. Doe court-mandate, which affords undocumented children a free k-12 public education despite of their undocumented status. This creates a significant disconnect between the childhood and adult lives of undocumented Latino college-bound youth. Stevenson (2005) reports that while undocumented Latino children grow up with public policies and communities they are treated as equal as their documented peers. However, the disconnect occurs when these students turn 18 years old and there are no longer any public policies protecting them or providing equal rights/services as their documented counterparts. Their communities and society at large seem them know as criminals, outcasts for being undocumented. Therefore, undocumented Latino youth are faced with

the harsh realities distinctive of marginalization, inequality and silent discrimination (Stevenson, 2005).

Literature shows that the younger undocumented minors migrate to this country the greater success they will have with cultural assimilation and integration into this country's educational system (Perez, et al 2010; Perez, et al 2009). Therefore, these students are expected to have less academic deficiencies than those undocumented Latino students who might have migrated to this country during their middle school years (Perez, et al, 2010). However, it is important to point out that the schooling experience for Latino children is not limited to the acculturation and assimilation process. Poverty, and demographic characteristics distinctive of Latino immigrants, factor in the undocumented youth's school experience (Passel & Cohn, 2009; Jewell, 2009; Coronado, 2008; Cantrell & Brown-Welty, n. d.).

Other challenges attributed to their legal status are psychological stressors undocumented Latino immigrants experience on a daily basis. Martinez-Calderon (2009) reported that polls obtained by the Pew Hispanic Center in 2007, showed that over half of the adult Latino undocumented population living in the U.S. worried that they or a family member could be deported any time. Some literature reports that fear of deportation and arrest can work as a deterrent for the undocumented college-bound from accessing higher education (Gonzales, 2010; Contreras, 2009; Drachman, 2006). This fear of deportation may keep students from socially isolating themselves from the larger community. Fear of the legal system keep many undocumented youth living in secrecy as well as with the constant pressure to go unnoticed and remain invisible to the larger society (Martinez-

Calderon, 2009; Contreras, 2009). Simple daily life situations, such as using public transportation, driving, work, or walking to school can produce radical-life changing experiences, such as deportation (Hernandez, et al, 2010; Martinez-Calderon, 2009; Perez, et al 2009).

Furthermore, social isolation, feelings of stigma and shame are often experienced by the undocumented immigrant, especially the undocumented college student (Hernandez, et al, 2010; Perez, et al, 2010; Martinez-Calderon, 2009; Contreras, 2008; Coronado, 2008). These psychological stressors add to the myriad of daily challenges this student population experiences which has an overall affect to their college experience. Emerging literature focusing on social identity and resiliency inform that the stigma and shame attached to the label of “illegal” affects many undocumented college students’ self-perception and social identity (Hernandez, et al, 2010; Perez, et al, 2009; Abrego, 2008). As a means to protect themselves from negative and pejorative terms, such as “illegals” and “illegal aliens” and the social implications that come attached to these terms, many undocumented college students do not disclose their illegal status to friends and or service providers and oftentimes limit social involvement on on-campus activities, as well as social events (Martinez-Calderon, 2009; Abrego, 2008). Feelings of shame and stigma are important to address because many of undocumented Latino youth may not have the protective capacities and/or outlets to keep them from further social-isolation which can possibly increasing their invisibility even in the only setting they should feel safe in, such as college.

Customarily, college goers see school life/campus life as a social space where they can socialize and develop social networks that share same commonalities and interests. Where connections and alliances are formed and in many ways help students through their academic journey (Martinez-Calderon, 2009). However there is contradicting literature addressing undocumented college students' perception of school being a positive social space for them. Some literature reports that undocumented Latino college students use school as a space in which they can build social networks and the only other space away from home that offers them a feeling of normality and safety; where they do not have to be concerned of looking over their shoulder (Martinez-Calderon, 2009). However, other literature informs this study that many students keep a distance from peers and school personnel for fear they will find out about their legal status (Hernandez, et al, 2010).

Service Providers and on-Campus Resources

Literature informs this study that the role of services providers is somewhat limited, as well as the availability of resources for AB 540 students for various reasons. Many undocumented Latino college students do not want wish to be identified for fear of peers and professionals finding out about their undocumented status; therefore, school professionals should create opportunities for students to feel safe to reach out (Hernandez, et al 2010; Perez, et al, 2010). Additional literature reports that school professionals need to educate themselves on the unique challenges and needs encountered by the undocumented Latino college student, which go far beyond their inability to qualify for financial aid (Gildersleeve & Ranero, 2010; Perez, et al, 2010). By

understanding the realities of this student population, school professionals can help ensure the success of undocumented students in higher education (Gildersleeve & Ranero, 2010).

Other limitations school professionals face is that their places of employment are not prepared to address the unique challenges as well as needs of the undocumented college student population (Oseguera et al, 2006). Literature informs this study that college faculty and staff often lack sensitivity as well as information whenever working with undocumented Latino college students (Perez, et al, 2010; Contreras, 2008). Students often feel these types of encounters are counterproductive due to the lack of training as well as the lack of sensitivity of many professionals around their legal status (Perez, et al, 2010; Contreras, 2008). These types of experiences may preclude students from accessing on-campus resources or limit their encounters with professionals they already know.

Other Challenges: An Uncertain Future

Despite of all the disadvantages, challenges, and sacrifices invested while in their pursuit of a college education, undocumented Latino college students' dreams for upward mobility and professional employment within their fields of education remain stagnant. Oftentimes, undocumented Latino youth hope that a college degree will ultimately grant them a path to legal residency (Martinez-Calderon, 2009). Unfortunately, their undocumented legal status bars this student population from gaining lawful employment even with a college degree (Hernandez, et al, 2010; Perez, et al, 2010; Martinez-Calderon, 2009; Contreras, 2009; Coronado, 2008; Stevenson, 2005). Many decide to

continue on with their education, in hopes that by the time they finish a graduate and/or post-graduate degree, immigration and/or educational policies, such as the federal D.R.E.A.M. act or California's D.R.E.A.M. Act will be enacted. However, for the time being, literature shows that many undocumented Latino college students may have no option but to join the underclass of the undocumented immigrant who are mostly employed in marginalized, low-skilled employment (Martinez-Calderon, 2009).

Theoretical Frameworks

Critical Race Theory (CRT), Resilience and Ecological Perspectives will better address the juxtaposition AB 540 undocumented Latino college students find themselves in as they pursue a college education. Critical Race Theory (CRT) examines and challenges the ways racism shapes social constructs and social practices (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Additionally, Critical Race Theory argues that racism is embedded and constant in U.S. society (Pabon Lopez & Lopez, 2010; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). CRT theorists examine the subtle and hidden forms of racism as it operates on a more systematic and institutionalized manner, which in turn keeps a racial stratification where marginalized minority groups occupy the bottom of the stratum (Pabon Lopez & Lopez, 2010; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). CRT proposes that upward mobility for marginalized and underrepresented minority groups is only allowed whenever the dominant white majority can benefit from it and as long as racial homeostasis maintains its status quo (Pabon Lopez & Lopez, 2010).

In the case of AB 540 undocumented Latino college students, systems and institutions in place, such as legal and educational systems, prevent this population from

improving their socio-economic status and increasing the likelihood of a better quality of life through a college education. In spite the great majority of this population obtaining their k-12 education in U.S. schools, still access to higher education are limited by high college tuition rates. Access to a k-12 education is supported by federal constitutional rights under the Plyler vs. Doe Supreme Court ruling. However, this court ruling is limited to k-12th education only. As these students get ready to pursue higher education, there is not a single federal policy in place that would significantly minimize the financial burden to make higher college enrollment rates possible for this population.

In the case of Critical Race Theory, undocumented Latino college students find themselves in a very unique and contradictory position than adult undocumented immigrants. Scholars attest to the fact that a great majority of these students arrived in the U.S. at a very young age, they have been able to learn a new language, adjust and this country's educational system as well as academic expectations, and have assimilated and acculturated to American culture and customs (Abrego, 2008, as cited in Abrego, 2006; Fernandez-Kelly & Curran, 2001). Oftentimes undocumented students dress and speak English in ways that is difficult to tell apart from the U.S.-born peers (Abrego, as cited in Olivas, 1995). Yet, undocumented Latino youth are included while at the same time excluded from U.S. society. Exclusion becomes more pervasive as these students come of age. They no longer have the k-12 educational system to provide that safety net of inclusivity. Hence the from their Studies show that in spite of state-enacted policies, such as California's AB 540 legislation, undocumented Latino college-students still struggle to

pay for college and oftentimes have to settle for a community college because that is all they can afford (Abrego, 2008).

Critical Race Theory proposes that thorough Counterstorytelling, racially and socially marginalized groups can bring forward their own realities as a means to create social awareness of daily struggles and inequalities they encounter (Pabon Lopez & Lopez, 2010; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Although the realities of inequality, marginalization, and oppression are synonymous of every minority group, AB 540 undocumented Latino college students' realities are unique to this population, and can be attributed to the marginalization of undocumented Latino students' realities of inequality and inequity whenever accessing higher education (Harmon, et al, 2010). Additionally to the lack of equal access to higher education, undocumented Latino college students face daily challenges, stressors, and fears contributed to their undocumented status. Hence, through Counterstorytelling AB 540 undocumented Latino college students can create social awareness of their group's specific realities. They find themselves at a very unique crossroads where the legal and educational systems restrict their opportunities for higher education and upward mobility.

Literature informs that AB 540 undocumented Latino students have a very uncertain future (Drachman, 2006). From a legal perspective, their undocumented status keeps them living in the shadows of a legal system. And as long as immigration policies continue to unique situation this population finds itself in, AB 540 undocumented Latino college students will continue to face daily sacrifices, struggles and challenges. Another crude reality of this population is the risks of deportation they face on a daily basis.

Literature indicates a great majority of this population has no personal ties to their countries of origin as well as no remembrance of it. A great majority thinks of this country as their own; hence has no intentions of ever leaving (Perez, et al, 2009; Stevenson, 2005). Another reality AB 540 undocumented Latino college students addresses their uncertain future. Those who manage to obtain a college degree cannot obtain legal employment in this country. Many young and talented undocumented Latino college students (who have been educated in k-12 U.S. schools, who uphold many of those American values instilled in them as early as kindergarten) will continue to be limited to the same racially and socially marginalized opportunities their parents have been allowed in this country.

As social workers encounter this population through their levels of practice, Social Workers need to understand resiliency factors as well as socio-environmental factors affecting this population. One factor to take into account is their legal immigration status, and how this contributes to the daily stressors they encounter in their home life as well as school life. Greene and Fong (2009) characterize resiliency as being a universal capacity that allows an individual, group, or even community to prevent, minimize, or overcome adversity. Resiliency promotes transformation as well as growth among those who encounter risks and stress (Greene & Fong, 2009). Without resiliency AB 540 undocumented Latino college students would not be able to endure the daily stressors they are subject to, both at home and at school. A desire for a better future and a strong sense of purpose and future allows this population to overcome environmental, academic, psychological and migration stressors, such as the process of acculturation,

poverty, inadequate housing, learning a foreign language, and their undocumented status (Fong & Greene, 2009; Perez et al, 2009).

Through the ecological perspective, Social Workers can look at this group's realities from a more critical point of view to better understand how their social environments shape the unique needs and the challenges this young population encounters on a daily basis. According to Pardeck and Yuen (2006), the ecological perspective assumes that "organisms live and adapt in complex networks of environmental forces" (p. 7). These living organisms (human beings) and their environment engage in continuous and reciprocal exchanges which can enhance or interfere the life situations or experiences of the individual as well as his/her social environment. And these reciprocal exchanges can either be a source of support or a source of stress for the individual (Pardeck & Yuen, 2006; Greene, 1994).

Through assessment of this population's resilience and ecological environments, Social Workers can better understand risk and preventative factors influencing this population. Perez et al (2009) contend that aside from all the risk factors and stressors affecting this population, such as work, family's socioeconomic status, fear of the legal consequences due to their legal status, as well as the social isolation many find themselves in as they move through college, and an unequal access to higher education, undocumented Latino college students still express high levels of optimism and perseverance towards their college education. These high levels of optimism as well as perseverance can be attributed to personal and environmental factors from which this population draws resilience characteristics (Perez et al, 2009).

AB 540 Undocumented Latino College Students New found Success

With the birth of California's AB 540 legislation there was also a rebirth in youth activism within the state of California. Often formed within university campuses, undocumented college students have created student-initiated organizations as a means to provide support and create social awareness of the challenges AB 540 college-bound as well as college-goers face in their daily college lives. Student organizations such as IDEAS (Improving Dreams, Equality, Access, and Success), S.I.N. (Students Informing Now) function as social support networks that provides resources and serve as political platform to create awareness of the struggles of AB 540 undocumented student population (Gildersleeve & Ranero, 2010; The S.I.N. Collective, 2007). AB 540 undocumented Latino college students feel that by joining college clubs and organizations they have found a new sense of identity of belonging and empowerment (Perez, et al, 2010). Many students see these campus support programs as a source of motivation as well as networks and resources, but most importantly as a source of moral support and motivation that give many the strength they need to continue on despite of their daily struggles (Gonzales, 2010; Hernandez, et al, 2010; Perez, at al, 2010; Martinez-Calderon, 2009).

Individual Academic Achievement

Students' stories of success, however, are often attributed to their drive and resiliency they have to overcome and accomplish their dreams of a college education. Despite of working so hard and risking it all for something they cannot benefit from such as eligibility for legal residency and legal employment, many undocumented Latino

college students reported to feeling satisfied and proud of their determination to pursue a college education (Hernandez, et al, 2010; Perez, et al, 2010). Many students see their parents' struggles as source of inspiration to continue on towards their college education (Gildersleeve & Ranero, 2010; Hernandez, et al, 2010; Martinez-Calderon, 2009).

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter will address this study's overall methodology employed to examine the challenges and successes of AB 540 undocumented Latino College students attending an institution of higher education in Sacramento, California. This study's primary site was chosen because Sacramento, California counts with multiple institutions of higher education thus allowing the researcher with easier access to the student population. This chapter will detail a description of the methods used while conducting this study. Study design, sample population, variables, instrumentation, and data gathering procedures and methodology. Additionally, the protection of human subjects will be discussed and the steps taken to ensure the subjects' protection.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the types of challenges AB 540 Latino college students consider they encounter due to their legal status. This study also seeks to explore what successes the target population feels they have achieved throughout their college education in spite of their limited resources due to their legal status. The primary focus of this study was AB 540 undocumented Latino College. Factors such students' demographic characteristics, educational needs, students' perceptions of California's law AB 540, as well as access to resources were taken into consideration when developing this study's research design.

Research Study Design

This study utilized a qualitative research design with purposive convenient sampling and snowball sampling strategies. According to Marlow (2005), qualitative sampling methods are based on the depth and relevance of the data being gathered rather than the sample size. This study hopes to gain in-depth information from the student population to further assess their challenges as well as their successes. This study was conducted through the administration of a multiple-choice survey questionnaire with Likert-type statements designed to measure demographic and background information, students' needs, college life stressors, and availability and accessibility to resources.

Study and Sample Population

A sample of AB 540 undocumented Latino college students attending an institution of higher education in the Sacramento region were invited to participate in this research study. This study employed a non-probability convenient purposive sampling, and snowball sampling strategies to fulfill the student sampling objectives (Marlow, 2005). The student participant criteria were fifty AB 540 Latino College students. Participant recruitment was done through college clubs/organizations, word of mouth, academic advisers, and through personal contact.

Instrumentation

Instrumentation employed in this study were a student participation invitation letter (Appendix A); a Student Consent Form (Appendix B); and a Student Survey Questionnaire (Appendix C). The survey questionnaire was developed by this researcher

for the purpose to find correlations between the students' legal status and the successes and challenges AB 540 Latino College students face while in college.

The AB 540 Latino College Student Survey Questionnaire consisted of thirty-one questions which included multiple choice, Likert-type scale statements, yes/no format-like questions, "mark all that may apply", and "specify" options. One question was left as an open-ended question with the objective to find out about the student population's most significant need.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data gathering procedures of AB 540 Latino College students and target population's Service Providers was obtained through the following means:

- 1) College clubs/organizations: The researcher attended meetings and explained purpose of the study and invited student target population to participate. At that time, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and reviewed Student Consent Form for participant signature. Student Survey Questionnaires were then handed out for student completion. Student Consent forms and Student Survey Questionnaires were collected into two separate envelopes by the researcher and were placed in safe and locked location only known by the researcher;
- 2) Academic advisers: The researcher contacted on-campus academic advisers, who were informed of the study and agreed to participate by referring qualifying students to the researcher;
- 3) Individual contact/Snowball sampling procedure: The researcher invited those

students who contacted the researcher. The researcher explained the purpose of the study and provided the student with a Student Consent Form and a Student Survey Questionnaire. The researcher provided self-addressed stamped envelopes for those who preferred to mail the forms.

Data Analysis

The data was coded, labeled and interpreted through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were employed to capture the demographic characteristics of the study population (e.g. gender, Latino subgroup, college enrollment), as well as the challenges and successes experienced by the student population. Tables were utilized to provide a graphical summary of this quantitative analysis.

Human Subjects Protection

This research study was approved by the Division of Social Work Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, at California State University, Sacramento; human subject's approval number: 10-11-035. No data were collected while pending approval of the research study. This study was considered to be "minimal risk" because participation could be categorized as daily conversations. Furthermore, participation was voluntary and participants were encouraged to stop at any time during the completion of the survey questionnaires. No personal information regarding the identity of students and service providers was required from the participants or collected for the purpose of this study. Additional efforts to ensure confidentiality as well as anonymity were taken by providing envelopes to those participants who wished to mail in their forms. The researcher also allowed

service providers to distribute student packets to those who wished to participate in this study, as a means to protect the identity of the student sample population from the researcher.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

This research study seeks to explore the success and challenges experienced by AB 540 undocumented Latino college students in the Sacramento region. Demographic characteristics as well as variables assessing successes and challenges were taken into consideration. Descriptive statistics were utilized to inform the results. A total of 50 surveys were distributed for this study. Thirty were provided to educational professionals at a local university, and twenty were distributed between two student contacts who had access to the student population. Eleven were returned, one was not completed, therefore only 10 surveys will be considered for results (See Appendix C). The limited amount of surveys returned to the researcher precluded this study from having any significant statistical findings and limited the analysis of the data to a narrative interpretation of the findings. Previous literature informed this study that access to this specific student population would be challenging due to students' willingness to go unnoticed for fear to be singled out and/or legal ramifications. Additionally, this researcher also encountered high levels of confidentiality and protection from service providers, friends, and acquaintances towards this student population, making it almost impossible for this researcher to have direct contact with the student participants.

Demographics

Participant's demographic information was organized in a table that identifies the questions, levels, and participant responses (See Table 1). The specific target population of this study was AB 540 undocumented college students enrolled in an institution of

higher education in Sacramento, California. All ten (10) participants attended an institution of higher education located in Sacramento. Six (6) were females while four (4) were males. Six (6) participants were between 18 to 22 years old, while the remainder four (4) were between 23 to 26 years of age. Eight (8) out of the ten (10) student participants were from Mexico, one (1) was from Ecuador, and the tenth student was from Colombia.

AB 540 undocumented Latino college students were almost equally distributed along grade levels; three (3) were college freshman, three (3) college sophomores, while two (2) others were college juniors and two (2) college seniors. Six (6) students attended a community college while four (4) were enrolled at a California State University. Out of the ten (10) students, five (5) students attended college on a part-time, while the other five (5) were full-time students. In terms of age at time of migration, four (4) reported to have migrated to the United States when they were under 10 years of age, the remainder four (4) migrated to this country from 10 to 15 years old. Overwhelmingly nine (9) of these students found out about their undocumented status between the ages of 11 to 15 years.

Table 1

AB 540 Undocumented Latino College Students' Demographics

Questions	Levels	# of participants	% of participants
Gender	Male	4	40%
	Female	6	60%
	Total	10	100%
College grade level	Freshman	3	30%
	Sophomore	3	30%
	Junior	2	20%
	Senior	2	20%
	Total	10	100%
Age	18-22	6	60%
	23-26	4	40%
	Other	0	00%
	Total	10	100%
Latino Sub-group	México	8	80%
	Colombia	1	10%
	Ecuador	1	10%
	Total	10	100%
Enrollment status	Full-time	4	40%
	Part-time	6	60%
	Total	10	100%
College Student Generation	First Generation	9	90%
	Second Generation	1	10%
	Total	10	100%
Age at time of migration	1-5 years old	1	10%
	6-years old	3	30%
	11-15 years old	6	60%
	Total	10	100%

Participants' Challenges as College Students

With the purpose to assess the student participants' challenges as a consequence of to their precarious legal standing in this country, this researcher utilized four (4) questions to gather more in-depth information from the student participants. The First question asked student participants to respond if they had delayed their college education because of their immigration status. Five (5) students replied that they had in fact delayed college because of their legal status. Four (4) answered no, while one (1) student failed to respond.

The second question asked student participants to rank the top three challenges they considered impacted their college experience. A ranking from one (1) to three (3); was requested, while one (1) being the most challenging. Student participants were asked to rank the following choices: College life; Lack of financial aid; Course load; Employment; Language barriers; Family support; Seasonal Work; Housing; Transportation; Math deficiencies; Inability to meet major's requirements due to legal status, and Other. Out of the ten (10) student participants, only four (4) student participants responded correctly to the question by ranking their answers as follows:

- Ranking 1: Lack of financial aid (N=4)
- Ranking 2: College Life (N=3)
- Ranking 3: Transportation (N=2)

The reminder six (6) student participants checked their answers without providing a ranking order. The following answers were chosen by this group of six (6) students:

- Lack of financial aid (N=4)
- Family support (N=3)
- Language barriers (N=3)
- Employment/Transportation (N=2)

The third question asked student participants if they felt their immigration status affected their college/social life (See Table 2). Out of the ten (10) students, eight (8) answered yes, while the other two (2) replied no. Only three (3) students answered how their legal status affected college/social life, and interestingly enough all three (3) student participants responded that they felt uncomfortable and embarrassed for not having some form of picture identification whenever out in a social event/place.

Overwhelmingly the lack of financial aid (N=8) continues to be the number one challenge facing AB 540 undocumented Latino college students, followed by transportation (N=4). Lack of family support, and language barriers along with general college difficulties make this student participants' higher education experience filled with challenges. While these may appear to be common challenges experienced by the general college student population, their unique experiences and challenges are influenced by their precarious legal status.

The last question asked student participants to mark the following type of challenges they felt they encountered as AB 540 college students, and were encouraged to choose all of the options they felt applied to their individual experiences. The following responses

were provided by student participants. Because students provided multiple responses all of the student participants' answers will be ranked from the most chosen to the least picked.

- Family's economic status (N= 9)
- Parents' level of education (N= 4)
- Academic performance (N= 4)
- Lack of AB 540 awareness by parents (N= 1)
- Misinformation about AB 540 by high school counselors (N= 1)
- Other (N= 2)

Literature supported these findings. It is not uncommon for the general Latino student population to encounter additional barriers distinctive of the Latino population, such as family's low socioeconomic status, and parental low educational attainment. Additionally language barriers can negatively impact some of these student participants' academic performance, while at the same time this could be attributed to poor schooling preparation prior to entering college. Academic performance could also be a byproduct of parental educational attainment. It is not unusual in this student population for parents to not be able to participate in their children's education for lack of educational attainment, and possibly language barriers. Literature informed this research that over half (57%) of adult Latino immigrants had not completed a high school education (Therrien & Ramirez, 2001).

Table 2

Lack of legal status affects students' college experience

Questions	Levels	# of participants	% of participants
Does legal status impact college/social life	Yes	8	80%
	No	2	20%
	Total	10	100%

Summary of Findings on Students' Challenges

Majority of the student participants' answers support the literature informing this study. This sample of ten AB 540 Latino undocumented students shared similar challenges that are characteristic of the Latino college student across the nation. The literature reported that a combination of demographic, background information such as the lack of legal residency, parental low educational attainment, being an English learner served as significant barriers which oftentimes worked against and already struggling college student.

The data gathered from this study showed that the AB 540 undocumented Latino college students have multiple challenges that impact their college experience. Not only do they have a greater need for financial aid; but their social/college life, employment, transportation issues, and academic performance are byproducts of their legal status. The needs of this student population are unique to their legal status and demographic characteristics. While these students do not qualify for any type of financial aid, their parents' inability to finance their college education due to low-skilled employment and an obvious lack of income add to the challenges these students already face. These

challenges lead many of these students having to resort to multiple means to help finance their college education, such as employment, part-time college enrollment. Literature has suggested that undocumented Latino college students oftentimes worked long hours and/or multiple jobs. While this may reflect the needs of many other minority impoverished college students; the legal limitations surrounding AB 540 Latino college students have made their needs and challenges unique to this population.

Their need to work already exposes the undocumented Latino college student to the greater community and leaves them vulnerable to the legal system. Now having to work under the table, oftentimes multiple jobs, without any type of State- “approved” picture identification card and using their family car to get to and from work, and/ or school, could potentially be the perfect recipe for disaster: The possibility of being arrested and/or deported any time. This type of scenario is very typical in the daily lives of undocumented Latino college students, the myriad of challenges and risky decisions these student make on a daily basis, such as driving without a license or obtaining employment illegally are unique to their realities of being undocumented.

Students’ Perceptions of in-State Tuition/AB 540

The following questions were used to assess student participants’ perceptions of California’s law AB 540 which allows students to pay for in-state tuition, rather than international student fees. The question was: Has in-state tuition been helpful to you? Student participants were presented with the following possible answers: Significantly; Somewhat; A little; Not really; and It has not impacted me at all (See Table 3). As a means to assess how significant AB 540 was to this student population, the second

question asked students what would happen if in-state tuition was not available to them. The following answers were presented to the student participants as possibilities: I'd still be in college; I'd not be in college; I'd only attend part-time; I'd only attend a community college; I'd work multiple jobs; My parents would have to work more; Resort to bank loans; and It would have no impact. Students were directed to mark all the answers they thought applied to their individual experiences.

Table 3

Students' perceptions of in-state tuition

Questions	Levels	# of participants	% of participants
Has in-state tuition helped?	Significantly	8	80%
	Somewhat	1	10%
	A little	1	10%
	Total	10	100%

Funding Sources

Students were asked what type of financial resources they employed to pay for the costs of their college education. Possible answers provided to the student participants were: Parents; Employment; Private/bank loans; Scholarships; Fundraisers; other. Students were asked to mark all the answers that applied to their individual needs. An overwhelming amount of students reported that their parents were a source of funding for their college education (N=7), followed by employment (N=5), and scholarships (N=4). Interestingly enough, half (5) of the student participants employed multiple means of funding such as parents and employment (N=2), employment and scholarships (N=1), parents, scholarships, and/or private loans (N=2) which means that they majority of the

student participants relied only on one funding source such as employment (N=3), or parents (N=2).

AB 540 legislation became law with this specific student population in mind. Student participants aiding this study reported that AB 540 has significantly helped them in their college access; however, results from this data showed that this student population continue to experience challenges when it comes to paying for college tuition, considering that five (5) of the students used multiple sources of funding. Employment was also a significant source of funding for these participants. While AB 540 may have college more accessible to this student population, again a combination of their legal status and low socio-economic status present limitations for their college experience.

AB 540 Undocumented Latino College Students' Successes

Student participants were asked a series of four questions to rate their successes as AB 540 Latino college goers. The student population answered to the following questions: Do you consider being a college student a success? Do you consider being the first member of your family to attend college a success? The third question asked the student population what they considered to be milestones of success for the AB 540 student milestones, with the following options provided: HS graduation; Admission to college; scholarships; educational rights advocacy; and Other. The fourth question, asked student participants what they attributed their success as college students. The following options were provided and students were asked to mark answers that applied to their individual experiences: Peers; Family; Academic standing; High regard on education; Personal goal; and Other.

Summary of Findings on Students' Success

Majority of the students reported that being a college student was a success (N=6), three (3) replied no, and one (1) failed to respond. In regards to being the first member of the family to attend college, over half of the student participants (N=8) reported to being the first members of their family to attend college, and considered this to also being a success. In regards for the milestones accomplished by AB 540 Latino college students, student participants provided a combination of multiple answers.

An overwhelmingly majority (N=9) responded that college admission was a milestone/success for AB 540 students, followed by educational rights advocacy (N=5), college financing with scholarships (N=4), high school graduation (N=3), and other (N=3). Out of the three (3) participants, two (2) indicated that college graduation was a milestone of success for AB 540 students, while one (1) reported that community building with students with similar struggles (See Table 4).

Table 4

AB 540 undocumented Latino Students' perceptions of success

Questions	Levels	# of participants	% of participants
Is being a college student a success?	Yes	6	60%
	No	3	30%
	Failed to respond	1	10%
	Total	10	100%
1 st member in family to attend college	Yes	8	80%
	No	1	10%
	Failed to respond	1	10%
	Total	10	100%
Milestones as AB 540 College Student- Multiple responses	Admission to college	9	90%
	Educational rights advocacy	5	50%
	Scholarships	4	40%
	HS graduation	3	30%
	Other	3	30%
	Total	10	

Resource Availability to AB 540 Undocumented Latino College Students

To find out students' needs as a means to inform this study of potential areas of improvement to better serve this student population to increase their level of success as college students, student participants were asked the following questions: What other types of on-campus and off-campus resources do you feel would allow you to be a more successful college student? Mark all that may apply. The following choices were presented: Mentoring; AB 540 club/organization; Community agency with AB 540/school help; Better informed staff/faculty; Spanish parent workshops regarding college entrance/preparation, and AB 540 information. Because students provided

multiple responses all of the student participants' answers will be ranked from the most chosen to the least picked.

- Mentoring; AB 540 club/organization (N= 3)
- Community agency with AB 540/school help (N=6)
- Better informed on-campus staff/faculty (N=6)
- Spanish parent workshops regarding college entrance/preparation, and AB 540 information (N=4)

Summary of Findings on Students' accessibility to Resources

In review of this data it is evident that AB 540 undocumented Latino college students would be more successful in their college experience if they were able to access resources to have their academic and other needs met. A great majority (N=6) of this students felt that better informed on-campus staff and/or faculty would aid in their success as college students. Literature presented in this study reported that on-campus educational professionals are not knowledgeable enough about this population and/or the specific needs and challenges faced by the AB 540 undocumented Latino College student which surpass the college campus. Additionally, this student population (N=6) reported the need of a community agency to provide services/information specific to their needs. This may be an indicator of this student population needing other resources/help outside of school as well as possibly needing a community space where they can feel safe and accepted. Students also reported a need for their parents to be better informed of college options, and readiness, as four (4) student participants felt that Spanish workshops for

their parents addressing college admission and readiness as well as AB 540 information would aid in their success as college students.

Most Significant Area of Need for AB 540 Students

The last question of the student survey intended to capture student participants' thoughts about what they believed to be the greatest need for AB 540 students by posing the following question: What would you do if you were given one million dollars to help out AB 540 students? Overwhelmingly, again, the majority of the student participants (N=8) felt that AB 540 undocumented Latino college student was financial, and responded that they would create scholarships specific for the AB 540 student. One (1) student failed to respond, and one (1) student indicated that the money would be used for scholarships and leadership development as a means to help them overcome psychological and emotional challenges experienced by the undocumented student.

Results of the Data

The findings from this research supported the literature and previous research addressing the undocumented Latino college student population. The lack of financial aid continues to be the number one challenge/barrier for higher education for this student population. Additionally, this research study also concluded that their parents' low socio-economic status as well as low parental educational attainment served as challenges for this student population. Furthermore, their need to finance their education through employment affects their academics and possibly increases their exposure to the legal system. The data provided by the student participants failed to prove that demographic challenges were not as significant as their need for financial assistance. These findings

were also supported by the literature review informing this study. In regards to the need for on-campus and off-campus support, the majority of student participants reported having a greater need for on-campus staff and professionals to be more cognizant of their presence as well as issues and challenges encountered by the undocumented college students. Additional findings from this study report that students felt they could benefit from an off-campus agency/program designed to meet the needs of these students as well as the need for more parent workshops in Spanish to provide general college preparation and entrance information as well as AB 540 information.

The current literature has indicated that oftentimes students do not feel service providers are adequately prepared to address the issues, needs and challenges unique to this student population. Students specially do not feel safe disclosing their legal status to educational professionals for fear of any legal ramifications. Also literature informing this study addressed the lack of school programs supporting and promoting AB 540 student success. In regards to their experiences addressing success, the results of the data showed that the students' perceptions on success were subjective to their overall experience. Some students believed that being a college student was a success while others believed that graduating from college would be a success while other student participants reported that educational rights advocacy would provide other venues to increase the success of the AB 540 undocumented Latino college student.

Summary

The data portrayed in this chapter displays the insurmountable challenges and barriers the AB 540 undocumented Latino college student population face as they go on

their pursuit of a college education. Barriers related to their legal status and demographic characteristic limitations such as low socioeconomic status, low parental education and involvement, place this young undocumented Latino population in a vicarious situation. Their legal status does not allow them to access any kind of public assistance, and the socio-economic factors characteristic of this immigrant population, makes their challenges and needs even greater. Government is nowhere near from enacting any type of policies that would provide some form of legitimacy for this population or implement policy to ease up the burden of costly college tuition.

Provided there is not any political interest to support the dreams and goals of a population who was practically raised by this country's educational beliefs and values, yet they are denied upward mobility. These students only want an opportunity to create a better life for them and their families, through education, yet this opportunity will continually be denied until policies create these opportunities for them. Until this happens, social workers must find creative ways to bring this community together to provide avenues, resources from their own community to address the needs and challenges this very young sub-group of undocumented immigrants are presently faced with.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this research was to gather data from AB 540 undocumented Latino college students in the Sacramento region to explore the challenges and successes they experience as college students. The researcher wanted to identify how their lack of legal status affected their overall college experience while at the same time assess this population's perception on success. The literature available on this student population, informs that the Latino student population encounters several barriers limiting their access to higher education. These challenges identified by the literature and supported by some of the findings from this study, are byproducts of multiple factors, such as low socio-economic status, low parental educational attainment, being the first member in the family to go to college, being less academically prepared, and lack of legal status.

These series of challenges affect their daily lives and create socio-emotional stressors related to their legal uncertainty. Most concerning is the lack of protection by public policies as well as a lack of access to resources. The State of California houses the highest percentage of Latinos in the United States and it is expected to continue to increase at alarming rates. Every year over 65,000 undocumented Latino students graduate from American high schools in the United States. It is estimated that 40% of those high school graduates reside in the State of California. As long as educational and immigration policies continue to ignore the unique needs and challenges of this student population, these young adults will continue to go unnoticed. It is imperative that social

workers find ways to identify them as well as to come up with creative solutions to service this population. The needs and challenges of the undocumented Latino college student go beyond a college campus.

Implications for Social Work

The Latino population is the fastest growing minority group in the United States. Latinos account for one of the poorest, undereducated, and unskilled labor force of any other minority group living in the United States, yet this population is the youngest with a median age of 27 years old (Passel & Cohn, 2010). The undocumented Latino population shares the same demographic characteristics and background information as those with legal residency. However their lack of legal status increases their vulnerabilities as well as needs. The undocumented Latino population is at higher risk of poverty, unemployment, marginalization and subordination. This population is often victim of systemic and institutionalized racist practices aided by the lack of comprehensive immigration reform policies. The state of California houses approximately 40% of the entire Latino population (documented and undocumented) from which an emerging subgroup of the undocumented Latino immigrants demands the attention of helping professions, such as the undocumented Latino college-age youth.

From a legal viewpoint, undocumented immigrants do not have the legal right to access any type of public services. Impoverished populations with limited resources tend to have a higher level of need for social services. The undocumented Latino college-age youth is definitely in a very complex position which requires an increased awareness from the social work profession, especially when social workers have very limited access to the

undocumented population. Social workers are responsible for promoting social change through advocacy and social justice. Social workers can create networks and be supportive of public legislation pushing for financial aid and legal residency for this student population, such as the Federal D.R.E.A.M. Act as well as the California D.R.E.A.M. Act, which would ultimately increase their opportunities of upward mobility. In addition, social workers can find creative ways to provide services to this student population possibly through the non-profit sector to promote academic support, advancement, and resources, as well as socio-emotional support for this population (considering that no public funds can be used to provide services to the undocumented population). Possibly the most indicative way for the social work profession to bring about change of this marginalized young population of undocumented immigrants through community building.

Social workers could empower this community by helping narrow the bridge between educational and legal needs and provide and promote resources to make these students' plight for a college education more dignified, more enjoyable. While at the same time, providing that safe public space this student population desperately needs and can come together to feel and be a part of something, without having the need to look over their shoulders and/or having that constant fear of deportation.

Limitations

It would have been of great benefit if this study would have secured the amount of student participants that were initially anticipated to partake in this project.

Unfortunately this limitation precludes this study from any new information as it only manages to support previous studies and literature available on the AB 540 undocumented Latino population. Also the researcher believes that the study design

limited further findings on the challenges experienced by this student population, due to the utilization of a multiple choice questionnaire and “mark all that may apply” options. For further research on this specific population, this researcher believes that a structured interview with a short demographic and background information questionnaire would better address the complexities found within this population. This researcher believes that an interview would have greatly compensated for the small sample population, thus allowing a greater wealth of information to be obtained from only ten participants.

Other limitations worth addressing for future research is the limited direct access this researcher had to the student population. Their ambivalence of publicly disclosing their status to strangers (which is understandable) plays a huge limitation for a large sample size. This researcher encountered this limitation in spite of being a college student, a Latina, and having some prior knowledge of AB 540, as well as exhausting just about every possible venue for recruitment.

Recommendations for Future Research

This newer sub-group of Latino undocumented youth is very new to the Research and literature academia. As this study reports, although there is a dearth of literature on this student population, most of what is available informs the reader of their academic experiences. However a gap in literature fails to address socio-emotional development of such young student population. Additionally further attention should be given to the protective and risk factors affecting the emotional and psychological health of the undocumented Latino youth/college student. Their fear of the legal system as well as deportation oftentimes may keep them from seeking help and/or feeling incapable of addressing this type of issues with the working professionals they may come in contact.

Further research is also needed on the outcomes of the student population who is able to complete their college education as well as those who drop-out.

Recommendations for those who may consider conducting further research of this study population and/or undocumented Latinos in general, special consideration must be given to their need to remain “invisible” to the greater society and the fear and reluctance they may express. This researcher believes that the most effective way to collect data from this population is by way of interview and/or through professionals who may have already built a positive relationship and have a working relationship with this population. If conducting a study on the younger population, perhaps resorting to technology, such as online surveys may provide a greater outcome.

While AB 540 legislation may have provided a new found political and social voice as well as legitimization for the undocumented Latino college student, and made college accessible to others, there are still miles to go before the undocumented Latino college student can reap the benefits of their sacrifice and struggles to obtain a college education. This study captured a glimpse of the myriad of challenges the undocumented student experiences and the symbolic value this population puts on higher education only hopes for upward mobility and a better quality of life for them and their families. The lack of immigration policies targeting the unique needs and realities of this student population will only continue to cripple their future. The unintended consequences for the lack of immigration policies in regards to this student population may be very well another generation of impoverished, underemployed young adults following unwillingly in the footsteps of their parents. For the Social Work profession, it is imperative to help develop

community partnership among the Latino population as a means to continue to promote and support the educational path for the undocumented Latino student.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Letter of Invitation to Participate

AB 540 Latino College Students' Cover Letter

¡Hola! Te invito a que participes en un estudio diseñado para explorar los retos y éxitos de estudiantes universitarios AB 540, como tu. Tu participación es muy importante y necesaria. Además es totalmente confidencial. ¿Interesada/o? Read-on!

This research study partially fulfills the requirements for obtaining my Masters of Social Work Degree, at the California State University of Sacramento. I am interested in the Challenges and Successes of Latino AB540 College students in the Sacramento Region, as a means to better understand the needs of this target population. This survey consists of 31 questions that should take approximately 30 minutes for you to complete.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please read the attached informed consent form and sign it, and then complete the survey. The informed consent form details how to return the forms.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this study, please feel free to contact me, at xxxxx@xxxxxxxx.csus.edu, or my Thesis Advisor, Dr. Francis Yuen, at fyuen@csus.edu or at (916) 278-6943.

Thank you very much.

Claudia L Beltran
MSW Student

APPENDIX B**Student Consent Form****INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY****TITLE: AB540 Latino College Students: Successes and Challenges**

Researcher: Claudia L Beltran, MSW candidate at California State University, Sacramento (CSUS).

PURPOSE: This thesis study is being carried out to partially fulfill requirements for Masters of Social Work Degree. The study explores the successes and challenges of AB 540 Latino college students in the Sacramento region.

PROCEDURE: If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a 31-item survey questionnaire. The survey is composed of multiple choice questions, and Likert-type scale statements, and it covers areas such as students' demographics/background information, students' needs, challenges and successes encountered in college, and availability and/or access to services/resources.

RISKS: This researcher believes there is minimal risk involved in this thesis study. Participants are, however, encouraged to stop the survey if you experience any level of discomfort while completing it, and you may contact the Counseling and Psychological Services at CSUS, (916) 278-6416, for assistance.

BENEFITS: There is no direct benefit to you by participating in this study. However, the findings of this study may result in a greater understanding of the challenges and/or successes AB540 college students encountered while in college.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Confidentiality for the student will be maintained to the fullest

extent possible. Informed consents and surveys will be kept separately so that even the researcher does not know which survey you completed. Survey data will be kept in a secured and locked location that will be only accessible to this researcher. All research data will be destroyed after the completion of the research project (no later than June 2010). No individual identifying data will be collected or included in any papers or publications that result from this study.

ALTERNATIVES/RIGHT TO REFUSE OR WITHDRAW: Participation is voluntary, and you are encouraged to discontinue your participation or drop from the study at any time without explanation. You have the ability to decline completion now or at any time in the future without any risks or consequences.

QUESTIONS: If you have any questions or comment in regard to this study, please feel free to contact Claudia L. Beltran, at xxxxx@xxxxxxx.csus.edu. If you need further information, you may contact this researcher's thesis advisor: Dr. Francis Yuen, at fyuen@csus.edu.

Research Study Participant's Bill of Right

- 1) To be told what the study is trying to find out
- 2) To be told what will happen to you and whether any of the procedures, drugs or devices is different from what would be used in standard practice.
- 3) To be told about the frequent and/or important risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that will happen to you for research purposes.
- 4) To be told if you can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefit might be.
- 5) To be told the other choices you have and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.
- 6) To be allowed to ask questions concerning the study, both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study.
- 7) To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.
- 8) To refuse to participate or to change your mind about participating after the study is started. This decision will not affect your right to receive the care you would receive if you were not in the study.
- 9) To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form
- 10) To be free of pressure when considering whether to be in the study.\

CONSENT: I have read and understand this consent form and the Bill of Rights for Experimental Subjects. I have had a chance to ask questions about this research study. I also understand that when I sign my name below, I am agreeing to volunteer for this research study. I have signed this informed consent prior to any and all study-related procedures being performed. I have received my own copy of this form.

Signature of Participant

Date

APPENDIX C

Survey Questionnaire

AB 540 Latino College Students: Successes and Challenges

The following questionnaire consists of 31 descriptive questions which should take 25 minutes to complete depending on how detailed you are in your responses. Please check and/or answer the most appropriate response. Your participation is voluntary and you have the option to refuse to answer any of the following questions or discontinue your participation altogether from the study at any time.

1. What is your current grade level?

Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Post-graduate

2. Are you a: Full-time student Part-time student

3. Why are you a part-time student? (Mark all that may apply)

I can only afford to attend part-time Work Transportation

Parents expect me to help at home while they work I'm an English learner

Other: _____

4. For Community College students: What are the main reasons you attend community college?

GPA Need to accumulate credits for transfer Financial needs

Do not have HS Diploma/GED Need more college courses before transfer

5. For 4-year college students: Did you attend a community college? Yes
 NO

6. What is your current GPA? 2.4 or less 2.5-2.9 3.0-3.4 3.5-4.0

7. Are you involved in any campus organizations/activities/committees?

No Yes, specify:

8. **What is your age?** 18-22 23-26 27-30 31-34 35-40
9. **Are you?** Male Female
10. **What country are you from?** Mexico Colombia Guatemala
 Other _____
11. **How old were you when you migrated to the United States?**
 1-5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years other, specify: _____
12. **How old were you when you found out about your immigration status?**
 1-5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years other, specify: _____
13. **Have you delayed your college education because of your immigration status?**
 Yes No
14. **How did you find out about AB540?**
 High school counselor Community college academic counselor
 University Admissions Dept Friends Family Other: _____
15. **Which of the following groups have been most supportive of your college education? Pick 3 from the following and rank them. 1=being most supportive.**
 Community college counselor University Admissions faculty
 Community agency Family Friends High school counselor
 On-campus organizations/clubs Other, specify: _____
16. **Which of the following has provided you with helpful AB540 information/resources/ materials? Pick 3 from the following and rank them. 1=being most helpful.**
 Community college counselor University Admissions faculty
 Community agency Family Friends High school counselor
 On-campus organizations/clubs Other, specify: _____

17. Which of the following are your major funding sources for college? Mark all that may apply.

- Parents Employment Private/bank loans Scholarships Fundraiser
 Other, specify: _____

18. What other types of on-campus and off-campus resources do you feel would allow you to be a more successful college student? Mark all that may apply

- Mentoring AB 540 club/organization Community agency with AB 540
 Better informed on-campus staff/faculty Spanish Parent workshops regarding college entrance/preparation and AB540 information

19. Identify the top 3 challenges for you as a college student. (# 1 being the most challenging)

- College life Lack of financial aid Course load Employment
 Language barriers Family support Seasonal work Housing
 Transportation Math deficiencies Inability to meet major's requirements due to legal status
 Other, specify: _____

20. Does your immigration status affect your social life in college?

- No Yes, how? _____

21. What are your immediate plans after graduation?

- Continue on with education Return to country of origin
 Acquire legal immigration status through employment Other: _____

22. Do you consider by becoming a college student itself is a success?

- No Yes, specify _____

23. Are you the first member of your family to attend college? Yes No

24. Do you consider this to be a success? Yes No

25. Which of the following would you consider as milestones of success for AB540 student? Mark all that may apply.

- HS graduation Admission to college Financing college with scholarships
 Advocating for your educational rights Other: _____

26. Has in-State tuition been helpful to you?

- Significantly Somewhat A little Not really It hasn't impacted me at all

27. What would happen if AB540/in-State tuition was not available to you? (please mark all that may apply)

- I'd still be in college I'd not be in college I'd only attend part-time
 I'd only attend a comm. college I'd work multiple jobs
 My parents would have to work longer hours/multiple jobs
 My parents and/or I would have to apply for bank loans
 It would have no impact on me as a college student

28. As an AB540 college student, do you consider you have _____ as oppose to non-AB540 immigrant students:

- More challenges Less challenges More success stories
 Less success stories Same challenges

29. I would attribute my success as a college student to: (Mark all that may apply)

- Peers Family Academic standing High regard on education
 Personal goal Other: _____

30. Besides immigration status, what other challenges AB540 students encounter? (Mark all that may apply)

Family's economic status Parents' level of education Academic

Lack of AB540 awareness by parents Misinformation about AB540
by HS counselors

Other, specify _____

31. If you were given 1 million dollars to help AB 540 students, what would you do?

Gracias por tu participación

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