

## **Immigrant-Origin Student Executive Brief**

### ***Overview of Student Population***

- 5.3 million immigrants enrolled in higher education in the U.S., and 8.6 % are first-generation immigrants (Batalova & Feldblum, 2020).
- California has the highest enrollment of students of immigrant origin with 50% of all student enrollment. Indiana has the lowest with 7% of students (Batalova, et al. 2020).
- 29 % attend public institutions while 25% attend private institutions (Batalova & Feldblum, 2020).
- According to the Higher Ed Education Portal, the U.S is home to roughly 427,000 students. Of these, 181,00 are DACA-eligible students and 245,000 Non-DACA eligible students.

### ***Relevant Terms & Definitions***

- Immigrant: A person who enters a country to take up permanent residence (Shapiro Law Group, 2021).
- Immigrant-Origin: students who are first-and-second generation immigrants (Shapiro Law Group, 2021).
- Undocumented students: individuals without legal documentation; a heterogeneous community comprising a broad range of first-generation immigrants in the U.S. (Shapiro Law Group, 2021).
- First-generation immigrants: persons with no U.S. citizenship at birth (Batalova, et al. 2020).
- Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA): a policy protecting young undocumented individuals from deportation and allowing them to work legally in the U.S. (Higher Ed Education Portal).

### ***Diversity within the Population***

- According to the Migration Policy Institute, among the 5.3 million immigrant-origin students in 2018: Latinos comprised 39%, AAPI 24%, Black 18%, and white 17% (Batalova & Feldblum, 2020).
- Half were naturalized U.S. citizens, and the other half included green-card holders (legal permanent residents); refugees, asylees, and other humanitarian migrants; and unauthorized immigrants (Batalova, et al. 2020).

### ***Historical Background (Trends, Statistics, Current Issues, Concerns, & Challenges)***

- Immigration policies have a significant impact on mixed-status families, in which family members may be unauthorized or are in the country legally but fear the potential repercussions of accessing public support. Although educational financial aid is excluded from that list of public benefits, the confusion surrounding complex policies could deter immigrant-origin students from seeking financial aid (Batalova, et al. 2020).
- Plyer V. Doe in the 1982's supreme case permit undocumented students to enroll in k-12 education, however, it does not guarantee the right to higher education (Ballerini & Fledblum, 2021).
- Though Plyer V. Doe allowed undocumented students to pursue higher education, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) prevent them from receiving financial aid (Ballerini & Fledblum, 2021).
- The restrictions placed on legal immigration by the Trump administration have reduced the inflow of immigrants and refugees into the country since 2017, particularly during 2020 as a result of the pandemic (Batalova, et al. 2020).

### ***Issues of Development***

- Many immigrant students are of low-income status and have to support their families through unstable employment, which makes it challenging to prioritize academic and extracurricular

opportunities. This is a challenge for undocumented immigrants who do not receive any financial aid, grant, or scholarship (Ballerini & Fledblum, 2021).

- Family can be both a barrier and a key factor for overcoming challenges. Families of immigrant students are generally supportive of their education and are the main source of emotional, and financial support, as well as aspirational and resistant capital. However, differences in cultural expectations between home and school as well as general roles in different environments can create tensions within families (George Mwangi., et al., 2021).
- Political and historical relationships between the US and nation-states may positively and negatively shape immigrant student experiences within higher education in the US. Immigrant-origin students may feel alienated by the emphasis on the democratic ideology of citizenship and civic engagement in higher education in the US, given the changes to their national identity and allegiances (George Mwangi., et al., 2021).

#### ***Their Collegiate Experience (Social & Academic Realm, Curricular & Co-curricular)***

- Immigrant groups experience prejudices that have a negative impact on their higher education experience, including academic invalidation, cultural invalidation by the dominant university culture, and educators reifying the model minority myth (George Mwangi, et. al., 2021).
- The lack of culturally relevant and targeted efforts from campus counseling services to serve immigrant students undermines their college experience (George Mwangi, et. al., 2021).
- Lack of self-esteem plays a significant role for first-generation students when interacting with their peers or faculty (Falcon, 2015).

#### ***Implications for Higher Education***

- Allowing undocumented students to pay in-state tuition or allowing them to apply for state financial aid would be a favorable policy that sends signals to undocumented youth about their future educational prospects in the long term (Cebula, et al., 2021).
- Larger networks provide greater access to economic opportunities and dominate the negative effect of increased competition for admissions to higher education in states that have favorable educational access policies toward undocumented migrants (Cebula, et al., 2021).
- To provide equitable access to higher education, it is imperative that legislation and policy are addressed to get rid of limitations set by PRWORA and IIRIRA.
- In response to the rising demand for high-skilled workers over the past decade, more than 40 states have set goals to increase the number of residents with postsecondary credentials. Many immigrant-origin adults could benefit from college completion initiatives to develop skills to transition successfully into the changing labor market (Batalova, et. al., 2020).

#### ***Strategies for Advising & Working with this Group***

- Mentorship proved valuable social capital for these statistically at-risk students by providing them with insider academic information, legitimizing their academic and professional goals, and transforming their immigration experiences into academic inspiration (George Mwangi et. al., 2021).
- Additional cultural sensitivity and competency skills are needed, especially in establishing environments that are conducive to appreciating and validating the experience of students with cultural values. It is crucial to limit personal biases and have an open mind to engage with immigrant students (University of Readlands, 2022).
- There is a fear surrounding inaccurate information, stating faculty and staff are unaware of immigration policy. Advisors with similar experience or well-versed in navigating resources for undocumented students are needed successfully build trust and alleviate stress for undocumented students. (Enriquez, L. E. et al., 2019).

## Recommended Resources

- Cuevas, S. (2020). Ley de la Vida: Latina/o Immigrant Parents Experience of Their Children's Transition to Higher Education. *Journal of Higher Education*, 91(4), 565–587. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2019.1647585>
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