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Advising Undocumented Students at Western Washington University

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Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (SoTL) Residency 2017 Project Summary

Authors

Emmanuel Camarillo

Project Title

Advising Undocumented Students at Western Washington University

Project Description

In recent years there has been an increasing number of undocumented students attending college. Although undocumented students have always enrolled at colleges and universities it was in 2012 when President Obama signed the executive order for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) that really allowed undocumented students to begin working. As a result, undocumented students were now able to pay for school. Western Washington University (WWU) was no exception as I believe more undocumented students are attending Western than ever before.

In the summer of 2016, as a result of undocumented students demands for more resources to support undocumented students at WWU my position in Student Outreach Services (SOS) was developed. I was assigned to be the advisor for undocumented students in Student Outreach Services. During this past year, I've worked hard to develop my position and understand more about the needs that undocumented students had at WWU.

The purpose of doing this project is to look at what advising looks like for undocumented students at Western Washington University. Because each institution provides a different level of support to undocumented students, it is important to understand how Western Washington University supports their undocumented students. Literature exists on best practices on how to work with undocumented students but there is a lack of information out there that talks about working with undocumented students from the perspective of an academic advisor. The research question that I am trying to answer is what does advising look like for undocumented students at Western Washington University?

Project Design

This project is a qualitative study. A total of 112 advising appointments were recorded. From the 112 recorded advising appointments, 21 themes of conversation emerged. The most common theme was class schedule and registration. Other themes that emerged were students coming in to check in with me and seeing how things are going, others came because they had questions about DACA or WASFA, and a few came in to talk about their concerns for their future plans.

Next Steps

My next step is to complete writing a draft for a peer-reviewed journal. Currently, the journals I am interested in publishing in are the Journal of College Student Development and NACADA Journal.