

# U**LEAD** NETWORK MODULE:

## **ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP**

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# MODULE: ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP



## PURPOSE

To explore the organizational complexities present as institutions are faced with reconciling their historic mission of inclusion for underrepresented students with a volatile set of sociopolitical pressures surrounding educational opportunity for undocumented immigrant students.



## BACKGROUND

Since the passage of the GI Bill, a major component of the mission of higher education institutions has been to expand access to traditionally underrepresented groups. Yet, colleges and universities are complex, bureaucratic organizations that must constantly mediate conflicting sociopolitical pressures in order to maintain that commitment to expanding access. In one sense, campus practitioners and administrators are shaped by their institution's unique set of values, governance arrangements, professional norms, and local constituencies. However, institutions are simultaneously responding to major demographic shifts, declining funding sources, and a variety of state and federal policies shaped by public will. This complex situation is particularly apparent in the institutional policies and practices that characterize higher education access for the growing population of undocumented immigrant students.

Emerging research and current discourse on this issue highlight three focal areas of activity across higher education:

- The role of Federal and State Policy
- The role of Professional Practice
- The role of Institutional Leadership

These three dimensions play important roles in the institutional decision-making processes that lead to policies and practices that impact access for undocumented students. In some instances, public institutions must interpret ambiguously worded federal and state policies which dictate, or at least influence, the legality of admissions and financial aid policies at public institutions. In other instances, professional associations representing groups of institutional practitioners may put forth a collective call to action, but must confront the fact that their members operate under institutional or policy constraints. In still other cases, college and university leaders, even presidents, may be outspoken in their advocacy despite political pressures. Moreover, it may be individual institutions may see this issue as a major part of their identity or mission, and feel an obligation to staunchly defend inclusive practices for undocumented students. Each entity contributes different information, scripts, stakeholders, and circumstances, as universities navigate the tension between inclusivity and sociopolitical pressures.



## ACTIVITY

Time: 50-60 minutes



## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To discuss the nature of the role that federal and state policy, professional practice, and institutional leadership play in advancing public will and public support for expanding educational opportunity for undocumented students.
- To identify the information, scripts, stakeholders, and circumstances that are salient in making sense of the issue.



## INSTRUCTIONS

The following pieces are to be read in advance of the class meeting:

1. Achieving the Dream: Recommendations for Admissions and Financial Aid Administrators on Working with Undocumented Students
  - Download this [policy brief](#)
2. “Grand Canyon’s DREAMers.” Nelson, L. A. (2013, January 28). Grand canyon’s dreamers. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from: <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/01/28/profit-grand-canyon-university-enrolls-growing-number-undocumented-students>
3. Cantwell University Case Study (included in the PowerPoint slides)
  - Download the PowerPoint [presentation](#)

## **OPENING DISCUSSION (10 MINUTES) - OPTIONAL**

- Depending on what role you play at your institution and where your institution is located, college and university administrators have varying levels of engagement with the issue of access for undocumented students. Some of us directly deal with the issue everyday, but for some of us this is new and unfamiliar terrain that we are trying to make sense of.
  - **When did the undocumented student issue become relevant for you as a higher education professional?**
- Participants will share for 10 minutes their personal experiences as practitioners with this issue. Hopefully practitioners will reflect a variety of experiences that begin to hint at the organizational complexities embedded in both individual and institutional decision-making around the issue.
- If necessary, facilitator can begin; here is an example:
  - I am an admissions officer, so this issue became relevant for me the first time I read the application of an undocumented student. She was fantastic—the perfect applicant—determined in the face of adversity, eloquent, excellent grades, great test scores—a total win for the university, and a sure admit. But because she was undocumented, she was forced to apply as an international student, and our school does not have a need-blind process for international students. We had to deny admission. That was when undocumented students suddenly became a part of my job.

## **EXPLORING THE ORGANIZATIONAL COMPLEXITIES OF SERVING UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS POWERPOINT PRESENTATION (50 MINUTES)**

- Institutional Leadership (additional instructions to accompany PPT slide)
  - Small Group Discussion
    - Attendees will be split into 2-4 groups. Using the thoughts sparked by the Cantwell Case Study, each group is assigned to engage in a small group discussion around the following questions. Participants should consider the conditions for action that characterize the Cantwell University case and compare them to their own institution:
      - What kind of institution is my institution?
      - What are our institutional values?
      - What is the policy environment in my state like?
      - What is the nature of the inclusive policies for undocumented students at my institution?
      - What is at stake in promoting (or not promoting) access and opportunity for undocumented students at my institution?

- How does my college or university president show leadership on this issue?
  - What resistance does he/she confront? Why?
  - How might I also be an institutional leader on this issue?
- Large Group Discussion
  - A spokesperson from each group reports out key or interesting points from their discussion of the role of institutional leadership at each school. Whole group discussion ensues for remainder of time.