Washington Coalition for Undocumented Student Success (WaCUSS)

Mission
We change the culture of our state for undocumented communities through constant critical examination of individual, institutional, and state practices, facilitating spaces for critical dialogue, sharing effective strategies, and moving towards collective action and social justice.

Vision
In service of undocumented individuals, we build cross-institutional collaborations, remove inequities, transform systems and impact policy to further community well-being.

Leadership Without Borders at the University of Washington Seattle, Undocumented Initiatives at Washington State University Pullman and Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) amongst other higher education institutions have been working on a statewide partnership to continue to work with and for undocumented students. We are all collaborating together to learn, network, find common partners and bring important information to our institutions for the benefit of our campus communities and current and future students.

We have seen many higher education professionals across the state work independently to resolve or get informed about many challenges and barriers that face our undocumented student community. However, through collective work and partnerships we have also seen how important it is to ensure that all of our student communities are respected and have access to the necessary resources and tools to help them get to graduation day and beyond. We believe that we must continue to work together and be creative, particularly in a state like Washington, which has seen the direct benefit of programs such as HB1079, DACA and WASFA, that have been beneficial to supporting undocumented students graduating from many institutions.
My name is Linda Vargas-Villanueva. I am a daughter, sister, student, and activist. As an undergraduate student at Washington State University I am pursuing a degree in Environmental and Ecosystem Sciences. Independent to this, I am Undocumented; I was born in Michoacán, Mexico and brought to the United States at the age of four. Although this is a value of my identity it is not my only identity and therefore it does not define me. Today, most of my work with my undocumented community revolves around this ideology. A skill I, and many undocumented youths must learn: to find resiliency and empowerment in their status. For too long, as a community, we have viewed being undocumented as a debilitating factor that would forbid us from achieving success. This is no longer acceptable; our community is powerful and motivated. Our students have an exceptional will to achieve but they need guidance and a space to celebrate.

Washington State University’s Office of Undocumented Initiatives has created these spaces for their students through programing, resources, student groups and now a center. Under my role as Undocumented Initiatives ambassador I facilitate a group of students that identify as members of the Undocumented Community or allies. Most of these students are freshman or our second-year students that have decided to continue the program. Mariposas Poderosas provides students with the tools they need to navigate college, develop themselves as leaders, and find empowerment in their identity. The program utilizes the “Making DREAMs Come True: A Workbook to Help WSU DREAMers Thrive in College”. The book is an important part of the program as it facilitates conversation through stories and activities. The three topics that we cover are Hope, Social Support and Emotional Openness with the final goal of allowing participants to share their stories.

For our undocumented community, especially our students, it can be difficult to have hope for their future as laws and policies are constantly changing around them. Hope has become a word that has been given to us as an inadequate solution for the incompetence and inaction of the failing systems in politics and education. We are changing the narrative; we propose hope as achievable short-term and long-term goals which take into consideration the student’s own values and the obstacles they may encounter. These goals not only allow participants to take their control over their futures’ back but also teach these students to use their own values as motivation for their future.

Social Support encourages students to surround themselves with people who support their goals while also expanding their network. These skills are important as students continue to develop themselves as leaders and young professionals. We encourage students to be their own advocates but also seek help when it is necessary. As a society we tend to encourage independent achievement and view the need for assistance as weak or unprepared. Being Undocumented is not something that has to be dealt with alone, no one is prepared to be undocumented and there is no blueprint for being undocumented. Yes, it should not define you, but it also should not keep you from seeking resources or expanding your social circle. Under this chapter we also cover healthy relationships with ourselves and others. From an academic standpoint, we encourage students to contact their professors or create study groups with peers.

Last, emotional openness is necessary for the reinforcement of the other skills and a key factor for our final goal of story sharing. As a final step in the program we allow students to use the safe space to share their stories and or status. Mental health is one of the core values of the program. Students learn to identifying their emotions and recognize what is causing those emotions. This is an essence of a healthy state of mind. As a facilitator and an undocumented student, I live the success of the program. The students describe the group as a family and are passionate about the space that has been created for them and is continuously adapted to their personal needs.
Undocu Ally Spotlight

Student-driven solutions, transparency, and activating our BRAINS, these are the elements that Jill Creighton believes are essential for a top university, components that the returning Washingtonian is proud to bring to her home state.

Her acronym, BRAINS, encourages students, staff and faculty alike to be bold, responsive, assessment-guided, individualized, nimble and socially just. This is Creighton’s approach to move the WSU community to become one of the top 25 public research universities in the country.

More specifically, Creighton’s vision for the Division of Student Affairs’ Campus Life pillar is, “a place where students can go for support and connection, where administrators and faculty can collaborate with us to assist students, and where our team members can thrive, no matter where they are in the WSU system.”

“Jill brings a history and commitment to partnering with students, faculty, and staff to enhance various aspects of campus life,” says Mary Jo Gonzales, vice president for student affairs.

Creighton oversees the Center for Community Standards, Housing and Residence Life, the Center for Fraternity and Sorority Life, and the Office of the Dean of Students on the WSU Pullman campus, as well as support campus life efforts on all WSU campuses across the system.

Creighton has served as the president of the Association for Student Conduct Administration and currently serves as the Region V Public Policy Division representative for NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education.

SA Voices from the Field shares the voices and stories from student affairs professionals from around the world. This podcast provides you with practical advice to help you be the best student affairs practitioner you can be, no matter where you are in your career.

https://naspastories.libsyn.com/
Armando Ramirez is a Central Texas Based Published Illustrator. He has done work for some Major Publishers as well as Independent Comic companies, his work is high energy and dynamic when it comes to sequential or Gallery ready art. His work has addressed many social issues and is adjacent with the current times. This piece (insert piece) is in relation to the pandemic that is still ongoing and how it affects families all over the country.

Armando has partnered with a talented team of creatives, which includes Daniel Flores (artist, @imaginaryheroics), Joey Gonzales (writer, @joeygnzls), and Hector Negrete (designer, lettered, @hectorelgraff) and are founding members of their own comic publishing group (launching soon). Flores will be illustrating the first book from the publishing line which will introduce an entire universe of characters and stories. Their mission is to tell robust and exciting stories that encompass a wider range of representation in comics, dedicated to reaching a broader and more diverse audience. "A majority of our characters are minorities which is an exciting prospect. Being able to tell these sorts of stories that showcase POC in positions not normally held by them is the driving force. Our leads, Bronze Man is Hispanic, Lady Avalion and Zap, are Black and Cloud is a young Native American. The entire line is steeped in Minority representation.” - Flores.

All members of the team of PLUS WACO COMICS has had their work published with separate independently published comics, Daniel Flores as the artist of "Acceptable Losses," an action packed comic that tells the story of a super-soldier who has his country their back on him, Hector Negrete's lettering prowess is well established with multiple Antarctic Press stories and Writer Joey Gonzales, with his In-Line skating Manga, “To the Line” published last year.

“When we decided to create an entire comic book universe, it was imperative to me to create characters that are exciting and interesting, but also reflect the many different cultures and history of our own world. Writing characters like Black Toro, a luchador vigilante born and raised on a Mexican Rancho, really allows me to explore my grandmother’s beautiful home country, as well as my own lineage, opening the doors for me to learn about the incredible people and places that lie under the same sky above us”- Gonzales.

For more updates on Plus Waco Comics follow them on Facebook and Instagram (Links Below)
https://www.instagram.com/pluswacocomics/?hl=en
https://www.facebook.com/PlusWacoComics/

For more updates on Personal Works from the Creators follow them on Instagram
Armando Ramirez- https://www.instagram.com/armandoramirez_art/?hl=en
Daniel Flores- https://www.instagram.com/imaginaryheroics/
Joey Gonzales- https://www.instagram.com/joeygnzls/?hl=en
Hector Negrete- https://www.instagram.com/hectorelgraff/?hl=en

"Plus Universe Alpha" Cover by Danny Flores:
DACA Updates

June 2020—U.S. Supreme Court’s decision to reject DHS’s move to rescind the DACA program.

Decision implies that DACA will be back in to it’s 2012 original mandate

July 2020 USCIS announces changes that will be implemented to DACA

DACA recipients can continue to apply to renew DACA.

DACA protections and benefits continue (deportation protection & work permits).

Renewal period has been shortened from 2 years to 1 year. Renewal remains $495.

USCIS will reject all initial and new DACA applications.

Advance Parole will be rejected unless there are “exceptional circumstances”.

What now?

The Trump Administration is being sued for not following the Supreme Court’s decision on the DACA program

USCIS Changes to Fees

Green Cards

- Debundling
- $1,760 to $2,910

Naturalization Applications

- Increase by over 80%
- $640 to $1,170
- Eliminate any waivers

H-1B Visa Applications

- Filing fees for employers petitioning for an H-1B worker will increase by 70%
- Total will be over $3,000; Employers who paid a “premium processing” will now have to wait almost twice as long to receive a decision.

Asylum Applications

- $50 fee to apply for asylum. USA fourth country in the world (Iran, Fiji, Australia)
- $550 fee for a work permit

DACA

- No fee but instead of every two years it will be annually to renew application.

Washington State Relief Fund

Washington Dream Coalition (WDC) raised over $3.4 million serving over 4,200 families across the state.

Gov. Jay Inslee sets a $40 million relief fund for people who can’t access federal stimulus programs because of their immigration status (Oregon & California). Federal CARES Act. Open in mid/late October.

$3 million fund for food-production workers—whether undocumented or not—who become ill and are staying home.
Washington Student Achievement Council

We advance educational opportunities and attainment in Washington. In pursuit of our mission, the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC):

▪ Leads statewide strategic planning to improve educational coordination and transitions
▪ Supports Washingtonians through the administration of financial aid, a college savings plan, and support services
▪ Advocates for the economic, social, and civic benefits of postsecondary education

If you are interested in working with WSAC to shape higher education, we are currently seeking student participation. Apply Here

Resources:

▪ Don’t derail your postsecondary plans (information on how to access postsecondary education amidst the COVID-10 pandemic)
▪ You don’t have to be a U.S. citizen to get state financial aid or resident tuition in Washington. There are different ways to qualify for immigrant students—including those who are undocumented. Learn more here.
▪ Now’s the time to fill out the WASFA- click here to do it now

Contact:
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Undocumented Initiatives Events Fall 2020

Immigration Consultations
bit.ly/wsuimmigrationconsultations
System Wide

“Why You Should Vote: Voting as an Undocu Ally”
Friday October 9th 5pm
Meeting ID: 939 8287 4871 Passcode: 921962
The event will feature student speakers who are undocumented, from undocumented communities, and are allies to undocumented communities. These students will share why they hope their peers will vote or why they will be voting themselves. We are hoping an event like this will connect students to the very real personal impact that their vote can have on their WSU classmates.
State wide

“Democratic Empowerment 101”
Thursday October 15th 4pm
Meeting ID: 975 2367 9424 Passcode: 392838
With the presidential election quickly approaching, the time is now to learn how to get involved in our democracy, and why it’s important. Democratic engagement is more than voting, and facilitators from the Center for Civic Engagement will work with you to find your passion and develop a plan to make a difference.
System wide

Undocu Ally Training
Monday October 19, 2020
Time: 4:00 - 5:30pm
Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS, or Android: https://wsu.zoom.us/j/91865744706?pwd=cVU2RWxPykpPaGFaTW5zcWhGY3NHdz09
Meeting ID: 918 6574 4706
Passcode: 068531
Date & Time: Oct 19, 2020 04:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Immigration Consultations Workshop
Friday October 23rd
Time: 1pm to 2.30pm
In this workshop we will talk about the different immigration pathways available to you, from DACA renewals to family-based petitions to employment sponsorship. You will learn about the actionable steps you can pursue to take your immigration pathway into your own hands.
Meeting ID: 972 9303 8815 Passcode: 858268
State Wide

The Office of Academic Engagement is hosting our 5th Annual FAFSA/WAFSA fest events.
November 19, 4-5:30pm. Both events will be conducting via Zoom. These virtual events are designed to assist student complete their state and federal student aid and answer any questions that they might have about the process. Students who wish to attend and get help can register at this link: https://wsu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5gyTb3xF5jzqQ08
System Wide

Undocu Ally- training for Mental Health Providers
December 1, 2020- CAPS
Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS, or Android: https://wsu.zoom.us/j/97500189139?pwd=SnpnK0k3dTZEMUpVUktRd21neFFQUT09
Meeting ID: 975 0018 9139
Passcode: 637242
Date & Time: Dec 1, 2020 08:00 AM Pacific Time (US and Canada)
System Wide

Undocu Ally Training
Monday, December 7, 2020
Time: 4:00 - 5:30pm
Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS, or Android: https://wsu.zoom.us/j/91260352544?pwd=K3FNa0d2X0pORnJlakF0QmdVUF88Zz09
Meeting ID: 912 6035 2544
Passcode: 906065
Date & Time: Dec 7, 2020 04:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)
State Wide
Leadership Without Borders

Husky Lending Library (Beginning of Fall Quarter ‘September 2020’)
Contact Lead: Hugo Garcia Villa hugogv@uw.edu or undocu@uw.edu
This program is designed to assist students in obtaining required textbooks that would otherwise be cost prohibitive.

Undocu Ally Virtual Training
Fall Quarter October 23, 2020 10:00AM-12:00PM
Contact Lead: Hugo Garcia Villa
This program is to bring training and additional resources for UW faculty and staff as well as for other institutions of higher education and school districts to develop a better understanding of how they can build more supportive environments for undocumented students.

Undocumented Summit 2021 (June 19, 2021 9:00AM-3:00PM Tentative)
Contact Lead: Magdalenda Fonseca
This conference will highlight the various ways we as educators can support undocumented students and our communities.

UW Student Legal Services Collaboration- DACA Information Session
October 29, 2020 4:00PM-6:00PM
Information sessions that will be available to students, faculty and professional staff to understand up to date current changes in policies & laws regarding immigration and the impact it has.

Graduate School Readiness
(November 19, 2020 4:00PM-6:00PM)
Workshop in collaboration with GOMAP & Graduate Funding Office to present on preparation & funding for students seeking to attend graduate or a professional school.

Alumni Network (Tri-Campus)
(October 21, 2020 4:00PM-6:00PM)
In collaboration with UW Bothell and UW Tacoma we will be hosting an alumni network night. We will have alumni be part of a panel to talk about their experience as undergrads and undocu professionals.

How to Build Your Business (ITIN)
(October 27, 2020 3:00PM-5:00PM)
Provide a webinar and explain the way to start earning an income by either working as an independent contractor or starting your own business.

Leadership Without Borders (LWB) works to serve and empower undocumented students at the University of Washington. LWB offers leadership development resources, college success navigators, the Husky Lending Library, a space for community building, and connections to other campus and community resources.