



# Five-Year strategic plan

for Cal's Undocumented Student Program



**UNDOCUMENTED  
STUDENT  
PROGRAM**



UNIVERSITY  
OF CALIFORNIA  
BERKELEY



# Introduction

**EVERY YEAR, 65,000 UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS GRADUATE FROM U.S. HIGH SCHOOLS.**

California is home to 40 percent of these students, the majority of whom face enormous barriers to their success in school and beyond, including poverty, discrimination, and a legal system that is stacked against them.

True to its motto of “Fiat Lux” (“Let there be light”), UC Berkeley has become a national leader in creating a welcoming environment for these students and supporting them to reach their potential. Through the Undocumented Student Program, Cal is carrying out its public mission to serve the people of California, while ensuring that undocumented students are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve.

Now entering its fourth year, the Undocumented Student Program is at an early yet critical crossroads in its evolution. This strategic plan describes how the program will continue to push forward by pursuing our two overarching goals.

In the following pages, we describe the evolution of the Undocumented Student Program while exploring these goals and related strategies in more detail.

## GOAL 1

**UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS WILL THRIVE AND SUCCEED AT UC BERKELEY.**

## GOAL 2

**USP WILL SHARE ITS MODEL IN AN EFFORT TO INCREASE SUPPORT FOR UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS NATIONALLY.**

“For the first time, I felt like I had the support system at Berkeley that I needed to be successful. I now had a space on campus that I could go to for help without fearing how they would react if they found out I was undocumented. I knew I had someone I could go to who would listen and provide me with advice, whether it was for my classes or my situation at home. I no longer felt isolated because I soon became part of a community, a familia of other undocumented students and allies.”

— Fabiola Gutierrez, class of 2016



# The evolution of the program

Fulfilling the rigorous academic requirements for admission to UC Berkeley marks only the first of many obstacles for Cal Dreamers. These students have overcome overwhelming financial, cultural, and legal barriers to get to Cal and face additional hardships once they are admitted.”

— Former UC Berkeley Chancellor Robert J. Birgeneau

**THE PAST 25 YEARS HAVE WITNESSED AN UNPRECEDENTED WAVE OF IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES.** The rise in immigration has sparked a backlash as policymakers at all levels have set out to restrict immigrants’ access to citizenship and strip large segments of the immigrant community of longstanding rights.

For over a decade, UC Berkeley has bucked the tide of resistance and sought to create a more welcoming campus for undocumented young people, thanks in large part to the leadership and advocacy of dozens of undocumented students and high-profile supporters including former Cal Chancellor Robert Birgeneau and Elise Haas and her father, Robert D. Haas.


With its establishment in 2012, the Undocumented Student Program (USP) at UC Berkeley became the first comprehensive program of its kind in the United States. In USP’s first semester in 2012, it served more than 112 students. Today the program serves 369 out of 377 self-identified undocumented undergraduate students at Cal. Within the next five years, the program expects to more than double this number while also exploring the feasibility of providing tailored support to graduate students. This would bring the total number of students served to more than 800.

Initially, USP focused on addressing the obstacles preventing undocumented students from completing a Berkeley education. But over time, the program’s approach has shifted toward developing and offering a range of services aimed at supporting these students to achieve full equity and inclusion in the university.

USP is a member program of the Centers for Educational Equity and Excellence (CE3), a cluster of equity programs at Cal designed to empower and support nontraditional, underserved and underrepresented students, including low income students, students of color, and other populations. USP’s mission as part of the broader effort is to “support the equity, advancement, and empowerment of undocumented students within UC Berkeley and promote pathways for engaged scholarship.”

The support and services provided by the USP have proven crucial in helping undocumented students succeed at Cal. In the spring of 2015, the average cumulative GPA for USP users (369 undergraduates) was 3.11 (compared to 3.29 for all undergraduates). This is notable and impressive given that the population served by the USP has one of the highest levels of financial need of all students (with an average annual family income of \$26,000), as well as minimal access to financial aid.

With critical financial support from Elise Haas and the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, USP has rapidly become a national model for supporting undocumented students in higher education.



# USP's five-year plan

Yongbin Chang,  
class of 2018

**DESPITE USP'S GROWTH AND SUCCESS, CLEAR CHALLENGES REMAIN FOR UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS AT CAL.** This is a student population that continues to face enormous financial, cultural and institutional barriers that can keep its members from reaching their potential. Over the next five years, USP aspires to strengthen the support it provides to undocumented students. The program also seeks to institutionalize support for these students across the UC Berkeley campus and, more broadly, throughout the UC system and at leading universities across the country. We will do this by pursuing the two overarching goals: 1) Undocumented students will thrive and succeed at UC Berkeley; 2) USP will share its model in an effort to increase support for undocumented students nationally.

Since the launch of the Undocumented Student Program, USP's "Job One" has been to support undocumented students to thrive and succeed. In the next five years, the program will continue and strengthen the support it provides for undocumented students by pursuing three strategies as follows.

## GOAL 1

### UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS WILL THRIVE AND SUCCEED AT UC BERKELEY.

Understanding that undocumented students do better when their families and communities are supported, Berkeley's Undocumented Student Program has actively worked to create safe and empowering spaces, wherein undocumented students, their families, staff, faculty, and the broader community can work together to ensure that all individuals have the opportunity to fulfill their potential."

— Tom Wong, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of California, San Diego

### STRATEGY 1: PROVIDE A HOLISTIC MODEL OF SUPPORT TO UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS

USP draws on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to ensure that we are providing the full range of supports and services that will help undocumented students thrive and succeed. The program also incorporates a critical social justice/equity frame into its work, based on the recognition that the students we serve face clear and persistent societal and institutional barriers to their success. In the next five years, USP will continue to strengthen its services across the following areas.

- Academic Counseling and Case Management Services — Deliver individualized service plans for each student; and expand USP's peer counseling program.
- Mental Health Services — Provide direct services to USP students while planning for an eventual shift of mental health services back to the Tang Center on campus.
- Legal Services — Assess available immigration pathways for at least 80% of undocumented students on campus; and develop a network of pro bono attorneys for students' families.
- Academic Experience Services — Connect undocumented students to campus programs and services to enhance the student experience and support successful transitions from high school and/or community college.
- Financial Wellness and Emergency Assistance — Help students navigate financial aid and scholarships, and provide emergency grants to help with unexpected financial strains.
- Housing and Food Security Services — Identify ways to help students find affordable housing options and achieve food security.

## **STRATEGY 2: EQUITIZE THE CAL CAMPUS**

USP's programs and supports are not enough to ensure that undocumented students can thrive at Cal. UC Berkeley also has to make larger, campus-wide changes to address gaps in services and create an adequate and sustainable support system for these students.

Two examples of areas where there are clear gaps in services and support for undocumented students are housing and food security. Financial aid packages are not substantial enough to cover the cost of on-campus housing for undocumented and other students, and UC Berkeley does not guarantee dorm housing for students. Moreover, Berkeley recently ranked highest of 300 cities throughout the country as the most expensive college town. Similarly, a recent research report from Berkeley Law's International Human Rights Law Clinic found that nearly three-quarters (73%) of undocumented students interviewed reported skipping meals due to financial constraints; some reported missing as many as 14 meals per week in the most intense periods.

In addition to supporting undocumented students to address current challenges in these areas, USP intends to advocate for institutional changes that address these gaps in support over time. Similarly, USP will be working to institutionalize the mental health services it is currently providing to undocumented students by supporting careful planning to transfer those services back to the university.

To the extent that Cal develops programs, systems and a campus environment that align with the urgent and diverse needs of these students, then USP's work will be made much easier in the years ahead. In the next five years, USP will expand its role as an advocate for undocumented students so that UC Berkeley truly lives up to its commitment to providing them with all the support they need to reach their potential.

## **STRATEGY 3: EXPLORE SERVING GRADUATE STUDENTS**

USP already is helping a number of undocumented graduate students through current services in areas from emergency grants to assistance with immigration issues. However, graduate students have distinct needs and concerns that the program currently is not capable of addressing. For example, while much progress has been made in the provision of financial assistance to undocumented undergraduate students, graduate students still face distinct challenges in finding financial aid resources.



Graduate students can face difficulties adjusting to an environment that can be very isolating due to the rigidity of master's, doctoral and professional programs. The community that is necessary to succeed at the graduate level is harder to find, as there is often no interaction with students outside a student's department or program. With increasing numbers of undocumented students pursuing graduate degrees, USP recognizes that we have a responsibility and an obligation to find ways to support them.



Oscar Alvarez,  
class of 2017

Dalia Nava,  
class of 2017

**U**SP INTENDS TO CONTINUE TO **SHARE ITS MODEL** and to support the growing network of colleges and universities that are making a commitment to better serve undocumented students. We will achieve this goal by pursuing two strategies as follows.

## GOAL 2

**USP WILL SHARE ITS MODEL  
IN AN EFFORT TO INCREASE  
SUPPORT FOR UNDOCUMENTED  
STUDENTS NATIONALLY.**

Since its implementation in 2012, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program has helped hundreds of thousands of young immigrants take giant steps towards the American mainstream. However, DACA does not address many of the barriers to higher education undocumented young people face. Today, more than ever before, they require leadership and innovation by institutions of higher education. The Undocumented Student Program at the University of California, Berkeley has done a remarkable job providing students the opportunities and tools they need to be successful. It is a model that has the potential to transform campuses across the country."

— Roberto G. Gonzales, Assistant Professor of Education, Harvard University and author of *Lives in Limbo: Undocumented and Coming of Age in America*

## **STRATEGY 1: DOCUMENT, ASSESS AND SHARE THE USP MODEL**

As noted above, there is great interest throughout the UC system, as well as among colleges and universities across the country, in the question of how to better meet the needs of undocumented students. USP is not the only program doing this work, but it is seen as a leading example. The program's rapid growth and its success in building an increasingly comprehensive continuum of services have attracted significant attention to USP and to Cal. Program staff have been in regular dialogue with other established programs at institutions from UCLA and Georgetown to the University of Texas.

In the next five years, USP will broaden our efforts to document the work we are doing and assess its impact through various means, including student surveys and focus groups, as well as tracking of student outcomes over time. We will share the results of these assessments through our website, conference presentations, reports and other tools aimed at supporting others to learn from USP's work.

## **STRATEGY 2: LEAD AND PARTICIPATE IN STATE AND NATIONAL EFFORTS TO ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF EXPANDING SUPPORT FOR UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS**

When USP began in 2012, it was the first program of its kind at any college or university in the nation. Now, iterations of the program have emerged and have been adopted at all of the nine University of California campuses and several Cal State campuses, including Cal State Fullerton, Cal State Northridge and others.

Nationally, the number of universities that are providing dedicated support to undocumented students is increasing rapidly, in part with support from USP. From the very start, USP has been committed to encouraging and supporting other educational institutions to implement holistic and equitable student support services designed to increase access and retention for undocumented students. For example:

- USP has partnered with the Forum on Higher Education at the University of Michigan to elevate the importance of providing holistic support services to undocumented students.
- USP has consulted with more than 60 universities to help in developing new programs, from the University of Washington in the West to Harvard University in the East.
- USP was invited to participate in the first-ever White House Summit on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Washington, DC. The program's role was to illuminate the "invisible" inequities that undocumented AAPI students face in higher education and share tools to mobilize communities to continue expanding opportunity for AAPIs.
- USP's model has been published in several academic journals such as the *Harvard Educational Review*, *NASPA*, and the *Chronicles of Higher Education*.

In the years ahead, we will continue this outreach in a targeted way, identifying high-impact opportunities to share our experience and to advance the "state of the art" in undocumented student services and support.



# What the plan will require

Emily Park,  
class of 2014

**USP'S FIVE-YEAR PLAN REQUIRES DEDICATED ATTENTION TO THREE CRITICAL AREAS THAT WILL HELP ENSURE THE PLAN'S SUCCESS. THESE ARE: FUND DEVELOPMENT; ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY; AND LEADERSHIP.**

## Fund Development

Former UC Berkeley Chancellor Birgeneau recently reflected in an interview on the importance of creating a lasting source of financial support for USP. “It’s dangerous for USP to rely on [UC Berkeley’s] operating budget,” he said. “If you don’t institutionalize it, it won’t survive.”

Toward this end, USP aims to create an endowment for the program of \$10-20 million within the next five years. The priority for endowment funds will be on sustaining the USP Director’s position. USP will conduct a feasibility analysis to explore other possible priorities for the endowment. Previously, another CE3 program

serving foster care students raised a \$7 million endowment over a three-year campaign in order to sustain services for approximately 60 foster care students per year.

In support of USP’s fund development efforts, the university recently assigned a staff member to lead University Relations efforts on behalf of the program. This new staff person will have the backing of Cal’s institutional fund development team. For the first time, USP will be in a position to work directly with the university’s fund development team, provide feedback on their performance, and co-strategize about the best approaches to ensuring that the program can meet its fund development objectives.



## Organizational Capacity

Because USP is a program within a large university system, it relies on the university for support in areas from technology and financial management to communications. Nevertheless, USP needs to strengthen its own capacity and “back office” functions in the years ahead so it can remain a successful program and achieve its goals.


A critical element of the five-year plan for the program is finding dedicated office space for the growing USP staff. The program also needs added space for convening and student gatherings. This will enable students to hold meetings and build community, while supporting their goals for engaging in a higher level of campus and community activism. USP is aiming to secure a 1500-2500-square-foot space for these purposes.

Other priorities as USP seeks to bolster its capacity include enhanced support for staff salaries. USP currently has four staff members including a director, a counselor/case manager, a mental health specialist and a legal fellow. Paying competitive salaries and benefits for these people is critical to USP’s ability to attract and retain highly qualified staff and enhance our support and services over time.

## Leadership

USP’s success in creating a robust support system for undocumented students and sharing its model is due in large part to the program’s strong and visionary leadership. Supporting the current leaders is a top priority for the program in the coming years. And while no immediate transitions are planned, preparing for an eventual change in leadership is essential. This means creating more clarity about leadership and staff roles and responsibilities and beginning to plan for an eventual succession process.

As part of USP’s five-year plan, the program’s leadership and staff will be analyzing their allocation of hours, updating their job descriptions and responsibilities to match the reality of their day-to-day work, and developing both short-term and long-term succession plans in the event of a change in leadership. USP also is planning to provide coaching, training and other supports to help its leaders manage workloads more efficiently and become even more effective.



The Undocumented Student Program at UC Berkeley is a national model in American higher education for how to meet the holistic equity needs of undocumented students. Its success has served to institutionalize equity and inclusion for undocumented students on campus. As a higher education access scholar I am most impressed by USP’s use of evidence-based practices to build a strong foundation and continually develop innovative programming.”

— William Perez, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Education, Claremont Graduate University



# Conclusion

**AS THE USP EMERGES FROM A SUCCESSFUL DEMONSTRATION AND STARTUP PHASE, IT IS SEEKING TO BECOME A SELF-SUSTAINING PROGRAM THAT PLAYS A LASTING AND INTEGRAL ROLE IN SUPPORTING THE UNIVERSITY'S EFFORTS TO CREATE AN EQUITABLE, INCLUSIVE CAMPUS FOR ALL STUDENTS.**

The next five years will determine whether Cal's efforts in support of undocumented students can stand the test of time and become part of an ongoing status quo where leveling the playing field for these students becomes the norm in higher education.

With this ambitious five-year plan, USP will sustain and expand the support it provides, institutionalize this kind of support across the Cal campus, and continue to spur other institutions in California and across the country to take steps to ensure that undocumented students can thrive.



# The USP five-year plan

## GOAL 1

**UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS WILL THRIVE AND SUCCEED AT UC BERKELEY.**

### **STRATEGY 1: PROVIDE HOLISTIC MODEL OF SUPPORT.**

- **Academic Counseling and Case Management Services** — Deliver individualized service plans for each student.
- **Mental Health Services** — Provide direct services to USP students while planning for an eventual shift of mental health services back to the Tang Center on campus.
- **Legal Services** — Support available immigration pathways for at least 80% of undocumented students on campus.
- **Academic Experience Services** — Connect undocumented students to campus programs and services to enhance the student experience and support successful transitions from high school.
- **Financial Wellness and Emergency Assistance** — Help students navigate financial aid and scholarships, and provide emergency grants to help with unexpected financial strains.
- **Housing and Food Security Services** — Identify ways to help students find affordable housing options and achieve food security.

### **STRATEGY 2: EQUITIZE THE CAMPUS TO REDUCE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS AND STRUCTURAL BARRIERS TO UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS' SUCCESS.**

- In the next five years, USP will expand its role as an advocate for undocumented students so that UC Berkeley truly lives up to its commitment to providing them with all the support they need to reach their potential.
- Initial priorities are housing support, food security and expanded mental health services on campus

### **STRATEGY 3: EXPLORE SERVING GRADUATE STUDENTS.**

- USP already is helping a number of undocumented graduate students through current services in areas from emergency grants to assistance with immigration issues. USP will explore expanding services to graduate students who have distinct needs and concerns.

## GOAL 2

**USP WILL SHARE ITS MODEL TO INCREASE SUPPORT FOR UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS NATIONALLY.**

### **STRATEGY 1: DOCUMENT, ASSESS AND SHARE THE USP MODEL.**

- USP will formally document the work we are doing and assess its impact. We will publish the results of these assessments through our website, conference presentations, reports and other tools aimed at supporting others to learn from USP's work.

### **STRATEGY 2: SUPPORT STATE AND NATIONAL EFFORTS TO ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF EXPANDING SUPPORT FOR UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS.**

- USP is committed to supporting educational institutions to implement holistic and equitable student support services increase access and retention for undocumented students.
- Continue outreach in a targeted way, identifying high-impact opportunities to share our experience and to advance the "state of the art" in undocumented student services and support.



Terrence Park,  
class of 2013

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