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## LEARNING FROM THE SHADOWS: Undocumented Students in Higher Education

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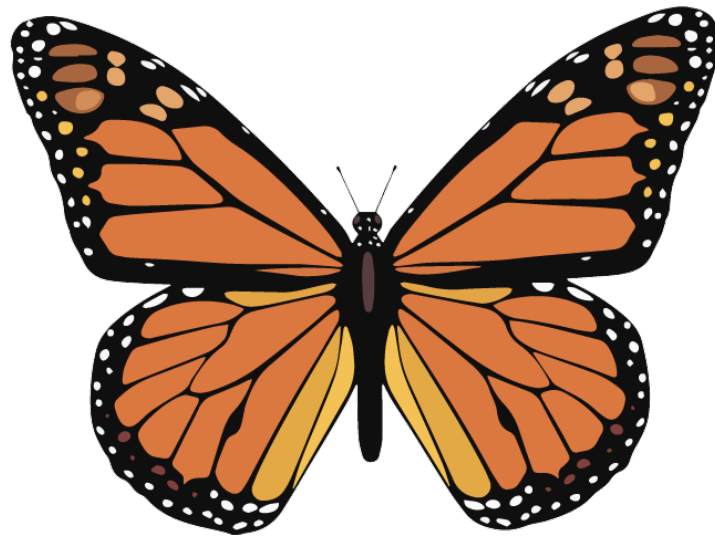
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**LEARNING FROM THE SHADOWS: Undocumented Students in Higher Education —  
Providence College**



**Sean Richardson**

## I. CONTEXT AND CONDITIONS: *ON THE MARGINS OF THE MARGINS*

**E**ducation policy and immigration policy intersect in dangerous ways which creates conditions for different types of students to be isolated in the development of their education and for their future. Not only are students are thrown into patters based on their race, and socioeconomic status, but also throwing citizenship and status into the mix will complicate it further. Dating back to 1982, the Supreme Court established within the case *Plyer v. Doe, 1982* that undocumented students would be given a free public education. The question within this case, was that, with the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th amendment, could Texas deny undocumented school age children the free public education that it provides for children who are citizens? “The illegal aliens who are plaintiffs in these cases challenging the statute may claim the benefit of the Equal Protection Clause, which provides that no State shall "deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." Whatever his status under the immigration laws, an alien is a ‘person’ in any ordinary sense of that term.” (Cornell, Law School). This clause, emphasizes the idea that beyond immigration status, “an alien is a person”. With this passing there was a sense of relief. With a free public education, undocumented students were achieving more and more. Since undocumented students were thriving in their setting, higher education became a question. *Plyer v. Doe, 1982* is important because it provides insight into how exclusive education was before this case. This can set the stage for the future of higher education, in which eventually, things have potential to become more equitable.

To further discuss relevant U.S. policy in regard to immigration and young people, in 2012, there was an executive order created to give children who were brought to the United States deferred action for deportation and detainment. Under this, students were eligible for work

permits, licenses and other forms of identification that would allow them some rights as people who are of limited legality in the United States. This immigration policy is called DACA, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. “The DREAM Act is a bipartisan Congressional effort to allow certain undocumented students who were brought into the U.S. as a child the opportunity to attend college and eventually to become permanent residents and citizens of the United States.” (Cornell Law) However, I would like to emphasize that being under DACA did not guarantee citizenship in the United States government. The DREAM Act was a bill that was introduced and pertains to the same population as DACA, however, under that act there would be a three step process to becoming a naturalized citizen. To be eligible for DACA one must a \$495 application fee, as well as provide proof of being brought to the United States prior to June 2008 and currently attending school, a high school graduate or have an honorable discharge from the military. Along with this, one must be under the age of 31 as of June 15th, 2012, and not have been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor or pose a threat to national security. There are a lot of qualifications that would allow someone to become DACA-mented. The hoops that are there make the process selective - being on DACA is a privilege, however, there is still this sense of anxiety when being deferred for deportation. The Republican party denounced DACA and claimed it as an abuse of executive power. Overall, DACA has had positive impacts on both American society, and on the community of immigrants.

To further the discussion in a larger context, the growth of the anti-immigrant narrative in the United States has influenced different forms of white supremacy permeating into the government. Under the Trump administration the anti-immigrant narrative has become the forefront of any conversation when mentioning this administration. The Trump campaign was

built on the different facets of the American lifestyle, ultimately exposing the American lifestyle as one that has embedded racism within its mitts. The anti-immigrant rhetoric is primarily directed toward Mexican and Central American people, and according to conservative media, these people pose a threat to American society. Donald Trump used the xenophobic fear people had to win the election which ultimately exposed the American public of having deep seated racism in their establishment. All of these different factors relate to and ultimately create destinies for students before they can figure them out for themselves, but go beyond for DACA students.

The slogan, “Make America Great Again”, can be interpreted in many ways. One interpretation has the understanding that this becomes the slogan for the whitening of America. Referring the past of America is intentionally vague. Does this slogan refer to the pre civil rights, Jim Crowe America? Which America does this slogan refer to? Which America was great? These are the questions that came up during this campaign. Through the conversations, the debates, the and the leaked exposès on Donald Trump, it’s clear the narrative of America that he has is based strictly upon white, male, supremacy. There is a lot of anxiety surrounding the repeal of DACA right now, which Donald Trump has decided was an abuse of power by Barack Obama. The supreme court will be voting on DACA in 2020. Thousands of people will lose their status and will end up losing so much that goes beyond the title of being on DACA.

Moving the scope further into state policies regarding immigrant students and the accessibility to higher education - federal financial aid is only given to those who are citizens. As professionals in higher education, everyone knows that funds determine who can and who cannot go to college. *Toll v. Moreno* and the Illegal Immigration Reform Responsibility Act of 1996, allowed states to decide what they wanted to do in terms of in-state or out-of-state tuition for

their immigrant population. Students who are on DACA, Temporary Protected Status or who are undocumented all together, will not receive federal financial aid. Not being able to receive federal financial aid is a large point of discouragement from college and higher education in general. This brings up questions of the affordability of higher education. One of the questions that professionals and policy makers had was, would these students be paying in-state or out-of-state tuition for their public universities. Some states will offer in-state tuition to these students considering they live in the state in which they are applying to college in, others will consider them outsiders and charge them out-of-state tuition which is considerably higher. To fit the gap of student's needs, certain states passed regulations that would grant undocumented students state financial aid, such as California and Illinois. "One remaining hope for undocumented students who wish to obtain a college education is to qualify for in-state tuition from their state's public universities, the cost of which would be substantially lower than out-of-state or private tuition rates. Unfortunately for these students, a majority of states widely interpret preexisting federal law as disqualifying undocumented students from in-state tuition rates." (Cornell Law). These do not apply to private schools in these different states. Private schools set their own policies when it comes to tuition and payment. Rhode Island does not have these regulations in place where students could receive state aid. However, Rhode Island does have the instate tuition policy. Rhode Island students are relying on scholarships from the institution themselves, or private scholarships and grants from an outside source. When thinking of different schools that sustain undocumented students, the University of California schools come to mind. U.C. Berkley is able to have different surpluses in which they fund the tuition of undocumented students. Granted, their political landscape is more freeing in a way that some private institutions are not.

Higher education is becoming more and more of a commodity, and more of an exclusive privilege as we go through this journey. An exclusive privilege that only belongs to some. Beginning with the availability of public education in the United States - *Plyer v Doe 1982*, served as a step in the right direction, but given the lack of assistance and the racism embodied within the public and affordability, students are left with one option, and that option is just not considering attaining higher education. All these factors create a perfect storm for isolation, and education inequity to permeate into society.

If higher education operates as a service, Providence College is not only failing students of color, but also immigrant students. Providence College is a private liberal arts college in Providence, Rhode Island that is home to over 4,000 students. Amongst these 4,000 students, the racial background is made up of 85% white students and around 15% of students of color and the majority of students do not identify as low income students. When it comes to the cultural competency of these students, they are lacking the knowledge. There have been several instances where students and faculty have made racist remarks that leave students not only in difficult situations but also leaves them isolated even further than just being a student of color. As this school has a homogenous population, there are bound to be moments where racist, xenophobic moments occur. The school being known for problematic students and situations has led to several demonstrations and different organizing efforts from students to do their part in eliminating racist incidents on campus. Student advocacy has come a long way, but ultimately, the school's administration would determine if there are any repercussions for actions that ostracize students. Student advocacy work can only go so far before it is shut down by the administration of the institution itself.

The mission statement of Providence College is, “a Catholic Dominican liberal arts institution of higher education and a community committed to academic excellence in pursuit of the truth, growth in virtue, and service to God and neighbor.” (Providence College) This is the overarching mission statement that influences the college’s character. This mission statement mentions that Providence College is an institution that prides itself on the academic excellence while also promoting growth in the search of truth. However, the vagueness allows for different messages to be perceived and taken in. Providence College would be identified as a paleoconservative institution. What this means is that this institution advocates for conservative norms and values. Providence College indirectly advocates for conservatism through the usage of Christian ethics. Paleoconservative's support restrictions on immigration, and support traditional ideals on gender, culture and society. Grounding itself in tradition, the institution has no room for change in terms of gender, society, culture or the immigration policies put on place. In terms of the mission relating to diversity and community, it mentions, “Providence College promotes the common good, the human flourishing of each member of the campus community, and service of neighbors near and far.” This is only a singular line from the community and diversity statement. In relation to the concept of “the common good” — this directly relates to the most good for the majority. The most would be the white population. Allowing populations to exist in the way they do.

Turning back to the institution and it’s students, there was a social media post in the fall semester of 2018, where students were dressed up for Halloween and the picture in the post was quoting the student in the image and it read, “what are you” and the response was “a nig”, in relation to the racial slur. Students were up in arms and ultimately, there was no consequence for



this racist comment. There was a forum where this student was given a platform to explain the situation and ultimately ended up victim-blaming the community he ostracized. When it comes to discriminatory incidents at Providence College, the school allows the person to admit they are wrong in the situation, however, there are no real consequences for their actions. There was no opportunity to understand why what they did was wrong. There was no conversation to be had about the incident besides the one where the Black students were gaslighted for being so upset. Providence College allowing students to be racist without repercussions creates this climate of fear amongst students of color but when adding the political element, this climate of fear expands further into those with political identities, also known as those affected by immigration policy.

In another instance of where students have been ostracized, was in 2018 when a student had put up a bulletin board supporting tradition marriage and denouncing marriage within the LGBTQ community. During this situation students were up in arms and were advocating for one another. At this point in time, the tension rose beyond control and our president had sent emails out to the entire community encouraging dialogue amongst our campus.

“Precisely because the nature of human sexuality and marriage is a disputed question, the dialogue that we have on our campus needs to be respectful of different points of view. For those who cannot agree with the Church’s teaching or who find it even offensive, it would be uncharitable to describe it as homophobic because the Church teaches that homophobia is a sin. In a similar way, those of us who profess what the Church teaches need to do so in a charitable way that recognizes the human dignity of every person as created in the image and likeness of God and in a way that does not foster the exclusion or marginalization of members of our community, like LGBTQ people or divorced and remarried Catholics, who find the Church’s teaching difficult to accept.” — Fr. Brian Shanley, 2018

It was not long after emails like this, encouraging dialogue and discussion between the inner communities at Providence College, Fr. Shanley was not given the chance to return for another term as President. Encouraging people to find common ground with such a difficult concept was enough for him to not be asked back to his position as the President of the college.

According to different sources, “GoLocal has learned that Shanley’s departure is being forced by the top Dominican officials that oversee PC and that those officials are concerned about the liberalization of Providence College”. The Provincial asking Fr. Shanley to not come back because he encouraged students to see the dignity in their human lives was too liberal for a college like Providence. In his time as President of the college, Fr. Shanley had worked with students on creating a more inclusive community from an advocacy and activism group called the Board of Representatives to holding Masses in the names of migrants and DACA students in the midst of the appeal of the executive order. Along with this, after a sit in at Providence College in the President’s office — Fr. Shanley agreed to the terms that students were suggesting. In the Student Demands, there were several articles written by students who were advocating for a more inclusive community. The last time there was an update sent out about these Student Demands was September 10th 2017, and a lot of these articles are still unfulfilled.

In addition to all of this, a lot of the students at Providence College grew up with right wing politics that eventually became them endorsing Donald Trump and his anti-immigrant sentiments. The “Trump” effect also happened at Providence College where students began to feel as if their xenophobic actions were justified and appropriate. Donald Trump used his platform to rip open this anti-immigrant rhetoric even further. This enables those below him, the American people, to use this same rhetoric to ostracize, isolate, and blame. This ultimately contributes to the larger issues of white supremacy on the Providence College campus.

When discussing the concept of white supremacy at Providence College, it stems from not only the homogenous population but also the requirement of four semesters of the Development of Western Civilization. This is a requirement under Providence College’s core

curriculum. In these classrooms - it mimics a regular history class except there are different elements of philosophy, culture, and theology. When sitting in these classes, it is often boiled down to the development of white people and does not have a diverse understanding of the true development of civilization. The skewed telling of history often isolates students of color in the classroom and forces them to understand something but have no connection to it, but only understand it for a grade at the end of the day. Students have been isolated in the classroom in different capacities when it comes to the Development of Western Civilization program. Through the nuanced interactions and history pertaining to one population, students of color, and the community within of immigrants of color are isolated in the classroom, thus making them distant from their own education.

“In terms of the DWC atmosphere, I found myself isolated because the other kids didn’t deem me “smart” enough because my school did not emphasize Europe as much as Providence College does. When I did know about the things we were learning about I would find myself anxious to talk and when I forced to work in small groups, some white kid would always take my ideas and make it seem like he came up with them. And so half of my Civ experiences were bad because they made participating a big part of our grade but I was anxious to talk because I did not want to sound stupid. I blame Civ for a lot of my mental health issue to be honest.” — A Member of the Class of 2020

This is a testimonial from a student who attributes her anxiety surrounding her education to the DWC program. When considering the make-up of the classroom and her being the only black woman in the seminar, and learning about things that do not pertain to her and mainly pertain to the wider audience, it is understood why she would feel isolated and have a heightened level of anxiety when speaking. It is sensed that she is representing her entire population on her back as well as, proving to the different students and the faculty members that she belongs where she is. These issues are not exclusive to the DWC classroom, but with different subjects as well. The following testimonial is from a student in an Honors DWC course.

“I had an honors professor that teaches honors DWC 201 for a different class and they told me that they "couldn't even tell that english isn't my first language" and that "it was really good for someone from those neighborhoods”, after reviewing an essay. I told them that I learned my native language and english at the same time so it basically is. and that experience is obviously very uncomfortable and made me hate the class. I was also the only person of color in the class and there were only 13 students. So seeing that a professor has that view of people who come from different cultural backgrounds was disappointing and definitely upsetting. So now i avoid the honors office because I'm not comfortable in a shared space, even though I earned my spot in the program. I even opted for a different hon 201 civ so I wouldn't be subjected to that professor's view of me.” — A Member of the Class of 2023

Different students feel it in different ways and in different classrooms, however, this sense of isolation is a distinct characteristic in the experience of a student of color at Providence College. When it comes to students who may be immigrants their experience is directly tied to their level of education or their comprehension of the English language. This directly correlates to the students who do not fit the main narrative of Providence College being isolated.

A tangible example of the white supremacy on Providence College’s campus would be the denial of the Providence Immigrants Rights Coalition by the Clubs and Organizations Committee of Student Congress in the year of 2015. The process of getting a club to Student Congress is difficult, however, this committee denying them the right to go in front of the larger board is an act of indirect white supremacy. The reasoning for not wanting an affinity space was based off numbers and the potential for students to be outed. These were illegitimate reasons for denying this club their right to go to the bigger board. These students went to an administrator, and a student shared their personal experience and were given the opportunity to present to the larger governing body. Needing to justify the right to have an affinity space for this group through trauma sharing is a violent act. PIRC was finally established and was given the space to exist under the Board of Multicultural Affairs, after justifying their existence through someone’s personal story. There is an essential part for the development of these conditions, and that would be the lack of faculty and administrators of color that would understand

When there is a lack of people that look like you in the system, there is a constant disbelief in the system, but it is justified. Representation is a big form of reinforcing dangerous stereotypes that are sometimes internalized by those who are on the margins. This student had to explain to white administrators that their trauma was worth receiving a place, and only after that was there an understanding. Reliving and unearthing trauma is an emotionally taxing process, that this student had to go through to get this club the time and recognition it deserved. If there were someone who was of this background or even a person of color who was in either positions to not get it to the point where this student is reliving traumatic experiences, the development of PIRC would have been a lot different. Representation matters and the experiences of those matter a lot in higher education. What it came down to was establishing connections to those who are allies and students feeling like they could confide in faculty and staff when it came to situations like this. (Progress Report on Student Demands)

To tie this all together, the macro influences the micro. Larger federal influences determine how everyone else follows and gives them an option to either repair the gap or expand it. With the administration and different large stakeholders enabling the anti-immigrant narrative, everyone either makes it worse, or makes up for it in different ways. Undocumented students not being able to receive federal financial aid is one policy for example. States like California and Illinois chose to lessen the gap, by offering state aid, as well as offering in state tuition.

In terms of Rhode Island, in-state tuition is offered, but since Providence College, where the case study is being held, is a private school, they do not follow state policies. Not only do finances become a worry beyond not receiving federal aid, but also the socio-emotional struggle

of being undocumented on a college campus that does not offer much help, and it is shown. All of this eventually affects the academics of these students. Since the accessibility of this school is so low for this population the academics end up becoming a last priority between paying for college and trying to survive on a campus that reflects xenophobic and racist norms. This thesis serves as a call for action, as well as an exposè of the conditions in which students of this background are forced living in. Students have to exist in the shadows out of a culture of fear and the conservative, anti-immigrants agenda.

## II. HISTORY OF ORGANIZING: *THE BUTTERFLY PROJECT*

**W**hen conducting research, the first thing that needed to be done was to learn about the history of student advocacy work around this important topic at Providence College. I reported to my faculty advisor, whose expertise lies within Unauthorized Migration, the transition to adulthood amongst this population as well as Brazilian Immigrants. After having conversations with her, and learning of the development of PIRC, we had come to the conclusion that the Providence Immigrant Rights Coalition, would be a critical point of my research.

Continuing on with the development of the Providence Immigrant Rights Coalition, a class of ten students all wanted to originally do an independent study on DREAMERS and the DREAM act, however, it eventually developed it into a Sociology course. These were the students who originally came up with the idea of PIRC. After doing this, they had approached Kristine Goodwin, the Vice President of Student Affairs, and asked for several resources for this community. One of which being a webpages in which students who are interested in Providence College but are undocumented can go to understand the nuances of applying and life at Providence College as an undocumented person. As of right now, there is no such webpages.

These students conducted interviews with other students who are of this status and asked them what they needed. On the list of things student cited as important would be, “contracting with immigration attorneys so that students and their families could have free consultations when needed, hiring a mental health professional versed in undocumented student needs, dedicating a staff/faculty to be a point person for undocumented students, having Providence College’s general council release a statement that explained procedures if ICE (Immigration Customs

Enforcement) were to come to campus.” These students worked with administration on making sure these different things were implemented and some of them were. In my first year at Providence College, Fr. Shanley sent an email out to the students assuring them that if ICE were to come, Providence College does not, and will not give them information regarding the status of our students. With Trump’s election, PIRC took a hit in terms of organizing morale - the student population of Providence College did not help much either. The work and research I have conducted directly builds off the previous work of these students and we thank them.

After discussing with my faculty advisor on the best way to get data, and informative research on this community, it was decided I should work with PIRC to do this. Ideas shifted back and forth between a forum, a workshop, or just a conversation with interviews. I decided, a workshop was the best way to do it. A workshop on how to be an ally, but also encouraged immigrant students to reveal parts of their experience inconspicuously. The Butterfly Project is a workshop centered on the concept of ally-ship and the different nuances that come with being an ally to a community at Providence College. All the while, inviting people the chance to have conversation and dialogue on the different aspects of being undocumented, DACA-mented, or under any circumstance of liminal legality. There was a survey that was taken at the beginning of the event that would reveal the demographics of those in the room.

Summarizing the data gathered, the event was majority white woman allies who are graduating in the class of 2022 and were not first-generation. Along with this demographic data, I collected thoughts and opinions on the what people think our immigrant community needs. Around the room at the event, I had posters that asked different questions. These questions



begged at different facets of living as an undocumented student but also begged allies to think about things in a macro level when it comes to Providence College itself.

The first question that was brainstormed was, “What resources need to be available for our immigrant population?” Responses ranged from vague “representation” to “A database that connects immigrants to different financial opportunities and networks”. These very different responses were filtered. Students are asking for a centralized source for their questions and ideas and different things that they may need. Certain responses asked for there to be more events regarding these topics and being able to have candid conversations about positionality and accountability. One response, “Resources should emphasize and promote open discussion of the topic of immigration and its effects.” With this response, the political climate at Providence College comes to mind, and how the institution itself operates. Having open discourse is almost impossible due to the conservative nature of the students, faculty, and alumni. Having an undocumented student center or something similar sounds beyond impossible. Another response, “a higher education professional that is meant to help the immigrant population”. There is a lot of work that goes into being the immigration liaison, that it should be a full time position here at Providence College. This person would need experience in diversity work as well as knowledge in immigration policy and education policy. A lot of the responses were geared toward representation of this community. How would this community be represented? Is having a person of color enough? For representation purposes, there would need to be someone who can relate to the cause, while also simultaneously, advocating for these students on a larger level with administration with a basic knowledge of the political landscape at Providence College. Normalizing the conversation is a critical point of all of the responses, being transparent about

students having more complexity, and just frankly are not the stereotypes. To have these conversations it would involve having different stakeholders at Providence College go to these events. The different stakeholders would be professors, faculty, staff and most importantly students. This response speaks to the different opinions and thoughts that people have about this immigrant conversation in general. To attach another response to this one, it was mentioned that these conversations are taboo in the context of the school. In order to do this work, the political realm of the school would need to change.

The second question in the room that sparked conversation and encouraged my research was, “What would you like to see happen for our immigrant community?” A lot these questions pertained to others that might have been in the space. In terms of ally-ship, one response says, “More vocal allies so people know that they have support.” “White people step up in all spaces.” — people in this community and the overall general population want visible allies in their community. This was a major conversation in the workshop considering the ally-ship section of the event. To summarize this section, a lot of the responses were focused on the visibility of the immigrant student community and the visibility of the allies so that people within this community know that people support them in their endeavors in terms of advocacy.

One response that differs would be “For clubs that are not related to multiculturalism to show more support”. This brings the Board of Multicultural Student Affairs into the conversation. The Board of Multicultural Student Affairs, or BMSA for short, is the umbrella organization in which a lot of the multicultural organizations under them. Afro American Society, Asian American Society, and Women Empowered are just examples as to what types of organizations fall under BMSA. Usually, lead by the leaders of color on campus, they often

support each others endeavors and events, and usually, the same crowd of supporters end up at the same events. A lot of the other organizations on campus have a very limited idea of what it is like to support a student of color, never mind a student who is an immigrant or on DACA. With the 50+ organizations on our campus, it is baffling that no other clubs besides the Multicultural organizations want to work with the Providence Immigrant Rights Coalition or even mention immigration policy in any of their events or meetings. This indirectly encourages a one-dimensional view of immigrant students, as if they only relate to multiculturalism.

The last few responses I want to highlight work in tandem with one another. They all directly relate to authenticity of the community being maintained in different spaces. The availability of authenticity directly relates to the positionality of the person in the room and in this case, the political affiliation. Politics affect whether immigrant students are seen as whole people or are put into dangerous boxes. With the ability to freely have conversation surrounding this political identity at Providence College it would involve breaking down the stereotypes placed on immigrant students, and whether that is through the classroom or having a less homogenous population where peer education becomes an option, these students would need the forefront in delivering this and have guidelines. At other schools, such as the different schools in California that are incredibly immigrant friendly, immigrant students have places where they can be authentic without fear. I would like to preface that at these schools they do have Butterfly Centers and different initiatives that support these students. At Providence, we do have the Providence Immigrant Rights Coalition, but like I have mentioned above, student activism can only go so far. Aside from student activism at Providence College already being stigmatized, but

it brings up the question of why activism and visibility of a certain community is the job of the students.

At the event, people answered a quick survey in which they identified themselves and answered different questions in reference to anxiety surrounding immigration policy, and the different aspects of being a student. Questions referenced different facets of student life which would either be academic, financial, or social. 83% of immigrant students are anxious about immigration policy. These students are immigrants themselves. They were not questioned on their status but were just simply questioned on whether or not they are anxious about the development of the policies that are coming forward and how it would impact their education. 66% of second-generation immigrant students at the event are anxious about immigration policy. Since these students are not immigrants themselves, they have the potential to be more detached from policy. These could be students who are in mixed status families, these could be students whose parents are naturalized but are still uncertain with the stance this administration has taken. Along with all this data, it is apparent that women, either African American or Hispanic/Latinx experience anxiety surrounding this concept more than white women and African American men or Latinx men. This puts women of color at a major disadvantage when it comes to many different things. When mentioning the Personal Counseling Center at Providence College, there were a lot of responses that were centered on the different needs of these students. Majority of them being, someone in the counseling center who could work on this. Someone who has knowledge of immigration policy that can counsel these students who are going through these tough changes and are living in limbo. When mentioning the conversation of status and counseling, 61% of second-generation immigrants who did go to the counseling center did not

think of their experience as helpful. 25% of immigrant students also rated it as less than helpful. Overall, this population of students did not find the counseling center beneficial. This could be attributed to the lack of representation of the population. With students not feeling as if the resources are adequate for them to use efficiently, and the uncertainty of immigration policy students have less and less options for emotional support.

### III. POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS: *SOCIAL SERVICE VERSUS SOCIAL CHANGE*

The central issue to this problem, is the lack of knowledge as well as the lack of representation in this area. At Providence College the only person with a role in this area is Dr. Kara Cebulko who serves as the Immigration Liaison and connects students to different resources at the college, but is limited in the support from the administration as well as the different faculty, given Providence College's political nature. The Immigration Liaison position at Providence College is a band-aid solution to a larger issue. Band-aid care is a term used by service theorists in which the service is not actually making any structural change. Providing students with someone to turn to, is important, but there underlying, skeletal reasons as to why these students need someone in their corner, and it is because of systemic racism and xenophobia. Racism and xenophobia influence how people see one another. The band-aid care that Providence College offers points to a larger contextual issue that has lead us up to this point.

To offer social change, there would need to be a large cultural shift at Providence College in terms of how student of colors are treated, but also they would have to normalize the conversation of immigration status. Considering which is easier, it makes sense to create different initiatives to incorporate these students from the margins into the main spotlight. Social service makes more logical sense, however, I encourage the Providence College administration to think of ways to change the culture surrounding issues that pertain to students of color.

In terms of social service initiatives the school could offer, one would be pouring different resources into the Providence Immigrant Rights Coalition. Making PIRC a larger organization with a voice on campus would make waves of representation across campus. In terms of understanding what it takes for students to feel comfortable being in their own identities

- representation plays a major role. Giving PIRC agency and autonomy to do more than just events, they could form them into a true advocacy organization and invite them to have a seat at the table. But, we know how student activism and advocacy works at Providence College. I would want this group to have special access to the Vice President of Student Affairs

With this, having different people on campus have the roles of “Immigration Liaison”. Having one person, is not helpful nor does it have longevity. Having multiple people have this title across campus not only does it identifies them as an ally to students, but also if a student needed to go to them, they could. Having someone like this in different areas of campus would make it easier to not only relate to people, but also could establish connections further. The expectations for people in this position would also ask them to advocate for these students in different capacities in administrative meetings in which their livelihood could be threatened.

The last solution I would like to offer would be the creation of a resource guide. With the creation of this resource guide, students would have access to it once coming to Providence College. With just a simple link students would be able to visible see the different things Providence College can do for them. DePaul University is one of the schools that has a guide made for their students. It is comprised of the different aspects of being a student, such as Tuition, Student Housing, Health Insurance, Student Leadership, Student Support Services. DePaul is very immigrant friendly and is overall just a different school than Providence College. Providence College would begrudgingly allow different social services to exist, as long as it is not threatening tradition that was created back in 1917.

To get Providence College to the point of being more immigrant friendly, there must be more visibility on the community without it becoming hostile. Positive visibility that is not

white-washed or ran through dilution, and become something not genuine. For this to happen, Providence College would have to abandon their insinuated political agenda. Framing political bigotry as religious freedom is incredibly vicious and takes away from genuine religious freedom. Student activism in this realm needs to be supported. With student activism backed by the administration in its fullest capacity, and a genuine, authentic voice with proper resourcing, this community could be brought to the forefront and will have more of an opportunity to enjoy their college experience. With the Providence College administration paying attention to this community in a larger capacity, this community has potential to thrive. Institutions of higher education are supposed to encourage diversity, learning and growth and yet, for certain populations it is easier at Providence College. These institutions are supposed to be service-driven, but are providing mediocre service that ultimately does more harm than good on vulnerable communities. This thesis serves as a call to action, while also simultaneously, shedding light on the issues of isolation at Providence College. Providence College using its Catholic identity to enforce right wing political norms not only isolates different students who do not fit that narrative, but also reflects the priorities of the institution as a whole. If we want to create a more inclusive community for immigrant students, students on DACA, students on TPS, the institution would have to modify the politics at hand within the school, while also, supporting student efforts surrounding this community as well. Providence College should be supporting student efforts toward understanding one another. Within these we'll be able to create a more inclusive community where students from immigrant backgrounds can feel supported, and can not only survive, but thrive. I believe there would be progress if undocumented students were regarded as full "persons" — similar to the way the court argued in 1982, to coincide with



the Catholic Social Tradition, and its emphasis on the dignity of the human person. Recognizing this community as full “persons” and giving them the respect and dignity would give these students agency and autonomy over their education and place it back in their hands.

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