



# **CUNY's Practitioner-Academic Partnership Supported Policy Changes for Undocumented Immigrant College Students**

April 11, 2015

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# Preview of Major Themes

- **Traditional relationship: colleges serve as data providers for researchers**
  - provide datasets, no interaction, never hear from each other again
- **An alternative model: Closer collaboration yields exponentially more useful research results**
  - CUNY Service Corps and CUNY's Office of Policy Research/Institutional Research partnered with...
    - Dylan Conger (George Washington University)
    - Lesley Turner (U. of Maryland, College Park)
- **Our goals for Spring APPAM:**
  - Encourage replication of successful partnership
  - Enlist APPAM to assist in building these partnerships

# Preview of Major Themes, cont'd.

- **Keys to this model's success:**
  - Keystone actor
    - Connected research producers with research consumers
    - Identified policy areas of mutual interest
    - Connected other actors around areas of mutual interest
  - Practitioner access to external researchers
    - High quality research that speaks directly to a policy-relevant question
  - Researcher access to -and communication with- policymakers
    - High quality research needs to be communicated to policymakers
- **If one of these keys to success does not exist, can APPAM fill that role?**

# Background: CUNY and Immigrant Students

- **CUNY strongly supports NYC's immigrant communities**
  - 38% of undergraduates are foreign born
    - 3% of undergraduates are undocumented
- **CUNY Office of Policy Research**
  - Pursues long-term, policy-relevant research to improve student outcomes at CUNY
  - Goal of research project on undocumented students
    - Produce empirical information on the educational choices and outcomes of undocumented students to improve decision makers' ability to design policies and programs that assist undocumented students in their pursuit of academic success.
- **CUNY Service Corps**

# Role of Major Players

- **CUNY Service Corps**
  - Had a pre-existing relationship with foundations
  - Connected CUNY's research producers to research consumers in the foundations
- **CUNY Office of Policy Research**
  - Established relationship with external academic researchers
  - Provided policy context and access to policymakers
- **Dylan Conger (George Washington University) and Lesley Turner (U. of Maryland, College Park)**
  - Provided research experience and methodological rigor

- **Basic statistical tables, undocumented students**
  - Enrollment numbers, academic performance, degree programs
- **CUNY Policy Brief and Working Paper**
  - Educational choices (majors, degree levels) and performance
- **Conger & Chellman, *Education Finance and Policy***
  - Findings:
    - Short-term: outperform comparable students who are citizens
    - Long-term: performance lags
- **Conger & Turner, *under review***
  - Strong evidence that undocumented students are more price sensitive than comparable students. Financial aid matters.
- **Future work: Academic impact of DACA**



# Research Products and Dissemination to New York City Council

Audience	Purpose	Research Vehicle	Metrics and Evidence
New York City Council	<p>Establish AAA/City Council Scholarships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The only public scholarship for which undocumented students would be eligible</li></ul>	Basic statistical reports	Enrollment and performance of undocumented students
NYC Council Higher Education Committee hearing	Support AAA/City Council Scholarships	Basic statistical reports	Enrollment and performance of undocumented students



# Research Products and Dissemination to New York State Government

Audience	Purpose	Research Vehicle	Metrics and Evidence
NYS Controller	Support NYS DREAM Act	Basic statistical reports	Enrollment figures of undocumented students at CUNY
NYS Assembly	Support NYS DREAM Act - Speak to criticism: “Would providing financial aid to undocumented students be money down a rat hole?”	Testimony based on Conger & Turner (under review)	Causal impact of cost of college on undocumented students



# Research Products and Dissemination to Private Foundations

Audience	Purpose	Research Vehicle	Metrics and Evidence
TheDream.US	Expand the number of CUNY campuses on which TheDream.US scholarships can be used.	Working paper ; Conger & Turner (under review)	Causal impact of cost of college on academic performance and persistence undocumented students
Robin Hood Foundation	Provided additional funding to TheDream.US for community college scholarships	Special data requests, basic statistical reports, educational choices and performance (working paper)	Compare scholarship recipients to national community college averages



# Case Study: Private Foundations

- **Development of relationship with Robin Hood Foundation and TheDream.US**
- **Development of a focus on undocumented immigrant students**



# Case Study: Private Foundations, cont'd.

- **How was research used?**
- **How did research assist the foundations in making their programmatic decisions?**
  - Robin Hood Foundation
  - TheDream.US

# How Can We Encourage More Partnerships?

- **Advantages:**
  - Practitioners bring on-the-ground experience and established dissemination channels
    - Makes academic research more relevant to policymakers
  - Academic researchers bring experience and methodological rigor to policy discussions



# Key's to this Model's Success

- Keystone actor
  - Connected research producers with research consumers
  - Identified policy areas of mutual interest
  - Connected other actors around areas of mutual interest
- Practitioner access to researchers
  - High quality research that speaks directly to a policy-relevant question
- Researcher access to policymakers
  - High quality research needs to be communicated to policymakers
- **If one of these keys to success does not exist, can APPAM fill that role?**

# How Can APPAM Encourage More Partnerships?

- **Does the Association have a role to play in these partnerships?**
  - Bringing various actors to the same table?
  - Disseminating research and policy products?

# How Can APPAM Encourage More Partnerships?, cont'd.

- **Does the Association have a role to play in these partnerships?**
  - Acting as a clearinghouse for
    - ideas for these partnerships?
      - Example: CUNY wants to explore the impact of course availability on academic outcomes
    - types of data available from various sources?
      - Example: CUNY now has access to NYS' wage and employment data
    - sites willing to host RCT research?