

Recommended Readings for the Admissions Policy Study Group

☒ Readings provided by Smith Q&A: Trans Women Belong at Smith

◆ [Mission of Smith College](#)

◆ [Info Packet for Board of Trustees - Trans Women at Smith 101](#)

- Glossary
- Trans Women and High School
- Q&A's Policy Proposal
- Policy Changes at Mills and Mount Holyoke
- Timeline of community resistance to this policy
- The New York Times article
- Q&A Petition comments
- Q&A Petition signatures

◆ [National Transgender Discrimination Survey](#) - The largest study of its kind, the education section is especially relevant.

◆ Educational resources from the [Sylvia Rivera Law Project](#)

- ["Trans 101" Explanation](#)
- Video of SRLP founder Professor Dean Spade speaking at Barnard College: [Why Can't Admissions Policies at Women's Colleges Be Based on Legal Gender?](#)

◆ [Lamba Legal advice for students seeking to amend the gender on their high school transcripts IF they manage to amend their government documents](#)

Readings Provided by Organizing for Undocumented Students Rights

Who Else Is Not Here?: Institutional Barriers to Undocumented Students at Smith

This fall, five undocumented students from Freedom University are applying to Smith. And this is not the first time: in the 2012-2013 academic year, three different undocumented students attempted to gain admission to Smith. None were accepted.

The reason we use the word "undocumented" is to resist the ways in which specific people in the United States, usually brown and poor, are dehumanized by the term "illegal." The term "illegal" is a racist legal and social construct intended to ensure an exploitable workforce. Using the word "undocumented" pushes back on the idea that certain bodies are considered "illegal" based on their citizenship status. There is no such thing as an "illegal" human being.

These same constructions of citizenship affect the admissions process to Smith, as with many other institutions like it. When applying to Smith, undocumented students are put into the international applicant pool. By being placed into this group, they are

made to compete with international elites who are likely to have had access to educational and resume building opportunities often unavailable to undocumented students, who tend to be educated in under-resourced areas in the United States. Further, while Smith accepts about 40% of domestic applicants, only 10-12% of international students are admitted. Additionally, undocumented students are ineligible for federal financial aid, federal work study and many domestic scholarship opportunities. The limited institutional aid for international students at Smith, which is based on “merit” rather than need, and the very high cost of education render college cost-prohibitive for the majority of undocumented students.

Many colleges, both private and public, have responded in various ways to mitigate this exclusion. Here in the valley, Hampshire College has created two scholarships specifically for undocumented students. Other schools, like University of Washington, have extensive application guidelines for undocumented students on their websites. In other words, colleges around the country are recognizing the need to explicitly support undocumented students during and after the admissions process; it is time Smith does the same.

Written by Smith College Organizing for Undocumented Student’s Rights

An Overview of Undocumented Students

According to The National Immigration Law Center:

An undocumented student is a foreign national who

1. entered the United States without inspection or with fraudulent documents;
2. or entered legally as a nonimmigrant but then violated the terms their status and remained in the United States without authorization.

Most undocumented students:

- have lived in the United States most of their lives;
- have learned English;
- have attended elementary, middle and high school in the United States;
- have completed high school and want to pursue a college education; currently lack a way to become legal residents or citizens of the United States.

The Undocumented Population

- 11.1 million Undocumented immigrants of all ages living in the United States.
- 1.6 million Undocumented immigrants ages 19-24 living in the United States.
- 2.1 million Undocumented students in the United States potentially eligible for the most recently proposed federal DREAM Act (S.729 in the 111th Congress).
- 1.9 million Undocumented youth in the United States potentially eligible for the “Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals” federal policy directive, which provides deferral from deportation and a work permit, but does not create a path toward formal citizenship.

- 65,000 Undocumented students who have lived in the United States for 5 or more years, or graduating from high school each year; only about 5 to 10 percent of them go to college.
- 7,000–13,000 Undocumented students enrolled in college throughout the United States

Challenges Undocumented Students Face in Pursuing a College Education

- **Financial obstacles:** Under current government policies, undocumented students cannot qualify for federal and most state-based financial aid, including grants, work-study jobs or loan programs. The cost of full-time enrollment at a public college or university ranges from \$15,000-\$40,000 per year.
- **In-State Tuition & Financial Aid:** Currently only 18 states have passed tuition equity laws or policies that allow undocumented students to qualify for in-state tuition at the public colleges and universities in their state of residence on the condition that: undocumented students must reside in the state, attend high school for 1-4 years in state, and graduate or receive the GED in state. In addition to allowing students to qualify for in-state tuition, California, Illinois, Minnesota, New Mexico and Texas provide access to state-based funding.
- **In-State Tuition and Financial Aid Bans:** Arizona, Georgia, and Indiana ban undocumented students from receiving in-state tuition.
- **Attendance Bans:** South Carolina was the first state to outright ban undocumented students from attending public colleges and universities, followed by Alabama and Georgia.
- **Private Colleges and Universities:** Almost all private colleges and universities classify undocumented students as *international students* and consider their financial situation in determining admissions. In this process undocumented students compete with students from every country in the world for a handful of enrollment slots. For these schools, an undocumented student's ability to fund their entire four years of college is considered in admissions decisions. The cost of attending a private college for four years ranges from \$80,000-\$200,000.

Educators for Fair Consideration

The data cited in this document was drawn from the Educators for Fair Consideration FACT SHEET on undocumented students (January, 2014). It is housed at the E4FC website. For more information please visit www.E4FC.org

Other Admissions Considerations

[Pledge of Non Support](#)