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Symbolic Sanctuary and Discursive Dissonance: Limitations of Policy and Practice to Support Undocumented Students at Hispanic Serving Institutions

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Abstract

An increase in public expressions of xenophobic and racist nativist sentiments followed the election of the 45th president of the United States, and higher education institutions across the country issued statements proclaiming their support for students impacted by changes to federal immigration policy. Guided by García's (2017) organizational typology of HSI and critical policy studies (Diem, Young, Welton, Mansfield & Lee, 2014), we conducted a content analysis of messages distributed via campus-wide email that addressed the vulnerabilities of DACA recipients and other immigrant students at two Hispanic-Serving Institutions in California. Our examination of these messages as policy documents reveals how campus and university-system leaders—even in a so-called “Sanctuary State”—attempt to create a notion of “campus as sanctuary” rather than committing to “sanctuary campus” policies and practices. We conclude with recommendations that push the notion of sanctuary campus beyond symbolic gestures and ask practitioners, scholars, and educators to reflect on the practices that foster true sanctuary environments.

Keywords: HSI, sanctuary campus, higher education, immigration, DACA

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Introduction

Following the election of the 45th president of the United States and subsequent increasingly strict federal approach to immigration policies, communities across the nation began to declare themselves “sanctuary cities” to denote their unwillingness to cooperate with and perpetuate a racist deportation agenda. California is the most populous and diverse state in the U.S. and is home to more than 10 million immigrants from around the world, an estimated 3 million of whom are undocumented. In 2017 California governor Jerry Brown signed SB54 (the so-called “Sanctuary State” bill) into law, effectively indicating that state law enforcement agencies would not cooperate with federal immigration authorities. Universities across the state issued statements assuring the protection of students from any attacks deployed by the President’s conservative cabinet, especially in the wake of the rescission of DACA (Deferred Action on Childhood Arrivals), an Obama-era Presidential Executive Order that provides work permits and access to higher education for undocumented individuals who meet certain criteria. A discrepancy exists, however, in the way that California state and city officials have taken up the term *sanctuary* compared to the leaders of the state’s public higher education institutions.

Through content analysis of the messages embedded in 20 emails and fact sheets distributed to stakeholders at two Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) in California, we found that campus messages construct a limited understanding of the responsibility universities carry with regard to immigrant students. Rather than identifying xenophobia and racist nativism as broader social problems to confront—particularly at campuses located in communities that are home to large numbers of immigrant residents—these responses are limited to providing educational access to undocumented students. Thus, universities, including HSIs which may be presumed to have an additional commitment to supporting students most impacted by racism, elicit a symbolism of sanctuary rather than deploying sanctuary practices.

Study Context

A report sponsored by the Pew Research Center estimated that there were 56.5 million Latinx people living in the United States in 2015, comprising 17.6 percent of the total U.S. population (Flores, López, & Radford, 2017). Of this group, 35 percent of those between the ages of 18-24 were enrolled in higher educational institutions—two- or four-year colleges, alike. While this signifies an increase in Latinx college enrollment, this group is still proportionally behind other groups in finishing and obtaining a four-year degree (Krogstad,

2016). Student demographics in California's public university systems are also changing whereby the population of Latinx students enrolled in the University of California (UC) system, for example, has doubled in the last two decades, from 12 percent in Fall 2000 to 24 percent in Fall 2017 (University of California, 2018). Given the rapid increase of Latinx student in public institutions of higher education, many institutions across the state of California now qualify for the federal designation of Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). HSIs are "defined as accredited two-year and four-year degree granting institutions with a minimum enrollment of 25 percent Latinx students" (Santiago 2006).

In this article we refer to the individual campus sites and university systems by the pseudonyms "Dorado State University" (part of "University System A") and "Boardwalk University" (part of "University System B"). Based on the classification system employed by Nuñez, Crisp and Elizondo (2016), both campuses are considered "big systems four years" HSIs, a category of primarily public institutions with large enrollments of mostly undergraduate students. Dorado State and Boardwalk University are located in different parts of California—Dorado State in Southern California and Boardwalk University in Northern California—and are part of university systems that have distinct funding relationships with the state legislature and independent governance systems. Their campus demographics are also distinct; a majority of students (about 60%) at Dorado State identify as Latinx, while Boardwalk University's Latinx population only recently grew past the 25 percent mark in 2012 qualifying it as a Hispanic Serving Institution. Both universities are located in communities whose city councils approved the adoption of "Sanctuary City" designations in 2017, which limits cooperation of local authorities with federal immigration law enforcement agencies.

Approximately 11 million undocumented immigrants were living in the U.S. in 2015 (Krogstad, Passel, & Cohn, 2017). Of these, the majority were Latinx, with Mexican migrants counting for 5.6 million of the total number in 2016 and increasing numbers of undocumented immigrants from Central America arriving from 2009 to 2015. Furthermore, 65,000 undocumented students graduate from high school every year, and 25,000 of those graduates were from California high schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Of these undocumented students who graduate high school, only 5% to 10% pursue higher education, and far fewer actually attain a higher education degree (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). While HSIs are increasingly essential points of access to higher education for many Latinx

students, there is much discussion surrounding what Hispanic *servicing* means and who benefits from the application of such a title (García 2017a). Debate also exists within this context about the responsibility of HSIs to provide sanctuary for undocumented and DACAmented Latinx students. Based on a review of the extant literature and in response to changing conditions for undocumented university students and communities, this study was guided by the following research question: How do two public HSIs in California interpret their responsibilities in the context of a changing federal immigration policy environment? How are city and state sanctuary policies reflected in HSI practices?

Literature Review

This study addressed the formal institutional responses of two public universities to changes in federal immigration practice. In this section, we briefly situate our research in the context of research on HSIs, undocumented student access to higher education, and institutional supports for undocumented students in higher education support.

Hispanic-Serving Institutions in the United States

Research on Latinx students in higher education broadly suggests that in order to succeed they must navigate racial tensions in broader society and on college campuses (Becerra, 2010; Irizarry, 2012; Pérez & Sáenz, 2017). Thus, Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) can serve as a critical point of access to higher education for underserved communities (Benítez 1998; Benítez & DeAro, 2014; Conrad & Gasman 2015). In California, HSIs provide access to higher education by enrolling higher numbers of Latinx students; however, completion and persistence rates remain low at many of these universities (Contreras & Contreras, 2015). As such, scholars argue that not all HSIs center the notion of “Hispanic-Serving” in their institutional identity and practices (Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Contreras, Malcom, & Bensimon, 2008; Hurtado & Ruiz, 2012). For example, many HSIs utilize grants associated with an HSI designation for the improvement of the campus as a whole and digress from promoting Latinx student achievement (Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Contreras et. al., 2008; Hurtado & Ruiz, 2012). Moreover, scholars suggest that the HSI designation is complex, and is an added identity to institutions that did not develop with the intent of serving Latinx students (Hurtado & Ruiz, 2012). Therefore, institutions with an acquired HSI designation must interrogate how and to what extent they are “serving” a growing number of Latinx students (García 2017a, 2017b).

Undocumented Latinx Students in Higher Education

Two prominent themes in the current literature about undocumented Latinx students in higher education are the impact of financial constraints (Diaz-Strong, Gómez, Luna-Duarte, & Meiners, 2011; Pérez Huber, 2009; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015), and family supports as a resource (Diaz-Strong et al., 2011; Pérez Huber, 2009; Pérez, Espinoza, Ramos, Coronado, & Cortes, 2009; Puntí 2017). Financial constraints are evident in the lack of access to many state and federal aid programs, which can lead to increased levels of stress and anxiety that impact the emotional and physical well-being of undocumented Latinx students (Diaz-Strong et al., 2011; Pérez Huber, 2009; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015). However, much research acknowledges that protective factors such as a family's economic, social, cultural, and emotional support cannot be ignored as contributing factors for academic achievement (Pérez et al. 2009; Pérez Huber, 2009; Puntí, 2017). For example, students often drew on families' migration stories for inspiration (Pérez Huber, 2009), as well as the use of phrases such as "échale ganas" ("put a lot of effort") from family members to inspire them to do well in school (Puntí, 2017).

Higher Education Support for Undocumented Latinx Students

A major theme in the literature is the lack of institutional support for undocumented Latinx students, and how it contributes to the difficult experiences they encounter as they navigate educational spaces (Diaz-Strong et al., 2011, Pérez et al., 2009; Pérez Huber, 2009; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2015). As a result, undocumented students often rely on individuals as resources to guide them towards information and assistance about financial aid, admissions, networking, and career advice (Boden, 2011; Contreras, 2009; Kouyoumdjian, Guzmán, García, & Talavera-Bustillos, 2017; Muñoz & Maldonado, 2012; Pérez & Sáenz, 2017). For example, some campus personnel became essential to the academic achievement of undocumented Latinx students because they help map out college and career trajectories (Boden, 2011), act as sources of inspiration (Kouyoumdjian et al., 2017), and are encouraging and positive role models who are empathetic to students' experiences (Pérez & Sáenz, 2017). Positive faculty and campus personnel become crucial to students' academic success as they navigated higher education amidst a lack of institutional support. Thus, institutions of higher education, and specifically HSIs should make particular efforts to support Latinx undocumented students.

Theoretical Framework

We drew on the epistemological assumptions of critical policy studies to frame our examination of higher education administrators' responses to changes in federal immigration policy stances. Diem, Young, Welton, Mansfield and Lee (2014) explored the development of critical policy studies in education through a literature review and oral histories with scholars in the field, and identified five fundamental concerns addressed in research that employs these perspectives: (1) attention to the differences between policy rhetoric and practiced reality; (2) concern regarding the policy, its roots, and its development over time; (3) concern with the distribution of power, resources, and knowledge as well as the creation of policy "winners" and "losers;" (4) attention to social stratification and the broader effect a given policy has on relationships of inequality and privilege; and (5) acknowledgment of the agency of non-dominant groups as they resist oppressive policy processes (p. 1072). We conceptualize the official language of higher education administrators as one part of a complex network of policy actors and actions. This approach echoes other research that has examined how language use provides evidence of micropolitical processes and institutional logics involved in navigating contentious educational policy contexts at the K-12 level (Whiteman, Maxcy, Fernández & Scribner, 2017).

We also borrow from García's (2017a) conceptualization of an organizational framework for Hispanic Serving Institutions to narrow our focus to the interpretation and implementation of policy as practice (see Levinson & Sutton, 2001) at two HSIs in California. García (2017a) originally developed a typology of Hispanic Serving Institutions based on extant organizational theory and results of an in-depth case study of an HSI in California; she also employed the typology to classify six institutions in the Midwest (García 2017b). García (2017a; 2017b) characterizes HSIs in four ways: (1) Latinx-serving, institutions that produce equitable outcomes and have a supportive culture for Latinx students; (2) Latinx-enhancing, institutions that have a supportive culture but do not produce equitable outcomes; (3) Latinx-producing, institutions that produce significant number of legitimized outcomes despite lack of a supportive culture; and (4) Latinx-enrolling, institutions which neither produce equitable outcomes nor have a culture for supporting Latinx students on campus. Combining this typology with a critical policy lens allowed us to identify particular ways that institutional power is conveyed through official modes of university communication with stakeholders.

Methods

Critical policy studies typically employ qualitative methods and incorporate theoretical perspectives throughout all research processes (Young & Diem, 2017). Qualitative studies are also well-suited to exploring the impact of local context on how broader phenomena are interpreted and enacted (Maxwell, 2013); in this case, we examined the purported roles and responsibilities of two higher education institutions in California relative to the protection and academic success of undocumented and other immigrant students. Theory-driven content analysis is an inquiry approach that is particularly aligned with research that focuses on communication and the impact and flow of messages, whether qualitative or quantitative in nature (Neuendorf, 2017). In this study, we conducted a critical content analysis of email messages and documents posted to institutional websites. As Altheide and Schneider (2013) have described, analyses of documents drawn from such sources can be connected to broader social critiques, and formats of communication can themselves be significant rhetorical shapers of power, ideology, and influence (p. 3). In this case, we chose to compare messages from two different large public universities in order to remove the focus of critique from the individual message-writers to the larger institutional structures these leaders' actions may maintain, reinforce, or disrupt.

We selected documents for analysis based on the specific sociopolitical context of the impact of changes to federal immigration policy on undocumented communities in California, specifically in the context of higher education. As framed by Krippendorf (1989), Communications, messages, and symbols differ from observable events, things, properties, or people in that they inform about something other than themselves; they reveal some properties of their distant producers or carriers, and they have cognitive consequences for their senders, their receivers, and the institutions in which their exchange is embedded (p. 403).

In adopting such an understanding of the significance of emails to thousands of members of campus communities and fact sheets distributed to even wider audiences, we assume that such documents reflect broader priorities of the two campuses as HSIs, and the two university systems as public California institutions.

Data Sources

We selected six emails sent to the Dorado State University community by the campus president and three messages sent by the Chancellor of the associated statewide system, along

with seven emails sent to the Boardwalk University community and four associated public statements released by various campus and university system stakeholders. A total of 20 documents (36 pages of messages) were saved electronically as PDFs. All messages were sent between December 2016 and May 2018.

Data Analysis

Based on the theoretical frameworks outlined earlier in this article, we developed an analytic matrix (see Table 1) that applied the five fundamental concerns of critical policy studies in education drawn from the work of Diem et al. (2014) to institutional messaging about immigration policy, including DACA, on the two campuses. We also looked for evidence that suggested identification (current and/or aspirational) with García's (2017a) typology of HSIs. Each author examined all 20 documents and completed a copy of the matrix independently. We then engaged in an iterative process of comparative analysis of each other's matrices, writing a series of memos, discussing our interpretations, and clarifying any areas of difference. Through this process, we identified emergent themes that are presented in the following section.

Researcher Positionality

At the time of this research, Uriel and Andrea were doctoral students at Boardwalk University, while Raul and Allison were an M.A. student and faculty member, respectively, at Dorado State University. Uriel is also an alumnus of Dorado State University, and Raul is a current DACA recipient. Uriel, Andrea, and Raul identify as Latinx while Allison is white. We share common interests in exploring how social identities impact student experiences and commitments to advocating for inclusive learning spaces in educational institutions.

Findings and Discussion

In this section, we present and discuss findings of our content analysis in three categories: (1) Constrained definitions of community; (2) Universities as politically neutral government authorities; and (3) Responses to immigration policy as reflective of HSI identity. In keeping with a Critical Policy Studies analysis, we highlight particular ways the two universities and systems express and wield authority through both the content and the form of email messages.

Constrained Definitions of Community

In 2017, an undocumented Dorado State student (not a DACA recipient) was detained by Border Patrol authorities in her neighborhood, located a few miles from campus. Her

lawyers claimed the move was retaliation for her activism on behalf of immigrant rights, and for protesting the detention of her mother by immigration officials earlier in the year. The student was kept in detention for almost a month before being released. Although Dorado State's president made statements in support of the student as a member of the campus community, these statements carefully avoided direct criticism of federal immigration agencies and did not address her undocumented status. Most of the messages we analyzed from both universities were similarly vague in response to broader social tensions and immigration issues and instead focused exclusively on DACA, a federal policy. Public universities that are part of larger state systems must comply with state and federal statutory authority, particularly in their use of public funds, they have discretion to develop local mission statements and activities designed to address unique community needs. Although undocumented status is more than an educational access issue, both Dorado State and Boardwalk University construct an understanding of *community* as limited to *campus*, effectively removing them from responsibility to make broader statements of solidarity. By limiting their focus to campus community only, universities restrict their capacity to offer support to off-campus stakeholders.

We found that DACA status was almost always referenced only as it pertained to certain students' university attendance, rather than a federal program that is not specifically tied to higher education. However unwitting this rhetorical conflation between DACA and student status may be, it reinforces dichotomous positioning of immigrants more generally. Addressing the needs of DACA recipients on campus without mention of other undocumented students (non-DACA recipients) or undocumented community members who are neither DACAmented nor university attendees positions DACAmented individuals as good, deserving immigrants. Granting such social approval to students merely because they are enrolled in an institution of higher learning tacitly permits unfair stereotyping of other immigrants as less worthy and thus undeserving of support. This was also expressed by campus leaders' use of the term "Dreamers" interchangeably with "DACA students;" for example, *[Dorado State University]'s support of Dreamers is unwavering. We will continue to advocate for our students. They deserve nothing less.* Rather than acknowledging how immigrant status inherently impacts all aspects of individuals' lives in the U.S., such phrasing suggests Dreamers are students who just happen to be immigrants, and therefore deserve the same treatment as other university attendees.

The broader university systems with which both campuses are affiliated influenced both their definitions of community and the resources they made available locally. The differences in these universities influence both the experience of students and the administrative response to changes in immigration policy. Although University System A encompasses twice as many campuses, University System B has a more elite reputation and a less precarious funding situation that provides a certain degree of political insulation. System B also contains certain resources, like law schools, that are not available to System A constituents. A March 2018 Boardwalk University email titled *Urgent message regarding DACA* directed students to avail themselves of *free immigrant legal services* at another campus in the system. A message from the head of University System A in February 2018 noted that *free legal support services are available in your area to support you in this effort [DACA application]* but did not provide a link to access these services. Several messages from Dorado State University noted that the institution would cover the cost of DACA applications, clarifying that *we have made non-state funds available to cover the fees associated with the application*. Boardwalk University did not provide direct funds to students in support of their DACA renewal applications; rather, students were directed to the website of a nonprofit organization where *grants or other assistance to cover your renewal fee may be available*. The application requirements of the DACA program that potentially place undocumented members of a student's family at risk of identification have already deterred some otherwise eligible individuals from entering the program, yet this situation was not addressed in university messages. By failing to consistently acknowledge DACA recipients as part of a larger community of undocumented individuals, these messages effectively erase the complexities of social, familial, and cultural networks in which undocumented students are situated, particularly those who are part of mixed-status families.

Universities as Politically Neutral Government Authorities

The idea that authority figures are the best source of information—and that the university is a trustworthy authority—was common to statements from both institutions. This message was supported by the word choices and phrasing structures present in the documents, as well as the distribution mechanism itself. The ability to disseminate a campus-wide email is typically restricted at large universities, giving central administrators a great deal of influence in determining what situations are seen as “urgent.” Students and faculty are not able to disseminate email messages that would reach the entire campus community as this access is

filtered through upper-level administrative offices. The statements distributed by Dorado State University and Boardwalk University were all sent on behalf of the President or Chancellor or by other high-level administrators on campus. Even more explicitly, Dorado State University's messages were formatted on official memo-like letterhead, even when signed in a more casual manner with the president's first name. Almost all were distributed with a subject line that simply read *Message from the President* and required readers to click and open the email in order to learn what topic was addressed. Boardwalk University's subject lines were more descriptive: *Response to post-election hate flyers*; *Statement on the immigration ban*; and *Trump administration action on DACA*. In a message from the Chancellor of University System A following the initial announcement of the rescission of DACA, the phrase *DO NOT DELAY* was included as a separate sentence. The use of all caps combined with direct, imperative phrasing emphasizes the authority of the university system to provide guidance to students. Although both universities were invested in strengthening their authoritative positions, they also tacitly pointed fingers at the federal government as responsible for the difficult situation faced by undocumented students. From a critical policy perspective, however, this type of messaging reinforces governmental power by heightening alarm about a concerning policy shift without encouraging protest of the law. In a majority of the emails, readers are not directed to participate in efforts to change policy but are instead given clear directions about how to follow it.

Related to the rhetorical situating of university campuses as separate from the communities in which they are located geographically and socially, we found that the emails sent by administrators frequently referenced institutional "core values," alluding to a set of principles or standards of behavior. Furthermore, these "core values" mirrored popular narratives of "American" values that promote myths of the meritocracy and tropes of the U.S. as a free and welcoming space for all people regardless of background. A September 2017 message from Boardwalk University stated: *To end the [DACA] program is an affront to our nation's values. It also runs contrary to [University System B]'s commitment to educational access and opportunity to all. These DACA students are, for all intents and purposes, Americans.* Both institutions suggested that the political aggression toward DACA as a policy threatens the potential of the University to flourish as a space where the exchange of diverse ideas leads to intellectual growth and creativity. Thus, by decentering the importance of DACA status for many members of

undocumented communities and re-centering it as a policy that maintains the interests of the university, campus interpretations of equity and diversity are positioned as synonymous with American humanitarianism.

We found that the only political actions encouraged by the leaders of Dorado State and Boardwalk University were those that reinforce hierarchical government authority and place trust in democracy, even in the face of evidence that such faith is potentially misplaced. At the same time that their messages condemned actions by the 45th U.S. President's administration, they called on readers to contact their representatives and register formal protests with legislative officials. These rhetorical moves implicitly discourage grassroots forms of protest or active resistance. They also fail to propose new policy approaches or invite students and community members to participate in the development of new practices. From a reputational standpoint it is in a university's interests to suggest that social problems originate—and therefore need to be solved—outside of campus rather than indicate that its own practices and policies frequently directly reflect these same norms and histories. By asking students to get involved in efforts to influence forces outside the university, however, these messages place the labor of social change back on the communities most affected by racist and xenophobic policies, rather than taking a proactive and praxis-oriented approach to enacting reflective, critically conscious transformation within their own institutions.

Only a few of the messages that addressed DACA noted it as a program that provides authorization for recipients to work legally in the U.S., not just attend school; for example, a message distributed across University System A regarding the initial rescission decision in September 2017 was addressed to *[University System A] students and employees* and noted: *Renewal of your DACA status may be your only opportunity to obtain an additional two years of deportation protection and legal work authorization.* Following a federal judge's reinstatement of the program in January 2018, Dorado State's president issued a message that read in part: *the injunction allows those who need to submit applications to retain their residency status and work permit to do so* and ended with *[Dorado State] stands with DACA students.* These messages still positioned employment as something that would accompany an individual's studies, rather than acknowledging that the ability to earn income to pay for their education—and frequently, contribute economically to support their families—is a primary concern for most undocumented students.

In contrast with the presentation of DACA students as aspirational strivers, TPS (Temporary Protected Status) recipients were portrayed as victims. Although Dorado State University's President never referred to broader communities of undocumented immigrants in addressing DACA, his message from November 2017 specifically noted that *This announcement, particularly in the wake of other recent federal actions, may cause fear and anxiety for those in our community who have TPS status, or whose friends and family have TPS status.* Because TPS recipients were positioned as victims of forces beyond their control (despite the United States' historic and ongoing complicity in creating political and economic instability in their countries of origin), no political risk was posed to university leaders in taking a more expansive compassionate stance. The same email again reinforced the idea that university values reflect the best of American ideals—liberty and justice for all—rather than concrete actions taken by the U.S. government: *I want to remind everyone that [Dorado State] is, and will remain, committed to our values, even in the face of unsettling actions from Washington. Yesterday's decision does not diminish our commitment to the academic success of all of our students, regardless of their immigration status.* Similarly, a January 2018 message from Boardwalk University, issued in part to address actions regarding TPS, noted: *As a public university, [Boardwalk University] has a special mission to serve all Californians through research, teaching, and service. Our ability to fulfill that mission is obstructed when undergraduate and graduate students are not safe and fear the deportation of themselves, their families, and community members. By limiting their focus to threats to the DACA and TPS programs, the content of statements made by the administrative authors of the messages we studied reflect well-meaning but short-sighted efforts. A critical policy studies analysis reveals this narrow focus as one that, however unintentionally, reinforces racist nativist ideas that categorize some immigrants as deserving and others as undeserving burdens (Perez Huber, 2009).*

Responses to Immigration Policy as Reflective of HSI Identity

Although University System A enrolls a higher percentage of students of color, statements from University System B were more direct in acknowledging racial discrimination and naming white supremacy as a problem on campus. We also found that Boardwalk University was more explicit in addressing undocumented status in general, rather than more general allusions to DACA. While Dorado State and University System A messages rarely contained the word undocumented, one statement from the Boardwalk University leader

included the introductory phrase *I [Chancellor of Boardwalk University] am pleased to share the following statement of emphatic support for undocumented members of our community*. Based on the critical content analysis of email messages and documents posted to institutional websites in response to anti-immigrant rhetoric and changing conditions for undocumented university students and communities, and despite the absence of references to Dorado State and Boardwalk University as HSIs, we find that these two campuses evoke a symbolic Latinx-enhancing identity. As defined by García (2017b), “*Latinx-enhancing* is based on enrolling a minimum of 25% Latinx students and enacting a culture that enhances the educational and racial/ethnic experience of Latinx students” (p. 114). While the focus of our study was not to measure educational outcomes, our findings do suggest that both HSIs attempted to enact and mobilize available resources to support students deemed at risk.

Many of the 20 email messages we analyzed included live hyperlinks that directed readers to additional sources of information. These links led mostly to offices on the campuses of Dorado State or Boardwalk University, or to official policy information released by University Systems A or B. In the case of directing readers to resources related to countering immigration enforcement threats, these links reinforced a narrow focus on DACAmented students, and through further analysis we found that the supports offered aid only those who are current students at both institutions. Non-profits or other organizations who advocate for and support the undocumented community and their families outside the campuses and university systems were not typically included in these lists. By not expanding their focus beyond the campus or university system, the ability of these HSIs to further support positive identity development for students of color is limited.

Both universities have active cultural centers and ethnic studies programs and departments with rich histories, and many members of the campus community—staff, faculty, and students—who provide culturally relevant programming and vital academic resources that support students of color. As proposed by Garcia and Okhidoi (2015), actively working to change and adapt curricula and programming is necessary for HSIs to qualify as “serving.” In this study, however, we find little evidence to suggest that the presidents or chancellors of these universities wish to associate themselves with these efforts directly. Although administrators proudly tout statistics about the social mobility of Dorado State graduates, they do little to talk about the complex role played by U.S. higher education institutions in maintaining social

stratification. Because Minority Serving Institutions, including HSIs, have been designated as such as part of efforts to provide developmental support to historically marginalized racial and ethnic minority communities (Gasman, Nguyen & Conrad, 2015), the leaders of these institutions have a responsibility to center the voices of people of color rather than focus solely on the economic advancement of graduates. Because serving Latinx students was not the historical mission of these institutions, however, they must actively work to develop new organizational strategies that promote liberatory practices (García, 2018). By focusing their response solely on threats to DACA, the leaders of Dorado State and Boardwalk University miss an opportunity to mobilize powerful communities on behalf of members made vulnerable by capricious and discriminatory government officials.

Conclusion

In seeking answers to the research questions that guided this study, we were conscious of the complexities of developing and implementing flexible responses to rapidly changing sociopolitical contexts in institutions of higher education, which are often characterized as large bureaucracies prone to stagnation. Nevertheless, given the commitments of University Systems A and B to be innovative drivers of California's future, we suggest it is appropriate to examine campus practices as a reflection of underlying values. Overall, we find that Dorado State University and Boardwalk University interpret their responsibilities relative to the impact of changing federal immigration policy enforcement narrowly, with an almost exclusive focus on supporting DACAmented students. Although this support was sometimes reflected in the offering of concrete resources such as Dorado State's provision of photography services and funds to help students complete their renewal applications, it was more often intimated through rhetorical calls for unity and messages that reinforce narratives of American exceptionalism. Despite the sanctuary claims made by the state of California and many local city governments, we find that university campus practices are more risk-averse and engage in symbolic gestures that react and respond to policy changes. Although we acknowledge that funding concerns are constant, and university presidents must make difficult decisions about how to prioritize their use of political capital, we call on the leaders of campuses in systems that enroll the highest number of undocumented students (and many more immigrant students) in the country to take stronger actions, and use language that demonstrates a personal understanding of the impact of xenophobia and racism on entire communities—both on and off

campus— rather than engage in discursive dissonance. Attending to Bacchi's (2000) caution to critical policy analysts to avoid engaging in micro-examinations of discourse without considering what actions can be taken to change the circumstances we critique, we conclude this article by offering the following suggestions for practice.

First, we call for HSIs to publicly commit to engaging in an ongoing reflexive process in which practitioners account for broader social contexts and threats to the livelihood of the students they serve. By focusing on DACA students solely, the presidents' messages we analyzed cannot be seen as contributing to a broader "Latinx-serving" mission because the impact of attacks on undocumented people is felt much more broadly. The unintended effect of invisibilizing other groups contributes to pitting marginalized groups against each other. Future research should specifically investigate the impact of intersectional oppression on undocumented students who are members of other marginalized groups, including religious minorities, LGBTQIA+ individuals and students with disabilities. It is also not enough to acknowledge the existence of white supremacy and xenophobia as Boardwalk University did in their emails to the campus community. Universities must also interrogate how white supremacy and xenophobia permeate the educational experiences of the students they serve. Alluding to shared values of diversity honors an "enrolling identity" as opposed to a "serving identity" that could affirm and support students through practice. Yet, these support systems and practices must also reckon with the fact that attacks on undocumented people transcend the college campus. Intuitions of higher learning must move from rhetoric and toward action. For these reasons, we support greater collaboration between different campuses and different public systems of higher education in California. As evident by the emails sent out by administrators, each university system in California has resources that can be mobilized to support the undocumented community in their college campuses and beyond. Thus, the possibility of fostering true sanctuary environments is not far-fetched if HSIs across the California university system collaborate to support the Latinx students—and their communities—they aim to serve.

In accordance with our first recommendation, our second recommendation asks campuses to provide additional concrete resources, like food and housing, to undocumented students, especially those who are not DACAmented. Such a move would prevent the difficult decisions many students have had to make in the current system to potentially place undocumented members of their families at risk by listing a shared address on applications for

programs like DACA, and shift intuitions actions from *enrolling* to *servicing*, not just their undocumented students but their greater Latinx population. Ongoing concerns about how to pay for university tuition and fees are shared by many undocumented students (see e.g. Diaz-Strong et al., 2011; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2015) as well as many other students attending HSIs (Arbelo-Marrero & Milacci, 2016). HSIs like Dorado State University and Boardwalk University that enroll a majority of first-generation and low-income students can qualify to receive grants under federal programs like Title V and Title III, Part A programs; addressing the needs of some of the most vulnerable on campus can help institutions develop practices that benefit *all* students. Although public funds are issued with many restrictions, we call for both Dorado State and Boardwalk University to articulate their own identities as HSIs, and to incorporate protections for undocumented students as part of these commitments. Dorado State University's provision of financial support to cover the costs associated with DACA renewal application fees provides a glimpse into practices that can move HSIs and other universities towards sanctuary spaces for undocumented students, and to move HSIs closer to a multifaceted Latinx-serving organizational identity does not only focus on access and graduation rates (Garcia, 2016). It is imperative that as a sanctuary city and state practices are developed or redefined in a response to the current federal administration, we hold institutions of higher learning accountable for the ways in which they frame and market themselves. We call for HSIs to take actions to serve as sanctuary campuses for the students they so willingly claim to serve.

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Table 1.

Analytic Matrix with Sample Entry

Criteria	Document	Analysis
	Email date: 10-16-17 Dorado State (Message from the President)	
Evidence that message critiques or at least acknowledges roots and implications of immigration policies (such as DACA and TPS)	None provided- messages implies taken-for-granted assumption that “DACA is good.”	No evidence
Evidence that message critiques or at least acknowledges roots and implications of immigration policies (such as DACA and TPS)	<i>The fate of our students rests in the hands of elected officials who need to hear from us*</i>	Clear finger-pointing at govt. officials as ones with power. Resources indicated to belong to HiEd are voice / influence. Suggests that “signing a letter” is the most the President can do.
Evidence that message critiques or at least acknowledges roots and implications of immigration	<i>Dorado State’s support of Dreamers is unwavering. We will continue to advocate for our students. They deserve nothing less.</i>	Reinforces construction of Dreamers as “worthy” immigrants. Speaks to supporting DACA recipients because they are <u>students</u> , not because they are undocumented

policies (such as DACA and TPS)		immigrants being xenophobically targeted by racist govt. policies.
Evidence that message critiques or at least acknowledges roots and implications of immigration policies (such as DACA and TPS)	<i>Those of us who support Dreamers cannot afford to keep silent while Washington debates DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals).</i>	Does not clearly invite DACA recipients to resist, instead supports “savior complex” that suggests DACA students need protecting.
Evidence that message critiques or at least acknowledges roots and implications of immigration policies (such as DACA and TPS)	<i>I urge you to share your views with congressional representatives. Prompt them to enact legislation as soon as possible to protect Dreamers.</i>	Vague reference to lawmakers’ voiced support of DACA, but no action taken to preserve it.
Evidence that message critiques or at least acknowledges roots and implications of immigration policies (such as DACA and TPS)	Although more than 65% of Dorado State’s students are Latinx, and the majority of undocumented students on campus are Latinx, message does not address anything specific to Latinx students or characteristics of university’s student population beyond “Dreamers.”	No evidence

**Italics indicate text copied directly from email correspondence*