Role of Community Colleges in the Implementation of Postsecondary Education Enrollment Policies for Undocumented Students

H. Kenny Nienhusser

Abstract
This article examines the case of how the City University of New York (CUNY)—its central administrative offices and two of its community colleges—has addressed the issue of college access for undocumented immigrants in its implementation of New York’s college in-state resident tuition (ISRT) policy for this population. It highlights the role of implementers—those individuals who make day-to-day decisions and whose responsibility it is to carry out mandates—and policy ambiguity in the execution of policies. A total of 19 individuals ranging from interest group representatives, local community-based organization officials, CUNY central administrative office officials, and staff from two community colleges were interviewed. This investigation finds that CUNY’s central administrative offices have devoted a fair amount of resources on disseminating the availability of ISRT for undocumented immigrants and attempts to ensure proper institutional implementation of the state’s policy as interpreted by its system-level policy. Day-to-day implementation measures at CUNY and its individual community colleges included two processes: application for admission and residency verification. Furthermore, community colleges, to varying degrees, have developed outreach efforts that have focused on disseminating the availability of this policy and to a certain extent its procedures via one-on-one counseling and written communication. Last, this article concludes with implications for the literature and institutional policies and practices to increase the level of students enrolled in community colleges.

1University of Hartford, CT, USA

Corresponding Author:
H. Kenny Nienhusser, University of Hartford, 200 Bloomfield Avenue, West Hartford, CT 06117, USA.
Email: nienhusse@ hartford.edu