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**BRIDGING THE GAP:**

Guiding the College Search of Undocumented Students

In recent years, the issue of higher education access for undocumented and, more recently, DACAmented (see definition on page 32) students has grabbed the attention of policymakers, educational practitioners, and most certainly high school guidance and college counselors.

This consideration is imperative given a mere 25 percent of undocumented immigrants between the ages of 25 and 64 have either attended college or received a postsecondary education degree, compared to 53 percent of documented immigrants and 62 percent of individuals born in the United States.

Yet few studies have examined the role high school staff—in particular, school and college counselors—play in shaping the college choice process of undocumented students. This article reflects on research we conducted in an attempt to help fill that knowledge gap.

For our study, funded by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, we interviewed 15 undocumented immigrants from New York City about the information and emotional support they received from high school staff during their college search.

The college-choice process can be overwhelming as students are challenged with acquiring information and making decisions that will shape their educational trajectories. Undocumented and DACAmented students often face an especially difficult college search given the numerous barriers that come with their precarious immigration status.

And as our research shows, many such students fail to encounter appropriate guidance and encouragement from counselors in their college search.