

Role of Higher Education Associations on Institutional Policies Regarding Undocumented Students' Access to Higher Education

Research shows that when professionals are aware of the positions taken by their associations, they are more likely to reflect those positions in their decisions and professional practices.

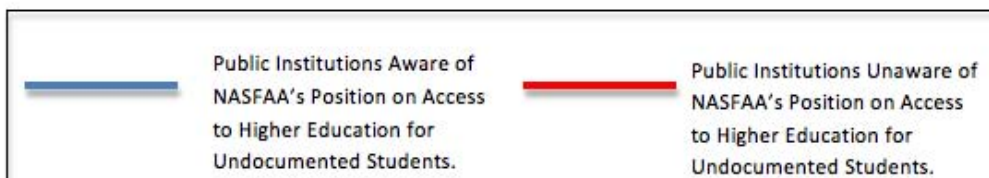
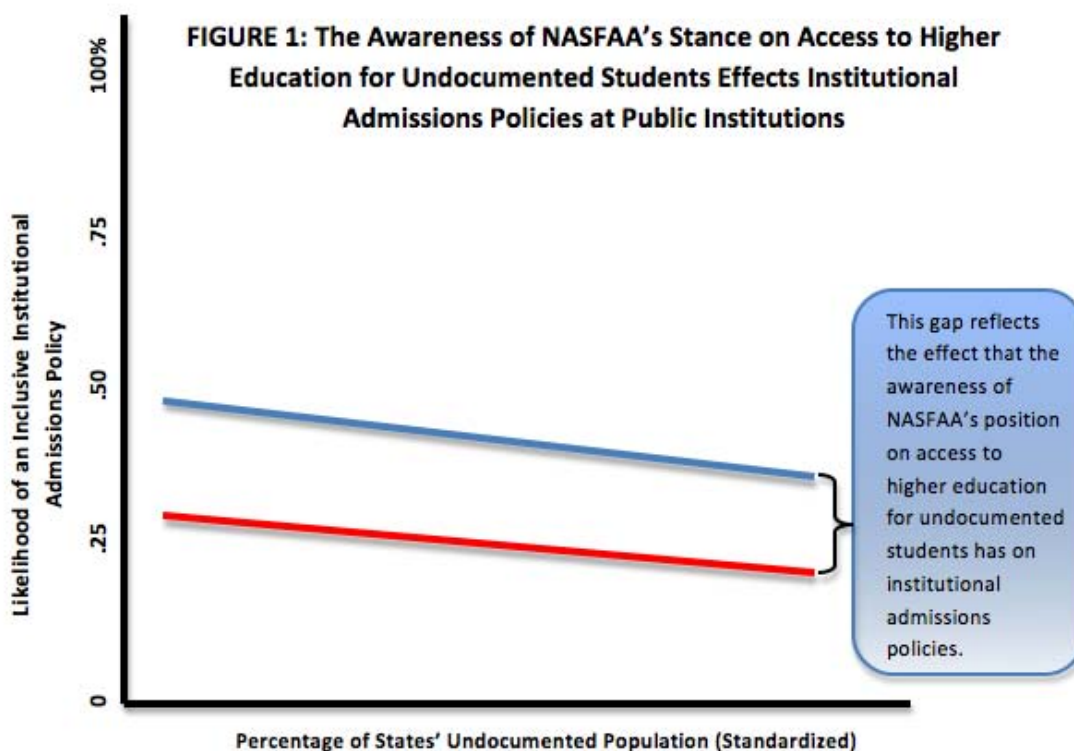
Associations like NASFAA as well as state and regional student aid associations -- whose history, traditions and values promote increasing access and opportunity for all capable students -- can have an important role in communicating with their members and reflecting an informed, national and profession-wide perspective in the positions taken on key issues affecting the field.

Higher education associations play a critical role in mediating and interpreting access policies for undocumented students, especially when information and legal parameters are confusing to professionals in the field. The policy position taken by these associations can guide decisions made by members, but these policies have less influence when members aren't aware of the positions taken by the associations.

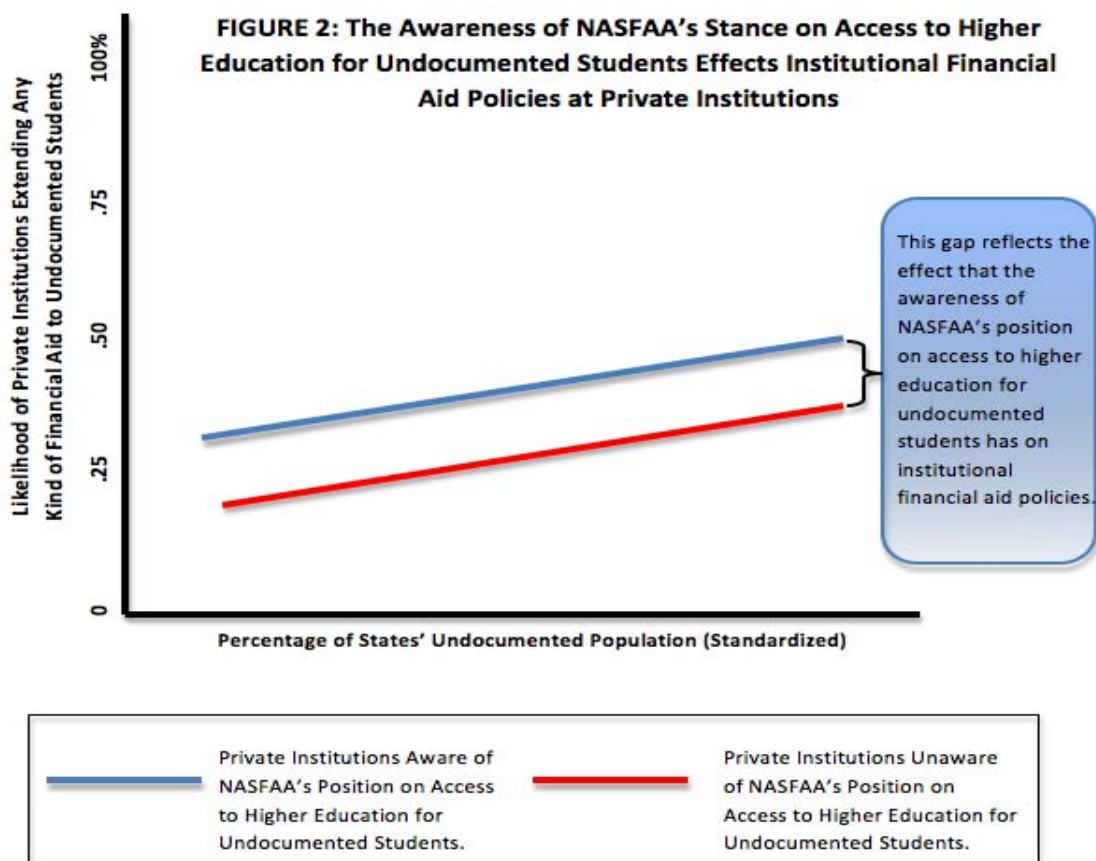
The National Forum's recent research indicates:

- Awareness of [NASFAA's support for the DREAM Act](#) increases the probability that an institution has an inclusive admissions policy when compared to institutions that did not report an awareness of NASFAA's position.
 - Awareness of NASFAA's policy position increases the likelihood that an institution has a financial aid policy for undocumented students.
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The following figures show the significant impact that awareness of NASFAA's DREAM Act position has on institutional admissions and financial aid policies for undocumented students. The distance between the two lines illustrates that awareness of NASFAA's position increases the likelihood of an institution having an inclusive policy. Awareness of NASFAA support of access to higher education for undocumented students who meet certain criteria increases the chances that an institution will have inclusive policies for undocumented students.



- National Forum research indicates that public institutions are more likely to have a policy permitting admission of undocumented students. This probability is enhanced when the financial aid directors of the institutions are aware of NASFAA's position on access to higher education for undocumented students. Furthermore, Figure 1 indicates that public institutions where financial aid directors are aware of NASFAA's support of the DREAM Act have approximately a 20% higher chance of having specific institutional policies that permit admission of undocumented students.
- The gap between the lines in Figure 1 reflects the impact of awareness on public institutions – showing an increased probability for having inclusive admissions policies for undocumented students. This effect is repeated when the probabilities are graphed against any continuous variable of our model. In this case the continuous variables were states' undocumented population, but the point of this graph is to show the gap between probability lines.



- The National Forum investigation also found that private institutions are more likely than public institutions to have specific policies that offer institutional financial aid to undocumented students. This probability is also boosted when the financial aid directors of private institutions are aware of NASFAA's support of the DREAM Act. Figure 2 also indicates that private institutions where financial aid directors are aware of NASFAA's position are 10% more likely to have stipulated policies that offer any kind of financial aid to undocumented students than those institutions who are unaware.
- The gap between the lines in Figure 2 reflects the impact of awareness on private institutions – showing an increased probability for having inclusive institutional financial aid policies for undocumented students. This effect is repeated when the probabilities are graphed against any continuous variable of our model. In this case the continuous variables were states' undocumented population, but the point of this graph is to show the gap between probability lines.

The significance of the awareness of financial aid associations' position on undocumented student policies is one of the most important findings of the National Forum's research. It speaks to the important influence that professional associations have in directly informing institutional policy. Associations' positions act as a compass for educational administrators when creating institutional policies that affect access to higher education for undocumented students.