

Legislative Advocacy Program

Undocumented Student Services
2019– 2020 VOICE Grant Report



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Program Objectives

The Legislative Advocacy Program's (LAP) objectives included developing students' leadership and research skills, critical thinking and problem solving, and effective communication in a legislative context. To achieve the program objectives, LAP students were required to participate in a series of weekly workshops and training sessions developed by the LAP coordinators. As an opportunity to observe the skills developed by the LAP students and to conclude the program, students participated in a capstone activity where they met with current state elected officials for virtual legislative visits. Consequently, the program activities and the capstone activity allowed for LAP students to become advocates for immigrant and student rights.



A blue poster with a white outline of a legislative building dome in the background. The title 'LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY PROGRAM' is written in large, bold, white letters with a yellow drop shadow. Below the title, there is a logo for 'UC SAN DIEGO UNDOCUMENTED STUDENT SERVICES' featuring a stylized book and leaves. To the right of the logo, the text 'INTERESTED IN ADVOCACY? WANT TO MAKE AN IMPACT? SEEKING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?' is written in white. Below this text is a yellow box with the text 'SIGN UP TODAY!'. Underneath the yellow box is the text 'DEADLINE: NOV. 15'. At the bottom left, there is a QR code with the text 'SCAN ME' above it. At the bottom right, there is the text 'QUESTIONS? EMAIL SMIN@UCSD.EDU'. At the very bottom, the URL 'HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/LAP2020' is written in white.

**LEGISLATIVE
ADVOCACY
PROGRAM**

UC SAN DIEGO
UNDOCUMENTED
STUDENT SERVICES

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Program Activities

Ice Cream Social: Meet and Greet between LAP students and coordinators. LAP students were introduced to the program, discussed social justice and community responsibility, and bonded over ice cream.

Documentary Night: LAP students watched “Documented”, a documentary about Jose Antonio Vargas, a famous undocumented journalist who lives in the United States. This documentary served to promote social justice by having students discuss diverse backgrounds and share their experiences.

Soft Skills Workshop: LAP students practiced soft skills, including public speaking and professional email writing.

Personal Narrative Writing: LAP students reflected on their connection or experience to immigration and developed a personal narrative focusing on the impact of immigration in their life. The session also provided an opportunity for the students to further bond with each other and establish a safe space for the students to share their stories.

Training #1: LAP students were introduced to the state’s legislative process and current state bills. The session focused on students’ development of critical thinking skills and problem-solving by discussing and understanding bills.

Team Huddle: LAP students chose to put together a documentary focusing on undocumented students from UCSD and present this to state legislators as part of the capstone activity.

Pre-Team Meeting: This meeting was used to discuss how COVID would impact students' participation in LAP and the program's objectives. Solutions were proposed for how LAP would move forward.

Bill Briefing: LAP students learned to research state bills and identify those most relevant to them. At the end of the meeting, students voted on two bills they would continue to research and support through the capstone activity.

Bill Narratives: LAP students drafted narratives for each of the bills they selected and put together talking points to prepare for the legislative visits.

Researching Representatives: LAP students researched the authors of the bills and representatives in favor and those against the bills.

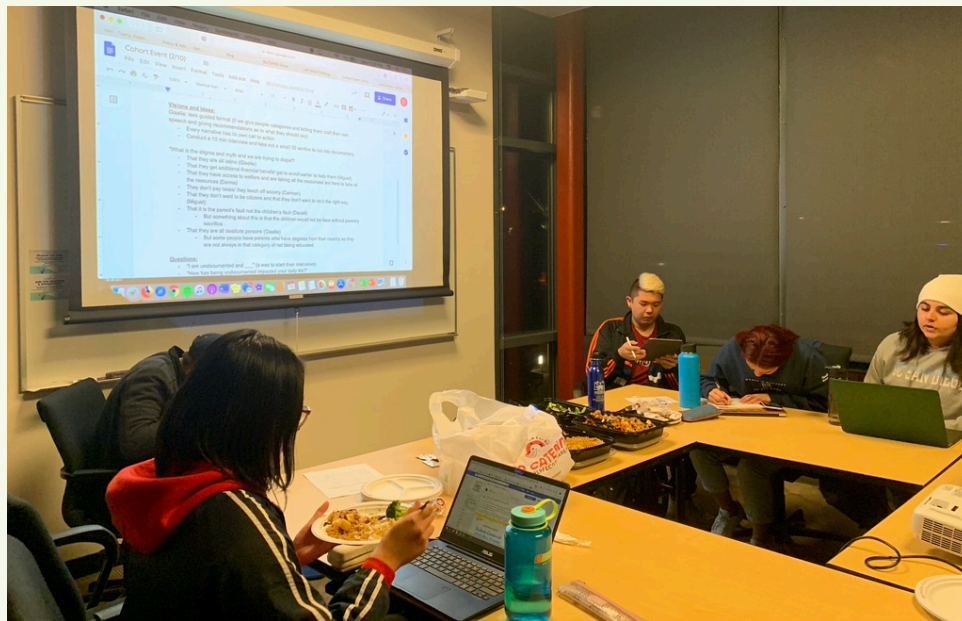
Legislative Communication Training: LAP students conducted mock legislative visits to practice public speaking and effectively convey information to a state legislator.

Email/ Call Session with Representatives: LAP students practiced professional communication over the phone and email with real current state legislators.

Immigrant Day Prep: LAP students participated in a second round of mock legislative visits focusing on the bills identified by the group and the legislators they would speak with during the capstone activity.

Immigrant Day of Action: As a conclusion of the LAP program, LAP students put into practice the skills they learned through real legislative visits where they advocate for the passage of five bills.

Final Farewell: Students reflected on their time in LAP and provided feedback into how we could further promote social justice and civic engagement in the next LAP.



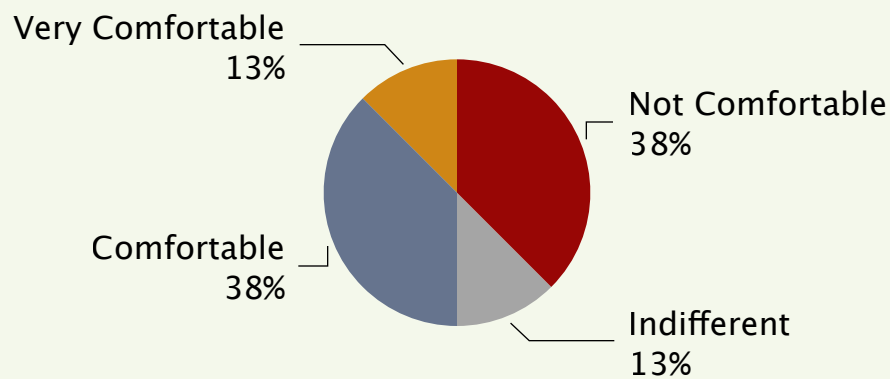
Program Assessment and Survey Results

LAP students were asked to complete surveys to determine if the program objectives were achieved. Based on survey results, all LAP students displayed growth in the assessed areas allowing for LAP to meet its objectives. Students reported that LAP was an enriching experience that helped them improve on specific skill sets they were interested in developing.

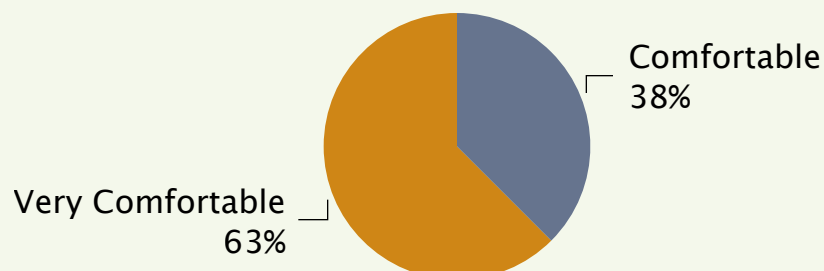
Leadership Skills

To develop student leadership, students led a “cohort project” of their choosing where they took up roles and responsibilities needed to complete this project. When asked to change their project due to COVID complications, students showed flexibility and took initiative in pursuing a new project. Additionally, students also displayed their leadership skills when leading conversations with state legislators during Immigrant Day of Action and the Soft Skills Workshop.

In a post participation survey, students reported a 30% increase in their comfort level in choosing to lead a project or activity that requires learning or doing something out of their comfort zone and their ability to take initiative in a group project.



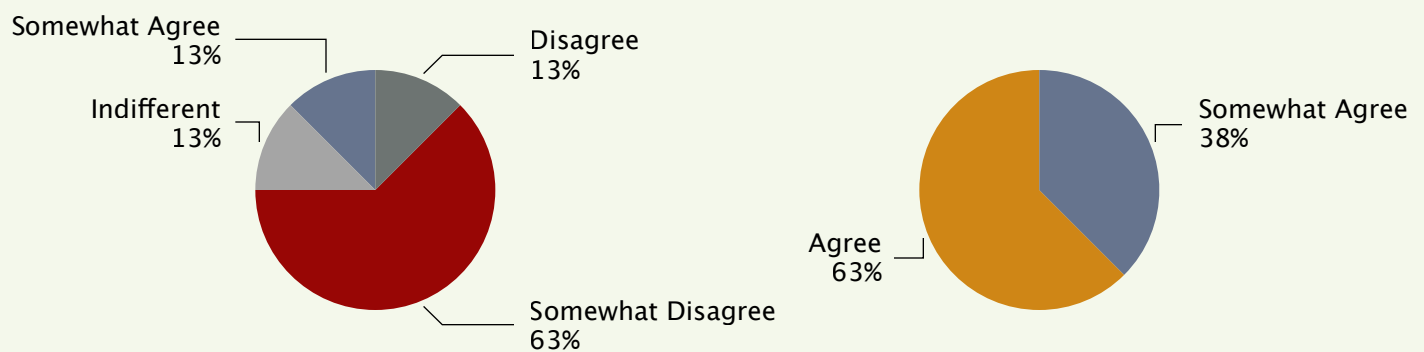
Student's comfortability in choosing to lead a project or activity; Pre-LAP (above) and Post-LAP (below)



Research Skills

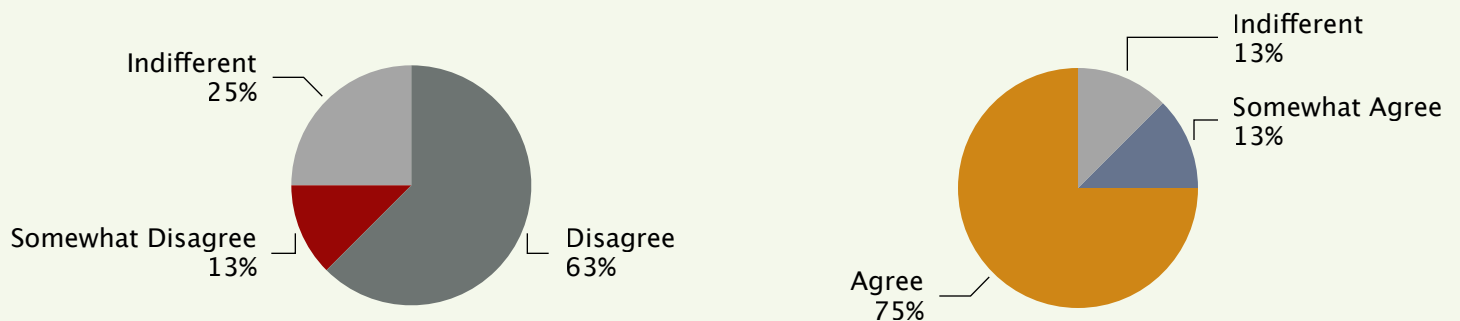
To develop student's research skills, training sessions were hosted to teach students how to utilize proper platforms and resources to research different California state bills and representatives.

Students reported a 51% increased comfort level in researching bills.



Pre-LAP (left) and Post-LAP (right)

Students also showed a 65% increased comfort level in tracking bills.

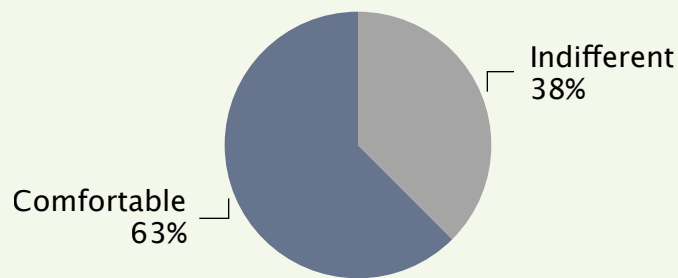


Pre-LAP (left) and Post-LAP (right)

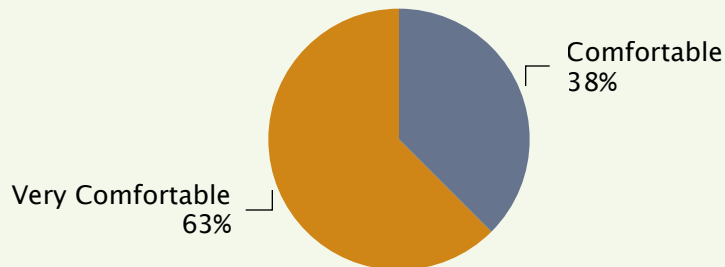
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

To develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, students utilized their research skills to strategically identify ways to speak to state legislators. Additionally, the LAP students collaboratively identified ways to ameliorate issues impacting LAP that arose due to the pandemic.

In a post participation survey, students reported a 21% increase in comfort level with their ability to think critically to prioritize and manage tasks.



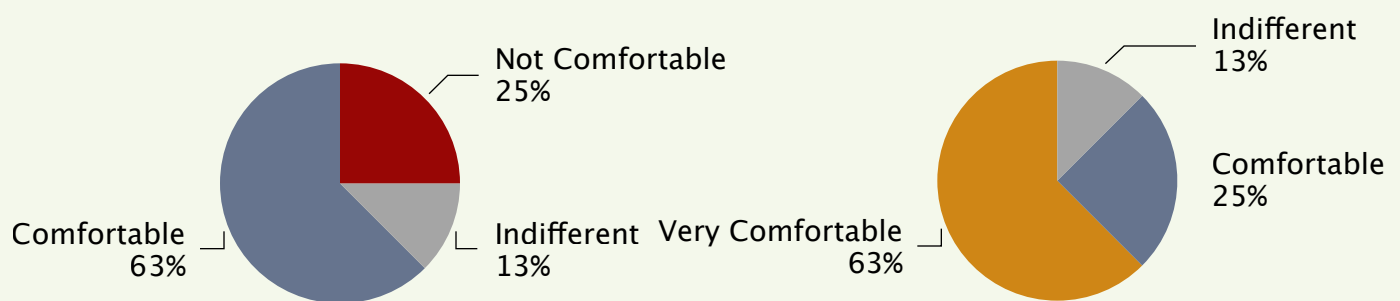
Pre-LAP (above) and Post-LAP (below)



Communication Skills

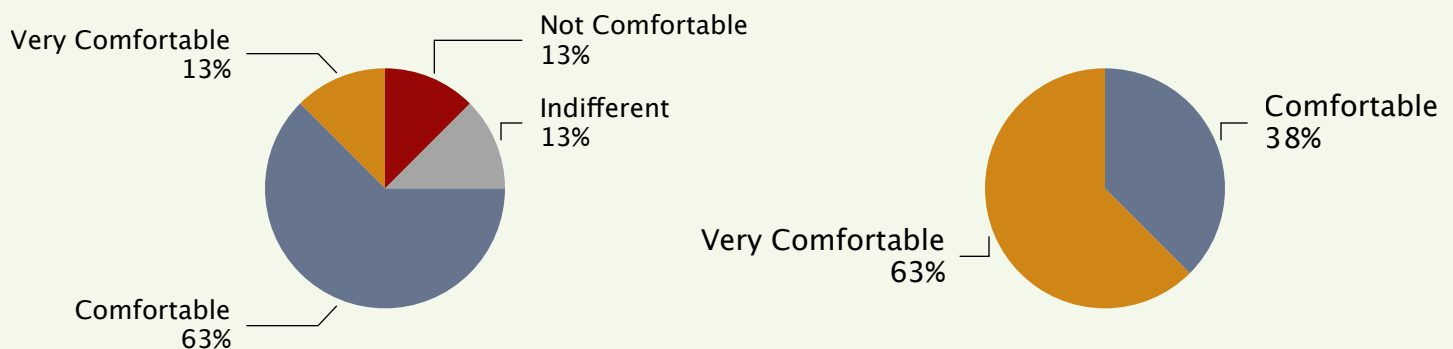
To develop communication skills, workshops were coordinated to review public speaking basics and give students time to practice their presentation skills. Students were recorded so they could watch themselves on video and make appropriate improvements.

In a post participation survey, students reported a 25% increase in comfort level when speaking in front of a group.



Pre-LAP (left) and Post-LAP (right)

In another training, students used their newly learned research skills and critical thinking skills along with their communication skills to advocate for bills to legislators who were more likely to reject our ideas. Students reported a 19% increase in their ability to express ideas orally and in a clear, organized, and convincing manner appropriate to the audience and the occasion.



Pre-LAP (left) and Post-LAP (right)

Participants

A total of 18 students were interviewed for the program, and ten were selected. The program looked for students with space for growth in their professional development so that they would gain and learn as much as they could from their participation in LAP. Priority was given to undocumented students with and without DACA to ensure the program aligned with the Mission and Vision of the Undocumented Student Services, the department that houses LAP. A mixture of undocumented and documented students from diverse backgrounds and college standing formed the 2019–2020 LAP student cohort.

Expenses

LAP coordinators initially allocated VOICE grant funds to cover the expenses generated by the workshops, training sessions, and capstone activity, but due to the restrictions on travel and social distancing, a large portion of the funding could not be spent.

Historically, LAP has provided capstone professional packages to LAP students to ensure they have the necessary tools and equipment for the Annual Immigrant Day of Action activity. Although the trip to Sacramento was cancelled, students were still given the capstone professional package as part of their completion of the program.

Capstone Professional Packages	\$1,053.49
Workshop and Training Meals	\$361.89
Equipment	\$7.54
Total	\$1,422.92

Challenges

The most challenging obstacle that LAP experienced was transitioning everything remotely. The program was forced to cancel their trip to Sacramento for the Annual Immigrant Day of Action activity along with other in-person activities which created concerns regarding the program's ability to meet its objectives. In response, LAP worked to adequately transition the program to a virtual setting while introducing new activities that aligned with program objectives.

Additionally, LAP students were also forced to change their group project last minute. Initially, the group chose to make a documentary but were able to successfully transition to another project where students drafted the outline of a bill that they plan to present to a legislator during the next academic year.

Lastly, LAP experienced challenges with the assessment tools used to evaluate student proficiency levels across all program objectives. At the start of LAP, students completed a survey that was used to determine their baseline proficiency. Then at the end of LAP, students completed the same survey to evaluate the post-LAP proficiency levels. Unfortunately, the initial survey tools failed to properly assess student's proficiency by not providing a standard by which students should evaluate their proficiency levels.

Impact

The purpose of LAP is to develop student's leadership and research skills, critical thinking and problem solving, and effective communication in a legislative context. Consequently, LAP

coordinators saw LAP students take a proactive role in advocating for immigrant and student rights through the state's legislative process. Overall, students reported feeling empowered in continuing to challenge unfair and unjust behaviors in their communities.

Students had two opportunities for advocacy work this academic school year – an email/ call session and the capstone activity. Here, students advocated for five different bills:

- **CALEITC (AB 1593)** – Written by Assemblymember Reyes, this bill would allow undocumented people who filed their taxes using ITIN to be eligible for income tax credit.
- **Health4All Elders (SB29)** – Written by Senator Levya, this bill would allow all undocumented persons who are 65 years or older to be eligible for Medi-Cal.
- **Health and Safety for All Workers (SB1257)** – Written by Senator Durazo, this bill would take away the household domestic service exclusion in the Labor Code (a code that states the requirements for employers to provide a safe working environment). Many undocumented people are domestic workers and are vital to the economy, but this also means that they are the group that is most at risk.
- **Public PostSecondary Education: Undocumented Students (AB 2972)** – Written by Senator Limon, this bill would require/ encourage public postsecondary institutions to create system-wide training programs relating to undocumented students and issues.
- **An act to add Chapter 17.95 (commencing with Section 7320) to Division 7 of Title 1 of the Government Code, relating to detention facilities (AB 3228)** – Written by

Assemblymember Bonta, this bill would require any private detention facility operator to comply with detention standards of care and confinement outlined in the facility's contract for operations

In the process, LAP was able to have an impact in our campus community because these bills covered a wide range of areas of need in the undocumented community. Although some of them may not affect undocumented students directly, they may have a relation to them. Additionally, even if these bills did not pass in this cycle, representatives are aware that there are people who care and have taken their time out to research and advocate for these bills.

In a normal school year setting, the Center can show further support for this project (and other projects) by allowing current awardees to reapply for funding for the next academic school year. Depending on the nature of the project, the outcome of the project can change and so it may take some projects more than a year to accomplish the goals that they are trying to accomplish. In this situation, advocacy for undocumented rights needs to continue and may take more than a year to accomplish.

Our Mascot
Bailey the
Honeybadger

