Season 2 Episode 4

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** [00:00:00] Hello everyone. Welcome back to Look No Feather. I am Emma Bjorngard Basayne, an advisor in the College of Education

**Ixchel Verdugo:** and I am Ixchel Verdugo one of the multicultural advisors and the Latinx Chica Retention. Specialist in CMAE

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** in this episode, we had the opportunity to interview Justine Carpenter, director of multicultural and and identity-based support services here at the uo.

Throughout the episode, Justine will be talking about legal support, scholarships, emergency funding, and other general resources available for dreamer and undocumented students on campus.

**Ixchel Verdugo:** This episode is also in collaboration with the Financial Literacy for Dreamer Students Task Force. A group comprised of faculty and staff in collaboration with the Financial Wellness Center at the University of Oregon, United in providing high quality financial literacy, educational programming for Undocu communities.

We hope you

enjoy.[00:01:00]

Can you please tell us your name and what

you do at the U of O?

**Justine Carpenter:** Hi. Yeah, I'm Justine Carpenter. I'm the Assistant Dean of Students and Director of Multicultural and Identity-Based Support Services. That's the title. So basically what I do is I support dreamer and undocumented students at the University of Oregon, and I support a team of individuals who work to support underrepresented students, including students of color, L G B, lgbt, qia plus students, student veterans, non-traditional students.

The, the list goes on, so it's quite expansive.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** So we know that you wear a lot of different hats at the U of O, which you just told us about. Uh, but can you please specifically tell us more about the resources you provide through the U of O Dreamers working group or in general, how you help support Dreamers on campus?

**Justine Carpenter:** Sure. So, um, so the University of Oregon has a Dreamers working group and it's a group of faculty and staff and sometimes students depending on the term from across campus. And the goal is really [00:02:00] about supporting dreamer students and creating a more. Inclusive campus for, uh, dreamer and undocumented students.

So how we support Dreamers on campus? Well, part of the way we do that is that the Dreamers working group provides Dreamer Ally trainings to campus, and so far we have trained over 550 Dreamer allies across campus, and that just goes to creating a more inclusive campus. And changes have been made since the inception of those trainings.

And some of those. Changes include ensuring that scholarships are now more attainable and more open to dreamer students to apply to. And then we also have direct services to dreamer students through our Dreamer and undocumented student support. And that's all located here in the office of the Dean of students.

**Ixchel Verdugo:** And like what do those supports like in particular look like? Obviously there's probably like the scholarship pieces and things like that, but

**Justine Carpenter:** Yes. So what does it look like? Um, well, generally it can look like having an individual one-on-one consultation with a student to kind of see where they are and what [00:03:00] supports they need, and then we can tailor supports to that student.

It can mean references. Excuse referrals across campus to certain, um, supports that they need. It can mean, um, having access to emergency funding that they might need. So for students who are DACA students and who hold daca, that can mean that they're having to pay renewal fees every two years. To renew their DACA status.

And that can be really a barrier for some students who may have otherwise used that money to pay for their rent or, um, to pay for food. And so we could help them gain access to some other services to help them, um, fund the money it takes. To renew their daca. We also, um, provide free immigration attorney, uh, referrals.

So we contract with an immigration attorney in town and they have the opportunity to sit with that attorney to file the renewal of their daca, and that's paid for through the university.

**Ixchel Verdugo:** If they were to

make use of that resource, would it have to be a referral? Through you? Yes. And then kind of that connection to the [00:04:00] lawyer, is that how

it

**Justine Carpenter:** That's exactly right, because the student has to, um, the attorney wants to know that the students are coming from the university in Oregon in order for it to come be covered through their contract.

The student then signs a release. Through me. Um, that gives me permission to release their name to the attorney and so they're signing a release in that way. Oh, ok. So the, that's why the student does have to go through me so that I can verify for the attorney's office that they are, uh, currently enrolled, um, university of Oregon student that's looking for help with their DACA process.

Mm-hmm.

**Ixchel Verdugo:** So, I know we kind of talked about some of the financial pieces, but um, are there any types of scholarships or financial aid out there for students who identify as Dreamers?

**Justine Carpenter:** Yes, there are. And I can tell you about some of them and if I miss any, feel free to feel free to try once that, you know.

Yes. Ok. The University of Oregon, we have a Dreamer scholarship that students can apply for on the UO financial aid dashboard. And so when you're a UO student, you go into the dashboard, you answering the series of question and, and that scholarship will come up. It's the [00:05:00] opportunity through excellent scholarship that students will see on their dashboard.

That scholarship is for currently enrolled students or students who are transferring in. From another institution, for example. So it's a scholarship that students will apply for either during their first year here, for their second year, their sophomore year, or as a transfer student coming in. It's also available to graduate students and law school students as well, um, or eligible for that scholarship.

So yeah, that's the UO Dreamer scholarship. There are also other scholarships across campus that are open to Dreamer students. Um, one of the main ones is the Diversity excellence scholarship. Mm-hmm. And, uh Ixchel can tell us more about that in more details. About how do I apply for that? Do you have It's also on the dashboard.

I

know, but

**Ixchel Verdugo:** it is, yeah, it's on the dashboard. Um, it is open to all students. You do have to maintain a 3.0 to be able to, to keep the scholarship. Um, and also making sure that you are taking at the very least 12 credits or full-time, um, status throughout [00:06:00] your time here. And depending on, you know, when students apply, um, you're awarded a certain number of.

Terms, but that's like something that kind of comes in like after, like once you, once they receive a scholarship, they come in and they're directly connected to our office, actually the Center for Multicultural Academic Excellence or C M A E. And we work with them pretty closely to check in, see how they're doing, if.

You know, anything is going on, then we can offer those supports on the backend to make sure that they're able to maintain their scholarship. But yes, that's, that's a really good

one. Definitely.

**Justine Carpenter:** Yes. That's great. And that's also recipients of our UO Dreamer scholarship do also meet with advisors in Center for Multicultural Academic Excellence as well.

Mm-hmm. It's another kind of part to make sure that our students stay on track. And the goal of that scholarship is really to help students through to graduation, because we see so many students come here, begin the U of O as an undocumented student. Student or a DACA student or in another status, TPS status, and really find their funding starts to feel limited and realize it's a lot.

So it's gonna take them a [00:07:00] lot to get to graduation, and that's what this scholarship does. And the closer you get to graduation, kind of the more, the higher the chance that you'll get the scholarships. So it really is geared to help students finish their degree. Yeah. And then for incoming students, not through the University of Oregon, but we know several dreamers.

Students who have gone through the Ford Foundation Scholarship and other scholarships they find about find out about through their high school advisors and so forth, and high school counselors. So the Ford Foundation Scholarship has some scholarships that are also open to dreamer students. And really, students can apply to any scholarship at the University of Oregon, but they want it as a dreamer.

When they're on the dashboard or whenever they're applying, they wanna look for the language that says that it's required to complete a FAFSA or an orsa. And the orsa, um, is specific for Dreamer students to fill out, and that's one of the ways that they'll know that it's okay for them to apply for that.

Scholarship.

**Ixchel Verdugo:** And I know this

kind of, um, you might talk about this a little bit later, but I guess kind of before we dip into that, I also did wanna mention like the, the local grown, um, scholarship. Mm-hmm. [00:08:00] That one isn't through the U of O, but high school students can apply for it. Or, um, students who are currently enrolled in higher education institution, whether it's a community

college or university.

**Justine Carpenter:** I was just gonna say, and, and local scholarships. I mean, students should look around mm-hmm. Their local communities as well, because there are local scholarships that are given and that is one another opportunity for students to find scholarships at the university or before they come to university.

**Ixchel Verdugo:** Yes.

You kind of touched on this a little bit, um, about the orsa, but could you go a little bit more in depth as to what the difference is between the FAFSA

and

the orsa?

**Justine Carpenter:** Sure. So both the FAFSA. Send the ORSA tools, right, that help the universities collect income, rather gather income information. Mm-hmm. Um, at each of the offices of financial aid.

So with the fafsa, it's a federal form that the information, the student fill out, the form it gets sent to college and universities that the student tells them to send it to. And the same is true for the orsa, but it's within the state of Oregon. So ORSA stands for Oregon Student Aid Application. And it's something that does not, when the form is filled out, that information is [00:09:00] not shared with the federal government.

It states within Oregon. So it's a. Way that universities have to collect the information to see what scholarship students might be eligible for. And the financial aid office then determines the student's need based on the form that they fill out. And, um, that way when a student applies for a need-based scholarship, and they're gonna say it's required that you fill out a FAFSA or an orsa, or if you're an international student, uh, there's a form that you fill out through the International Student Scholar Services.

So usually it's gonna be one of those three ways to tell the financial aid office what your financial need is. So that's really the difference. If they do the same thing, the FAFSA and the ORSA is just that the FAFSA goes to the federal government, ORSA stays within the state. Obviously, if a student fills out the ORSA and is not able to do a FAFSA that you know, that can impact the student, that means that they're not eligible to receive things like a Pell Grant, for example, or federal loans.

For example, and that's why the Dreamer Scholarship, that's why ORSA is so important so that we can make sure those students have access to other scholarship opportunities and other financial

aid.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** Yeah, that was [00:10:00] super helpful. I've always kind of just wondered about the difference, um, between the two. So I, I didn't grow up here.

I'm from Sweden, so even just understanding FAFSA and how all that works. Like, and then having this different, um, program. So that's mm-hmm.

**Justine Carpenter:** And then there are, if you're, if you, you know, were from Oregon, the state of Oregon has other aid that's available, right. That you can apply to or apply for, um, osac, Oregon scholarships here.

Mm-hmm. That is for, if you're an Oregon resident, kinda were from an Oregon high school, maybe you would be applying for those scholarships as well. So state aid the Dreamers can apply for, but not the federal aid. Yeah.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** And

can students, they have questions about kind of how to approach all of this. They can come.

And they can talk to you about that or someone from your office just for kind of ideas on how to go about, you know, researching

for scholarships.

**Justine Carpenter:** Yes, absolutely. And we also, I should mention, have information up on our website as well. So our website is just, um, when you go to the University of Oregon website, Studentorg slash Dreamers.

And, um, the homepage [00:11:00] for the UO Dreamers will come up and that is where my contact information is as well. And so students can reach out directly to me, um, to set up an appointment to talk. We can talk over the phone, we can make a Zoom appointment, we can talk in person. Yeah, there's lots of ways to do it.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** So in your opinion,

what resources should all students, dreamers and undocumented students know about?

Yeah, so there are a lot, especially, um, so starting at the beginning I would. Say, knowing about basic needs and the department here within Dean of Students office? Well, the basic needs Office can provide many different types of support.

Uh, each term they have what's called the textbook subsidy, so it can help students who are in need, um, financial resources to pay for their textbooks each term. Um, that is limited and it's on a first comfort serve basis, the student pantry information. So how to get, um, food if. Students are in need of food.

There's a, some, some other student crisis fund through them. So there's lots of resources that they have and they can tell you that in detail. But definitely basic needs is, is a big one. And then I mentioned before we do have emergency funds, um, that I do have [00:12:00] available, and those are typically for a student who is either undocumented or has DACA status, typically who falls.

Under that, um, emergency fund that I can assist with. And so that happens if there's a dreamer student maybe in there, have some sort of interruption to help them just stay in school and be successful. So as an example might be maybe their car breaks down and they're unable to drive, you know, back and forth to school, or maybe they have a really large medical bill, they haven't had insurance in the past, and, and it's kind weighing on them to pay that medical bill just.

Funds that can be used for food, anything, housing, you know, anything emergency like, uh, that comes up, they can contact me and we can try to work out resources for them. And then I did already mention the do, um, for DACA students, the immigration attorney to consult for applying a renewal and then that we can help for funds with applying for the, um, DACA renewal.

Of course, um, I think there are resources all across campus and so one of the ones that we talk about when I talk with students and meet with them for the first time is to absolutely encourage them to go to CMAE or Center for [00:13:00] Multicultural Academic Excellence, which I think yes, um, is crucial. It's about not just meeting.

People meeting, uh, making community, but it's also, you know, meeting with your advisor, making sure it's very important. Yeah, because Dreamer students, because they don't often have a lot of the same scholarships, they really have to use their credits wisely. So we wanna make sure that they're using the, um, resources that they have with advisors so they know what classes to take.

**Ixchel Verdugo:** That's actually a nice. Plug

because we also have our, uh, resource ponds where students, you know, if they're in need of textbooks, it's kind of similar to the textbook subsidy, um, through basic needs. But if they're not able to go through basic needs, they can always come through us. And if we have a, a quite a large selection of books already, but if they can't find them there, then you know, they can always submit a purchase request and we can see if there's a possibility for us to buy the book.

For, for the student, we have calculators, I clickers. Mm-hmm. Um, stuff like that's, which we know that's great. Can get a little bit spendy, um, yeah. Depending on what class the [00:14:00] student is taking. So, one other follow up question. So for, um, the emergency fund, is there like a, a cap or like a maximum that

you put for students?

Yeah.

**Justine Carpenter:** Yeah. So this is for the, just to be, just to clarify, this is for the Dreamer Emergency Fund, which is different Yes. Than the fund that goes through basic needs and through students office. Yes. So for this Dreamer Emergency Fund, we would say, um, up to $500. And, uh, that would be, so anything below 500?

Yes. Up to $500. And that would be once per academic year. Okay. That you'd be able to apply for that.

**Ixchel Verdugo:** Awesome. Good to know. Thank you. So, um, we're switching gears a little bit here. Um, In what ways can students who are Dreamers build community on, on campus, just in

general?

**Justine Carpenter:** That's a great question. Thank you.

And it is really important for students to find community and build community. So, um, yeah, some of the ways that we encourage folks, one of the ways I mentioned was. Encouraging folks to visit cmae mm-hmm. Um, studying [00:15:00] by going to the study sessions that occur there that, um, work for them. We also have some opportunities through the program here, which is we have a dreamer student advisory board, or dreamer on docu student advisory board.

And we have opportunities that are generally open each year. And this is about the time we'll start to reach out for folks to be part of our team for next academic year. It's a stipended position and you meet with other, uh, students who also identify as undocumented, uh, as dreamers in general. Meet usually every other week.

Um, some of it is just team building. Some of it is, um, the students help us do a better job at providing students with services. So we get their feedback and they get to meet each other, and they really do treasure that time to meet other students like themselves. And just have fun outside of classes as well.

And then the Student Advisory Board, um, also puts on some social, so we'll do a couple of socials each time a year. And that can help really help students get connected with the Greater Dreamer community across campus. Absolutely. Those are some of the things that I would [00:16:00] mention. And then in a consultation, we often ask the student too, what are, what are you looking for and what are your interests?

Because the University of Oregon has. So many great clubs and organizations and opportunities to join, you know, and sometimes it's based on student interest and that's just where they find they'll thrive. And it's really up to the individual student. But if it's someone who's just looking to find other Dreamer students to connect with, we can definitely help you with that.

That'd be great.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** Yeah. Thank you.

Yeah, so another point of connection for students would be the financial literacy task force for the undocu communities that myself and Ixchel and Briseda Molina and, uh, Gilbert Rogers from the Financial Wellness Center that we do together. So it's basically a place where we have collected resources for, uh, students and we have videos.

On, you know, just general financial literacy, uh, how undocu communities can use the counseling center on campus. Uh, we're gonna have a student perspective video coming up [00:17:00] soon, so definitely be on a lookout for that. Uh, where we talk to a student about, you know, their experience as a. Dreamer student and, um, you know, what they wish they would have had and just tips and tricks around like financial wellness, um, that she has to share.

And then also this podcast episode, uh, will be part of that task force's like initiative. So it's kind of like a little cool collaboration between the podcast and the, and the task force. Um, but yeah, definitely be on the lookout for resources that, uh, we are putting together and we've shared that out with the advising community.

So your advisor should also be able to, uh, if you feel comfortable talking to 'em about it, share those resources or feel free to connect with myself or Ixchel, and we can send you all the links. Wonderful. So the last question, um, so sometimes navigating the systems in higher ed can be a bit tricky, especially when it comes to finding resources.

So what would be some pieces of advice that you would give to a student who is documented or undocumented [00:18:00] that is thinking about, or has already started their journey at the U of O? Because you know, sometimes you're just like, you even just clicking around on the UO website. Side looking, you know, at clubs and stuff, it could all kind of start feeling, you know, just a little overwhelming.

So how would you kind of narrow down and like focus in on that place to

start?

**Justine Carpenter:** Yeah, and that's a great question too. Um, it can feel tricky, especially when you first get here. One of the things I think I would say is, You know, never, never stop reaching out. I think it's good to, as you said, go onto the website and begin clicking, but sometimes what's really gonna motivate you and get you there is to go with a person, go with another, find another person.

Ask like what they're interested in. If you meet someone who invites you to join an organization. Take them up on it, even if it's just to visit for one meeting. See, try it out yourself and see if you like it. It's okay to try out different organizations or different groups, and it's okay not to go back if it's not the one for you.

So be open to new experiences for sure. And I know that coming from the pandemic, sometimes it is easier to find things online, and that's okay [00:19:00] too. If that's how we're doing your research. That's what it's. Therefore go onto you, engage and see what opportunities are there. And if you're not sure, it's a great time to, you know, meet with a staff member, whether it's someone in CMAE, myself, um, another academic advisor, and just talk out, you know, what your plan is and what you're looking for, what your interests are.

They can often point you in the right direction as well. And sometimes there's not complete information on the website. There'll be an organization, but it won't. Say exactly when they're meeting or you won't know how to make that connection. And sometimes a staff member can help be the bridge to, to get you there and find out more detail for you and help you or help you find out the details that you need in, in order to make that happen.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** So when students

reach out to you or you know your group, do you find that they do that over email? Or do you find that they'd rather come in person? Is there like a difference how they might feel comfortable reaching out that you notice? Or is that a choice they have? Do you have like office hours they could come to or, you know, specific.

Specific times if they wanna come in.

**Justine Carpenter:** Yeah. Usually

students reach out directly through email and then we schedule a time for them to come [00:20:00] in one-on-one or meet on teams. It's, it's for the student, but it's very rare that a student will come in person Okay. Um, to show up at the office. Um, which is fine. I think I actually prefer though they reach out through email because my schedule is.

Quite hectic. And sometimes if they did stop by, I, I wouldn't necessarily be here or have time to make them. But if I can schedule a time with them, I absolutely, then I'm just dedicating my time to that student and I have them on my calendar. And, and that's really what works best for them to reach out that way.

And, you know, if you think about it, it can be a little overwhelming, a little scary for some students to walk in and identify themselves as a dreamer. So a lot of times it happens either over the phone or through email or, you know, I think, I think they've come to see me as. A lot of times they get referred to me by an academic advisor or a faculty member across campus, and so the faculty member tells them, you know what?

This is a person you can talk to. And I think the student feels comfortable in that way reaching out to me then. But in general, yeah, I think students are gonna be more extreme or students seem to be more comfortable reaching out first, uh, through email than in person. That's [00:21:00] perfect. Thank you

**Ixchel Verdugo:** so much, Justine.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** We hope that you enjoy the interview with Justine. Make sure to tune in for the next episode. Thank you so much for listening.