



# **Americans by Heart: Undocumented Latino Students and the Promise of Higher Education (Multicultural Education)**

*William Perez*

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*Americans by Heart* examines the plight of undocumented Latino students as they navigate the educational and legal tightrope presented by their immigration status. Many of these students are accepted to attend some of our best colleges and universities but cannot afford the tuition to do so because they are not eligible for financial aid or employment. For the few that defy the odds and manage to graduate, their status continues to present insurmountable barriers to employment. This timely and compelling account brings to light the hard work and perseverance of these students and their families; their commitment to education and civic participation; and their deep sense of uncertainty and marginality. Offering a rich in-depth analysis, the author presents a new framework for educational policies that recognizes the merit and potential of undocumented Latino students and links their situation to larger social and policy issues of immigration reform and higher education access.

### **Contents:**

1. Exceptional Students, Marginal Lives
2. Growing up American and Undocumented
3. Academic Engagement
4. Civic Engagement
5. The Primary Gateway to Higher Education
6. Undocumented College Graduates and the Impact of Legal Status
7. Conclusion

**William Pérez** is an associate professor of education at Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, California.

“No topic speaks more forcefully about the values of our country than how we treat the poor. *Americans by Heart* gives voice, hope and clarity to one of America’s most invisible groups—undocumented students. Whether one agrees or disagrees with the country’s current immigration policies, we all need to better understand the topic and hear the challenges, dreams, and struggles of these young people. This book is a compelling and thoughtful analysis on a much discussed but little studied topic.”

—**William G. Tierney**, University Professor and Wilbur Kieffer Professor of Higher Education, Director, Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis, University of Southern California

“In America today a growing caste of youth are coming of age on the shadows of the law. They are American at heart, but *alas*, not in the eyes of the law. Far from paralytic or silenced, they are fully engaged in a struggle for the autonomy of the human spirit. As *Americans by Heart* poignantly reveals, these youth are fully engaged—with a fierce optimism and Kantian rational agency—performing for us all nothing more and nothing less than what it means to be an American. I applaud William Pérez this urgent, important, and loving book. It is essential reading for all who worry about threats to our democratic promise.”

—**Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco**, Ross University Professor of Globalization and Education, New York University

“This is a very courageous text that asks us as a nation to broaden our construction of citizenship to include the rights of the undocumented in our midst through policies that simultaneously tear down barriers and build bridges to higher education institutions for them. To do so is not only in our best interest as a country, but it responds to fundamental, national—and indeed, human—values related to fairness and human dignity. Kudos to William Pérez for his cogent, stirring analysis of an otherwise vexing social problem.”

—**Angela Valenzuela**, Professor, University of Texas at Austin, and author of *Subtractive Schooling and Leaving Children Behind*

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