

Leveraging Community College- High School Partnerships to Improve College Preparation: A Success Story from Leeward Community College in Hawai'i

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About Education Northwest

Founded as a nonprofit corporation in 1966, Education Northwest builds capacity in schools, families, and communities through applied research and development. This case study, describing the development of a college outreach program at Leeward Community College using GEAR UP Hawai'i funding, was conducted at the request of GEAR UP Hawai'i.

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Introduction

This case study describes how GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) Hawai‘i partnered with Leeward Community College (LCC) to create a sustainable outreach program to prepare secondary school students for college and career.

GEAR UP is a competitive grant program of the U.S. Department of Education, intended to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. Hawai‘i is currently one of 34 states awarded a GEAR UP state grant, and received its first round of GEAR UP funding in 2000.

GEAR UP Hawai‘i is operated as an integral part of Hawai‘i P-20 Partnerships for Education—a statewide initiative led by the Executive Office on Early Learning at the Office of Governor, the Hawaii Department of Education, and the University of Hawai‘i System (UH). The Partnerships’ goal is to strengthen the education pipeline from early childhood through higher education.

The focus of GEAR UP Hawai‘i has evolved over the years. In its first round of funding (2000 to 2005), GEAR UP Hawai‘i focused on partnership with middle and high schools. It was not until 2005, in the second round of funding (2005 to 2011), that GEAR UP Hawai‘i started to shift its focus to partnerships with UH community colleges and campuses to deliver services to secondary school students, particularly those from Title I or low-income schools. GEAR UP Hawai‘i is now partnering with six of the seven community colleges in the state to provide college and career preparatory services to secondary school students. This case study focuses on the partnership between GEAR UP Hawai‘i and LCC, to showcase the development and implementation of a college outreach program.

To provide some context on the setting, this study begins with a brief description of LCC and the high schools it serves through its outreach program. Next, we describe the development of the program and how GEAR UP funding was used to stimulate a systemic change in community college student services, with an enhanced focus on low-income students. Third, we focus on features of the outreach program. We conclude with lessons learned from the development, implementation, and eventual sustainability of the outreach program. Throughout this case study, we share perspectives on the outreach program from key stakeholders.

This study is based on interview data, observations, and documentary evidence collected by the authors, external evaluators of GEAR UP Hawai‘i, between February and April 2014. The authors interviewed five GEAR UP Hawai‘i and LCC staff members integral to the development and implementation of the outreach program at LCC; conducted two focus groups with LCC students served by the outreach program and three interviews with LCC student peer

mentors; observed the “Discover Leeward Day” at LCC; and visited four secondary schools targeted by LCC’s outreach program, where we interviewed seven high school counselors and administrators. Finally, we reviewed policy and program documents and other materials related to GEAR UP Hawai‘i and the LCC outreach program, including survey data collected by LCC on the college outreach program that provided us with perspectives from program participants.

Leeward Community College Setting

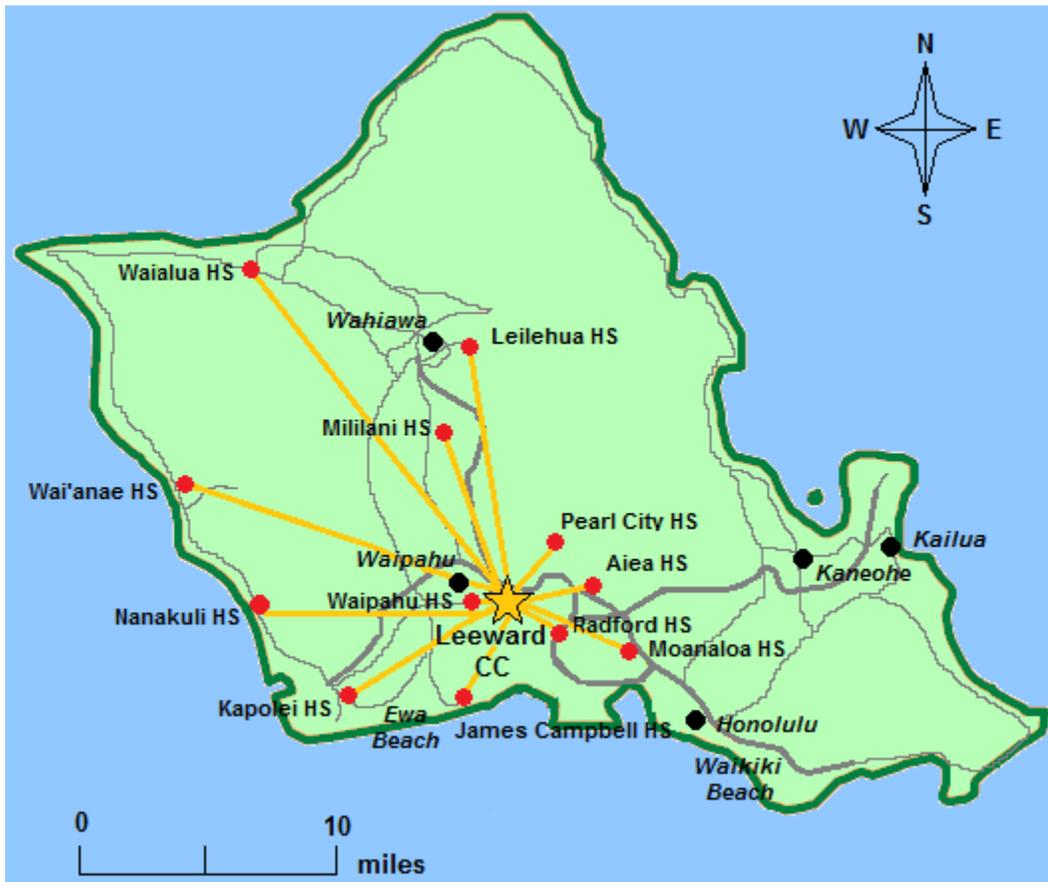
Leeward Community College, on the island of Oahu, is one of seven community colleges in the University of Hawai'i system. Located in Pearl City, outside the capital of the state (Honolulu), the campus of LCC overlooks Pearl Harbor and fleets of navy ships. The college serves close to 8,000 diverse "credit" students seeking a credential; 30 percent of the student population are Native Hawaiian students, 21 percent are Filipino students, 15 percent are students of mixed ethnicity, 11 percent are White students, and the remaining 24 percent are students of other ethnicities, such as Japanese, Chinese, and Pacific Islander.¹

The LCC service area consists of high schools in the Central and Leeward Districts of Oahu. As illustrated in the following map, LCC has targeted 12 high schools as part of their outreach program.² These high schools differ widely—some have larger populations of low-income students than others, and measures of educational outcomes vary across the schools. For example, according to state data from 2013, the percentage of students who received free or reduced-price lunch at the 12 high schools ranged from 15 to 73 percent. The percentage of students who were proficient on the state assessments ranged from 49 to 87 percent in reading and 15 to 66 percent in math. Reflecting the diversity of the state population as a whole, all the target schools enrolled students from a variety of racial and ethnic groups, including Native Hawaiian, Filipino, Pacific Islander (e.g., Samoan, Tongan, Micronesian), Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Black, Hispanic, and White. However, the share of these student groups at each high school varied greatly; for example, the proportion of Native Hawaiian students ranged from 6 to 71 percent across the twelve high schools. In terms of distance, Wai'anae High School was the farthest from LCC (23 miles) and Waipahu High School was closest (2 miles). Ten of the 12 schools are no more than 16 miles away from the Leeward campus.

¹ From Leeward Community Colleges campus profile: <http://www.hawaii.edu/campuses/leeward.html>

² These high schools are: Aiea HS, Campbell HS, Kapolei HS, Leilehua HS, Mililani HS, Moanalua HS, Nanakuli HS, Pearl City HS, Radford HS, Waialua HS, Waianae HS, Waipahu HS

Figure 1
Leeward Community College and Its 12 Outreach Program Schools



Note: Geographic locations of schools are indicated by red dots.

Development of the Outreach Program

Reaching out to secondary schools is certainly not a new concept for community colleges in Hawai'i. However, outreach services provided by community colleges tended to focus on recruitment rather than preparing high school students to succeed at the postsecondary level. GEAR UP Hawai'i envisioned using community college and high school partnerships to deliver college preparation services and programs directly to secondary school students.

To encourage community colleges to reach out to secondary schools and focus on issues of college readiness and success, GEAR UP Hawai'i issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) in 2005 to all community colleges to solicit their ideas for activities and programs aligned with the mission of GEAR UP—to prepare low-income students for postsecondary education. This RFP process was accompanied by conversations between GEAR UP and community college staff members to understand what community colleges were already doing and explore various possibilities for community colleges to work directly with secondary school students on college preparation. An LCC student services staff member recalled how GEAR UP helped transform student services at LCC:

LCC student service leadership recognized early on that GEAR UP funding presented an opportunity to build a stronger relationship with high schools in our service area. There was no outreach program prior to collaboration with GEAR UP and efforts in reaching out were spotty at most. At that time, our counselors here were assigned to individual schools, and services depended on the type of service provided by individual counselors. Some counselors never visited any secondary schools and the relationship between LCC and secondary schools was remote and had much more to be desired. GEAR UP provided us with an opportunity to formalize an outreach program and create a deliberate, coordinated program.

LCC's proposal stood out as having the qualities of a partner who could implement and institutionalize a strong outreach program. These qualities included:

- A strong belief among the college and student services leadership in strengthening outreach to secondary schools
- A need to streamline and coordinate outreach services
- Committed staff members that would ensure sustainability
- Target high schools with a high percentage of low-income students
- Prior outreach experiences in the Career and Technical Education (CTE) program
- The commitment and related policies to support and assist students' transition from a two-year community college to a four-year university

Using funding from the GEAR UP grant, LCC student services formed a “GEAR UP team” to plan the outreach program. The GEAR UP team had to create buy-in for the program because they faced a number of staff concerns. First, there was debate regarding who LCC students were. The attitude was: “We are here to serve students who are on this campus.” Staff did not think resources should be directed to high school students. Second, staff members were concerned about who was going to do the work. Counselors could not spend an extensive amount of time at secondary schools, and the suggestion of using college student mentors quickly raised a concern regarding the quality of services. Finally, there was a general concern that another program was being “dumped” on counselors. As we will describe subsequently, the deliberate design of the outreach program addressed many of these concerns.

The GEAR UP team developed an outreach program model guided by three key principles:

1. **Relevance:** Student services should be relevant to the needs of the students they serve.
2. **Access:** LCC student services and information should be more accessible to students and their schools.
3. **Sustainability:** The program should be built to last beyond the GEAR UP funding and eventually be an integral part of student services at LCC.

Relevance

The commitment to relevance led to more communication between LCC and its service area schools. In 2005, LCC formed an advisory board with high school counselors. Instead of making guesses, LCC invited advisory board members to share the realities they were dealing with in their schools. These conversations provided LCC staff members with detailed accounts of a high school counselor’s day-to-day activities, and they quickly came to realize that high school counselors did many tasks with many students, and much of their responsibilities had nothing to do with college preparation. In addition, when high school students applied for college, these counselors spent a large amount of time juggling college visits and other requests from colleges.

To respond to high school counselors’ needs, LCC streamlined services and communication between LCC and high schools to alleviate the burden on high school counselors. In the past, multiple counselors and staff members provided different, uncoordinated, and inconsistent services to high schools. Using GEAR UP funding, LCC created a position to manage the outreach program, and the coordinator became the primary point of contact to the high schools. In addition, as we will describe subsequently, many of the outreach program services are intended to directly support high school counselors, rather than add work.

An LCC staff member described the overall impact of GEAR UP funding and how LCC delivers more coordinated, personalized services to high schools:

GEAR UP gives us the resources to reach out and deliberately make a plan in doing all these things. Having a dedicated person do this made a big difference...Personal familiarity is very important in the context of communities we serve. We are making ourselves relatable. Some students in the past did not know where LCC is even though they are just a few miles away from us. GEAR UP allows us to make connections with school counselors and talk about specific issues their students have. They know us and are comfortable with us.

Access

As a community college, LCC is committed to providing affordable access to higher education to all who desire to enroll at their campus. The GEAR UP team designed the outreach program to align with the broader mission of access by 1) focusing on preparing low-income students to enroll and succeed in postsecondary education and 2) making most components of their outreach program available to all students in their service area high schools. As a result, outreach shifted its focus from recruiting at the high schools to providing college preparation services, which directly aligns with the mission of GEAR UP and fills a gap in services high school counselors cannot always provide.

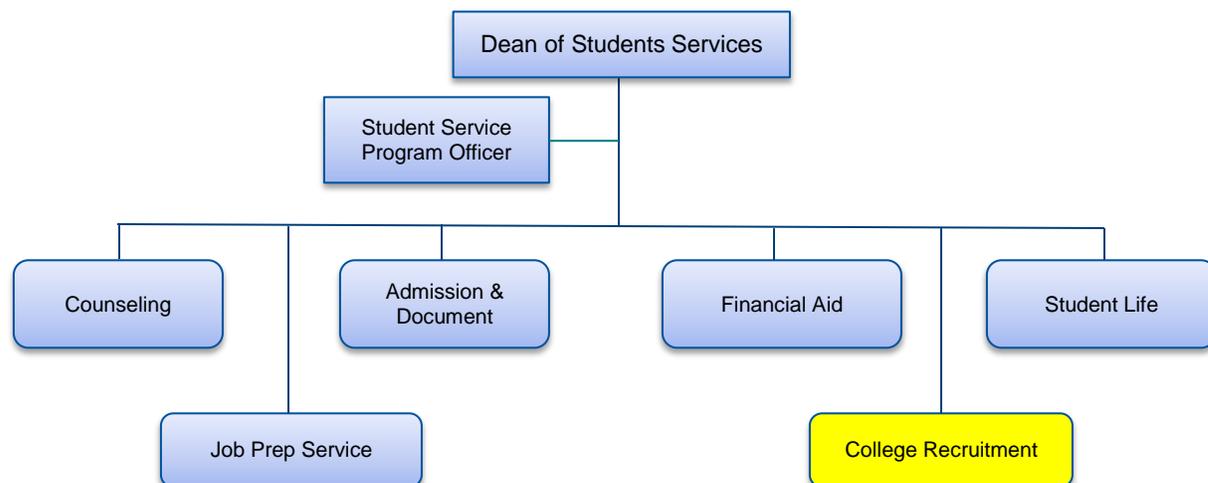
The commitment to access also pushed LCC staff to recognize and accept that serving high school students is essential to broadening access and contributing to the college success of students who may one day be LCC students. The outreach program design has allowed LCC to build a better relationship with the community and give all students, regardless of their background, the same opportunity to enter and succeed at LCC or other colleges.

Sustainability

To plant the seed of the sustainability, the GEAR UP Hawai'i RFP specified that community colleges could only use GEAR UP money to fund a position for no more than three years and, after that, community colleges would contribute at least 25 percent of funding for that position. This requirement demands the commitment from community colleges to build their own capacity and, ideally, institutionalize the position by covering the full cost of the position with institutional funds.

As a result, the outreach program, partially funded by GEAR UP Hawai'i, is now a permanent part of student services at LCC. As shown in the following figure, under the Dean of Student Services, an assistant to the dean supports the dean and coordinates different units of student services, including the College Recruitment office, which houses the outreach program.

Figure 2
Organizational Chart of Student Services at Leeward Community College



The college recruitment unit is the smallest unit within the structure of student services, and staffed with only one full-time employee, who coordinates the college outreach program, without any clerical support. The outreach coordinator is supported by student peer mentors who handle much of the outreach that takes place in high school classrooms. To address concerns regarding the quality of services, peer mentors are chosen through a highly selective interview process. These peer mentors represent some of the strongest students and leaders on campus.

Further, student services leadership used GEAR UP funds to design a set of outreach events, materials, and activities that can be used continually by different individuals across different schools. The outreach program replaced a “piecemeal” process of outreach (that involved creating and recreating events and activities) with a standardized set of materials and activities that, in a long-run, saved college staff members’ time and resources because they no longer had to create their own events, materials, and activities for high school students. In creating a sustainable outreach program, the student services leadership also addressed a primary concern LCC staff had regarding the time and resources required to implement an outreach program.

Description of the Outreach Program

The key components of the outreach program consist of the following: Student-to-Student Service, Discover Leeward Day, the Bridge Program, First-Year Experience, and Annual Gathering of High School Counselors.

Student to Student Service

Student to Student Service (S2S) is the largest component of the outreach program. S2S employs LCC students, usually in their second year at LCC, to provide different workshops on college prep for high school students at their schools. The peer mentors also work individually with students on applying for college. S2S is based on an early model of peer mentoring from the Career and Technical Education (CTE) program that recruited prospective students from low-income schools. S2S took advantage of the network of schools established via CTE Peer Mentoring and expanded the network, as well as the contents of the program, with a clear focus on college preparation.

The S2S selection and training process is highly rigorous in order to maintain the quality of services. About seven peer mentors were hand-picked by the coordinator in charge of the College Recruitment unit, through an extensive interview process. The key characteristics the coordinator looks for when selecting peer mentors are demonstrated leadership skills and responsibility, public speaking skills, a strong work ethic and professionalism, and a passion for working with high school students to improve college readiness and success. The coordinator refers to them as “elite students” at the college. Peer mentors were equally proud to be selected to be part of the program. One peer mentor told us:

It takes a certain person to do this job. They have to represent LCC well and have a strong passion for helping students recognize that they can pursue postsecondary education. We need to be a good role model for these students.

The outreach coordinator provides each peer mentor with a training manual, known as “a big binder,” and using the manual, trains peer mentors on an individual basis and as a whole group to ensure they understand the responsibilities, rules, and regulations at both the college and the high schools they serve.

Workshop Series

One component of S2S is a series of interactive workshops provided to high school students in their classrooms. College personnel with expertise in college preparation designed the workshop content and pedagogy, and peer mentors collaborated to update the information and activities to make them more relevant to high school students. The workshops use group

activities to engage students in topics related to college planning and readiness. These series of workshops include the following:

College 101: The Value of College

Geared for student in grades 9 and 10, this workshop provides students with information on the value of going to college by describing the different types of careers and salaries an individual might have with a high school diploma, an AA, BA, MA, and other degree types.

College 201: The Application Process

Geared for students in grades 10 and 11, this workshop teaches students about the college application process, from applying to attending their first day of college. Peer mentors discuss all the steps required to become a new student.

College 301: Financial Aid

Geared for students in grades 11 and 12, this workshop teaches students about applying for financial aid, different types of financial aid, and what financial aid can be used for.

College 401: Money Management

Geared for students in grades 11 and 12, this workshop provides students with a chance to experience what it is like, financially, to be a first-time college student. Secondary students practice managing the money they earn and/or receive from financial aid, their parents, and other sources.

These workshops build a “college-going” culture by teaching students about the value of college and how to plan for college and by capitalizing on peer mentors’ personal experiences. Peer mentors also engage students in interactive problem-solving activities, and are responsive to counselor and teacher needs. The program coordinator visits target high schools regularly and assesses the needs of each school so that peer mentors can further tailor workshops to the context of each school. At the request of participating schools, student services staff members often supplement these workshops with more technical and detailed sessions on certain topics, such as how to complete FAFSA.

The personal touch by the coordinator visits and the workshops provided by peer mentors have greatly enhanced the connection between LCC and its secondary schools. One principal commented:

It is wonderful to have someone we know from LCC and we feel comfortable asking many questions, and we get our responses quickly. Our students feel the same way.

Another high school counselor spoke about the coordinator and said:

Whatever high schools need, she provides. She goes out to high schools and does presentations. She is a one-woman show... She contacts us and then LCC peer mentors come and do a lot of the work.

A high school principal echoed the above sentiment when he said:

[The outreach coordinator] is [the school counselor's] point of contact. She is instrumental in everything. Having that point of contact and relationship is important. [The outreach coordinator] comes out and supports us in all aspects. She is on campus, so our students know her. The frequent updates from her are helpful.

In 2012–2013, peer mentors provided workshops for a total of 2,463 students, after which each student completed a short feedback form. Almost all student participants agreed that workshops:

- Were informative and helpful
- Helped them understand the importance of going to college
- Helped them understand LCC was an option for them
- Helped them make up their mind to go to college

In an open-ended question, students were asked to identify two benefits of attending college. The most frequent responses regarding the benefits of going to college were: 1) to earn more money, 2) have a better career/future, 3) higher/better education, 4) better future for my family, and 5) more options in life.

Overall, the feedback from schools regarding these workshops was very positive. Schools increasingly want to participate in this program and take advantage of the workshops, which now have to be booked a few months in advance, and, as the coordinator noted, “some student mentors have started to go to intermediate schools and elementary schools” in the service area. The workshops have also been a learning experience for counselors and teachers by improving their understanding of the realities of the college and financial aid application process and campus life from a student perspective.

Individual College Application Help

A second component of S2S is individual college application help. Peer mentors visit high schools based on the needs of the high school counselor. At some schools we visited, LCC peer mentors visited the high school every day, and at others, they visited once a week. Across all the schools we visited, the peer mentors have a similar role: they work individually with high school seniors, who are applying for college, on their college application. A counselor who received peer mentor help from LCC and other colleges described the process:

The peer mentors are a clone of me. They don't have the counseling background, but they know the application process. It is nice for the kids because they are younger people who graduated from our high school. Somebody is here every day from LCC; sometimes there are two. LCC peer mentors come so often that they often meet with anyone. The LCC peer mentors are very helpful. At the basic level, they can help students apply to any college, even a four-year college in the mainland.

High school counselors and administrators had nothing but praise for LCC peer mentors who visited their classes and helped students apply for college. High school counselors said:

I wish had more numbers to prove the impact, but I know it in my heart. It is overwhelming to help this many kids and [the peer mentors] are like a life boat and I am on the Titanic. They are so helpful.

Students enjoy working with peer mentors. They like hearing about college from a student perspective. The students are applying for college. Applications are being filled out.

[The peer mentors] raise awareness about going to college because they are closer to my students' age. They are helpful to students applying to four-year colleges too. There are more students applying to college now than if it was just me.

LCC students we spoke with also recounted their work with peer mentors when they were in high school, which largely centered on help with applying for financial aid. Their perspectives emphasized the importance of financial aid in helping students attend community college, and how peer mentors contributed to broadening access to higher education for students from low-income backgrounds. For example, the LCC students told us the following:

I worked with a peer mentor and asked them about money and the FAFSA. I filled out my college application with peer mentor.

I worked with a peer mentor at Campbell [high school]. She explained how to fill out the college form. She helped me sign up for the Pell grant and other scholarships. It was helpful.

The peer mentor told me about FAFSA. FAFSA helped me commit to something, to come to college.

Discover Leeward Day

Discover Leeward Day is a half-day event offered annually in February on the LCC campus to high school seniors, particularly those who have applied for enrollment at LCC. The College Recruitment Unit coordinates the event, and staff members from various offices of student services comprise a committee who plan the event. It is the culminating event in reaching prospective students by inviting them to the campus and exposing them to various academic programs and campus services and facilities.

We observed the Discover Leeward Day of 2014, and we were impressed by staff members' warmth and friendliness toward student participants, including about 190 students from 12 schools. The message from each of the sessions to students was clear: "You can do it. We are here to support you." Each session was delivered in a personal and non-threatening manner with a lot of humor. Some of the presentations were given by recent graduates of the college. A panel of current college students did a Questions and Answers session addressing:

- How is college different from high school?
- What advice would you give to incoming students?
- What is the best thing about your experience at Leeward?

Throughout the day, there was an emphasis on the economic value of college, the specific career opportunities tied to specific degrees, and how to transfer to a four-year college. For example, when a faculty member humorously asked the student audience, "Do you want to stay at LCC for the rest of your life? Please raise your hand if you do," no one raised a hand. The faculty presenter continued with a broad smile on his face, "Yes, that is right. We don't want you to stay here forever and we want you to go on with your life. Our AA credits here are transferrable within the UH system." He told students if they completed a STEM program at LCC, they would automatically get an invitation from the UH system to apply to a four-year university. Toward the end of the day, the Dean of Career and Technical Education presented data on outcomes of CTE students. He reported that 90 percent of CTE students are hired after graduating from LCC compared with 70 percent nationwide.

In classrooms, students learned about specific degree programs. We observed the presentation by the Hawaiian Studies program where faculty, staff, and LCC students talked about specific degrees and careers in Hawaiian studies, and about supports and services for Native Hawaiian students. In another classroom, students who were interested in a teaching career watched a video presentation by Rita Pierson about the power of connecting with students. A faculty member from the education department followed up with specific requirements for an AA degree in teaching. He also did a comparison between university and community colleges: class size, cost per class, degrees, service learning, and so forth, to help students understand the economic aspect of attending a community college versus a four-year university, as well as how to transition from one to another.

On their way to the buses which would take them back to school, we chatted with a few students participants and asked their response to the half-day event. Here are a few quotes we received:

I am very excited about coming to LCC and it is not intimidating as I thought. Faculty members here are so nice to us.

I am glad I got my application done, and this event gave me more details about what I need to do when I get here.

I am really impressed with the programs that LCC offers and the CTE program is very attractive to me.

It is wonderful to listen to those students who have already graduated from the college as well as those who are currently enrolled in the college.

The High School Bridge Program & First Year Experience

The outreach program has now expanded to include two new components: the high school bridge program and first year experience. These programs aid to bridge the gap between college application and college enrollment by supporting students, particularly low-income and first generation students, as they transition from their senior year in high school to their first year in college.

The High School Bridge Program is similar to S2S, but provides more in-depth support to seniors who are prospective LCC students. The assistance is comprehensive to address gaps in college application and actual matriculation because many more students apply to LCC than actually show up on campus in the fall. Currently, five Title I high schools are participating in this program. In 2013, the proportion of students in these schools who received free or reduced price lunch ranged from 50 percent to 73 percent.

High school seniors receive one-on-one assistance from peer mentors or an LCC student services recruiter in: completing their college admissions application, taking the LCC college placement exams, submitting health clearances, signing up for new student orientation, scheduling counseling appointments, completing the FAFSA application, and learning about the LCC freshmen summer camp. The LCC enrollment data for Fall 2013 suggested the program shows promise at closing the gap between applying to LCC and actually enrolling at LCC. At that time three high schools and over 300 students participated in the program. In 2012, around 30 percent of LCC applicants from the three high schools actually enrolled at LCC in Fall 2012. In 2013, the number of applications from the three high schools almost doubled, and the percentage of bridge participants from the three schools who actually enrolled at LCC in the 2013–14 academic year ranged from 60 to 94 percent.

Starting in 2011, the federal government allowed GEAR UP funds to provide services to students who were enrolled in college in their first year. In 2012, LCC acted accordingly by adding a component to their outreach program: the First Year Experience (FYE). A designated staff member from student services, funded by GEAR UP Hawai‘i, oversees peer mentors who reach out to first-year students via a weekly email to provide support and help them form a social circle of support for each other. The First Year Experience is also part of early warning system called “Maka'ala” (“Eyes Wide Open”), which was piloted from 2008-2011 and expanded to the entire campus in fall 2011. Student Services tracks student academic performance and attendance in the first six weeks of student enrollment at the college and

identifies any student who is at risk of dropping out. These identified students are encouraged to meet with their counselors to address their needs.

Annual Gathering of School Counselors at Leeward

The idea of gathering high school counselors at community colleges was well supported by GEAR UP Hawai‘i. GEAR UP funds are used by most community colleges to sponsor an annual one-day event with preparation and follow-up activities. The purpose of the gathering is to increase the communication between high school counselors and administrators and community college staff members to tackle challenges related to preparing students for college.

LCC invites counselors and administrators from their service area schools to the campus for one day to share what programs are available at LCC and to communicate changes to LCC programs and processes and new opportunities for students. This gathering is also an opportunity for LCC staff members to listen to secondary school realities and brainstorm various ways to collaborate with schools in their service area. As part of preparation for this event and the topics for the discussion, LCC provides each participating school with pertinent information – the proportion of students from their high school who enrolled at LCC and participated in developmental education. Developmental education encompasses basic skills courses in reading, writing, and math that do not count towards students’ degree program. Developmental education rates represent a key indicator of students who are not prepared for college-level academic courses. The principals we interviewed were very appreciative of the data and used them to assess where they could improve support at their schools to better prepare their students academically.

Conclusion

LCC strategically used GEAR UP funds to develop an outreach program that reaches out to high school students in grades 9 through 12 and provides them with key college preparation information (S2S workshops), supports all students in applying for college (S2S college application help), targets seniors to close the gap between college application and enrollment (HS Bridge Program), and supports students in their first year in college (FYE). In doing so, LCC has created activities and services that are relevant to the needs of high schools in their service area and have broadened access to LCC and higher education in general. These activities and services are institutionalized so that they are a sustainable part of LCC Student Services.

Areas of Improvement

In collecting data to prepare this report, we heard two areas of feedback about the program.

First, LCC primarily uses a single point of contact for the outreach program—the program coordinator—a strategy that facilitates the coordination of services and relationship-building with high schools, but also raises concerns about sustainability. The coordinator is extremely dedicated to her work, and over and over, high school administrators and counselors praised her, calling her “instrumental in everything” and “a one-woman show.” However, some were also concerned about the sustainability of services if the outreach coordinator gets “burned out” or replaced by someone without the same level of dedication.

We suggest, then, that to ensure the success and sustainability of the outreach program, the outreach coordinator must be supported by a strong group of student leaders and administrative support from the college. One source of support is to expand the number of peer mentors to ensure the delivery of a robust set of outreach services. In addition, the outreach coordinator should receive administrative or clerical support to ease the burden of managing a large number of tasks and individuals.

Second, we also heard concerns from peer mentors of missed opportunities for them to continue to provide first-year college support for those with whom they have already established relationships via their services in high schools. From the perspective of peer mentors, providing such support should be a natural part of peer mentoring. Instead, their connections with these high school students are disrupted when the students they have helped enroll at LCC. One peer mentor expressed his frustration:

We help them in high school with the workshops. We help them apply to college. We help them create their FAFSA account, fill in the student portion, and tell them what their parents should do. After they graduate, we help them during New Student Orientation. And then they disappear.

Recommendations

Based on LCC's experiences, we provide the following lessons to community colleges who want to develop a strong outreach program with neighboring high schools:

Use grant money to set up or expand a program rather than fund the program.

GEAR UP money was initially used to plan the outreach program, develop materials, and create and fund a position to coordinate the program. However, the grant specified that the college needed to commit to the program by contributing 25 percent after three years. This eventually led to the institutionalization of the college outreach program.

Use one point of contact for outreach who is a highly qualified project manager, committed to relationship-building with secondary schools, and knowledgeable around issues of college access and success.

Establishing relationships and rapport with high schools and students is critical for the success of outreach efforts, particularly in a place like Hawai'i where relationships are so important. A single point of contact to secondary schools facilitates the development of strong relationships with secondary schools. A college outreach coordinator also needs to have leadership skills and content expertise in the area of college readiness to manage the challenging tasks of responding to high school college preparation needs and training college students to effectively deliver high-quality outreach services.

Employ college students as role models to deliver outreach services.

College students serve as role models to high school students, and can communicate relevant and relatable college and career readiness information to high school students. An effective outreach program will ensure that college student mentors are selected through a rigorous interview process, provided comprehensive training, and supported by student services personnel with expert knowledge in college readiness.

Provide high schools students with hands-on, personalized college preparation.

Workshops that include interactive activities and group learning keep high school students more engaged and perhaps have a more lasting impact on students' understanding of the value of college and how to plan for college. Furthermore, individual help with completing college applications and FAFSA may have a direct impact on increasing college enrollment.

Provide services to schools based on their needs rather than using one "cookie cutter" model.

Standardizing materials and activities ensures that the outreach program services can be delivered by many different people over the years. But, equally important to ensuring its quality is tailoring the program to the specific needs and requests from high schools. Additionally, annual counselors' meeting serves as a way to conduct a needs assessment.

