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KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS

Hana Lima Scholarship Program:

Summary of Evaluation Findings 2009-2010

By RaeDeen Keahiolalo-Karasuda and Rozlynd Awa

Introduction

The Hana Lima Scholarship Program (HLSP), funded by Kamehameha Schools and administered by Alu Like, Inc., was collaboratively evaluated in 2009-2010 by FAQ Hawai'i,¹ John Knox and Associates, the Financial Aid and Scholarship Services (FASS), and the Research & Evaluation Division (R&E) of Kamehameha Schools (KS). The scholarship program gives financial assistance to students participating in a vocational or technical education program for occupations that can provide a “living wage.”² By providing financial assistance to students, HLSP addresses the needs of a continuously overlooked population—a group which falls in between a high-school diploma and four-year degree.

Key Program Facts

- The \$1,500 scholarship (which may be received twice) provides financial assistance toward tuition and fees, books, and other required tools or uniforms for a vocational program.
- Applicants must be of Native Hawaiian ancestry, be enrolled at least half time in a degree or certification program, and maintain a 2.0 or higher grade point average.
- Additionally, preference is given to non-traditional students: single parents, disabled (meets the American Disability Act definition), houseless, sole income providers, previously incarcerated and wards of the court.
- Since the program's beginning in 2006, it has awarded scholarships to approximately 1,182 recipients.

Purpose of Evaluation

The evaluation phase of Kamehameha Schools' Education Strategic Plan (ESP) began in 2008 and requires accurate data on the impact of various programs in order to assess progress toward organizational goals and to determine opportunities for expansion, improvement or consolidation. This report analyzes the impact of the HLSP by presenting the results of its evaluation.

¹ This summary brief is based on the full evaluation reports titled, “Hana Lima Scholarship Program: Focus Groups & Telephone Interviews” (December 15, 2010) submitted by FAQ Hawai'i, and “Hana Lima Scholarship Survey, 2010: Summary of Key Results” (September 9, 2010) submitted by John M. Knox & Associates, Inc (sub-contracted by FAQ Hawai'i).

² Merriam-Webster defines “living wage” as “a wage sufficient to provide the necessities and comforts essential to an acceptable standard of living.”

General Findings

Overall, the evaluation affirms that the HLSP is operating well and meeting its intended goals. It also provides valuable insight as to what external challenges participants face in their pursuit of achieving career or educational goals. These successes and challenges are as follows:

1. Participants persist through their programs to completion, receiving degrees and/or certificates.
2. Participants are generally satisfied with the current level of counseling services offered.
3. Majority of program completers earn more in salary or wages than before their scholarship training.
4. Barriers to participants' achievement of program and career goals come primarily in the form of a recessionary job market and/or family responsibilities.

Evaluation Design & Methodology

The HLSP evaluation sought to better understand the program's effectiveness by aiming to meet the following objectives:

1. Determine the extent to which intended outcomes are being met.
2. Identify ways to improve services for scholarship seekers and recipients.
3. Evaluate outcomes for program completers and non-completers.
4. Identify barriers to program completion as well as barriers to achieving career and/or educational goals.

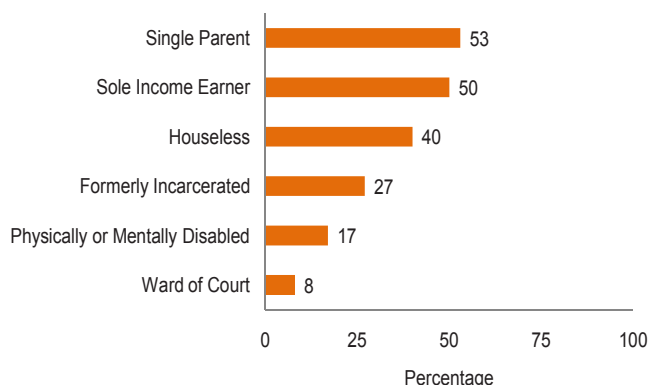
To accomplish these objectives, FAQ Hawaii conducted a self-administered mail survey and an online survey among 1,182 HLSP recipients. Of these, 413 participants completed either survey for an overall completion rate of 35 percent. More than half of the survey respondents (71 percent) indicated they had completed the program for which the scholarship had been provided. Additional qualitative information was also gathered from a select number of survey respondents through focus groups and telephone interviews.

Program Participants

Many HLSP recipients come from backgrounds characterized by particularly challenging life experiences. This diversity of backgrounds was well represented in the survey respondent pool. In addition, demographic characteristics of respondents included:

- Sixty-nine percent were female and 31 percent were male.
- The average age of participants was 31 and the median age was 28.

Figure 1. Personal Challenges Faced by Respondents



*Totals exceed 100% due to individual respondents having multiple responses

- Nearly 55 percent of applicants reported at least one of the six challenges listed above.
- Among those reporting any challenges, the most frequent were being a single parent (53 percent), being the only person in the family earning money (50 percent), and being houseless (40 percent).

Despite these challenges, additional information indicates that respondents continued to pursue a post-high education.

- Fifty-six percent of respondents were the first in their families to attain a post-high school education.
- Prior to getting the scholarship, 44 percent of participants had a high school diploma, GED, or less, while 49 percent either had some community college or technical training, or had a degree/certificate at this level. Education levels were slightly lower among those with particularly troubled backgrounds – specifically, those who had been wards of the court and/or spent time in jail.

Findings

➤ Participants persist through their programs to completion, receiving degrees and/or certificates

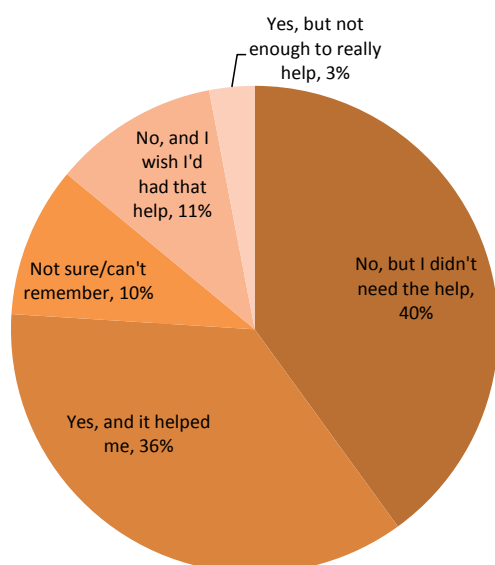
One key indicator of success for the HLSP is students' completion of their academic or training programs. Excluding students still in school, 71 percent reported completion and a degree, 26 percent did not complete, and 3 percent were "not sure."

Approximately 71% of Hana Lima Scholarship recipients complete their degree or training program.

➤ **Participants are generally satisfied with the current level of counseling services offered**

Currently, scholarship seekers can request guidance during the application process and throughout the duration of their programs (i.e., post-award). However, the program does not provide a formal counseling component in which students can rely on a dedicated counselor to become familiar with their individual needs and tailor assistance toward addressing those needs. Exploring counseling services as a possible opportunity for program improvement, the evaluation assessed participants' experiences and opinions on the usefulness of counseling during the intake process and for learning about job fields.

Figure 2. Percentage of respondents who received job counseling



- While slightly over half of the respondents (51 percent) said they'd received no counseling, most said they didn't need it.
- Thirty-six percent who received counseling said "it helped me."
- About 14 percent indicated a desire for more counseling services.
- Participants among two small subgroups said they needed more counseling – 35 percent who had been wards of the court and 29 percent who had been disabled (not shown).

Despite the fact that a relatively small percentage (14 percent) of survey respondents indicated a desire for more counseling, qualitative responses revealed that there may be more of a need for counseling services. One participant explained,

"...people, they have different comprehension levels as far as how to navigate through the website or even how to understand this paperwork and what it really says, and what it's really asking. It took me a little bit of

a while to really understand. ...Where do these things have to go? And what is this form?

...I think it's back to the support where you assign a counselor and they can help work through those steps with you if you express a desire to get a scholarship and you have a plan. It would be great for both sides."

Another person spoke of his own experiences and the positive difference of having a good counselor.

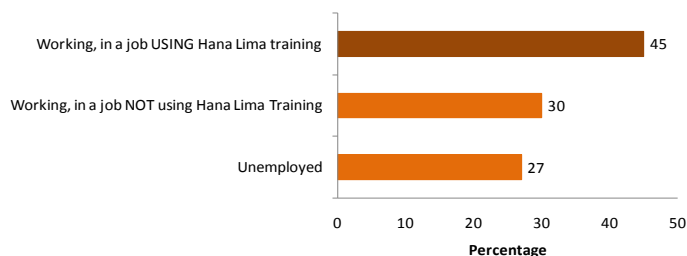
"You know, that was my first time in college so that whole process was kind of a lot for me. You know, like all these different forms they almost all look the same...I had to just be persistent and ask a lot of questions. The financial office, they knew my voice over the phone. I'd always be calling. They'd say you got to call this guy. And I'd say, I know but he's not calling me back. You cannot help me out? ...the monies that are given to students could be better used if the counselor and the student relationship is better.

And I think that probably a good counselor who's aware of what they're going through could probably encourage them or help them with solutions, find alternatives, or something because for me, in receiving that, I would not have been able to go to school, much less continue school, without Kamehameha Schools."

➤ **Majority of program completers earn more in salary or wages than before their scholarship training**

The HLSP believes that education and training beyond the high-school level can increase students' set of marketable skills, improve their job prospects, and ultimately support their attainment of higher paying jobs. The goal is to see its participants secure jobs and utilize the skills they've acquired during their degree or training programs. Results from the evaluation suggest that there is, indeed, a correlation between program completion and participants working in higher paying jobs.

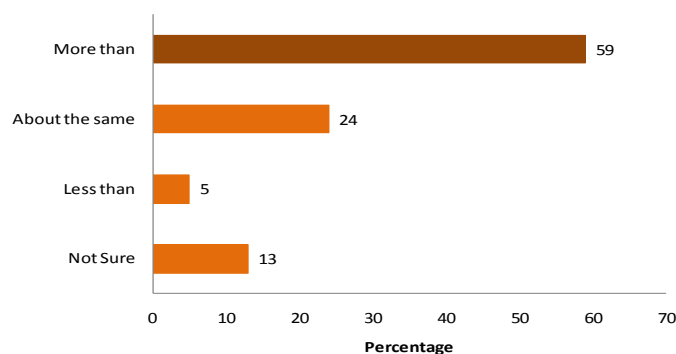
Figure 3. Respondents' current work situations



- Forty-five percent of respondents were working in a job using their Hana Lima training.
- Approximately 27 percent were still unemployed (with the majority of those individuals seeking work).

- Particularly high rates of ongoing unemployment (in the 33-50 percent range) were reported by small subgroups – the disabled, those who used their scholarships at private colleges, and those who had been in jail and/or wards of the court.

Figure 4. Respondents' current wages, as compared to BEFORE receiving their scholarship training



- Fifty-nine percent of respondents reported earning more in wages than before receiving their scholarship training (**with about 26 percent making at least \$10,000/yr. more**).
- Those most likely to report an income rise of at least \$10,000 were those in health/education/human service programs.
- Those least likely to report major gains were older students (31+), those with challenged backgrounds (such as previously incarcerated or wards of the court, though homelessness had no impact), and those in driver training or other specific vocational programs (not shown).

It is important to note that prior to receiving their scholarship training, nearly 65 percent of participants earned wages that fell below the poverty guidelines for a family of four.³ So while the results of the evaluation do show that a majority of participants increased their earnings, most are still not earning a “living wage.”

A majority 59% of respondents reported earning more in wages than before receiving their scholarship training - still, most are not earning a “living wage.”

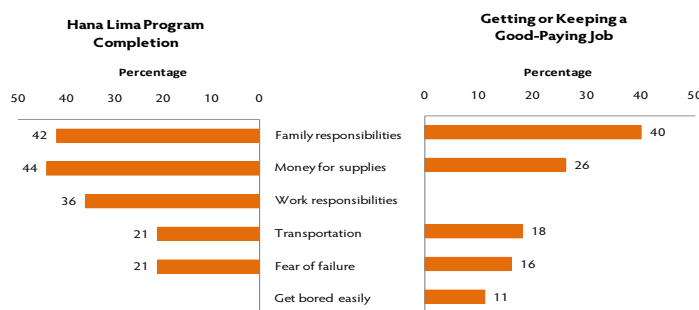
These findings support the potential usefulness of counseling services. First, it suggests that certain fields (i.e. health, education, human services) tend to provide larger earning gains – useful information for students who are undecided on a career path. It also highlights a subgroup of participants who would likely benefit from a stronger support system.

³ Based on 2011 Department of Health and Human Services Federal Poverty Guidelines Federal Register, Vol.76, No.13, January 20, 2011, pp.3637-3638.

➤ Barriers to participants' achievement of program and career goals come primarily in the form of a recessionary job market and/or family responsibilities

Understanding the barriers program participants face is vital for improving service delivery. While the range of barriers reported was wide, examination of the top five barriers was most telling. Four out of the five top barriers to program completion and getting or keeping a good-paying job were the same: family responsibilities, money for supplies, transportation, and fear of failure. When asked what the “most important” barrier to getting a job was, the highest response (20 percent) focused on the lack of jobs.

Figure 5. Barriers to program completion and a good-paying job



With a clearer understanding of participants' needs and the challenges they face outside of their programs, Alu Like, Inc. and Kamehameha Schools can begin to formulate strategies to improve participants' chances for success.

Recommendations

All of the participants gave extremely high marks regarding satisfaction with the HLSP. As one participant expressed,

“It gives you a special tool. You can use that tool. If you didn't have that tool, or have that degree, or have that license, people wouldn't even take a second chance to even look at you. With this tool, scholarship, or license, you're in for the race, you know?”

Another individual discussed the impact the scholarship program had on his life:

“Because I didn't have no schooling the only type of work I did was labor work. That's the only thing I knew. So at 45, 46 years old I was coming to that crossroads saying I can't do this for the next 20 years but I know I can drive for the next 20 years. That was an opportunity. When I heard about the Hana Lima I took advantage...it's a good program. It's a blessing and I thank God...”

Participants also provided additional suggestions and feedback on ways in which the HLSP might improve. For example, almost everyone agreed that the application process was very easy and not

intimidating. Those who applied to other scholarship programs mentioned that the HLSP was a lot easier to apply to than most programs. Despite the generally positive response with regard to the application process, a few suggestions for improvement were made including the following:

“The suggestion I have is if we could meet up with one Alu Like coordinator or one counselor and help us do the application on hand, I think we could be more successful in getting financial help for our schooling.”

Another participant suggested,

“...having an orientation thing, a group thing, mass e-mail: [saying] whoever is having problems come to this workshop...”

Counseling support can improve outcomes for program applicants and participants. Pre-guidance counseling can help students define career options, and scholarship/awardee counseling can help students persist and complete their education. This may include help with further financial assistance if needed, education beyond the vocational, technical or certification programs. Guidance counseling can also serve to help students to manage activities that may prohibit them from attaining their educational and career goals.

A recent study conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau found that it is possible to get high paying jobs from career-technical training. The study explains, however, that this cannot simply be done by introducing students to a booming career field, but rather by informing and guiding them to the field's best jobs.⁴ Hana Lima recipients stand to benefit from this targeted guidance approach, because it allows them to more accurately gauge the types of education credentials they will need to attain jobs with increased prospects for earning a living wage and beyond.

The HLSP serves a population that tends to be at higher risk for not completing their education. This group is also more likely to experience generational poverty (being in poverty for two generations or longer).⁵ As such, increased guidance and mentorship can provide greater access to resources and supports. In this way, the counselor/student relationship is very important.

In addition to the recommendation for counseling, HLSP might consider the following recommendations:

1. Extending financial support to students taking night courses. This will allow for greater access to an educational and career path while students continue to work.

2. As indicated in this study, one of the main barriers is family obligations. In particular, 53 percent of HLSP participants said they were single parents. Allowing students to attend night school would likely mitigate these scheduling conflicts.
3. HLSP might also consider subsidizing childcare or preschool for single parents who lack other support.

Conclusion

Evaluation findings indicate the Hana Lima Scholarship Program is successful at meeting its intended goals and that further enhancements are possible. Data show most participants complete their training and attain respective degrees or certification. Those who complete the HLSP typically earn more in wages than they did prior to the program. Still, most program completers earn less than a “living wage” for a family of four. Overall, program satisfaction is high among a diverse pool of respondents. At the same time, several recommendations for improvements were offered such as, expanding counseling services, allowing students to attend night school, and subsidizing childcare or preschool for single parents.

Building on this success by considering implementation of the recommendations in this brief will likely enhance the program and allow for greater access to education – and ultimately a living wage – for this Native Hawaiian population.

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For more information about the Hana Lima Scholarship Program:

http://www.alulike.org/services/kaipu_hana.html

⁴ Crissey, S.R., & Bauman, K. (2010). Between a diploma and a bachelor's degree: the effects of sub-baccalaureate postsecondary educational attainment and field of training on earnings. Education Week.

⁵ Discussed further by Anthony P. Carnevale, Director of Georgetown University's Center on Education and Workforce in the article: Gewertz, C. (2011). “College for all” reconsidered: are four-year degrees for all? *Education Week*.