1. Executive Summary

Leeward CC’s Student Services Area is comprised of 10 different units and programs that work in concert to support students’ entry, progression and completion of their academic journeys. They are responsible for supporting and assisting with students’ co-curricular needs—needs that are non-academic in nature, but that directly impact students’ ability to be successful in their classes and in earning their credentials.

Leeward CC’s Student Services Area is comprised of the following Units and Programs. Each play a unique role in students’ educational journeys; but all are focused on 1) helping students start, continue and complete their educational journeys; 2) providing support and resources to address issues that jeopardize students’ progress; and 3) alleviating institutional, administrative and/or other barriers that prevent students’ forward movement.

**Early College**
In order to increase the State’s college-going and college success rates, Leeward CC’s Early College Program provides high school students with the opportunity to take college courses while still in high school. The program targets those who do not traditionally aspire to college (e.g., low-income and first-generation students), and the credits students earn can be applied to both high school graduation and college degree requirements. The program strives to prepare students for college success on all levels, and to meet the College’s student success goals. Leeward CC’s Early College Program depends heavily upon its partnerships with students’ high schools.

**Recruitment**
The Recruitment Office focuses on increasing Leeward CC’s enrollment. It helps to raise public awareness about the College, and it supports and promotes the (re)enrollment of a wide variety of constituents. The Recruitment Office coordinates and runs all campus tours; provides representation at Career & College Fairs and other events; performs various college-going workshops at the high schools; and provides application assistance to people who are interested in attending the College. The Recruitment Office also serves as the College’s primary liaison with its service area high schools, adult community schools, military educational centers and alternative educational sites.

**Admissions and Records (A&R)**
The Admissions & Records Office is often the first point of contact people have with the College. It oversees students’ admission; maintains their academic records as they progress through their academic programs (i.e., their grades and transcripts); and helps to confer all of their degrees and certificates once earned. It also serves as both an access and acceleration point for transfer students who wish to utilize previously earned credits to earn a degree; to students utilizing their veterans benefits to support their education; and any other student who needs their enrollment and/or course-taking verified in order to secure employment, scholarship funding, admission to the next level of education, etc. The Admissions & Records Office plays an important role in students’ entry into the College, their progression through their coursework, and their completion of this leg of their academic journey.
Financial Aid
The Financial Aid Office serves as the arbiter for federal, UH system and institutional aid that is
given to students in support of their education. Although this office awards some merit-based
funding, the majority of their resources support those who are both underrepresented in higher
education and who stand to benefit most from it—i.e., low-income students. Because much of the
funding given out by this office allows for continued financial support, the Financial Aid Office is
key in helping students start, continue and then complete their education. The Financial Aid Office
also plays an essential role in helping to provide equitable access to education for those who are
underrepresented.

Hawaii Nutrition Employment & Training (HINET) Program
Through a partnership with the Department of Human Services (DHS), the HINET Program helps
eligible students receive food stamps and other supports for their basic needs so that they can
successfully engage in their education. Participating students must meet the DHS income standards
and must be pursuing a short-term, workforce credential. The HINET Program is extremely
important as it helps to fill the gaps for students who are ineligible for federal aid, who qualify for
insufficient levels of aid, and/or who are pursuing non-credit credentials. The HINET Program also
serves as a conduit that connects qualifying students to other State resources (e.g., childcare, TANF,
housing, emergency assistance, etc.).

Counseling
Once a student’s journey begins, the Counseling Unit is the main provider of academic guidance
and non-academic support. Counselors start students on the right path by providing initial advising
for all first-year students. They then help to keep students on that path by providing continued
academic advising (including transfer advising) and by intervening when students perform poorly.
Counselors help students traverse the many facets of a student’s educational journey. This includes
navigating the College’s processes and procedures; establishing educational and/or career goals;
managing their financial supports; successfully negotiating work-school-life balance; practicing
self-advocacy; and overcoming academic and personal challenges, to name a few. Counselors also
are the arbiters of graduation, performing all degree audits to confirm eligibility for credential
conferral. Each of the Unit’s 20 Counselors are asked to monitor and steward the educational
journeys of a specific caseload of students—so every student has a counselor.

Veterans Resource Center (VRC)
The Veterans Resource Center (VRC) provides specialized services for military veterans, active
duty servicemembers, reservists, guardsmen, and their dependents. It supports these students
through all phases of their educational journey—particularly in their entry to the College and in
their continuation from semester to semester. The VRC is key in helping students understand how
to access and retain the military benefits that finance their education. It is also poised to support
and provide resources to students who experience difficulty. The VRC houses a Leeward CC
Counselor as well as a partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), who provides
both an onsite Psychologist and a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.

Student Life
The Student Life Office helps to keep students engaged in their education by 1) offering them a
conduit through which they can build connections; 2) offering them an opportunity to develop
leadership skills; and 3) fostering a sense of community within the student body. Student Life does this through organizing and executing campus-wide events; facilitating the establishment and continuation of student organizations; overseeing the campus’s Student Government programs; and by coordinating and running its multi-campus intramural sports program. Nurturing involvement is important to students’ retention. Not only do students want to remain a part of our community because of these activities, but those involved in these Student Life programs must 1) perform at a certain level academically; and 2) stay enrolled at the campus in order to participate.

**Student Health Center (SHC)**
The Student Health Center is an extension of University Health Services at Manoa. It provides health care services that include but are not limited to health education, disease prevention, and treatment for acute episodic illness and family planning services to Leeward CC students, faculty, and staff. The SHC also works with Admissions & Records to ensure that the State of Hawaii mandated health requirements for entrance to post-secondary school are met. The mission of the SHC is to achieve and maintain a healthy student body and college community.

**Job Prep Services**
The Job Prep Services Office helps students prepare for employment. It provides them with career assessment and exploration tools; it helps them develop the skills to actually apply for jobs (e.g., resume building, interviewing, effective job searching, effective application submission); it helps to expose students to different job opportunities within intended fields; and it connects students with potential employers.

**Dean of Student Services Office**
The Dean of Student Services Office coordinates and oversees the efforts of all of the units within Student Services. It provides leadership and guidance; provides advocacy and resource development; oversees and manages various student success initiatives; acts as an ombudsman for students when they encounter difficulty with the College’s processes; and ensures the health and safety of the campus by administering and enforcing the Student Conduct Code as well as the University’s Title IX policy.

Collectively, the offices mentioned above contribute to the College’s efforts to enroll, retain and then transfer and/or graduate (i.e., completion) students—a process otherwise known as the Student Success continuum.

**EVALUATION SUMMARY**

**Program Demand**
Over the last year, there was continued and/or increasing demand for the enrollment, retention and completion services provided by Student Services. This was evidenced by both the sheer volume of students that the College needed to support, as well as by the falling trends that, if they’re to be reversed, now required increased and focused attention from our units. In academic year 2019-2020:
Enrollment
- The College received 11,029 applications for admission, which was a 16.5% increase over the previous year.
- The College received 2,109 Early College applications, which represented a 10.8% shortfall which occurred primarily in Summer 2020 due to COVID-19. Fall and Spring participation continued to grow.
- The College, however, continued to enroll less than half of those who were admitted (i.e., yield rate). During this review period, only 42% of those who were admitted for the Fall and 37% of those admitted for Summer registered for classes. This is a 6% and 4% decline respectively from the previous Fall and Summer.
- Of the students who did enter and register in Fall, nearly half were supported by federal financial aid. In the Spring, financial aid supported a third.

Retention and Persistence
- 4,444 students who had applied to our campus during the evaluation period enrolled in classes. 1,570, or 35.3%, of these were Early College students. This is 8.5% more students than in the last evaluation period.
- The College continued to support a student body that averaged close to 6,400 students a semester (6,568 in Fall 2019, 6,219 in Spring 2020, and 2,606 in Summer 2020).
  - Close to half of the continuing students at Leeward CC financed their education with federal student aid each semester. About 7% of Leeward CC’s students financed their education using VA benefits, and 105 students were supported by HINET.
  - About 25% of these students have previously earned college credits that needed to be officially applied to our degree requirements. About 12% of our student body are veterans or military-connected.
- The College continued to lose enrolled students over the course of time. The College’s Fall to Spring persistence rate continued its plateau of 68%, and its Fall to Fall rate remained steady at less than 50%.

Completion
- During the review period, 1,843 credentials were awarded.

Program Effectiveness
Overall, the enrollment, persistence/retention and completion services provided by Student Services were effective in meeting the demands that were presented. Collectively, our units informed the public about Leeward CC; processed all application materials received; offered the requisite number of orientations and advising appointments; certified students for VA benefits and HINET and awarded financial aid; supported Early College students and provided resources, information and assistance to continuing students. We:
  - Admitted and supported the entry of 10,134 students.
  - Awarded financial aid to 3,253 students, and supported 105 students through HINET.
  - Handled 5,433 health requirements.
  - Took 2,301 new students through new student orientation.
  - Held new student advising sessions with 1,992 students.
• Provided over 300 students with an opportunity to strengthen their leadership skills as well as their connection to the College via different Student Life opportunities.
• Supported the enrollment and continued needs of 6,568 students in Fall 2019, 6219 in Spring 2020 and 2606 in Summer 2020. This included 604 Early College students in Fall 2019, 789 in Spring 2020 and 274 in Summer 2020.
• Conferred 1,843 degrees and certificates.

However, a deeper analysis shows us that there is still work to do.

**Enrollment**

• Although we have seen an increase in applications and have maintained high acceptance rates (between 89%-93%), our yield rate continues to decline. In this evaluation year, only about 43% of all students who applied for Fall 2019 went on to enroll in classes, and only 37% of those who applied for Summer 2020. Last year, our yield rates were 48% and 41% respectively. Our yield rate for Spring 2020 remained consistent with last year; however, that still meant that only half of those who applied that semester actually enrolled.

• We can see that there are “leaks” at every step of our entry pipeline, which ultimately results in the loss of students. In Fall 2019, for example, we received 6,084 applications. Of those, we admitted 5,659 students—2,653 of which were new to college and needed to go through new student orientation (NSO). However, only 1,556 (58.7%) of these students completed NSO; of which, only 1,444 (92.8%) took the next step and met with a counselor for new student advising. Of the students who completed their advising, only 1,223 (84.7%) actually registered. So, at each step, we lost at least 7.2% of our students, and at most 41.3% of them. Even though the amount of attrition may vary, this pattern of loss has held true over-time.

• Although most of the students in 2019-2020 who were awarded Financial Aid ultimately enrolled at the College (81.2%), 18.8% of them did not. Additionally, only half of those who complete a FAFSA with us go on to enroll at the College. This pattern has been constant over the last 3 years, and is another “leak” in the pipeline.

• Our Early College students fare better. During this evaluation period, we experienced an average 75.7% yield rate from Early College applicants—despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Retention and Persistence**

• We have not made gains in our semester-to-semester persistence rates. They have stagnated—remaining at the exact same levels for the last 3 years. We continue to lose a third of our students from Fall to Spring, and then over half from Fall to Fall.
  o However, our new admits seem to persist at a slightly higher rate than the College’s overall average. Our data shows that, when admitted in the Fall, these students persist to Spring and then to Fall at a rate 8%-10% higher than the overall average. This is not true to students who enter in the Spring. The 1st semester persistence rate for these students tend to be 15% lower than the overall average.
  o HINET Program participants also seem to persist at higher levels. 75% of all HINET participants persisted from Fall to Spring. Financial Aid recipients also seem to persist at higher levels.
• Underperforming (UAP) students contribute to our attrition rates.
  o On average, we lose about half, or about 500, of the students placed on UAP each semester; many do not re-enroll after receiving an academic sanction. Students placed on academic warning, which is the first academic sanction, represents the largest group of students lost. About two-thirds of all underperforming students are at the academic warning level; and 52% of these students do not persist into the next semester.
  o The persistence rate of underperforming financial aid recipients stands to be even bleaker. Federal regulations tie academic performance with financial aid eligibility. Because of this, students who underperform often lose their funding, which impedes their ability to continue.
  o Preliminary data suggests, however, that UAP students who 1) receive a counselor intervention; and 2) have registering for the next semester as part of that intervention, are much more likely to persist.
• Although we continue to see unprecedented growth in Early College participation, student success and performance remains unstable. Last year, 80% of all grades awarded to Early College students, on average, were Cs or higher. This is consistent with the success rates of the year before, and still higher than those of first-time freshman at the College. However, it is 15 percentage points lower than the average of 95% just 3 years prior.

Additionally, the College’s overall enrollment rate continues to decline. Our campus experiences about a 5%-6% decrease in enrollment each year. Last year was no exception. Although Student Services is not solely responsible for these institutional outcomes, we do track and monitor them, as they are the outcomes that we try to help impact.

Student Services has already begun to position ourselves to improve our outcomes. We have:

• Begun our plans to open a scaled-down version of the Welcome Center. The Student Services Welcome Center will increase both effectiveness and efficiency by centralizing the customer service aspects of the division, thereby allowing units to concentrate their efforts on building and executing student success related strategies.
• Convened a taskforce that will evaluate and improve the College’s on-boarding system. All units involved in this process are participating.
• Increased our partnership with the College’s Communications Office so we can more effectively communicate with students at key points of the student journey.
• Refocused the Recruitment Office so that it is less focused on outreach and more focused on intentionally impacting the College’s yield rate.
• Begun the process of repositioning all offices so that they are best able to contribute to the College’s goals of improving enrollment, retention and completion.

Program Efficiency
Although Student Services has been largely successful at meeting the needs presented, all struggle with achieving the efficiencies that could allow them to be more effective and impactful. A common theme throughout all of the Student Services offices—especially those who are highly regulated by compliance demands—continues to be an extremely high workload burden created by the need to simultaneously execute and manage a multitude of processes that are 1) highly diverse
in both their goals and in what is required; 2) highly complex; 3) constantly expanding and changing; and 4) lack the resources and tools, including access to data, that would make the work efficient. Much of the work executed by the offices within Student Services are highly manual in nature. As a result, their ability to be “efficient” as well as adaptive to new requests and situations rests entirely on the capacities (both in numbers and in abilities) of their human resources.

This has a direct impact on the results that Student Services offices are able to deliver. Here are a few highlights from the Area’s program data that reflects this.

**Admissions**

One of the ways in which we determine efficiency in enrollment is by looking at application processing times. Admissions and Record’s goal is to process regular applications within an average of 14 days upon receipt. Data shows that, although we largely improved from last year, we are not meeting our efficiency goals most of the time. Additionally, we are most challenged during the Fall semesters when the application season is typically the heaviest. In these semesters, we average a lag of almost a month. This is largely due to staffing limitations. Because of the amount of time and effort it takes to process a single application via our current system, Admissions staff must attend to one semester at a time in order to ensure that all that have applied to the most imminent semester are admitted and can register for classes. So, when application seasons overlap (e.g., both Fall and Spring application seasons are open), applications for the latter semester are put on the back burner until the applications for the most impending semester are completed. In 2019-20, this situation was exacerbated by unanticipated staffing vacancies and by COVID-19 induced work-from-home orders which began in Spring 2020—both for full-time staff and for student employees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2018</th>
<th>Spring 2019</th>
<th>Summer 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>42 days</td>
<td>11 days</td>
<td>16 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>28 days</td>
<td>7 days</td>
<td>9 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>37 days</td>
<td>23 days</td>
<td>9 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>22 days</td>
<td>24 days</td>
<td>5 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This lag definitely impacts a student’s ability to progress through our College’s on-boarding process efficiently. It also impacts students’ experiences with our College—introducing more frustration and confusion, which probably leads some to give up and go elsewhere.

It is important to note that even in the best scenario, it takes our College a minimum of 7 days to process someone’s application. This is still the best we can achieve with 2, full-time staff and 2 student employees completely dedicated to admissions. This, in itself, speaks to the inefficient nature of our current application system. In an era that cultivates people’s expectations for immediate gratification, this system, if maintained, will increasingly work against us.

Beginning with the Spring 2021 application season, the UHCC system will launch a new application system. This system is supposed to increase efficiencies for the Admissions & Records Office. We are hopeful that it will.
Veterans Benefits

The time it takes us to complete the processes that allow students to access their funding also affects enrollment. Therefore, we need to look at our efficiency in programs such as Veterans’ (VA) Benefits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2018</th>
<th>Spring 2019</th>
<th>Summer 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>67 days</td>
<td>39 days</td>
<td>34 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>47 days</td>
<td>25 days</td>
<td>16 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2019-20, the amount of time it took for the College to complete students’ VA certifications seemed to increase. So, overall, it appears as though our efficiency in this area decreased. However, the data can be deceiving. Many times, longer processing times can be attributed to student delays in providing the required documentation. The mandate to move to telework and remote communication and service beginning in Spring 2020 could’ve exacerbated this. In general, VA benefits certifications are completed within 1-2 weeks of receiving the required documentation.

Again, however, even in the best scenarios, students need to wait.

Transcript Evaluations

Evaluating transcripts in an efficient and timely way is critical for any student who enters our campus with some higher education experience. It is not only important for enrollment; it is also important for continuation and timely completion of a student’s degree. Students need to know, both at the juncture of deciding where to enroll and at the juncture of making registration decisions, if and how their previous credits apply. This, oftentimes, is a deciding factor in which college a student plans to attend.

However, our College is very inefficient at evaluating transcripts. Due to the limitations in both our staffing and in our tools, as well as the limitations introduced by the complexity of the task, students, at a minimum, regularly see an 8-week lag in our transcript evaluation process. Additionally, because of these limitations, we won’t even entertain evaluating a student’s transcript unless he/she is already enrolled with us. This can compromise a student’s inclination to choose our campus. This problem will be exacerbated as the College is required, by federal law, to evaluate more transcripts. We are now required to evaluate all veterans’ transcripts. The mandate to evaluate the transcripts of others could follow.

Needed Resources

Overall, there are many areas of inefficiencies within the different Student Services Offices that prevent us from being able to make bigger impacts on intended outcomes.

It is our intention, over the next year, to 1) better pinpoint and address areas where we can improve our efficiencies in order to have a greater impact on student enrollment, persistence/retention and completion; and 2) acquire the tools and resources to do it, including access to meaningful and timely data.
We do know that, at a minimum, all of our offices will highly benefit from the following tools in order to increase efficiency, and have a bigger impact on student success:

- A fully staffed and operational Welcome Center (which will create efficiencies and reduce redundancies by combining the front desk operations of several offices)
- A communication relationship management (CRM) software that will allow for the identification, tracking, monitoring, intervention and automated communication with various student subgroups. This type of tool is not only needed to facilitate the entry of students; it is also needed to help the College stay in compliance with various federal and state regulations (e.g., financial aid, NC-SARA) as it implements new initiatives (e.g., Online AA degree program, Course Program of Study, accelerated classes/programs, fully online programs, Early College, etc.).
- Effective, user-friendly, regularly updated and available data dashboards that will allow us to track and monitor our efforts, inform strategy design and inform resource allocation.
- A centralized, IT staff person who can, at minimum:
  o Set up, configure and maintain the various software systems being or will be used by Student Services in support of multiple work functions (e.g., STAR, MySuccess, NSO Online, JCO, Career Coach, the Liaison application, the Ocelot ChatBot, SignalVine, any communication-relations management software adopted by the College, etc.).
  o Design, configure and maintain online systems that will allow for secure online submission of forms as well as the routing of those forms through various workflows.
  o Design and maintain the digital signage that will be present in the Welcome Center.
  o Create and design efficient and secure database systems that work with and between systems already being used by the campus.
- Alterations to BANNER pages that would allow for increased automation of our processes.