Hawaii Nutritional Employment & Training (HINET) Program

2020 ANNUAL REVIEW OF PROGRAM DATA

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I LEeward COMMUNITY COLLEGE
What is HINET?

The Hawaii Nutrition Employment and Training (HINET) program at Leeward Community College (Leeward CC) is contracted by the State of Hawaii, Department of Human Services (DHS) Benefit, Employment and Support Service Division. This program serves students who are Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients working toward a career and technical education (CTE) degree or a workforce credential from the Office of Continuing Education and Workforce Development (OCEWD). The mission of HINET is to help these students overcome employment barriers and learn the skills and expertise needed to obtain employment and become self-sufficient. HINET targets an underserved student population, consisting of students who are receiving SNAP and reaching out to those who may be potentially eligible.

HINET practices a holistic approach when providing support. Primarily focusing on what students need personally and academically contributes to their success that puts them on a path to degree completion. HINET plays a large role in the enrollment of new students by providing financial means with tuition, books and supplies, and transportation. The program also advocates and assists students with navigating through state processes and procedures to secure resources from additional public benefit programs. Additionally, HINET collaborates with community partners such as Kamehameha Schools, Family Self Sufficiency Program (Section 8), the Honolulu Community Action Program and the American Job Center to outreach and enroll prospective students. It is a financial intervention to assist students who are not able to receive financial aid or pay for their workforce education.

While HINET’s services increases access for underrepresented students, it also plays a significant role in retention efforts. Returning students can also benefit from tuition assistance, books and supplies, and transportation reimbursement. During their participation in HINET, students are monitored to ensure they are on track with their career pathway and maintain their GPA. This population is faced with insurmountable challenges and HINET has been there to listen and connect them with adequate and appropriate campus and community resources.

Analysis of HINET

In order to qualify for SNAP, students need to meet federal poverty guidelines which would also deem them eligible for the Pell Grant, a need-based grant for low-income undergraduates. According to the University of Hawaii Institutional Research, Analysis and Planning Office and the Leeward CC’s Office of Planning, Policy and Assessment (OPPA), in the Fall of 2019, 42% of Leeward CC’s full-time and 21% of part-time students received Pell Grants which totals 3,618 degree-seeking students who could potentially benefit from HINET. In addition, the vast majority of OCEWD’s students are low-income with 90% of them needing assistance with tuition costs. HINET is certainly an underutilized resource and recruitment efforts is an area to be reviewed and expanded. Approximately 35 students requested tuition assistance and 20% of these applicants were OCEWD students. Tuition assistance provided to HINET students totaled $30,615.
2020 Leeward Community College ARPD
Program: HINET

Table 1. indicates data for prospective HINET students which is reported monthly to the University of Hawaii (UH) HINET system. It is important to note that the application data for 2019 – 2020 is not entirely complete due to several factors. Initially, ‘application’ included the total number of inquiries and HINET applicants. A change to separate these categories was implemented in July 2020. New management in January 2020 resulted in a slight lapse in data collection as the transition occurred and limited data was available for Fall 2019.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020 (Jan-Aug)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HINET Applications Received</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>120 inquiries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18 applications for July &amp; Aug 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 138</td>
</tr>
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Table 1. Prospective HINET Student Data from 2018 to 2020

Based on additional monthly reports to the UH HINET system, from January through August 2020, the average caseload consisted of 46 students. Toward the end of Spring 2020, the number of HINET cases began to decline as some students lost their SNAP benefits only then to reapply because their unemployment benefits fluctuated and affected their income. Some participants needed additional funding and applied for state financial assistance through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, thus disqualifying them from HINET. The most noticeable loss occurred in June 2020 when seven negative closures due to non-compliance and loss of SNAP exceeded the six positive closures of students completing the necessary coursework at Leeward CC to transfer to a four-year institution.

The forty-one appointments recorded from January through August in Starfish and Star Balance does not entirely capture HINET’s interactions with prospective and current HINET participants. The program’s services transitioned remotely in Spring 2020 due to the pandemic, and as a result a majority of the communication with students was made via phone, email and Zoom rather than to schedule an appointment. Appointments were typically made for new HINET students to become oriented to the program. Although details of all student meetings are documented in the DHS database, another way is needed to collect aggregate data to report an accurate picture of student participation.

An evaluation survey to collect data to determine efficiency and to compare effectiveness will also need to be developed. The plan is to work on creating a survey or other tool to assist with determining effectiveness. HINET has yet to formally develop Student Assessment Outcomes (SAO) since the priority was to ensure that HINET is abiding by DHS guidance and regulations. Currently, HINET does not have any tools to evaluate services.

Despite the fact the HINET program is considerably new to Leeward CC, it appears to yield a positive outcome. OPPA’s data demonstrated, in Fall 2019 that a total of 165 students received HINET services. However, only 105 showed up at the Fall 2019 Census. Table 2 indicates that 75% of these students persisted Fall 2019 to Spring 2020. According to the University of Hawaii Community College’s 2020 ARPD for Leeward CC’s Student Affairs, this is a higher persistence rate compared to all students which persisted at 68%. In addition, 5% of students completed a degree or certificate of achievement and 2% claimed a UH four-year institution as their home campus. By Fall of 2020, 54% of students enrolled in classes while 10% completed their education.
and 8% transferred. This supports Leeward CC’s campus’ Wildly Important Goal of keeping the students we have.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spring 2020 Retained</th>
<th>Graduates in Fall 2019</th>
<th>UH 4yr in Spring 2020</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>Fall 2020 Retained</th>
<th>Graduates by Fall 2020</th>
<th>UH 4yr by Fall 2020</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 2. Persistence, Completion and Transfer Rates among HINET Students

HINET mirrors and aspires to meet similar goals to the state of Washington’s program known as the Washington State Basic Food Employment and Training Program (BFET). Thirty-four of their community and technical colleges offer this support resource and have assisted more than 89,000 students since 2005. “Two years after exiting BFET, 60 percent of participants are employed with a median hourly wage of $14.44, above the state’s $12 minimum wage (BFET, January 2020).”

Unfortunately, there have been changes in funding security due to COVID-19. Initially, the University of Hawaii planned to institutionalize the HINET program with legislative monies but now funding is tenuous due to state budget shortfalls. It is imperative to maintain funding for the HINET program because the effects of the pandemic have created a fragile state for low-income students.

"Right now, low-income and first-generation students are deciding if they will be able to start college or return to college in the fall. This report spells out many of the extra hurdles these students faced to earning a degree even before the COVID-19 pandemic. With budget cuts looming, policymakers must prioritize these students because if they are forced off the path now, they are the least likely to make it back on (Calahan et.al 2020).”

**Action Plan**

**1. Strategize recruitment efforts so that higher education is accessible to low-income students**

Collaborate with community and campus partners to target new, current and returning students. For example, find students nearing completion, either enrolled or stopped out, and determine if they are candidates for HINET to assist with completing their credential.

**2. Organize and widen data collection to review HINET’s strengths and areas of improvement**

Revise current data for accuracy and increase data collection to analyze:

- student contacts
- students who received help enrolling with state benefit programs and their enrollment and persistence rate
- students targeted for completion and rate of credential completion while in HINET
- students who received an intervention from HINET and their persistence and completion rate

3. Identify SAO.

Developing SAOs will assist in measuring how HINET provides services to meet students’ needs and reinforcing student success.

4. Create a survey to determine efficiency and effectiveness.

This survey will ensure there is continued focus on meeting the needs of students while continuing to practice Achieving the Dream’s Holistic Student Support model. Survey results will identify community resources to develop strong relationships so low-income students will have access to them.

Resource Implications

The HINET program requests to maintain funding for a full-time HINET Coordinator. Technology is also necessary to generate data of student lists based on specific criteria and to evaluate HINET participation. This will also allow for easy tracking and monitoring of HINET students.

☐ I am NOT requesting additional resources for my program/unit.

Sources:
