

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PARTICIPANT SURVEY

BRIDGE TO HOPE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII
FALL 2008



INTRODUCTION:

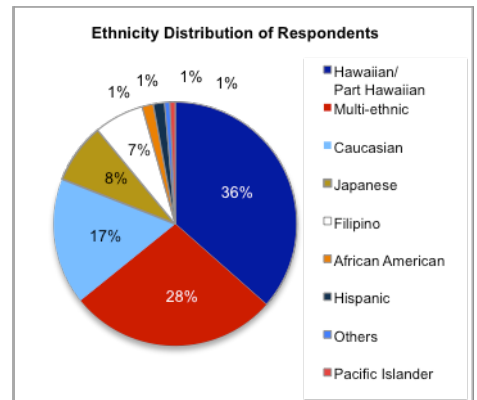
Bridge to Hope (BTH) is a nationally recognized partnership between the University of Hawai'i and the State Department of Human Services' (DHS) "First-To-Work" program providing college education for welfare participants as a means of lifelong economic self-sufficiency. Students are full-time enrolled at any of the 10 UH campuses combining coursework and employment to meet a 20-hour per week First-to-Work requirement. The UH Bridge to Hope program provides on-campus student employment as well as other student support services to assist students in achieving their educational goals.

Initiated in Fall 2000 as a "pilot project" Bridge to Hope (BTH) has worked with nearly 400 students between 9/2000 and 6/2007. This is the first comprehensive survey of UH BTH participants. Respondents were equally divided between currently enrolled students (50%) and those who had graduated (38%) or left school without finishing (12%). While students are eligible to participate for their full five years of First-to-Work eligibility, BTH participants spent an average of 1.7 years utilizing the UH BTH program to achieve their academic degree.

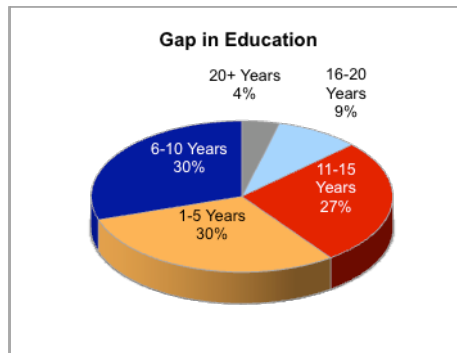
BRIDGE TO HOPE STUDENTS:

A composite of the "average" Bridge to Hope parent would be a 32-year old single mother with 2 children. Children's ages span from younger than 1 year to 22 years, with an average age of nearly eight years old.

BTH participants reflect Hawai'i's ethnic diversity. Most BTH students are single mothers (97%) although a few 2-parent families and single fathers (3%) also participate.



RETURNING TO FINISH COLLEGE:



BTH provides women an opportunity to complete a much-needed college degree. 48% of respondents had previously attended college but without completing their degree. The median gap between previous attendance and re-enrollment at UH is eight years.

"The best part of the Bridge to Hope program is the incredible support and network abilities. I cannot put a price tag on how much the moral support has been instrumental in my completion...."
-Former BTH participant



BTH EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT: FALL 2000-2007

A 75% graduation rate of a traditionally “high-risk” student population gives credit to the BTH students’ drive and determination as well as the support network the UH Bridge to Hope program provides.

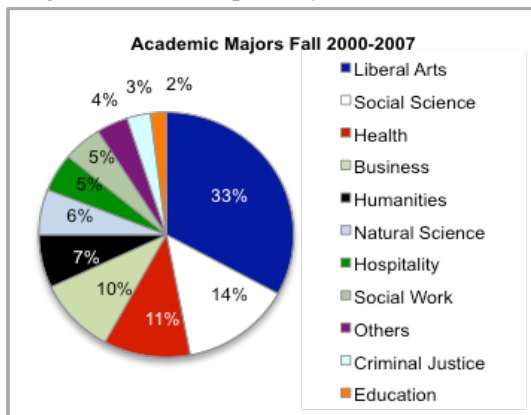
The total BTH participant pool (vs. survey respondents) of 401 individuals (with 104 still currently enrolled) have earned a total of 224 degrees. This includes 43 students who earned an AA at the community college, transferred and earned a BA as well. Seventy-five percent (75%) of all BTH students participated at a community college campus.

Degrees Completed as of Fall 2007

AA/AS	136 (43 continued to BA)
BA/BS	81
MA/Professional Degree	7
Total	224
Still Enrolled	104

Academic Majors:

BTH students pursue a range of academic majors, with an emphasis in areas with strong employment opportunities such as health careers, criminal justice and education. Liberal arts and social sciences are also well represented as foundations for a wide range of careers, especially for AA students at the community colleges.

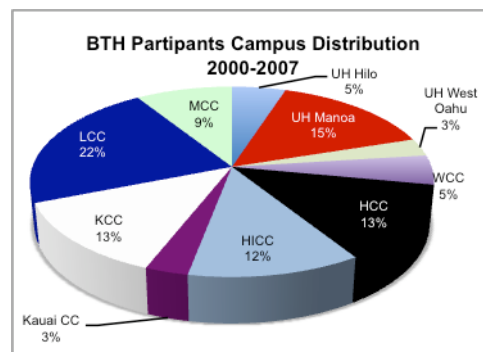


Degree Major	Total
Business	22
Criminal Justice	7
Education	4
Health	24
Hospitality	11
Humanities	15
Liberal Arts	75
Natural Science	14
Other	9
Social Science	31
Social Work	12
Total	224



Campus Distribution:

Campus	Students
HCC	53
HawCC	47
Kaua'i CC	14
KCC	52
LCC	86
MCC	37
UH-Hilo	21
UH-Mānoa	56
UHWO	13
WCC	22
Total	401
Total UH-CC (2 yr)	311
Total UH-BA (4 yr)	90



Note: Campus distribution may differ from degrees granted due to BA students' continued employment at community college (usually convenient to residence and childcare).



A COLLEGE DEGREE FOR LIFELONG ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY:

Participants' Earnings by Occupation & Education:

Tracking the earnings of people who leave welfare (“leavers”) is not a priority for federal or state agencies and such data is sparse, inconsistent and out-of-date. The most recent national report uses data from 2002 reporting a median hourly wage of \$8.06. Bridge to Hope participants’ earnings and benefits exceed those of welfare “leavers” nationally.

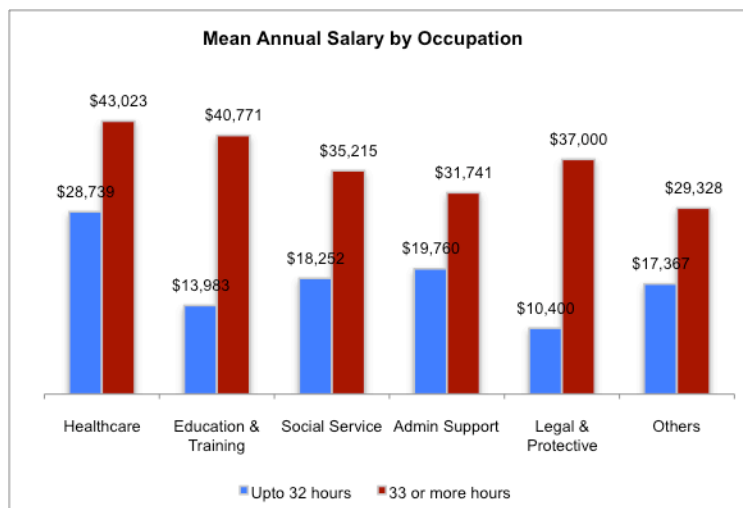
National Comparison of Wages & Benefits¹ of Women Leaving Welfare:

	Wages Hourly	Employer Health Insur.	Paid Vacation / Sick Leave
Urban Institute “Welfare Leavers” State Findings (No info available re: education)	\$ 8.06	32.6%	n.a.
Maine Parents As Scholars Graduates (BA) (Supports BA education)	\$11.71	71.4%	67.9% / 60.7%
UH Bridge to Hope Participants (Supports AA/BA education)	\$15.45	76.0%	73% / 64%

Bridge to Hope participants’ earnings and benefits exceed those of welfare “leavers” nationally with a median hourly wage of \$15.45.

Wages for all BTH participants	Salary (annual)	Wages (hourly)
Degree not completed	\$24,413	\$11.92
Completed AA/AS (2yr)	\$27,567	\$13.25
Completed BA/BS (4yr)	\$41,776	\$20.38

Comparatively, Bridge to Hope survey respondents’ earnings are stellar with a median hourly wage of \$15.45 for those no longer enrolled. Full-time employment and occupational variations impact *average* wages and many BTH graduates earn a “self-sufficient” wage and are on their way to economic sustainability for their family.



“They [contributed largely to] completing my degree. I am no longer on TANF and I am able to support myself and my family. We also have medical insurance with my company.”

-Former BTH participant

¹ “Assessing the New Federalism: Snapshots 3.” Urban Institute, 2003. “Parents As Scholars: Education Works.” Maine Equal Justice, 2002.

LIFELONG & INTERGENERATIONAL IMPACT:

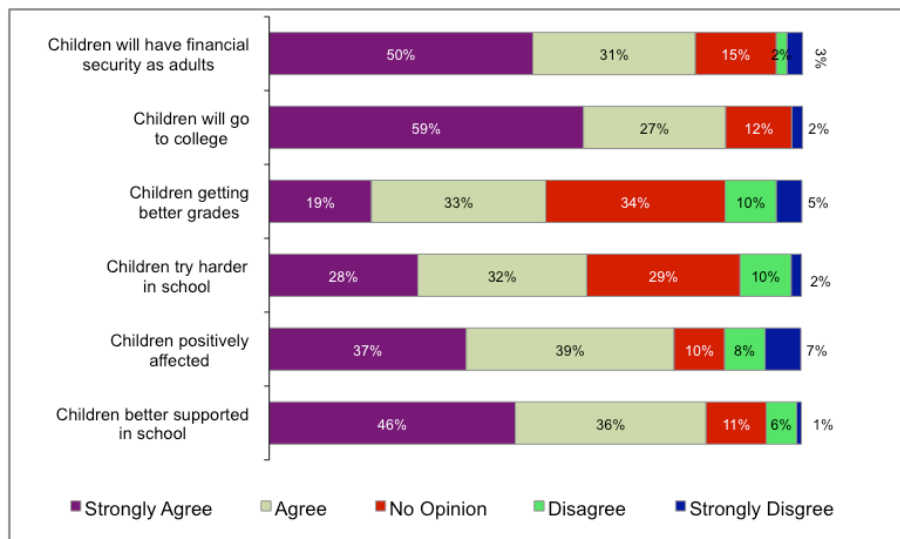
A college education improves women’s earnings potential. College also positively impacts self-esteem, civic engagement, and life outlook. 27% of BTH participants indicated that their motivation for pursuing education was to “improve my financial situation” while “setting an example for my children” was a close second at 25%. Overwhelmingly, survey respondents report that their children have been positively impacted by parents’ participation in college, including 85.7% who believe their children will go to college and 80% who believe their children will have financial security as adults.

*“My son said to me,
‘I liked that when I
was in school, I knew
you were in school
too.’”*

-Former BTH participant



Educational Impact on Children

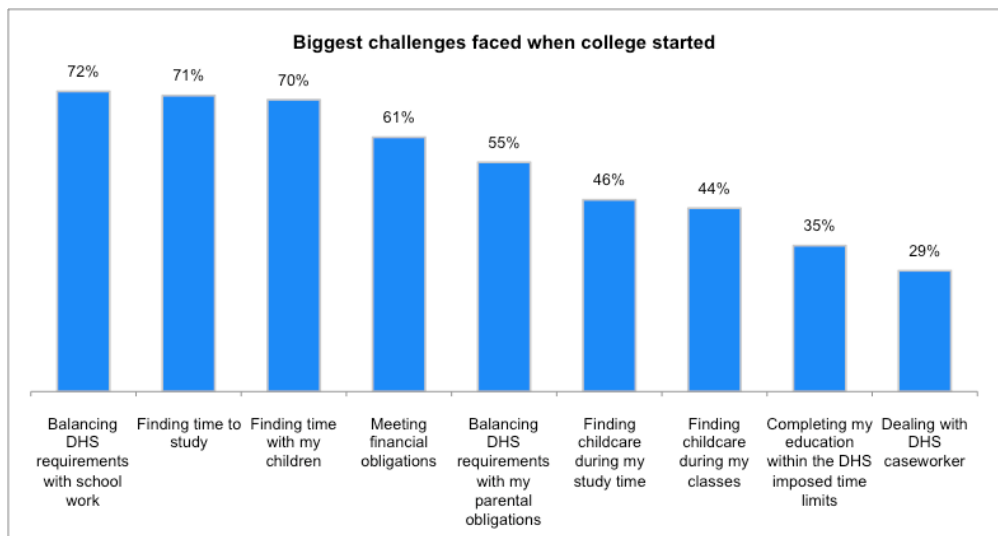


GETTING STARTED: CHALLENGES

Respondents report that balancing the needs of children, DHS/FTW and college were quite challenging.

*“I had to find a job
that would
accommodate my
school, study, and
parent schedule and
reach my work hours
for DHS. How was I
supposed to do that?”*

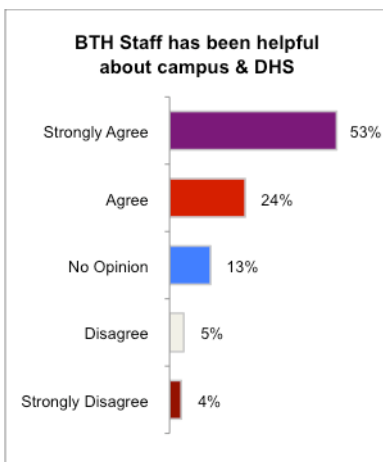
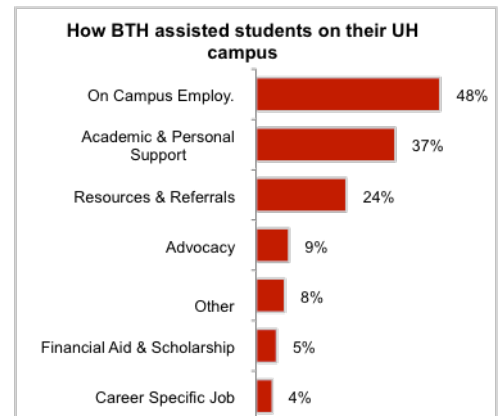
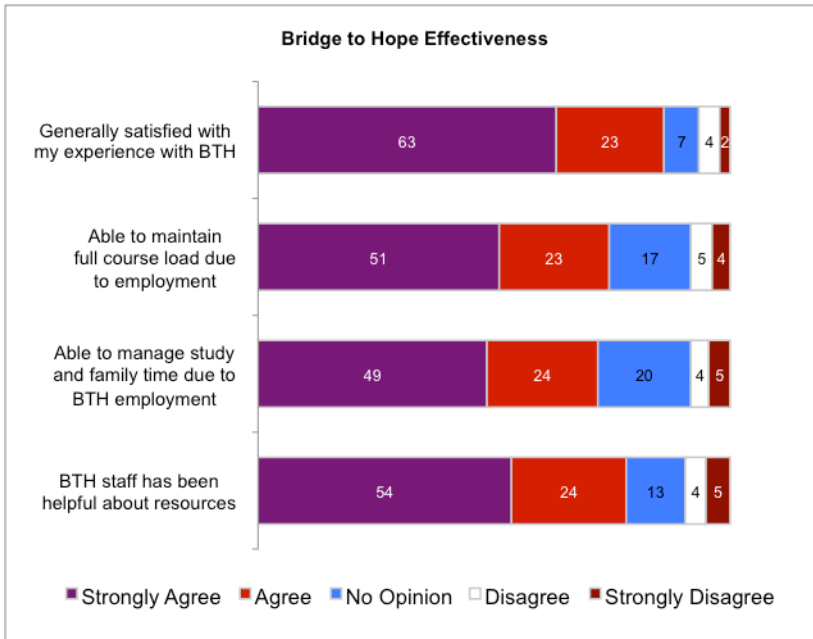
-Former BTH participant



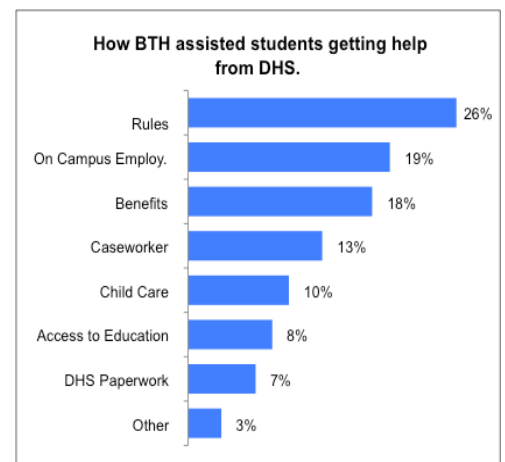


BTH PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS:

The UH Bridge to Hope program has two important functions: 1) to provide on-campus employment for students to meet First to Work (FTW) work requirements; and 2) to provide referrals and assistance to academic support services at UH. Additionally, assistance with understanding and fulfilling DHS/FTW requirements is an important function.



Overall, 86% of respondents indicated they were “generally satisfied with my experiences with the BTH program.” Indeed, 63% indicated they “strongly agreed” with this statement. Respondents indicated that Bridge to Hope met its primary objective, which is to assist students in getting what they needed from UH (71% Yes) and from DHS (55% Yes). Over 78% of respondents indicated that “Bridge to Hope staff have been helpful in answering my questions about my campus and DHS.”



Providing on-campus employment is intended to reduce the time-crunch of family, work and study time. 72% of respondents indicated that on-campus employment provided time-management for study and families, and 74% were able to maintain a full course load because of the convenience of on-campus employment.

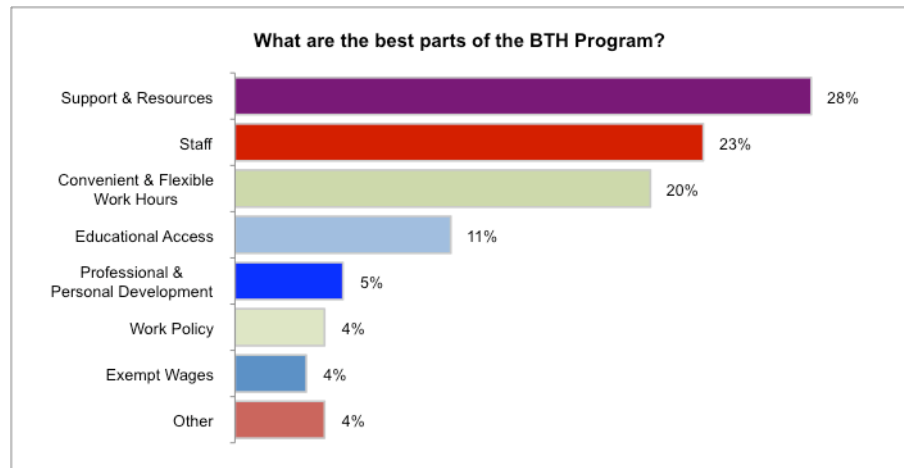
WHAT BRIDGE TO HOPE DOES WELL:

Over 82% of respondents identified “the best parts of the BTH Program” with “Support & Resources” (28%) gaining the largest response from students; and “Staff” (23%) an important second. Again reflecting the premise of convenient student employment, 20% identified their on-campus job it as one of the “best” parts of BTH.

“Without the support from this program, I would have probably been forced to drop out of school.”

As I look back, I know that I would have not been able to reach many of the DHS requirements if Bridge to Hope did not step in and help me figure it all out.”

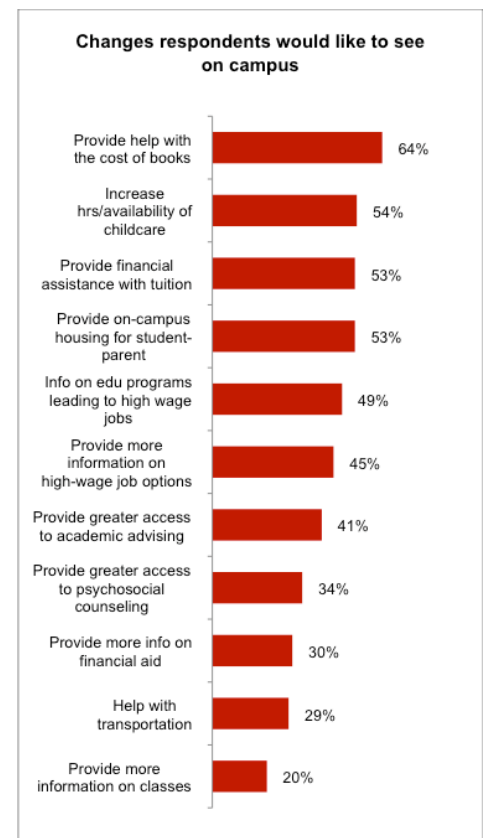
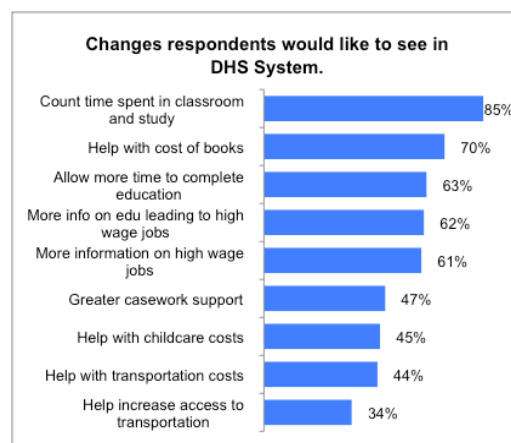
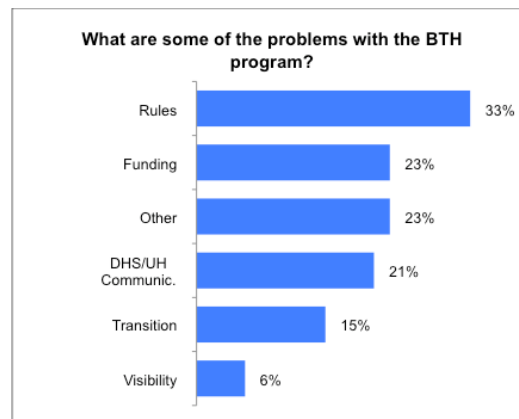
-Former BTH participant



Respondents had the opportunity to offer suggestions for changes at UH and DHS that would help low-income parents access and complete their education.

“I did not think that anyone would understand, let alone help me succeed, in my goal to finish school. With the support and encouragement of Bridge to Hope, I have succeeded and I am always challenging myself to do more.”

-Former BTH participant





AWARD WINNING & NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED:

Bridge to Hope has received recognition as a successful and innovative program from national organizations advocating for women, low-income families and students.

Bridge to Hope was first recognized nationally as a “Model College Program” by the Howard Samuels State Management and Policy Center at City University of New York (CUNY) in their 2003 publication, “Continuing a Commitment to the Higher Education Option: Model State Legislation, College Programs and Advocacy Organizations that Support Access to Post-Secondary Education for Public Assistance Recipients.”

Bridge to Hope received Honorable Mention for the 2006 “Progress in Equity Award” from the American Association of University Women.

The professional association for student affairs, NASPA (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators), recognized Bridge to Hope as the 2007 “Silver Award Winner” for Off-Campus, Commuter and Non-Traditional Programs. Bridge to Hope was also recognized as an outstanding “Innovative Program” by Western Region VI of NASPA in 2006.



THE 2007-08 BTH SURVEY:

In Fall 2007, all 391 individuals who had participated in the UH Bridge to Hope program from Fall 2000 - Spring 2007 were mailed an 89-item survey about their experience with UH Bridge to Hope and their post-UH employment (when appropriate). In all, 137 individuals returned a completed survey offering an impressive 35% response rate. These 137 individuals were evenly divided between former and currently enrolled participants.

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