

SEAN ICARI

Junior • Waiākea High School • Aspiring Structural Engineer

At first glance, Sean Icari seems to be the typical sixteen-year old. He's a junior in high school who plays soccer, runs track, and has a supportive family. What isn't so typical of Sean, though, is that he plans to graduate from Waiākea High School with forty-two college credits already on his University of Hawai'i transcript. That's equivalent to almost one and a half years of full time college work, all completed while still in high school. Though he admits to the challenges he has faced being part of the Early College Program, such as finding a balance

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between high school courses, Early College requirements, and sports, he has used resources available to him to push himself further than he thought

possible all because, as he puts it, "One of my main goals in life is to get into college; I want to be a structural engineer." Sean realizes the advantages he will have by completing college coursework before he graduates from high school: "It puts me a step ahead of other people. People are going to be fighting for scholarships and for jobs and this program puts me a step above so I can be the one to get that scholarship or I can be the one to get that job first."



LEILANI CHELLIAH

Senior • Kaimukī High School • Aspiring Pharmacist

Leilani Chelliah is a seventeen-year old senior at Kaimukī High School who also holds a part-time job. She is the daughter of immigrants and the first person from her family to earn college credit in America. Going into her senior year, she has already accumulated eighteen college credits setting her well on the way to reaching her goal of becoming a pharmacist. The thought of taking college classes in high school was, at first, scary to Leilani: "I didn't know what a college class was like and I was scared to try new things." However, with the support of her AVID teacher, classmates, and counselors at Kapi'olani Community College, she earned an A in her very first college course and is on track to graduate with thirty college credits. She describes

her Early College experience as: "Amazing because it's a great opportunity to earn college credits and it shows I can do more. It's given me more confidence to push past what I thought was my potential, and it also gave me skills that I can use in the future."

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DAEZON ARRUDA

Junior • Waiākea High School • Aspiring Registered Nurse

Daezon Arruda is an 11th grader at Waiākea High School who plans to become a registered nurse. She draws inspiration from her mother, an LPN, and her sister who is studying nursing in Texas. She is taking advantage of all that Early College can offer as she builds on the 12 college credits she has already earned on her way to graduating from high school with a total of 42. As she explains, these courses are part of her “pathway to being an RN. I’ll take biology and chemistry... because it’s the basic requirements of an RN.” Though she admits to being tentative about taking college courses in high school, she’s now glad she did: “I wasn’t sure if I could be successful in college while



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balancing (high) school. It was a great opportunity for me to get a head start and take advantage of all these free classes. Early College has empowered me to keep moving forward.” The Early College experience has changed Daezon’s outlook not just on college, but her entire life: “I wasn’t too serious about class but then I started doing my work. These classes gave me the tools that changed my whole perspective on how I should look at school and that transferred over to my high school classes and how I talk to my parents or how I talk to my peers and it all came into play when I started taking Early College classes.”



CHRISTIAN ILDEFONSO

Junior • Farrington High School • Aspiring Doctor

Christian, a junior at Farrington High School, aspires to earn an advanced degree in medicine, which will make him the first person in his family to receive a degree beyond an associate’s. He also aspires to graduate from high school with at least forty college credits. In order to reach that goal, Christian knew he had to focus on his work ethic: “I started off (high school) and didn’t know what to do; I realized I had to change and that’s when I started doing Early College and now I’m on my way to becoming valedictorian.”

According to Christian, Early College is much more than just learning content. “It taught me time management, how to speak up, and to care about what people say back. It taught me things that can help me in the future.” He admits that before taking Early College classes, he did not even want to attend college because it seemed out of his reach. Now, without the worry of cost holding him back, he doesn’t “have to worry about getting into college” and can instead focus on what it will take to finish his bachelor’s degree and apply to medical schools.

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BRANDY ALLEN

Parent • Waiākea High School

Brandy Allen has many jobs - she works for the county and in retail - but she takes no job more seriously than being a mother and foster parent. She wants what is best for her children so enrolling her daughter in Early College courses was an easy decision: "It's a once in a lifetime chance of her getting a degree. I honestly feel that this is the best program; it's a blessing." She has seen her daughter grow from being nervous and uncomfortable with the courses to being a confident student, ready to accept a challenge.

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Ms. Allen knows this will only benefit her child in the future: "This is really going to help her when she enrolls in college.

She has grown so much. She's more focused and takes more time with assignments. She takes more initiative; she's become much more mature." Ms. Allen also appreciates the savings: "(We) saved time and money. I know money is important for everyone and this was free and they paid for books."



Brandy Allen (R) with daughter Katelyn (L)



Sabrina Phelps with son Isaac Serrano (L-R)

ISAAC SERRANO & SABRINA PHELPS

Sophomore & Parent • Waipahu High School

Isaac Serrano is a sophomore at Waipahu High School who takes part in that school's Olympian program which helps him stay on track to receive his associate's degree by the time he graduates from high school. If he maintains his current pace, he will earn sixty-two college credits, and his AA, by the end of his senior year.

Describing his experience in college courses he states, "It was enjoyable. People say in college the teachers are strict but they actually do (care) and it's pretty cool being able to see the college experience."

In addition to the academic benefits, Isaac's mother, Sabrina Phelps, also fully understands the financial benefits of these programs: "It will be easier for me financially in the future with (his) college. We are all in college debt and I know personally how it can just run you into a debt hole. I don't want him to start life in that heavy debt."

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JAMES “JJ” CABRALDA

**iReady Instructor & Teacher
Leilehua High School**

At Leilehua High School, Mr. James Cabralda explains, “Early College is an eye opening experience, because parents really start buckling down and start saying ‘Hey, how are we going to pay for our child’s education?’ It’s a hand in hand kind of thing - they (parents) start figuring out how they will pay for college, and I begin asking my students ‘How are you planning to pay for college?’” Leilehua High School offers an innovative approach to Early College in that all of their students take 100% of the courses on-line. As

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a Leilehua High School teacher, James Cabralda explains, “We didn’t want to make our students choose between Early College classes and sports, band, and clubs so we thought of doing it online to make it more

available.” Since 2013, the number of Early College participants has grown ten-fold from nine to ninety students. Mr. Cabralda hopes to continue growing the program throughout his high school to offer more opportunities to his students.



ARDIS ESCHENBERG

**Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Windward Community College**

Windward Community College is committed to dual credit because it is not only a national best practice, but it also has a strong local impact. As dual credit has been implemented, WCC has been able to focus on the strengths of local high schools, to grow community partnerships, and to promote student development and success that benefit the entire community. As Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Ardis Eschenberg explains, “We have seen impacts at the individual level, where successful course completion is high, and at the macro

level, where high school college going rates have improved.” Most importantly, WCC has increased college access and success in the community for not only individual students but also for large peer networks and their families.

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