

Early College Testimonials

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KATINA SOARES

Principal, Moloka'i High School

“On-island resources and opportunities are limited for students of Moloka'i High School, a small rural high school. Early College offers our students the opportunity to not only explore a college education but have exposure to content and coursework our school is unable to provide. Early College builds confidence in our students' ability to be successful in college, serves as a bridge to the college environment, and has been instrumental in increasing our college-going rate to 66% of graduates.”



TOMMY COX

Principal, Kapa'a High School

“Early College has given the students of Kapa'a High School opportunities unlike any other they have ever had. Being from a small rural island, our students do not have many opportunities to take part in experiences such as this. They wanted courses that were rigorous, would save them money in the future, and would best prepare them for life after high school. Whether our students are earning certificates of achievement or setting themselves up for an associate or bachelor's degree, Early College has made a significant impact on their learning and their futures.”



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KELLIE FRIAS

College and Career Counselor, Hilo High School

“Early College helps our students to be better prepared when they attend college. The rigor and expectations are higher than those of our traditional high school classes, and students are thankful to have experienced their first courses in the safe environment of Early College, in a closed class amongst their peers. Early College also helps students who may not have been planning to attend college see that they can be successful in the college environment. Most of our student body would not be able to afford traditional Running Start courses while in high school. Their families may not be able to afford the tuition, and they would not be able to manage the scheduling and transportation. Our Early College program is built into the school day, making it accessible to all students. The legislative funding we have been receiving makes it possible for our school to offer these courses completely free of charge to our families.”

RICK YAMASHIRO

Early College Counselor, Campbell High School

“The Early College program has provided, in one word, ‘opportunity.’ Many students who did not feel confident about attending college were given an ‘opportunity’ to take college courses for free through the University of Hawai‘i. As they experienced success in each class, their self-confidence grew, and most left high school knowing that they will be successful in college because of the ‘opportunity’ that was provided.”

KAWEHI NGUYEN

College Readiness & Retention Facilitator, Hawai‘i Community College - Pāalamanui

“Early College is a positive investment for our community, our state, and our nation. This program allows hope to those who would never have stepped to the plate. Taking Early College courses prepares high school students for the realities of life and promotes perseverance and dedication.”



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GARYN TSURU

Director of Early College, UH West O‘ahu

“For the past nine years, I have had the privilege and honor of working with Early College students across many high schools on the Leeward coast of O‘ahu as both an instructor delivering college coursework and an administrator planning and implementing programs. I truly believe that the Early College Program is the single most effective means to cultivating college and career readiness in students, allowing them both the opportunity to simultaneously obtain college credit while completing their high school requirements, and helping them develop the skills necessary to tackle the economic challenges of the 21st century. The program serves students who come from indigent communities that are comprised of ethnic groups largely underrepresented in higher education. Many of these students are or will be the first in their family to attend college.”



CARLOS PEÑALOZA

Chancellor, Leeward Community College

“Early College allows us to serve the needs of our community, helping to raise the hope and confidence of students. We’re especially excited when our Early College students, who may not have envisioned going to college, realize that they can be successful in the future.”



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ARDIS ESCHENBERG

Chancellor, Windward Community College

“Early College is the single largest tool we have to change educational access and success in this state. We work with students who are less likely to go to college and provide engaging, hands-on college coursework. During this time, we help promote college, financial aid, and scholarship applications. We see not only larger college enrollment but greater success! I see more and more of our ‘opio find confidence in their abilities and take up the challenge of growing themselves and their community. On a larger scale, Early College has promoted better relationships, understanding, and transitions between high schools and the college. Our instructors better know their high school counterparts and get to partner together to make education happen.”

MAENETTE K.P. AH-NEE BENHAM

Chancellor, UH West O‘ahu

“The Early College Program provides our youth an opportunity to experience college-going in a supportive environment. Students learn that college is doable and not intimidating, they earn college credit that can be applied to their college transcript, and they make valuable connections with college advisors and faculty. Students are provided foundational discipline information that prepares them for their future programs of study. For many of our Early College students, their transition to college is seamless and they persist and graduate on time.”



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