

**Early College in the UH System:  
A Proposal for Growing System Leadership and Support**

*Submitted for the President's Emerging Leaders Program  
by:*

Brenda Coston  
April Goodwin  
Tiana Loo  
Jill Omori  
Alan Rosenfeld

# **Early College in the UH System: A Proposal for Growing System Leadership and Support**

## **I. Introduction**

In recent decades, the nation has seen rates of high schools students participating in Early College (EC) programs experience significant growth. EC allows students to receive dual credit for successfully completing college-level courses, typically delivered at the high school campus or online, which are counted for both college and high school level coursework. The literature shows that participation in dual credit courses provides numerous benefits to participating students including increased rates of matriculation into post-secondary education, decreased time to degree, and reduced overall debt burden upon graduation. In Hawai‘i, opportunities to participate in EC programs have increased over the last several years, from eight courses offered in 2012-13 to 269 offered in 2017-18. Although this is a definite move in the right direction, there are serious obstacles to student participation, including funding, access and administrative support. This proposal explores these issues and provides low-cost, high-impact recommendations that may help remedy the existing deficit in resources that is preventing equitable access to EC learning opportunities to all the high school students in Hawai‘i. System-level leadership that uniformly supports all 10 UH campuses in relation to overseeing policy, procedures and technical assistance plans would provide the necessary tools for campuses to meet the increasing demand for EC offerings across the state.

## **II. Problem Identification**

Currently, there is no comprehensive systemwide leadership or support for EC in Hawai‘i. Limited resources have been dedicated to EC by way of scholarships for qualified students (through GEAR UP) and partial course cost payments to participating Hawai‘i Department of Education (HIDOE) schools (through legislative funding), both administered by Hawai‘i P-20 Partnerships for Education (P-20), and though limited technical assistance has been provided to selected high schools, the support is not uniformly distributed to the 10 UH campuses and there remain several areas of need to be addressed to make EC in the UH system an equitable, consistent, well-aligned opportunity available to all of Hawai‘i’s high school students.

While EC has expanded opportunities for Hawai‘i residents to attend college on the U.S. mainland, the University of Hawai‘i has a vested interest in attracting EC participants to its 10-campus System. Currently, 46% of Dual Credit high school graduates matriculate into the UH System and that number has been steadily *decreasing* as EC offerings have expanded. This means that while EC growth has been successful in terms of addressing Hawai‘i’s “55 by ‘25” goal, it may in fact be steering local high school students away from the UH System. After reviewing the current literature on EC and conducting a series of interviews with P-20 staff and early college liaisons at several UH campuses, several themes rose to the surface as areas of

need that are not currently being addressed through any sort of systematic approach. The primary issues are related to funding and administrative practices, which require consistent leadership and support to address. This brief outlines these key issues and presents recommendations for possible interventions at the UH System level that can provide high-impact, low-cost support to equally benefit all 10 campuses and improve EC programs throughout the State of Hawai'i.

#### **A. *Funding***

Despite some state, federal, and private funding support for EC courses (administered by P-20), there remains a clear absence of a system wide funding structure that enables colleges and universities to fully recover the costs of instruction (which was identified by several of the interviewees as a disincentive to engage in early college programming). The UH System MOA allows \$6,000 for 3-credit courses and \$8,000 for 4-credit courses, which in some cases does not even pay for the instructor buyout, much less the administrative costs to support the program and wrap-around student services. In the 2017 legislative session, the HIDOE received \$1 million in general funds to support EC courses in FY 17-18 and an additional \$1 million for FY 18-19. At the start of this current legislative session, the HIDOE and Governor Ige submitted a request for another \$1 million to support EC programs which would increase the funding for FY 18-19 to \$2 million. The decision on this funding will be determined at the end of the current legislative session in May. There is also a bill in the legislature this session (HB 2010/SB2224) that would allocate some funding to the HIDOE from the Convention Center special fund to EC courses that are geared toward Hospitality and Tourism Industry careers.

Based on interviews conducted with P-20 and other UH administrators, it seems that despite the fact that new funding streams are becoming available to support EC, the majority (if not all) is held centrally and given out in small grants on a school-by-school basis. This ad hoc approach to funding EC programs across the system is not sustainable nor is it comprehensive. For example, the EC High School Program grant, which is funded by the state legislature and administered by P-20, currently provides partial funding to only 12 selected high schools to cover the cost of course delivery, but these grants account for only a minority of participating high schools, so the benefits do not reach all students in the state.

Although the costs of Early College are largely covered by legislative appropriations and external grants, there is no guarantee that this funding will persist into the future. Any cessation in funding support would be devastating to current EC students who are working towards particular academic goals such as associate's degrees. Furthermore, the availability of EC programs varies greatly from one high school to the next, leaving many prospective EC students unserved. Hawai'i needs to align with best national practices to ensure that all students in the state have the same opportunity to engage in EC courses in a cost-effective fashion for students and campuses alike.

## ***B. Administrative Practices***

A pressing concern of nearly each campus liaison who was interviewed by this team was the need for greater technical support, consistency, and guidance for EC programming. The application and intake process varies from school to school, college campus to college campus, and island to island. There are various inconsistencies across programs that lead to a lower number of students, high level of administrative monitoring, and an excess of unnecessary work on both student and school/campus administrators. The time and resource requirements are proving to be an obstacle for effective admittance and monitoring of students. These issues are elaborated upon below.

### Admissions and Registration

- There are two applications (UH System application and Dual Credit application) per campus and per semester to process an EC student.
  - Campuses are not consistent in when to allow a student to register for a class, as some require one or both applications to be processed prior to registration.
  - There are inconsistencies in how the Dual Credit form is completed for each campus and where the form is submitted.
  - Some campuses require students to complete a new application if they wish to add or drop a course, rather than enabling STAR to serve this purpose.
- There are additional labor intensive actions required for an EC application which are not needed for a traditional student application.
  - Each EC student application must be reviewed to ensure their major is accurate in Banner, since many students input the incorrect major on the EC application, whereas traditional student applications do not need to be monitored.
  - Once accepted, the student must be made inactive for future terms in Banner to ensure the student is NOT eligible to register for future terms, whereas EC is only good for one semester.
- Data entry varies, and data entry practices are inconsistent.
  - Data gathering for dual credit has proved difficult as all dual credit students are entered into Banner without disaggregating by Running Start, EC, or Jump Start. This lack of disaggregated data prevents schools and campuses from making evidence-informed decisions about EC programming.
- Deadlines vary from campus to campus; some campuses have strict deadlines, while others do not.
  - This leads to lower participation and enrollment if a class is cancelled by the campus and the student wants to take a similar class offered through another campus, but their deadline has already passed.

### Placement

- The community colleges have the same placement measures via Accuplacer for Math and English courses. However, placement ranges vary from campus to campus so students can place into college level at one campus, while the same score would qualify them for developmental courses at another campus.
- UH West O‘ahu does not accept Accuplacer scores for placement into English classes; they use writing samples. This inconsistency is confusing for students who place into ENG 100 for an EC course offered through Leeward CC but may not necessarily place into ENG 100 through the ENG 100 course offered by UHWO.

### Requesting EC Courses

- Processes for managing high school requests to participate in EC vary from campus to campus. It ranges from email requests to completion of a physical form.

### Health Clearance

- Many campuses require the TB and MMR Health Clearances prior to a student registering for classes, however this policy is not consistent across all 10 UH campuses.

## **III. Conclusion**

### **Administrative Recommendation:**

Policy and administrative guidance and leadership should be managed by a unit at the System level to ensure adequate levels of support to all 10 UH campuses. Given the current structure of UH System administration, this responsibility would likely reside in Hawai‘i P-20 Partnerships for Education or in the Office of the Vice President for Academic Planning and Policy. This unit would consist of at least two positions: a Director for Early College Initiatives (high banded APT or EM position) and a support staff (APT). This team would take a leadership role to foster successful EC programming across all 10 UH campuses by creating and disseminating policies and practices and coordinating and providing technical assistance to campus liaisons.

Specifically, responsibilities would include:

- 1) Setting uniform policies related to minors on campus, students with disabilities, HIPPA, FERPA, Title IX, etc.,
- 2) Creating clear and consistent administrative processes around admissions and registration practices,
- 3) Generating and disseminating a shared application, waivers and other essential documents,
- 4) Creating meaningful practices around data use and collection,
- 5) Providing technical assistance to campuses to ensure a consistent understanding of current processes and procedures,

- 6) Supporting campuses in strategic program planning and development (including establishing guided pathways, course sequencing approaches, etc.),
- 7) Seeking funding opportunities to support EC programs and students,
- 8) Actively maintaining a knowledge base of current EC best practices around the nation, liaising with relevant organizations and attending conferences and meetings and sharing that information back to campus liaisons.

**Programmatic Recommendations (to be overseen by the newly created EC unit):**

- Support the creation of vertically aligned EC educational pathways that will enable local high school students to matriculate directly into specific academic majors at the UH campus of their choice. EC programs provide UH campuses with a captive audience to market and promote their academic programs. However, in order for this partnership to be mutually beneficial and effective, college faculty must develop curricula and deliver courses that directly respond to the interests of high school students, counselors, administrators, and parents. Hawai‘i’s public schools are increasingly relying upon the implementation of academies to ensure students’ career readiness. Common examples include Health Sciences, Business, STEM, Creative Media, and Public and Human Services. Rather than providing an array of General Education courses, faculty in specific disciplines connected to high school academies should create scaffolded pathways that direct students from their academy into a related college major at a chosen UH campus. It will also be critical for campus faculty to deliver EC courses themselves (rather than farming them out to adjuncts) and to invite faculty colleagues to the EC classrooms for guest lectures and meet-and-greet sessions. The development of personal mentor relationships will make EC students feel more connected to the UH campus providing EC instruction and more attracted to the possibility of matriculating at that specific institution rather than pursuing a college degree on the mainland.
- Administer strategic incentives to encourage faculty to go to off-campus sites: funding for gas/mileage or stipends as long as these initiatives are in agreement with the UHPA-BOR collective bargaining agreement. Training for instructors on teaching high school students.
- Create a web app for high school students and their families that would include a range of helpful links to websites, forms and applications in addition to variety of other resources.
- Fund full tuition for all qualifying EC students.
- Generate incentives for students to enroll in UH system institutions. This could include benefits such as free parking, books and supplies, waived student fees, etc..

**Possible Trade-offs:**

- The expense of creating new positions or redefining existing positions at the System level. This proposal suggests that the best place for a new Director of EC Initiatives

position would be most logically housed at P-20. This could take resources away from other priority areas or require additional funding.

- Moving from the status quo approach of working mainly with select institutions to provide support and funding to a model that is inclusive of all 10 campuses may present administrative and personnel obstacles.
- Shifting from the current System role which could be defined as that of “coordinator” to one of leadership may raise philosophical issues within current structures.

**Interviews Conducted:**

Sarah Akina, Counselor, Windward CC

Michael Bitter, Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, UH Hilo

Glenn Dee-Kuwaye, EC Coordinator, Hawai'i CC

James Dire, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Kaua'i CC

Kelley Dudoit, Coordinator, Moloka'i EC Programs

Linda Fujitani, Academic Advisor, Maui College

Keith Hayashi, Principal, Waipahu High School

Sheryl Higa, Assistant Registrar, Leeward CC

Kory Ann Jury, College and Career Counselor, Pearl City High School

Kami Kato, EC Coordinator, Leeward CC

Denise Konan, Dean, College of Social Sciences, UH Mānoa

Elten Lau, College Counselor, Wai'anae High School

Karen Lee, Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Honolulu CC

Garyn Tsuru, Director of College and Career Readiness Initiatives, UH West O'ahu

Pearl Wu, Instructor of Outreach/Orientation, Honolulu CC

Drake Zintgraff, Outreach Counselor, Kapi'olani CC