NEWS RELEASE
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External Affairs and University Relations

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I AWARDED $3.4 MILLION FOR LOW-INCOME STUDENTS

HONOLULU - The University of Hawai‘i has been awarded $3.4 million in 2011-12 to increase the number of low-income middle and high school students statewide who are prepared to enter and succeed in post-secondary education through GEAR UP Hawai‘i, the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs from the U.S. Department of Education.

The federal GEAR UP program provides seven-year, matching grants to states and partnerships for services that improve access to and success in higher education at high-poverty middle and high schools statewide. GEAR UP Hawai‘i has been serving Hawai‘i’s low-income youth since 2000, preparing them for success in college.

“This grant will allow us to continue the important work of GEAR UP in Hawai‘i. Since 2000, the University of Hawai‘i and the Hawai‘i Department of Education have partnered closely together to serve Hawai‘i’s students, who have benefitted from GEAR UP programs that support the transition of students from K-12 through post-secondary education,” said Linda Johnsrud, University of Hawai‘i Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs/Provost. “GEAR UP Hawai‘i’s work is aligned to the University’s Hawai‘i Graduation Initiative, which promotes successful completion of college.”

“Hawai‘i’s public school students will continue to greatly benefit from programs supported through GEAR UP,” said Hawai‘i Department of Education Superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi. “Preparing our students to graduate college- and career-ready and to succeed in today’s global environment is critical to our state’s future economic success and a key component of Hawai‘i’s Race to the Top education reform plan.”

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Hawai‘i P-20 Partnerships for Education has been responsible for oversight of GEAR UP Hawai‘i and served as the lead in preparing the grant proposal for this award.

“These GEAR UP funds have allowed us to campaign for a more rigorous high school diploma to prepare our youth for success, and will allow us to continue working on, and developing new programs to achieve Hawaii P-20’s statewide goal of 55 percent of working age adults having a two- or four-year college degree by 2025,” said Karen Lee, University of Hawai‘i Associate Vice President and Executive Director of Hawai‘i P-20.

"For the first time, the new grant will allow us to serve students into their first year in college, providing them the support they need to successfully transition into postsecondary education." said Angela Jackson, GEAR UP Project Director of Hawai‘i P-20. “We will continue to support middle and high schools with programs such as Running Start, which give students the skills and knowledge needed for successful transitions into higher education. GEAR UP funds also provide professional development training for teachers, assistance with financial aid and scholarships, awareness of college application requirements, and many other programs focused on supporting students’ success.”

Through the partnership of the University of Hawai‘i, the Hawai‘i Department of Education, local community organizations, government agencies, and businesses, GEAR UP in Hawai‘i will provide services to nearly 21,000 students between 2011 and 2018.

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Hawai‘i P-20 Partnerships for Education, a statewide partnership led by the Early Learning Council, the Hawai‘i State Department of Education and the University of Hawai‘i System works to strengthen the education pipeline from early childhood through higher education so that all students achieve college and career success. Hawai‘i P-20’s partners share a sense of urgency about the need to improve Hawai‘i’s educational outcomes in an increasingly global economy, and have established a goal of 55 percent of Hawai‘i’s working age adults having a two- or four-year college degree by 2025. For more information, visit [http://www.p20hawaii.org](http://www.p20hawaii.org).