RESEARCH DESIGN

Honolulu Community College faculty believe that all Associate of Arts graduates should develop greater understanding of their physical/cultural Hawaiian, Asian, Pacific environment.

As a consequence, when UH-Manoa (university to which the majority of HCC students transfer) adopted a Hawaiian, Asian, Pacific focus requirement as part of their revised (2001) general education requirements, HCC quickly incorporated the requirement as part of the A.A. Degree expectations.

Courses qualifying for the “H” (Hawaiian/Asian/Pacific) Focus designation are reviewed by the H-Focus Board and then periodically assessed to assure that the classes meet the “hallmarks” associated with the designation:

1. The content should reflect the intersection of Asian and/or Pacific Island cultures with Native Hawaiian culture.
2. A class can use any disciplinary or multi-disciplinary approach provided that a component of the class uses assignments or practica that encourage learning that comes from the cultural perspectives, values, and world views rooted in the experience of peoples indigenous to Hawai‘i, the Pacific, and Asia.
3. A class should include at least one topic that is crucial to an understanding of the histories, or cultures, or beliefs, or the arts, or the societal, or political, or economic, or technological processes of these regions; for example, the relationships of societal structures to the natural environment.
4. A class should involve an in-depth analysis or understanding of the issues being studied in the hope of fostering multi-cultural respect and understanding.

David Cleveland (HCC Assessment Researcher) and Jan Petersen (H-Focus Chair) collaborated on the development of a revised H-Focus Evaluation Form for the Spring 2006 evaluation.

Online and hard copy versions of the evaluation were provided to H-Focus faculty to administer to their classes. 90 students in all but one of the H-Focus classes completed the evaluation.

FINDINGS

H Focus Classes Far Exceed H-Focus Hallmark Expectations

♦ 90% of respondents report that 75% or more of the class focused on H/A/P issues.
♦ 93% of respondents report that 75% or more of the class assignments focused on H/A/P issues.
♦ 87% of respondents report that they gained a great deal more understanding about H/A/P issues.
♦ 84% of respondents report that they gained a great deal more appreciation for these regions/cultures

COMMENTS VERIFY DEVELOPMENT OF UNDERSTANDING/APPRECIATION OF H/A/P ISSUES

Understanding more about the problems that Native Hawaiian facing and what American did in these pacific areas especially in Hawaii. It makes me more close related to this place. ... I can see now how the Hawaiians are similar to other Asian cultures

It made me realize that there is much out there than Hawaii. So much is going on in the world and there is so much to see and experience. Mr Wong is a great educator who works hard to try and make a point and provide clear understandings to his students. He opens up the world to us and clearly makes us think. Why? Well, because he doesn’t have the answers just like us. We are in search for our own answers and desires. Nobody can live your life except you. Education, the mind, and knowledge are the keys to power and success

CONCLUSION

The H-Focus requirement is operating to effectively ensure the development of H/A/P understanding/appreciation in HCC A.A. graduates (verified by another study of Spring 2006 A.A. Graduates); however, recent changes at UH-Manoa that limit the H-Focus designation to classes focusing primarily on Hawaiian topics/issues are causing the college to reconsider how to ensure the continued development of H/A/P understanding while avoiding confusion about the transferability of our H-focus designation.