SLOWING TO A JOG

HCC’s Running Start Program
Fifth Year Evaluation

FALL 2006

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Running Start Program Background

During the summer of 2000, Honolulu Community College linked with Honolulu School District high schools to launch a legislatively mandated Running Start program (inspired by a similar program in Washington) in Hawaii.

Four previous studies - Out of the Blocks, The Second Lap, Getting in Stride, and Stalled at the Hurdles - reported on each of the first four years of the Running Start program at HCC.

The goals of the Running Start Program include:

- Accelerate student educational progress
- Ease the transition from high school to college
- Reduce taxpayer and family educational expenses
  (State of Washington - 2004 - Taxpayer savings: $36.4 million; Family savings: $23.1 million)
- Enrich/expand educational options for talented high school students
- Improve articulation - linking Hawaii’s high schools and colleges
- Provide an alternative educational environment for talented, but disenchanted, high school students
- Link high school and college educators to coordinate and improve preparatory education
- Prepare students for the independence and freedom they experience within the collegiate environment

Running Start students simultaneously earn high school and college credits while adjusting to college expectations/culture. If Washington’s experience is any indicator of the direction of the Hawaii program, increasing numbers of high school students will gradually shift to heavy college loads (numerous Washington RS students complete high school and Associate of Arts degrees simultaneously and, therefore, become full fledged college juniors after high school graduation).

CONTENTS OF THIS REPORT

This report includes findings from the Summer 2006 Running Start student survey, RS student demographic and performance data, discussions with HCC administrators, dual enrollment findings from the mainland, and comments/recommendations by the researchers - Professors David Cleveland (Sociology) and Jean Maslowski (Counseling).

SURVEY DESIGN AND RESULTS

Summer 2006 RS students were invited (personalized letters from the researchers and encouragement from their faculty) to complete an on-line (hard copy was available) questionnaire.
Respondent Demographics

- Response rate = 64% (71 of 111 students)
- Gender = 61% Female; 39% Male
- Median age = 16
- Age Distribution = 12% age 15
  39% age 16
  49% age 17
  0% age 18
- Ethnic Identification = 45% Chinese
  (Primary) 23% Japanese
  9% Filipino
  1% Hawn./Part Hawn.
  6% Caucasian
  0% Other Pacific Islander
  17% Other

FEEDER HIGH SCHOOLS - McKinley Remains Primary Feeder

While qualified students from any public high school are eligible to enroll in Running Start, HCC’s Summer 2006 Program drew students from only a handful of high schools. 59% (42) of respondents came from a single high school - McKinley. This suggests that the publicity effort for RS remains largely within the Honolulu School District and is far more effective at McKinley (coordinated by MHS Counselor - Cynthia Kunimura) than at other Honolulu public schools. Only two respondents attended Farrington High School (closest high school to HCC).

If McKinley’s recruitment efforts can be duplicated at nearby Farrington and Moanalua High Schools and then extended to other Hawaii public and private high schools, RS enrollments at the college and throughout the UH System will skyrocket.

Chart/Table # 1

![Pie chart showing school distribution](chart.png)

Last summer’s Getting In Stride report noted the low participation rate by students from neighboring high schools with high minority student populations. The report recommended that
recruitment efforts at these schools (to boost minority RS enrollment) be strengthened. McKinley High continues to serve as the major minority RS feeder school - no significant enrollment gains were realized at other high schools.

**MOST (78%) RS STUDENTS PLAN GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL DEGREES**

RS students aim high. All respondents plan to earn baccalaureate or higher college degrees. Over three-fourths of respondents plan to earn graduate or professional degrees.

![Chart/Table # 2](chart.png)

**DIVERSE COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY PLANS**

RS student eventual academic goals demonstrate the degree to which they differ from traditional community college students. They also consider a far wider range of transfer options than do other HCC Associate of Arts students. A 1993 study of HCC Associate of Arts students (*Reaching for the Ring*) reported that 82% planned to transfer and most of those (82%) planned to transfer to UH-Manoa.

While most of 2005 RS respondents include UH-Manoa as a possible college choice after high school, dozens of other colleges/universities are being considered, including:


While RS students begin their college education at Honolulu Community College, **only three respondents are considering HCC after high school graduation**.

Almost all RS students will enroll at four year institutions. They use the RS experience to hone college academic and social skills, launch college careers, gain confidence, and earn credits that accelerate the completion of baccalaureate and advanced degrees.
RS STUDENTS CONTEMPLATE DIVERSE CAREERS

Eventual career/professions contemplated by RS students include:

Business, computer programming, education/teaching, physician, pharmacy, engineering (various specialities), film/movie production, social work, dentistry, chemistry, orthodontics, acting, fashion/design, special education, law, nursing, biology, pastry chef, hotel management, dental hygiene, graphic design, coaching, real estate, accounting, computer networking, personal trainer, psychology, international relations, chef, physical therapy/sports medicine, architecture, math/physics, occupational therapy, aviation, music.

MAJORITY: 1ST GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

A major mission of community colleges is to broaden access to higher education by offering students an opportunity to begin college at a low cost, close to home, student-centered institution that prioritizes teaching and individual student attention.

The Running Start Program provides an early opportunity for capable high school students to discover that they can succeed in college. These successful experiences translate to a higher “college going rate” for students who may otherwise not attend college.

Only 34% of the fathers of respondents have baccalaureate or higher degrees (three possess graduate degrees); only 27% of the mothers of respondents have baccalaureate or higher degrees (five possess graduate degrees).

44% of their fathers and 51% of RS mothers never attended any college.

The fact that fewer than a third of their parents possess any type of college degree suggests that the RS Program helps HCC fulfill its basic mission: broadening higher educational access.

While these RS students have fairly clear college and career goals, since many come from non-college educated families, extra college counseling/guiding assistance may be required to maximize their transfer options. Parents who have not attended college are far less likely to understand college application, admission, financial aid, and matriculation processes.

MOST ARE SOLID HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMERS - Mean HS GPA = 3.39

RS students report high school GPA’s that range from 2.5 to 4.10 with a mean of 3.39.

Many mainland dual enrollment/dual credit programs limit admission to high performing high school students. When the Hawaii RS pilot program was designed (collaborative effort between UH-HCC and the Department of Education), planners decided to open the Hawaii RS program to any student who qualified for college classes (placement test scores) and who was deemed capable by the sending high school. This liberalized eligibility policy was adopted to permit the entry of students who may be quite talented and prepared for college, but, who for whatever reason (boredom, alienation, dislike of the high school environment, lack of motivation) don’t possess high grade point averages.

To date, this liberalized open admissions policy seems to be working effectively as almost all Running Start students fare well in their HCC courses - regardless of their high school grade...
point averages. This is likely the result of careful screening and monitoring of RS students. High school and HCC counselors intervene when a RS student encounters difficulty in a class.

35% OF RESPONDENTS HAVE TAKEN AP CLASSES

About a third (35%) of respondents report having previous AP experience. Students with AP experience feel somewhat better prepared for college than students without such AP experience.

15 YEAR OLDS FEEL SOMEWHAT LESS PREPARED

Eight (12%) respondents are fifteen years old. Presumably, these younger students are carefully screened on the basis of academic preparation and maturity before being allowed to enter the RS Program. In any case, only 50% of 15 year old respondents reported feeling Extremely Well or Well prepared for college coursework expectations as compared to 84% of 18 year old respondents.

GEAR UP FUNDING - MAJOR DROP - ONLY A QUARTER (26%)

A major difference between the Hawaii and Washington Running Start Programs is Washington public schools pay the college tuition expenses for their RS students. Hawaii Act #236 (Year 2000) mandated the development of the Running Start Program in Hawaii; however, the mandate was unfunded and specifies that RS students will pay their own tuition/fees.

This significant difference caused many in Hawaii to be concerned that our Running Start program would draw only relatively affluent students who were already planning college careers and who could easily afford UH Community College fees.

The serendipitous, nearly simultaneous launch of Hawaii’s Gear Up Program ($10 million Federal grant to support a federal program whose mission is to significantly increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education) that pays the tuition and book expenses for RS students who are designated as financially needy as a result of their free or subsidized lunch status at their high schools has assured students from less advantaged backgrounds entrance into our Running Start Program. The Gear Up grant eligibility criteria has, however, been revised to prioritize first time RS students - resulting in a significant decrease (from 55% to 26%) in the percentage of HCC RS students supported by Gear Up funding. (Gear Up website: http://gearup.hawaii.edu/about.htm)

CHART/TABLE # 3

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66.7% | Self |

2.9% |

26.1% |

4.3% | Parent/Se f |

G AR UP |
While the RS Program is well reviewed by virtually all respondents (100% rate it as Excellent or Good), Gear Up students are somewhat less enthusiastic about the RS Program than are students from more affluent backgrounds - only 44% of Gear Up students gave the RS Program an EXCELLENT rating as compared to 72% of students whose tuition was paid by their parents or themselves.

In the summer of 2005, Gear Up funding facilitated early college enrollment for over half of RS respondents; this year Gear Up eligibility criteria reduced Gear Up participation to about a quarter of RS respondents. The fact that most of RS participants are first generation college students suggests that Gear Up funding successfully targets students who need an additional financial/counseling boost to enter college programs. Further evidence that Gear Up reaches their targeted group is revealed with cross tabulation analysis that shows that 33% of Non-Gear Up fathers have baccalaureate or higher college degrees compared to only 6% of fathers (completing baccalaureate or higher) of Gear Up students.

Less than a half (46%) of Gear Up supported students report that they definitely or probably would have enrolled in RS Program if Gear Up funding had not been available. Obviously, without Gear Up funding, many of the neediest RS students would not be in the program.

HIGH SUCCESS RATE - RS STUDENTS EXPECT TO PASS THEIR CLASSES

All respondents (100%) expected to pass all of their HCC classes.

HIGH SCHOOL EXTRACURRICULAR INVOLVEMENT MAINTAINED

A frequently heard concern from high school educators and families is that enrollment in RS may decrease involvement in high school extracurricular activities.

RS student responses should dispel such concerns: 94% of respondents plan to maintain or increase their participation in high school extracurricular activities. More students actually plan to increase their participation in high school activities (21%) than decrease participation in high school activities (6%).

CHART/TABLE # 4
HCC CLASSES AND FACULTY LAUDED

RS students give very high marks to their HCC classes (96% Excellent or Good) and the individual attention and support they receive from HCC faculty. (88% Excellent or Good)

RS STUDENTS FEEL WELL PREPARED FOR THE PROGRAM

As seen in the bar graph below, RS students report that they were generally well prepared for the their RS experiences. They understood the necessity to be individually responsible, understood college coursework expectations, and felt comfortable with the behavioral expectations of the college environment. They feel less prepared for Writing & Mathematical Reasoning and least prepared for Classroom Discussions.

CHART/TABLE # 6
Perception of Preparedness - Rank ordered by Mean Value
(1.0 = Extremely Well Prepared ..... 5.0 = Poorly Prepared)
RESPONDENTS FEEL WELL ACCEPTED

RS students feel their college enrollment is well accepted by their high schools, friends, family, and faculty. They feel somewhat less accepted by “regular” HCC students; however, even here none of them felt poorly accepted and 85% report that they are well or extremely well accepted.

CHART/TABLE # 7

RAVE REVIEWS FROM PARTICIPANTS

73% of respondents rated the OVERALL RS experience as EXCELLENT and 24% rated it as GOOD. No respondent rated the experience as POOR and only two respondents (3%) rated RS as FAIR.

While all aspects of the RS Program received favorable reviews, RS students gave the highest marks to the overall quality of RS Program, the quality of the assistance provided by the high school and college counselors, the individual attention and support provided by the college instructor(s).

Lowest marks (still fine marks - over 90% Excellent or Good) were given to the application and registration processes.

CHART/TABLE # 8    Rating the Quality of RS    (Excellent to Poor)
RESPONDENTS RECOMMEND RS TO CLASSMATES

73% of RS students will Definitely Recommend RS to their high school classmates; 20% will Probably Recommend RS; 5% will Maybe Recommend - and only one respondent will Probably Not Recommend RS.

CHART/TABLE # 9

RS STUDENTS PREFER COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT

62% of respondents strongly preferred or preferred the collegiate environment; 27% had no preference; and only 11% of respondents strongly preferred or preferred the high school environment.

CHART/TABLE # 10
Running Start STUDENT COMMENTS

Respondents were given an opportunity to add comments about what they liked best and least about the program; and anything else they wanted to say about the program.

Comments are often the richest source of insights of an evaluative process.

WHAT THEY LIKE BEST

As can be seen in the selected responses below, students liked getting dual credit, the preparation for the transition to college, their classes, the freedom of the college environment, their instructors, the individual assistance they received, the financial support provided by Gear Up, the overall college environment, and the confidence they developed by succeeding in college courses.

I like that I have a chance to experience college early. I also like that everyone is there to learn unlike HS. ... I like how Running Start gives me the opportunity to experience how a college class is. Another thing is that it lets me get a head start in earning credits and helps me be prepare in getting use to college life when I get into college. ... I have greatly benefitted from the Running Start program because now I have first-hand experience of what college life will be like, not only academically but socially. I know what to expect once I get here, and I don't have to worry about being lost or having no idea what to do. Furthermore, I've gotten a head start on earning college credits which gives me less core requirements to worry about and makes me that much more closer to getting my college degree. Running Start is an excellent program that I believe will benefit all high school students. ... I really like the fact that it gave me a feel and experience of what college will be like, maybe not the dorming part or anything, but mainly what kind of classes to expect and what kind of workload to expect. I also like the way that we could kind show up to class when ever we wanted to, though I never really took advantage of it like others do. ... All the aspects of Running Start are good. I think it's a good opportunity for high school students to participate in this program. ... I really enjoyed the Running Start Orientation. The whole Running Start program was a great experience for me. ... I like that not only can I get a taste of a college course and credit, but I also receive high school credit as well. I really liked the friendly atmosphere of Honolulu Community College and the welcoming faculty that were more than willing to help. These easy-to-approach people helped to enhance my experience with Running Start. The informative orientation held a couple days before the first day of class was also extremely helpful and fun as there were prizes involved! I just like the idea that I am able to operate (somewhat functionally) at the college level which shows me that I will be able to handle college and college level work if I focus. ... The teachers, and being able to pick your schedule. Knowing what will be on midterms and finals ... The teacher is very enthusiastic and makes the class very enjoyable. ... I liked that I could choose when I wanted to take my class. The new class was shorter, where it was only one hour as opposed to six. I also liked how I could choose when I could go to class, and which classes I wanted to take... The GEAR UP grant also helped in obtaining school supplies for my Running Start course. ... I liked the college environment and class schedules. Also the professor had much more interesting topics to discuss in class compared to high school classes. I enjoyed the feeling of independence as well. ... I liked my instructor because I learned a lot with the help of him being entertaining. The arrangement of the class was also good, because there was not an overload of assignments. ... Our Teacher was funny and taught us in a understanding way. He was always available if we needed help with anything. ... The lectures were interesting and understandable.
WHAT THEY LIKE LEAST

The comments below reveal that many RS students are dissatisfied with the new limits on Gear Up funding. Some expressed some degree of dissatisfaction with the admissions/registration processes and want more access to counselors. Some didn’t like the lecture format of many college classrooms. Others felt somewhat overwhelmed by the pace and expectations of their college classes. Some commented negatively about the expense of tuition and books.

I didn’t really like being in a class with students who were a lot older and who are actually in college. I mean in some ways it was good to have them in the class because we could learn a lot from them, but it also made me feel that I was somewhat inferior to them since they’re older and know a lot more than I do. I always had this feeling that I didn’t really belong in their class because I’m not as good at the class as they might be. I’d rather have been in a class of only running start kids. .... how it was early .... The material was a lot harder ..... I didn’t like the fact that the books were so expensive, but that’s something that can’t be helped. .... The only thing I like least about Running Start is the fact that it doesn’t apply to all colleges. I mean it’s hard to transfer all the credits to the certain college that I’m intending to go to. The program basically only refers to all the federal funding schools and sadly doesn’t allow us Running Start Student to attend other colleges in the state such as HPC or HBC. ... The reading. ... The lecture and the exam. .... In college you have to study harder because there is only two exams: a mid-term and a final. Also there is only one term paper to complete. But with hard work, attending class everyday, and paying attention in class, achieving a good grade isn’t too hard. .... I wanted to take another class. ... That you have to set up an account to see your grade. I don’t have Internet. ... ... hard exams and note-taking ... Considering that I only took one class during this summer semester, I am not aware of the rigors involved in taking a full course load of classes. Also, I don’t like the fact that some of my prospective colleges do not accept the running start credit, although I would feel better prepared to take that college’s classes. ... The transition from HS to college classes was tough at first. .... I’m in Gear-Up but I still had to pay the $300+ for the class. I’m guessing it’s because of the fact that I’m not a part of free and reduced lunch, but still it would’ve been nice to have a little discount =) ... I feel that Running Start is a great program that preps high school students for college. However, I feel that children with financial difficulties should be awarded Gear Up scholarships more than once. It gives them an opportunity to learn more instead of wasting time doing useless things like playing games. Overall, the program was pretty good. .... The aspect of Running Start I liked the least was that we are only given the opportunity by the GEAR UP Scholarship once. Without the scholarship many will be unable to again participate in the Running Start program. .... The length of the semester ... I had already learned the lessons taught in class. ..... exams, taking notes, no homework for us to understand the material of the subject. .... Price ..... I didn’t like all the reading we had to do to prepare for our assignments. ... I really didn’t like to have to write the paper and the tests. ... taking the compass test ..... I don’t like the lack of communication between the professors and students ... The work is more concentrated and difficult than high school, but I expected this. ... I do not like how all RS students do not have the opportunity for Gear Up Scholarships. ... Some of the students were rude in class, something that you won’t see in high school. ... Registration process was a pain - had to make several trips to campus. ... I least like the height of the costs. ... Classes are expensive. ..... I don’t qualify for Gear Up, so I am unable to get the grant. .... I don’t like the fact that smoking is everywhere (outside). ... The only aspect that I like least about the RS program, is that during the summer the classes are accelerated and so a lot of the time the work is crammed and you have to be very focus in order to complete all of your assignments on time. .... The only thing that I did not enjoy about RS is that the they tried to cover everything so fast. Maybe if you guys take your time and cover a little less, then we will actually learn more.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS/COMMENTS

Many respondents want suggest that more scholarship/financial aid be provided to reduce college enrollment costs; more Running Start publicity; an improved registration process; more convenient class times; and better coordination between community colleges.
I'd say that it could possibly be improved by only having classes with only Running Start kids in it, but it wouldn't really work out though because each kid signs up for different courses for different time periods and it'd be a waste for a professor to be teaching only like 3 to 5 or so kids in a class.

Because I took the summer session without any funding support, I (parents) needed to pay entirely for the $339 tuition and the cost of textbooks. Although there is assistance for students with low income, it would be nice if students in general had their textbooks helped paid for or borrowed instead. It was a small English textbook, even as used books, for over $70. ... I think that RS should publicize itself more (because I didn't even know such a program existed until some of my friends told me that they had to go somewhere after school -- college). Also, maybe the differences (if there are any) among the community colleges could be shown. ... nothing much... for me to sleep earlier? ..... nothing cause it's already great!!!!!!! as is. ... All I really ask is to allow Running Start in other colleges around the state because every student can make it a big trip just to go to class. It also gives student the opportunity to try out different colleges to making their decisions easier to make.... Maybe there can be more brochures or talks about the Running Start Program. I didn't know about this program until this year. If I had known about it in my Sophomore year, then I probably would have considered taking it last summer as well. ... Tell students that if they are able to handle then it's okay to take 2 classes. ... Make the application process easier.... The program was very well prepared, where it was in a sense similar to high school, but yet offered a great deal of independence. In other words, it was a great transitioning tool for more rigorous schedules. Improvements that are made would probably be very minor, if any. ... Free books that we could return back to the class after its done with. ... Some things that could improve the program is that more federal funding can be given to children who want to earn credit and get the experience. Otherwise, everything else is good. ... Offer opportunities to take more classes in one semester. ...... The suggestion I have to improve Running Start would be to give the students of the GEAR UP Scholarship a chance to take multiple courses at once. Taking only one course may not sufficiently emulate the college experience or may be too relaxed for normal school settings. ... Make the semester a little shorter .. give some homework so people can understand it and be able to do it on the test. the teacher should write the stuff on the board, not just saying it(not everyone can write down what the teacher says) ... Provide more scholarships ... none .. provide more classes ... It would be great if students enrolled in RS could be supported by Gear Up Scholarships. ... Make registration easier. ... If prices to apply were lowered the program would look that much more appealing. ... Make the classes cheaper. ... Registration should be easier. ... More money for grants so more students can experience a Running Start. ... Make the campus smoke free and provide some kind of work study available to Running Start students. ...

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Respondents were then given an opportunity provide additional comments on any aspect of the Running Start Program. As seen below, in this section, students chose mostly to comment on their positive experiences in the program:

.. Running Start was a great experience and with the orientation I felt very comfortable going to class. ... I would just like to say that I had a great first RS experience which I think can greatly be credited to my English 100 professor (Mr.. Timothy Cubero) because he was just a funny and friendly, easy-to-approach instructor and he made the class very RS-student-friendly and always stuck around after class to answer questions or correct papers. He seems very excited everyday when he comes to class and never has anything bad to say or a frown on his face.... Running Start has giving me a great experience through colleges and I'm hoping most colleges will be similar like the college I'm attending to right now. My parents thinks it's a perfect idea for me to go to college early so that we could manage our financing easily especially when my sister just graduated. Though my friends are turning seniors right now, they think
it's a wonderful thing for them to get a head start in college so that they don't have to worry so much about finding the perfect school. ... I know now that I have to work hard in college and there are no excuses. I have to keep up with my work. The Running Start Program prepared me for college and what to expect when I attend college when I graduate from high school... I had a wonderful experience. I just wish that I had known about this program sooner! ... It was a great experience, and I definitely would consider taking more classes in the future. ... I wish I knew more about this last year. Then I would have taken it during my summer before becoming a Junior ... Running Start was really fun and I think a lot of the students in my class enjoyed it. Like I said before, the professor was great and it was just a good experience for me! I totally recommend other students to participate in this! ... Far better than most of the high school classes. ... it was fun ... I enjoyed my experiences with the Running Start Program because it gave me a glimpse of what college life is like and makes college seem much more manageable to me. With the running start program, there seems to be more teacher assistance as compared to high school, and the means to which the lessons are taught are easily understood. I also enjoyed the fact that I could simply just leave after the work for a course is done with, instead of having to sit and wait until the end of class. ... This is an excellent program that provides both college & high school credits. It allows students to experience college life and develop self-directing learning skills... I've had a wonderful time in my Running Start class and I thank you for making this experience a great one. The orientation day by the way, was really quite fun! ... It was an awesome experience and it gave me something positive to do over the summer. ... Something else that I may like to state about my Running Start experience is that it was very enjoyable and would like to once again participate in this program under the GEAR UP scholarship if possible. Also, I would also suggest a bus pass program for students who may not live near and/or have transportation to the closest community college. ... It has been great working in a college environment, I certainly hope other students in high school will be influenced to enroll in RS courses in the near future. ... I'd like to thank HCC for the easy credit. ... The work wasn't nearly as hard as I thought it would be!... This is my first time as a Running Start student and I am really glad that I registered. I was able to meet new teachers and friends. I was also able to feel how a college student feels. ... it was great, I should have enrolled in earlier.... I met new friends... I learned a lot and enjoyed my class ... This was a great experience for me and I think I would like to continue in the future. ... I really enjoyed my Running Start experience. I have learned a lot in my class that will help me in my calculus class next school year. I had fun in class because I made both old and new friends. Thank you so much for this valuable and memorable experience!!! ... It was overall a good experience and I'm glad I was part of it. ... Met new people. ... It give high school students a look and experience at college life, preparing for the actual thing. ... I met new and old friends. ... I made new friends and it gave me some experience of what to expect after graduating from high school ... Well, overall I had such good time in RS, because the class was really fun and the people are really nice.

THE BOTTOM LINE - RS STUDENT PERFORMANCE

The goal of an evaluation is to determine if the program meets its objectives. The RS program was implemented to accelerate student academic progress, ease the transition from high school to college, and, ultimately, save taxpayer dollars by streamlining the educational process.
While respondent comments and responses demonstrate _RS_ Student satisfaction with the program, ultimately the success of the program lies in the performance of _RS_ students in their college classes.

An analysis of the actual grades (not self reported, but gathered from HCC student records) of _RS_ student performance for the Summer 2006 semester demonstrates that _RS_ students fare very well at HCC.

**SUMMER ‘06 _RS_ EXCEPTIONAL PERFORMANCE: 3. GPA - 32% A’s**

_Running Start_ students completed 97% of their classes (enrolled: 523 credits; completed 508 credits) - a far higher completion rate than experienced by traditional first semester HCC liberal arts students.

Only three _RS_ students received failing (“F”) grades. Overall (including the “F” grades), the grade point average for Summer 2003 _RS_ students was 3.34 (“W” and “N” Grades not included in calculation.) 32% of the grades received by _RS_ students were at the “A” level versus only 3% at the “D” or “F” level.

**CHART/TABLE # 11**

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_Gear Up_ STUDENTS MATCH NON-GEAR UP STUDENT PERFORMANCE

_Gear Up_ is the federally funded grant program funded to boost college attendance rates for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

_Gear Up_ pays the college tuition and textbook expenses for _Running Start_ students who are eligible for the “free” or a “subsidized” lunch programs.

As one might expect, fewer _Gear Up_ students come from college educated families. For example: only 18% of the fathers of _Gear Up_ students hold Bachelor’s Degree (or higher) compared to 53% of _Non-Gear Up_ students.

In last year’s evaluation of the program, _Gear Up_ students trailed _Non Gear Up_ students in academic performance and perceived preparedness for college; however, this summer’s _Gear Up_ students fared as well in both areas.
GENDER NOT A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR

Cross tabulations of the data reveal that gender does not appear to be a significant factor affecting respondent performance or respondent review of the RS Program.

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS - RS GROWTH STALLED

Since the release of A Nation At Risk (1983 study that documented the crisis facing our educational system), increasing attention has been paid to the critical linkages of the American educational system. The documented gap between the preparation level of students leaving our high schools and the expectations associated with performing in the college classroom and in careers has led to the dramatic expansion of remedial/developmental coursework at our colleges and universities. However, the consequences of being underprepared for jobs and higher education at high school graduation are not limited to slowed matriculation as a result of diversion to remedial/developmental classes. Underprepared students are far less likely to enroll in any form of higher education and even when they do, they are far less likely to complete college degrees/programs.

MAJOR FUNCTION: LINKING SECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION

A major function of operating dual enrollment/dual credit programs is the tightened linkage between our high schools and colleges. Administrators, faculty, and students develop effective communication channels that connect individuals, programs, and institutions resulting in the coordination of standards and curriculum. Other states are finding that these new relationships serve as a catalyst to launch additional innovative educational partnerships. These efforts, dovetailed with standards based secondary education, should play a significant role in improving the preparation of high school graduates.

SLOWER THAN ANTICIPATED PROGRAM GROWTH - DECLINE AT HCC

Running Start is a institutionalized component of Hawaii’s public education system. However, to date, the promise and potential of the program remain in an embryonic form. Interim UH President McClain and the new UH Strategic Plan address the need to integrate Pre-Kindergarten to graduate level education (Pre-K to 20) to ensure the future of this society. RS offers Hawaii an opportunity to transform part of the “seamless web” rhetoric into reality. As the State of Washington and, indeed, the nation now demonstrate, high school to college transitions are greatly enhanced through such dual enrollment/dual credit programs.

Instead of expected growth, HCC RS enrollments declined by 18% in the 2004-2005 academic year( from 251 to 209). In the UH System, RS enrollments gained 31% during the year If Hawaii’s Running Start program had matched Washington’s Running Start rate of growth (adjusting for population size differences), there would now be about 1000 RS students enrolled in the UH System - instead, there are now approximately 200 students enrolled at the seven UH Community Colleges. Currently, in the State of Washington, 9% of high school juniors and seniors are taking college courses through Running Start - if 9% of Hawaii’s public school junior and seniors were enrolled in Running Start, Hawaii would now have over 2,500 Running Start students.
Growth in Hawaii’s Running Start Program has been slower than anticipated. As seen in the table above, some campuses are actually experiencing declining rather than increasing enrollments.
WHY THE SLOWER THAN EXPECTED GROWTH IN ENROLLMENTS?

The researchers have limited insights about the RS environment at other UH campuses, as their experience is largely with the Running Start Program at Honolulu Community College and with HCC’s relationships with the Department of Education, the major feeder high schools, the UH System, and Gear Up representatives; however, by this point there are some fairly obvious differences in the approach to Hawaii’s dual enrollment/dual credit program as compared to that in many other states.

Many Hawaii public schools seem to define the program as an academic extra rather than an integrated component of the broader effort to improve college enrollment and success rates. Despite the several reports detailing the effectiveness of Hawaii’s RS program and the success of students in the program coupled with dozens of mainland reports, RS gets relatively little publicity at most high schools (the exception is McKinley High School where Counselor Cynthia Kunimura is an active promoter and recruiter).

Furthermore, the Department of Education’s insistence that RS courses be matched with existing DOE courses has resulted, until recently, in the identification of only a few dozen classes (many of which are foreign language classes) in which our RS students can enroll. The number of eligible classes has now expanded to about 60 - which may boost enrollments.

While the liberalized list of eligible courses is a very positive sign, the eligibility policy is still highly restrictive to compared to most mainland models where no exact course match is expected - for example, college social science courses are accepted as social studies high school units regardless of the existence of an approximately equivalent course at the high school. Perhaps the largest problem in this regard is the fact that, to date, not a single occupational/technical college course has gained approval for RS enrollment. This despite the fact that before the enabling legislature was enacted, it was specifically amended to include enrollment in occupational/technical programs.

SOME PROGRESS, BUT MUCH TO BE DONE

While some progress has been made on recommendations from the third study (Getting In Stride), much work remains:

- **Improve RS publicity efforts at the high schools and the community.**

  Some progress is being made on this front. Brochures and posters have been improved; radio, TV, and newspaper articles have publicized the program; high school visitations routinely involve discussions of the RS Program; and private schools have been informed of the program.

  HCC RS faculty, RS students, and regular HCC students who are graduates of Oahu high schools are being recruited for presentations to high school students and their families.

  However, it is clear from RS student responses that college and media publicity efforts have little to do with their decisions to enroll in Running Start. If Running Start is to truly take off in Hawaii, it will be as a result of efforts by high school counselors. The pie chart below shows that the high school counselor remains the major source of information about the program:
• Improve DOE/UH schedule coordination to ensure that college classes are offered at times/dates that facilitate student enrollment.

High School RS counselors and conversations with RS students make it clear that the current expectation is for students to take HCC college classes before (early morning) or after (late afternoon, evening, or weekend) their high school courses.

HCC attempts to accommodate RS student schedules; however, the college wants, if at all possible, to avoid “special” sections of its courses as one of the key components of RS is to place RS participants in integrated classrooms so they can gain actual college classroom experience.

As the program matures, we expect increasing numbers of RS students to enroll for half, most, or even all of their class work at the college - while maintaining high school enrollment. (This has been the experience in the State of Washington where many RS students simultaneously receive high school diplomas and A.A. degrees and where the “average” RS student takes half of a full time college class load.

As RS students seek heavier college loads, high schools and community colleges will have to work together to ensure that the students can be released to attend “prime time” hour courses as many essential core courses are only offered at these hours.

While the various components of the UH System now operate on a uniform Fall/Spring/Summer semester system, until the 1980's UH campuses did not coordinate schedules (start, end, study period, and evaluation period dates). We now adhere to a universal calendar, ensuring that students can efficiently enroll at more than one UH campus. Our new computerized registration system has made
it possible for UH students to enroll for classes at two or more community colleges without seeking special concurrent registration permission. And while some articulation problems remain within the UH System, the vast majority of classes now transfer fluidly between UH campuses and the UH System is developing a new articulation agreement that will absolutely assure the transfer of credit within the system.

For RS to fulfill its enrollment potential, some changes may be necessary in high school scheduling:

- **NEW UNIVERSAL PUBLIC SCHOOL CALENDAR**

  A factor affecting the expansion of Running Start has been the lack of a uniform State of Hawaii public school calendar. Schools and school districts maintained an array of calendars, making it difficult for the college to effectively coordinate programs with our feeder high schools.

  However, Legislation passed in 2004 called for the Board to adopt a single school calendar for public schools, starting with the 2006-2007 school year. The new, universal Hawaii public school calendar calls for a start date on July 27, 2006, a Fall recess in the first week of October, and a semester end date on December 20. The second semester begins on January 15, 2007, includes a recess from March 19 to March 30, and ends on June 8.

  While these dates are not perfectly aligned with the University of Hawaii calendar (UH classes start about three week later in the Fall and end about three weeks earlier in the Spring), public school students should be available for both semesters.

  **A significant change for which UH campuses must make some adjustments is the shortened summer** (since public school classes will begin on July 27) which should cause UH campuses to ensure that some Summer Session classes are scheduled with the public school Spring 2006 and Fall 2006 end/start dates in mind.

- **HIGH SCHOOL CLASS ROTATING DAYS/TIMES**

  Some high schools have a rotating schedule of classes, so that students start a class at one time on Mondays and then advance the start time on every other day of the school week.

  College classes are scheduled for day/time slots - meeting at the same hour on the days of the week when the class is offered. This mismatch between the rotating high school schedule and the fixed college class schedule means that students from these high schools are limited to late afternoon, evening, weekend, and/or summer classes.
Expand Running Start Course Options

At the pilot program’s launch, there was a desire to reduce program complexity by limiting the number of classes RS students could take - only a few courses with direct “matching” Hawaii public high school courses were included on the list of possible HCC classes for RS participants. Now that the program has demonstrated its efficacy, Hawaii should follow Washington’s example and permit RS students to take the entire range of degree-oriented college courses and match simply by distribution area (Math, History, Social Science, Humanities/Art, Computer Science, Foreign/Hawaiian Language, Technical, etc.).

For students who wish to complete a full year or two of college credit before graduating from high school, this is absolutely necessary. Furthermore, RS participants will ultimately attend a wide array of colleges/universities. Given the realities of different Core/General Education requirements, students need to select from an array of courses to ensure that their credits fulfill General Education Requirements at the college/university that they plan to attend.

Another compelling reason for broadening Running Start course selection is that our public educational system is particularly hard pressed by recent budget cutbacks. While recent windfall tax collections are improving public school funding, years of budget restrictions have resulted in fewer specialized courses that attract limited numbers of students (advanced courses in an array of disciplines and an array of performing arts classes). Shifting these sophisticated, specialized classes to community colleges (where they are part of the regular curriculum) is part of a national trend. (Robertson, Chapman, Gaskin, 2001).

While earning and accumulating college credits is an important positive function of Running Start (builds confidence and shortens the college career), an often overlooked benefit of dual enrollment/dual credit is the acclimatization effect of the experience. Many extremely well prepared (high GPA and high SAT scores) high school students experience culture shock when they first arrive at a college campus. Data from dual enrollment studies in other states (this research has yet to be conducted in Hawaii) demonstrate that not only do dual enrollment students tend to outperform non dual enrollment students at their colleges, they tend to have fewer adjustment problems and demonstrate higher persistence/retention rates. For example, longitudinal analysis of New York’s College Now Program reveals that these dual enrollment students are twice as likely to graduate from college on time and far less likely to require any remedial classes when they enter college. (Project Advance - Syracuse University: http://supa.syr.edu/; Arizona - Puyear, Thorn, Mills, 2001; New York - Kleinman, 2001)
• FURTHER DEVELOP RS ORIENTATION, WORKSHOPS AT HIGH SCHOOLS, AND CONDUCT AN ANNUAL RS UH/DOE MEETING

All of the above programs are identified as critical to the success of Washington’s RS Program.

HCC Student Services organized and conducted a special orientation session for Summer 2005 RS students to acquaint them with the expectations of the program, introduce some of their faculty members, link them with their college counselor, and the resources of the college. Feedback from that orientation session led to its refinement.

A structured evaluation of the Summer ’05 RS Orientation Session provided the following insights:

- Only 35% planned to enroll in RS in the Fall of ’05
- 90% would recommend the Orientation
- 93% had all their questions answered in the Orientation
- The Campus Tour was deemed the most helpful
- All found the staff/facilitators to be helpful
- All found the overall event to be helpful
- Overall the Orientation received very high marks
  (About a 4.4 on a 5 point maximum scale)

Planning is underway to improve and streamline the admission and registration processes for Running Start students. Placement testing opportunities will also be expanded/extended. Health clearance instructions will be clearer and will be distributed in a more timely fashion; however, student comments suggest that the process needs to be further streamlined. The HCC schedule of classes is now distributed to high schools earlier. HCC counselors and faculty will be made available for high school visitations. Potential RS students will be invited to the campus. High school counselors are regularly invited to the campus and their visits include a presentation on the RS Program.
EXPAND RS TO TECHNICAL PROGRAMS

Many capable high school students plan to enter technical/occupational programs (just a few HCC programs: Aviation Maintenance, Automotive Technology, Aviation, Administration of Justice, Refrigeration, Carpentry, Early Childhood, and Computer Electronics and Network Technician).

Running Start’s enabling legislation included vocational courses as part of the RS vision:

“Qualified course” means any vocational or academic course offered by the University of Hawaii system that also applies to the department of education’s graduation requirements or is otherwise permitted by department of education rule or policy. (Act 236)

While dual enrollment programs are certainly desirable for baccalaureate seeking students, they are probably even more beneficial for the education of technical/occupational students. The cost of running technical/occupational programs (equipment, supplies, faculty training, facilities) has skyrocketed in the past three decades. Community college technical/occupational programs possess the faculty and equipment to provide students the skills and knowledge they require to enter the job market. Few high school technical programs can adequately prepare graduates for the marketplace. The Running Start Program can well serve students, employers, and the community by opening occupational/technical programs to qualified high school juniors and seniors. (Rafn, 2002)

Some suggest that high school age students lack the intellectual and social maturity to engage in rigorous technical/occupational community college programs. However, a review of technical/occupational education policies around the rest of the developed world reveals that these programs are routinely completed in late adolescence. It should also be remembered that before the University of Hawaii launched its community college system, until it was renamed Honolulu Community College in 1966, the school was operated by McKinley High School as Honolulu Technical School. (earlier named Honolulu Vocational School & Territorial Vocational School) So, before becoming a community college, the institution served as a magnet school for high school juniors and seniors (in some years admission was as early as age 14). When HCC became a community college, admission requirements were raised to: either a high school graduate or 18 years of age. This sudden shift of age eligibility has negatively impacted academic and workforce preparation.
PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

HCC RS faculty, counselors, and administrators will meet to discuss this report and to then plot the future of RS on the campus.

Probable goals include:

- Tightening ties with existing RS feeder high schools.
- Developing ties with other public high schools.
- Opening “RS” (Early Admit) opportunities for private high school students.
- Working with the D.O.E. to expand the range of courses available to RS students.
- Exploring RS opportunities for occupational/technical programs.
- Developing more sophisticated brochures, posters, and publicity efforts for the RS program.
- Communicating more effectively with Parent/Teacher organizations.
- Expanding “RS” (Early Admit) opportunities for Home Schooled students.
- Expanding orientation and support services for RS students.
- Continuing/expanding the structured evaluation/assessment of the program.
- Launching a longitudinal research project that focuses on former RS students to determine the impact of their participation upon college preparation and performance.
- Expand recruitment efforts at HCC’s Gear Up partner high schools: McKinley, Farrington, and Kailua

The above goals will, however, be difficult to achieve without adequate funding for staffing and coordinating responsibilities.

The renewal of Gear Up Grant funding has averted the crisis that would have negatively impacted disadvantaged student enrollments; however, as the program grows, Hawaii will have to follow the lead of other dual enrollment programs and fund public school and UH positions to coordinate and support the program.

Questions? Comments?
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REFERENCES


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