LAULIMA A ‘IKE PONO
“Working Together for the Collective Vision”

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Funded by the NSF OEDG initiative, Laulima A ‘ike Pono established a collaborative model for community science education in Hawaii through socially relevant and authentic place-based research training in the biogeosciences.

Objectives of the program

• Provide community members opportunities to explore geosciences through community internships and college mentoring.
• Integrate scientific methodologies and technology with traditional knowledge and practices to create a holistic educational experience of research at He’eia fishpond.
• Bring science and cultural practitioners together through collaborative projects and peer-to-peer learning opportunities.
• Provide a framework for training of scientists in the integration of their research with community and educational outreach programs.

Education Questions

• Does the LAIP program successfully engage underrepresented students and members of the community?
• Does the LAIP internship program improve participant understanding and skills in science?
• Do participants in the LAIP internship show enhanced interest in courses, majors, or careers related to natural sciences, environmental studies, or resource management?
• How can the work of the internship program be shared with the larger community?

Methods

- Interns worked in cohorts of 8 for 6 months with a graduate researcher.
- Demographic information was collected on each participant at the start of the program.
- Participants were given pre- and post-program surveys with both focused and open-ended questions about their science interests, career plans, and perceived skill level in aspects of scientific research.
- A summative online survey was administered to all past interns in October 2013.

Participant Ethnicity

Percentages do not add up to 100% because many participants claim mixed race/ethnicity.

Results

Minority groups represented 54% of total LAIP participants, with 44% of all participants self-identifying as Native Hawaiian, Polynesian or Pacific Islander (HPP). Native Hawaiians represented 55% of minority participants.

Conclusions

- The program attracted a high proportion of participants that are underrepresented in STEM majors and careers.
- Scientists reported a high degree of satisfaction as a result of working with local youth as well as traditional practitioners.
- Participants indicated growth and improvement of science-related skills, knowledge, and interest.
- Participants reported enhanced interest in science, environmental studies and resource management, as well as participation in environmental and cultural organizations.
- Close to 1000 users have downloaded the Loko I’a iPhone App.

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