

# REL PACIFIC ASK-A-REL RESPONSE

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Research on College Success and Higher Educational Improvement  
August 2014

## INQUIRY

*What research has been conducted in the last five years about higher education in the Pacific region?*

As a first step in providing the requested information, REL Pacific conducted a web-based search for informational resources. Publications, reports, and guides from the past 5 years were organized into the following sections:

- **Section One:** *Micronesian students*— Research related to Micronesian students in higher education institutions.
- **Section Two:** *Higher-education policies and initiatives*— Research related to policies and initiatives at higher education institutions in and surrounding the Pacific region.
- **Section Three:** *Technology*— Research related to using technology in college programming and online learning in the Pacific region.

Descriptions of the resources are quoted from the publication abstract (Abstract) or the publication itself (Introduction or Excerpt). An abstract is always used when available. However, if additional text in the resource provides important information not contained in the author's abstract, the additional information is also provided.

## SEARCH TERMS USED

American Samoa; Asia-Pacific region; colleges; colleges & universities; colleges and universities; Guam; Hawaii; Hawaii (island) Hawaii; Hawaii Ocean; Hawaii United States; higher education; Honolulu Hawaii; United States; Kahoolawe Hawaii; Kalapana Hawaii; Kamuela Hawaii; Kapolei Hawaii; Kauai Hawaii; Mariana Islands; Maui Hawaii; Micronesia; Micronesian students pacific higher education; Molokai Hawaii; Northern Mariana Islands; Northwestern Hawaiian Islands; National Monument; Oahu Hawaii; Pacific; Pacific Islands; Pacific region; Pacific Rim; Pacific states; Samoa; USA, Hawaii; Wahiawa Hawaii; Waimea Hawaii; Western Samoa

## DATABASES SEARCHED

Google Scholar, ERIC, ProQuest Education Journals

*Resources identified in the search are listed below. The hyperlink to each resource is provided. Descriptions of programs and articles have been reproduced verbatim from their respective websites or abstracts.*

## RESOURCE OVERVIEW

The provided resources were found via web-based searches. The first set of criteria used for finding resources included publications in peer-reviewed research journals within the last five years that pertain specifically to Pacific

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institutions of higher education. Criteria were then expanded to include reports in the wider Asia-Pacific region, including Australia and New Zealand and reports in non-peer reviewed journals and sources to expand the list of available resources. Also, the requestor indicated that information from other localities will help the College benchmark their institution against others. Resources included also had to be available online and in English.

Resources included in this document were last accessed in August 2014. URLs, descriptions, and content included in this document were current at that time.

Descriptions of the resources were quoted from the publication abstract (Abstract), the publication itself (Excerpt), or the publication's host website (Description, Program Description). An abstract was always used when available. However, if there was no abstract for a resource a relevant excerpt was pulled directly from the source to provide basic information.

## RESULTING ARTICLES

### **Section One: Micronesian students**

This section includes publications and reports that describe research related to demographics and the role of culture and ethnicity in education for Pacific Islanders.

Kovacic, Z. (2010). Early prediction of student success: Mining students' enrolment data. In Informing Science + Information Technology Education Joint Conference, Cassino, Italy. Retrieved from <http://repository.openpolytechnic.ac.nz/handle/11072/646?show=full>.

**Source:** Google Scholar

**Abstract:** This paper explores the socio-demographic variables (age, gender, ethnicity, education, work status, and disability) and study environment (course programme and course block), that may influence persistence or dropout of students at the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand. We examine to what extent these factors, i.e. enrolment data help us in pre-identifying successful and unsuccessful students. The data stored in the Open Polytechnic student management system from 2006 to 2009, covering over 450 students who enrolled to 71150 Information Systems course was used to perform a quantitative analysis of study outcome. Based on data mining techniques (such as feature selection and classification trees), the most important factors for student success and a profile of the typical successful and unsuccessful students are identified. The empirical results show the following: (i) the most important factors separating successful from unsuccessful students are: ethnicity, course programme and course block; (ii) among classification tree growing methods Classification and Regression Tree (CART) was the most successful in growing the tree with an overall percentage of correct classification of 60.5%; and (iii) both the risk estimated by the cross-validation and the gain diagram suggests that all trees, based only on enrolment data are not quite good in separating successful from unsuccessful students. The implications of these results for academic and administrative staff are discussed.

Ratliffe, K.T. (2010). Family obligations in Micronesian cultures: Implications for educators. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, (23)6, 671–690. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09518390903468339>

**Source:** ERIC

**Abstract:** Micronesian people, a new group of immigrants to the USA, have a strong system of responsibilities to family members that guides their priorities and actions. When family obligations clash with school priorities, conflicts can occur. I interviewed 26 adults to learn about the relationships and responsibilities of family members to each other in Micronesian cultures and implications for Micronesian parent priorities that may affect their children's schooling. The system of family obligations in Micronesian cultures is described, and its role in the priorities and behaviors of Micronesian families around schooling of their children is explored through emergent themes of (a) identity, (b) family relationships, (c) family roles, and (d) responsibilities of immigrants. The conventions of family obligations are the core of many cultural traditions from the Pacific. Understanding these traditions may help teachers and administrators better assist immigrant Micronesian families and their children to be successful in American schools.

*REL Pacific at McREL was unable to locate a publicly available link to the full-text version of this resource. Although REL Pacific at McREL tries to provide publicly available resources whenever possible, it was determined that this resource may be of interest. It may be found through university or public library systems.*

Zuercher, D.K., Yoshioka, J., Deering, P.D., Martin, K., Curry, K., O'Neill, T., Apisa, S.W. (2012, Sept.). A culturally responsive, transnational middle grades teacher education program in American Samoa. *Middle School Journal* (44)1, 26–35. Retrieved from <http://www.questia.com/library/journal/1P3-2877071401/a-culturally-responsive-transnational-middle-grades>

**Source:** ProQuest Education Journals

**Headnote:** Educators in American Samoa learn about teaching young adolescents through a transnational master's degree program.

This article describes the development and implementation of a transnational middle level teacher education program, specifically based on the educative needs of young adolescent students and their teachers in American Samoa. For more than 30 years, the University of Hawai'i has partnered with the American Samoa Department of Education to provide undergraduate degrees in elementary education to a total of 647 graduates. While elementary education in American Samoa encompasses kindergarten through eighth grade, professional development needs specific to middle grades teachers have not been adequately addressed through these programs. In 2009, the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa pioneered a graduate level middle level teacher education program in American Samoa, the first program of its kind to focus on young adolescents' learning needs in this Pacific island territory. The 2011 Middle Level Master of Education degree (MLMED) cohort was the first group of in-service teachers ever to receive specialized middle grades teacher training in American Samoa.

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## Section Two: Higher-education policy and initiatives

This section includes publications and reports that describe research related to policies and initiatives at higher education institutions in and surrounding the Pacific region.

Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund (APIASF). (2010). Federal higher education policy priorities and the Asian American and Pacific Islander community. Retrieved from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED536942>

**Source:** ERIC

**Abstract:** The National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education (CARE), consisting of a national commission, research advisory group, and research team at New York University, aims to engage realistic and actionable discussions about the mobility and educational opportunities for Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) and how distinctions of race, ethnicity, language, and other factors play out in the day-to-day operations of America's education system. Their goal is to provide much needed and timely research on key issues and trends related to access and participation of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in higher education. By way of new and ongoing conversations among advocacy organizations, policy centers, and higher education scholars, this report focuses most intently on areas of emerging importance related to how AAPIs are positioned within the context of higher education policy priorities. It is guided by four propositions: first, the authors argue that policy matters: it dictates funding priorities, resource usage and federal, state, and local involvement in educational efforts. Second, they assert that institutions matter: what colleges and universities do with funding and resources has a tremendous impact on student success. Third, research matters: policy makers and institutional administrators need accurate, disaggregated data that present real assets and needs of college students and their families. Finally, strategic action matters: now, more than ever, there is a strong public interest in institutional accountability. The authors are interested in identifying and studying areas of program effectiveness relative to the AAPI population to inform policymaking decisions.

Hallinger, P. (2010). Using faculty evaluation to improve teaching quality: A longitudinal case study of higher education in Southeast Asia. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, 22(4), 253-274.h- Available from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ901887>

**Source:** ERIC, ProQuest Education Journals

**Abstract:** This paper presents a case study of implementation of a new system of faculty teaching evaluation at a graduate school of business in Thailand. The research employed a non-experimental, longitudinal case study design in the analysis of student course evaluation data gathered over a period of 21 terms during a seven-year period. The report describes the design of the performance and reward system and its role in the college's quality improvement program. Quantitative data analysis focused on results related to both instructor performance and faculty turnover. The data suggest statistically significant improvement in levels of instructor

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effectiveness and faculty turnover in the college over the seven-year period. While the research is subject to the contextual limitations of case studies, it also demonstrates the possibilities and problems of employing performance and reward in higher education.

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Lee, M. (2012). Regional cooperation in higher education in Asia and the Pacific. *Asian Education and Development Studies*, 1(1), 18-23. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/20463161211194432>

**Source:** ERIC, ProQuest Education Journals

**Abstract:**

*Purpose* - The purpose of this paper is to present a general overview of the kinds of regional cooperation that are commonly found in the higher education (HE) sector among countries in Asia and the Pacific.

*Design/methodology/approach* - The research methodology is literature review, collecting primary data from the web sites set up by the various organizations that are being reviewed.

*Findings* - The types of university exchanges can be broadly categorized as academic exchange, research collaboration and university-community engagement. Some of the regional cooperation are initiated by intergovernmental organizations while others are initiated by non-governmental organizations. The paper reviews intergovernmental initiatives by UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization], SEAMEO RIHED [South-East Asian Ministers of Education Organization], ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations], ASEM [American Society for Engineering Management], EAS [East Asian Summit], and APEC [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation]. It also reviews several higher education networks including ASAHIL [Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning], UMAP [University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific], APRU [Association of Pacific Rim Universities], AUF [Angeles University Foundation], AAOU [Asian Association of Open Universities], and APAIE [Asia-Pacific Association for International Education], as well as two regional initiatives, APQN [Asia-Pacific Quality Network] and the UNESCO Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific.

*Originality/value* - This is an original piece of analytical work on the roles and functions of various HE organizations and networks in the Asia-Pacific region.

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Shah, M., & Nair, S. (2011). The influence of strategy and external quality audit on university performance: An Australian perspective. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 17(2), 139-150. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13583883.2011.557778>

**Source:** ERIC

**Abstract:** External quality audits have been introduced in many parts of the world including Asia Pacific, Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. While external quality audits have been introduced for more than a decade in some countries like New Zealand, the United Kingdom (UK), Denmark, and Sweden, there is limited research on the extent to which such audits have improved the performance of universities on educational measures. This paper is based on a large public university in Australia that has used strategy implementation and external quality audit as an opportunity for change and improvement. The paper argues that effective strategy implementation, external quality audits, and internal reviews and improvement processes, if effectively managed, could improve performance of the university on various educational measures. The paper compares various performance data of the university: two years pre-strategy implementation and external quality audit and three years post-audit. Finally, the paper argues that a systematic approach to reviews with evidence-based decision-making enables the university to address the areas needing improvement and address the priorities in a timely manner.

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### Section Three: Technology

This section includes publications and reports that describe research related to using technology in college programming, such as online learning, in the Pacific region.

Iding, M. Crosby, M.E. (2013, June). Going beyond access: On-line education in Hawaii and the Pacific Islands. *Education and Information Technologies* (18)2, 245–252. Available from <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10639-012-9226-8#>

**Source:** ProQuest Education Journals

**Abstract:** This paper discusses several approaches to Web-based learning, on-line learning and IT instruction that have been implemented at the University of Hawaii, including studio-based learning, techniques for implementing critical evaluation skills when utilizing on-line sources, virtual museum use, the use of metacognitive prompts in on-line instruction and outreach to other Pacific Island communities. The paper also addresses aspects of ICT and on-line instruction and community building in multicultural settings that represent some of the most geographically isolated regions on the planet, with socioeconomic disparities spanning the digital divide. This paper shows how technology can be used to promote higher order thinking, metacognition and critical evaluation skills that encourage students to use ICT in more discriminatory and evaluative ways. The paper also shows that using virtual museums for sharing cultural knowledge and using metacognitive prompts for critical analyses are other ways of enriching knowledge through the use of the Internet. Furthermore,

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technology can be used for communicating with different populations regardless of income or ethnicity, and the Internet can improve access to higher education for rural populations that would not consider university access a possibility without being provided with the support that technology can give.

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Menchaca, M. P. & Hoffman, E. S. (2013). Certificate of online learning and teaching (COLT) at the University of Hawaii: A horse of another color for earning college credits. *Journal of College Teaching & Learning (Online)*, 10(4), 255. Available from <http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/90605729/certificate-online-learning-teaching-colt-university-hawaii-horse-another-color-earning-college-credits>

**Source:** ProQuest Education Journals

**Abstract:** Current conventional wisdom may perceive that higher education is outdated and maybe even likely to collapse. Online education is often predicted to replace brick-and-mortar campuses with systems providing students access to world-class learning via smartphones and tablets. Many private and commercial ventures are embracing such concepts. However, in the race to implement large-scale models, significant key elements such as understanding that learning can be social, affective, personal, and even cultural may be missing. Thus, creative yet research-based programs at the university level are needed. While it is true that existing university structures might inhibit the implementation of radical programs, there are opportunities where such innovation can be offered. In the case of the Department of Educational Technology at the University of Hawaii, an option for a program at the certificate level not necessarily leading to a traditional degree was provided. The certificate option provided an opportunity to explore entrepreneurial models while also incorporating what we understand about learning, the brain, and newer technologies. This paper describes the circumstances and approach that led to the creation of an innovative program that still fit within current university structures.

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Rao, K. & Giuli, C. (2010). Reaching REMOTE learners: Successes and challenges for students in an online graduate degree program in the Pacific Islands. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning* (11)1, 141–160. Retrieved from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=EJ881583>

**Source:** ERIC

**Abstract:** Access to higher education in the U.S.-affiliated Pacific Islands is limited. The island nations and territories in this Pacific region are geographically dispersed and separated by thousands of miles of ocean.

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Although local and regional colleges offer undergraduate degrees (associate's and bachelor's levels), islanders who seek graduate-level education have to move away from home or avail themselves of distance education opportunities in order to earn degrees at the master's and doctoral levels. To address a need for building the capacity of educational leaders in the Pacific to conduct and utilize program evaluation appropriately and effectively, Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) and the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM) partnered to deliver a two-year, online master's degree program. With funds provided by a grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF), PREL and UH developed the Regional Education Master's Online Training in Evaluation (REMOTE) program to provide this educational opportunity to students located on several islands in the geographically vast and diverse Pacific region. In this article, the authors present the results from an evaluation of the two-year program. The program evaluation was conducted to understand the issues that an online student in the Pacific region faces. These Pacific island students are from indigenous communities and live in rural settings. Many speak English as a foreign language. As adult learners who are mid-career working professionals, they undertake an online program with many concurrent commitments to family, work, and community.

Raturi, S., Hogan, R. & Thaman, K. H. (2011). Learners' access to tools and experience with technology at the University of the South Pacific: Readiness for e-learning. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 27(3), 411-427. <http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet27/raturi.html>

**Source:** Google Scholar

**Abstract:** Technology in higher education has become exceedingly popular and useful; however, a digital divide generally applies to the use of technology in education in many developing countries. The Pacific Island countries differ in their technological capacities and infrastructure, with the Fijian capital Suva being most technologically and infrastructurally advanced compared with other towns in Fiji and in other Pacific Island countries. This led the researchers to investigate access to e-learning tools and experience with technology amongst a group of 92 students, ranging from 18 to over 55 years of age, enrolled in postgraduate courses in education at the University of the South Pacific. A survey consisting of questions on age, gender, qualification, professional experience, ethnicity and access to and experience with technology was carried out for one cohort. The findings indicate an encouraging level of readiness for e-learning.

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