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# UH receives \$2M grant to help Windward Oahu students achieve in higher education



University of Hawaii awarded grant to help low income students from the Windward side of Oahu. (Source: Hawaii News Now)

By [HNN Staff](#) | March 14, 2021 at 2:08 PM HST - Updated March 14 at 2:10 PM

HONOLULU, Hawaii (HawaiiNewsNow) - The University of Hawaii was awarded \$2.3 million to help increase the number of low-income and first generation Windward Oahu students to enroll in higher education.

The goal of the Soar Higher grant is to encourage students to successfully complete high school and go on to college. The grant was awarded by the Harold K. L. Castle Foundation.

Funds will go toward partnering Windward area high schools with their feeder middle schools and Windward Community College to develop and implement a comprehensive college and career program. This will include counseling and support for students to explore career interests, improvements in their academic preparation, engagement in work-based learning opportunities and ultimately helping students reach their career goals.

"It's actually allowing them to push beyond the classroom and apply the technical, academic and employability skills that they need in real world, real time, authentic learning experiences," said Bernie Tyrell, Principal of Castle High School.

Education officials hope these funds will help eliminate achievement gaps among groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

"Windward Oahu is in our backyard and we've invested heavily in the students of this region and opportunity is growing for public school students. However, we still see deep inequities in the region," said Alex Harris, vice president for Programs at Harold K.L. Castle Foundation.

"We know the best path to household stability runs through a two or four-year degree. But it's still far too difficult for young people to get to and through college. We hope this four year investment will double the number of public school graduates in Windward Oahu that earn a degree or certificate," he said.

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