Through doing this Pacific Alliance internship we have learned to develop our leadership as well as teamwork skills. The internship has provided an opportunity to competitively apply to be an intern for their college campus. Interns are selected based upon their involvement as a Pacific Alliance participant, an essay, and an interview. Pacific Alliance interns are “ambassadors” for the Pacific Alliance Project and function in many different roles.

The Pacific Alliance Internship Program

The goal of Pacific Alliance is to create an increased rate of students in Hawai‘i who are earning Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) degrees and pursuing STEM employment. Pacific Alliance provides various activities and support for students with disabilities, which places students in a better position to reach their academic and employment goals.

Interns learn...

- Teamwork, professionalism, time management, organization, and leadership skills during the internship.

Duties include...

- Keeping track of hours; understanding and complying with confidentiality rules;
- Attending meetings; assisting at high school sessions; and assisting at special Pacific Alliance events.

Other duties include...

- Assisting staff during new student orientation, and help maintain the Pacific Alliance website by collecting current information on events, scholarships, and other opportunities for students.

For more information:

www.cds.hawaii.edu/pacificalliance/

NSF Award # HRD 09-29079

Mike Denis, Windward Community College

Pacific Alliance has helped me with programs like math camp, and the Winter Institute. I am currently studying ethnobotany and I’m in my second semester as an intern with Pacific Alliance. Pacific Alliance has helped me to gain the confidence I need to self advocate and access resources to achieve my academic goals. Some of my Pacific Alliance duties as an intern include doing presentations at high schools. I talk to kids about college and Pacific Alliance and help with the transition. I also set up a table once a week at Windward Community College to answer questions about Pacific Alliance and help participants with whatever questions they have. This experience has been very beneficial for my college experience because it helps me with time management and organization and responsibilities. Pacific Alliance makes the challenges I face in college more manageable. I plan to stay with the program throughout my college years.

Keshava Kaipaka, Honolulu Community College

My name is Kesh and I am very proud to be part of the Pacific Alliance Internship. When I first heard about the opportunity they offered I was a bit hesitant. I wasn’t really sure that I wanted to be part of the group because I thought that I might be tasked with more than I could handle. To my surprise, I was tasked with mostly work relating to science, technology, engineering and math that I wanted to be a part of. This was very beneficial to a student like myself who can lose interest in school work and other non-stimulating, mundane activities quickly. I got to participate in activities that interest me such as participating in preserving a community farm while I learned about genetically modified crops and how certain plants will grow well next to others. Overall, being part of the Pacific Alliance internship has made me a self motivated individual. This is because they offered us the chance to pursue an activity we wanted to learn about rather than one a preexisting syllabus would have picked out for us.

Richard Liaga, Kapiolani Community College

Aloha wela mai ka‘ou, ʻO Likeke ko‘u inoa, I’m currently enrolled as a Junior at KCC in the Medical Laboratory Technician program. I’ve been a Pacific Alliance participant for about two years now, and Pacific Alliance has helped improve my college experience as well as my grades in all my STEM related courses by supporting me with Mentoring, Tutoring, and especially the Summer and Winter institutes. Pacific Alliance has been a great inspiration and support to me and others with disabilities struggling through college as well as high school while trying to succeed in STEM related courses. I have been inspired by all the help that Pacific Alliance has given to me since I’ve become a Pacific Alliance intern at the beginning of this Spring 2014 school semester to try and give back to others that have similar backgrounds and/or stories as I do. I especially enjoy helping the high school students who wish to further their education and pursue college with the help of Pacific Alliance.

Mike Denis, Windward Community College

Keshava Kaipaka, Honolulu Community College

Pacific Alliance Intern, Richard Liaga assisting at the Kapiolani Community College Winter Institute for High School Seniors.

Derek Chan (above) hard at work preparing for the 2014 Pacific Rim International Conference on Disability and Diversity.

Keshava Kaipaka, (left photo) participating in the 2014 College Winter Institute. He worked hard to build rotating gears that would be printed from a 3D printer.

Richard Liaga, Kapiolani Community College

Mike Denis, Keshava Kaipaka, Derek Chan, & Richard Liaga

Derek Chan, University of Hawaii, Manoa

The Pacific Alliance internship has helped me hone my social and workforce skills, as well as help me work on my time management. It has also helped me to overcome some of my mundane fears such as working with others and communicating on the phone. Although the nature of my work was primarily entering data, it has even helped me to be more meticulous with what I do. This is because accuracy and precision of the data figures I input are essential to the Pacific Alliance project. I am extremely grateful to have taken this opportunity to better myself through this internship. I would definitely recommend the internship to those who want to work on their skills necessary for the workforce.