

A PRELIMINARY LANDSCAPE OF **NATIVE HAWAIIAN** **PACIFIC ISLANDER** STUDENT SUCCESS AT SACRAMENTO STATE



SACRAMENTO
STATE



PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER AND AUTHOR

Chao Vang, Ed.D.

Assistant Vice President, Educational Equity Programs and Student Success
California State University, Sacramento

Maiko Xiong, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, College of Education
California State University, Sacramento

Reviewers

Mary Ann Wong, M.A.

Research Analyst
CSU AANHPI Student Achievement Program

Frances Palu, M.A.

Operations Director
CSU AANHPI Student Achievement Program

RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Andrew Yang

Director, Asian Pacific Islander Desi American Center
California State University, Sacramento

Michael Niu

Graduate Student, Asian Pacific Islander Desi American Center
California State University, Sacramento

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Division of Student Affairs
Student Academic Success and Educational Equity Programs
Cultural Academic Resource Centers
Campus Educational Equity Committee
Office of Institutional Research, Effectiveness, & Planning
Photo Courtesy of Letrice Fowler, Nathan Marquardt and University Communications
Report Design by University Print
Funded by: California State University's APIDA Collective Funding Program



A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT LUKE WOOD



Sacramento State is proud to be home to a thriving Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander student population. As a proud Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution, we are committed to intentionally serving students reflective of this designation and all students who have been historically underserved in education.

To ensure that the collective experiences, aspirations and educational pursuits of our Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students are visible and better understood, this preliminary report is the first step to inform education policy and practice discussions for years to come.

I hope this report will carve out a place in the academic literature for the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander student experience, and that it will drive institutional changes that better support their academic development.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Luke Wood".

Dr. Luke Wood
President

SUMMARY

Key Institutional Data Describing Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Students

- In Fall 2023, 30% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students identified as first-generation college students and 43% were eligible for Federal Pell Grants.
- The top three majors for Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students were Business Administration, Kinesiology & Health Science, and Biological Sciences.
- The Fall 2020 cohort's retention rate for Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students:
- Fijian students at the end of year 1 (88%), year 2 (86%), and year 3 (78%),
- Guamanian students at the end of year 1 (72%), year 2 (63%), and year 3 (54%),
- Hawaiian students at the end of year 1 (72%), year 2 (55%), and year 3 (38%),
- Samoan students at the end of year 1 (66%), year 2 (50%), and year 3 (33%)
- The Fall 2018 first-time freshman 4-Year and 6-Year graduation rate for Fijian students were 4.8% and 57.1%, Guamanian students 20% and 50%, and Samoan students 24% and 37.5%.

Key Findings from the Survey of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Students

Student Characteristics

- 65% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students are living at home with 5 or more people in the household.
- 42% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students have no immediate family who attended college and completed their college degree.

Adjustment to College Life

- 66% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students indicated that helping their family, parent, or community was their reason to pursue higher education.
- 51% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students indicated that their parents/guardian or sibling encouraged their decision to attend college.

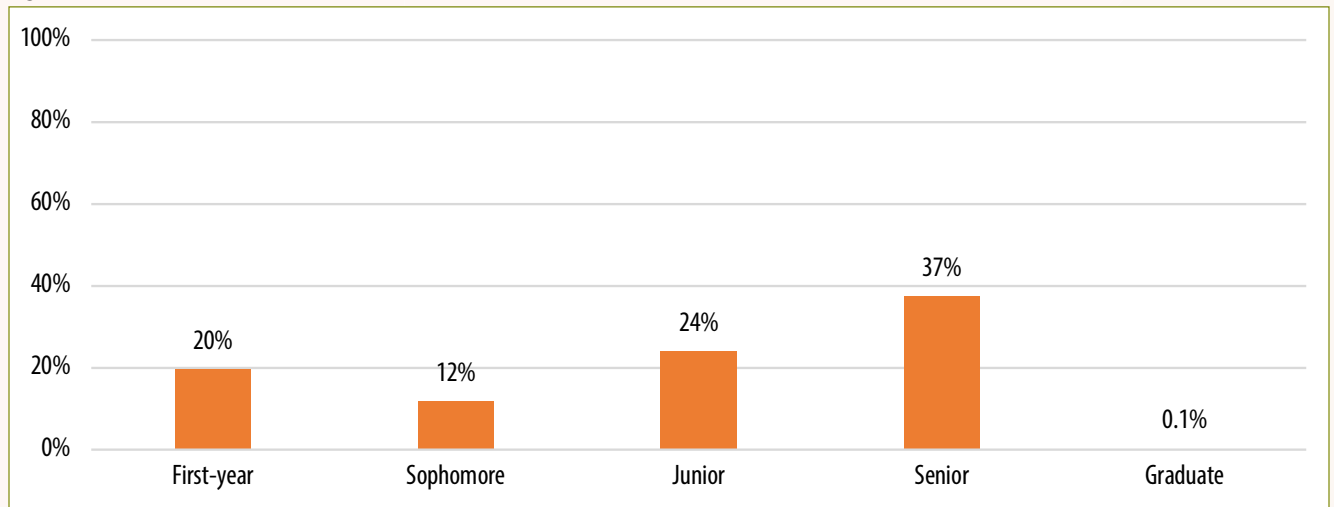
Campus Climate

- 71% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students frequently or occasionally felt isolated from campus life.
- 66% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students frequently or occasionally felt lonely or homesick.
- 62% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students frequently or occasionally worried about their health.

Student Success

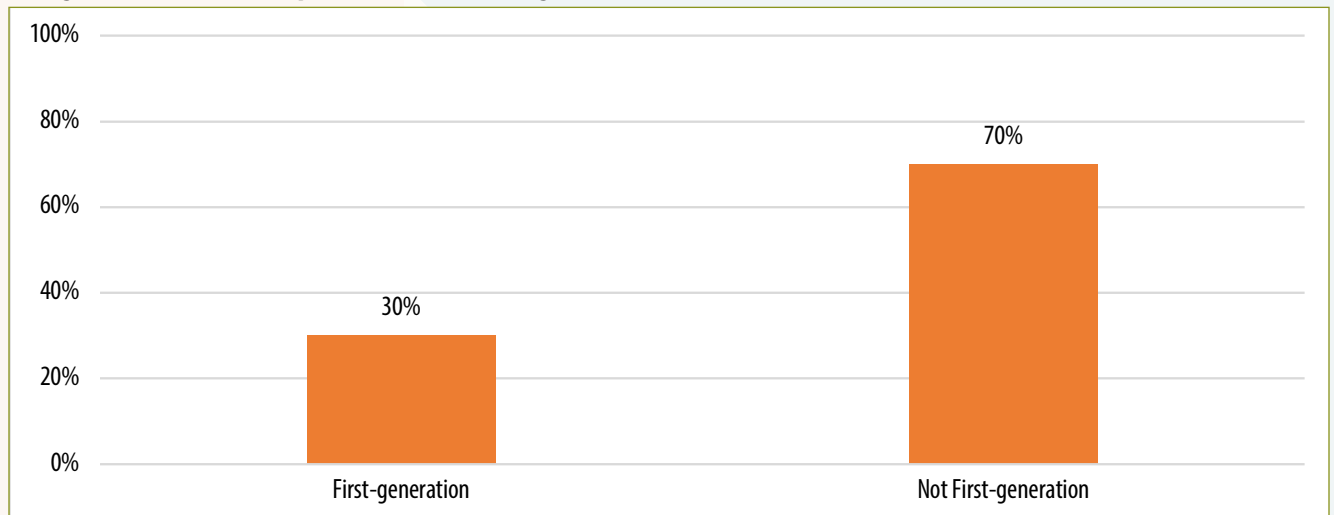
- The top five university support, information, or services Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students indicated to be most helpful to facilitate completing their degree were (1) Scholarship opportunities, (2) Job/internship, (3) Cultural awareness programs and services, (4) Career development and (5) Academic advising.
- 86% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students indicated family obligations (e.g., taking care of siblings, personal problems, etc.) interfered with their ability to successfully complete their degree.
- 64% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students indicated academic and educational factors (e.g., lack of adequate preparation for college, lack of proper motivation, poor choice of major, etc.) interfered with their ability to successfully complete their degree.

Figure 1. Class level for Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students, Fall 2023.



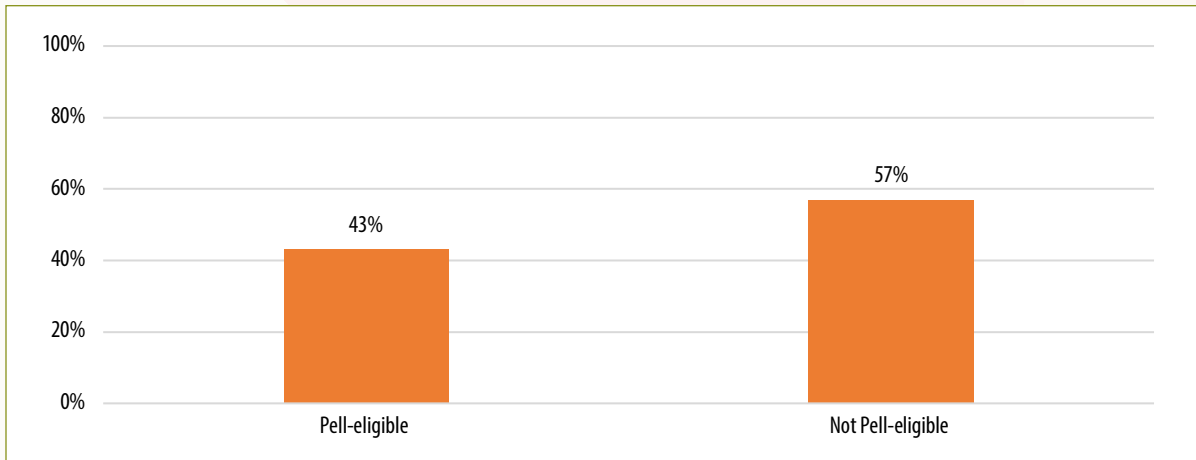
In *Figure 1*, in Fall 2023, 20% of NHPI students were freshmen, 12% were sophomores, 24% were juniors, 37% were seniors, and 0.1% were graduate students.

Figure 2. Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students who identified as first-generation college students (neither parent attended college at all), Fall 2023.



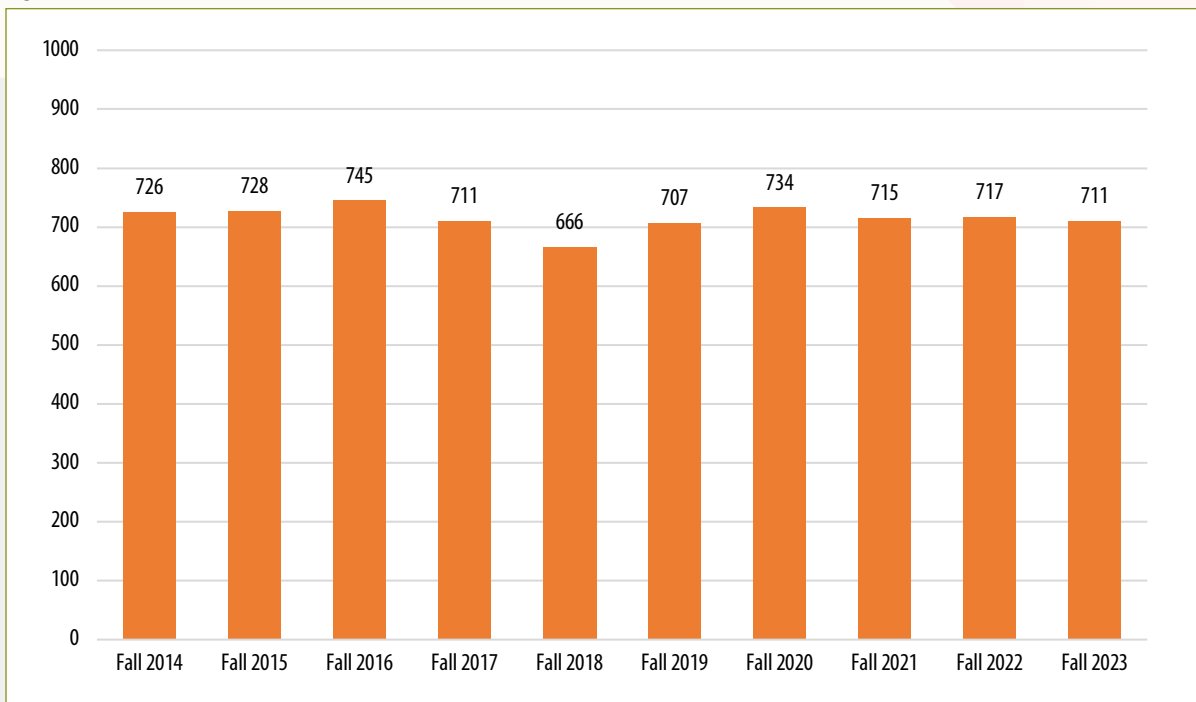
In *Figure 2*, 30% of NHPI students identify as first-generation, and 70% identify as non-first-generation.

Figure 3. Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students who were eligible for Federal Pell Grants, Fall 2023.



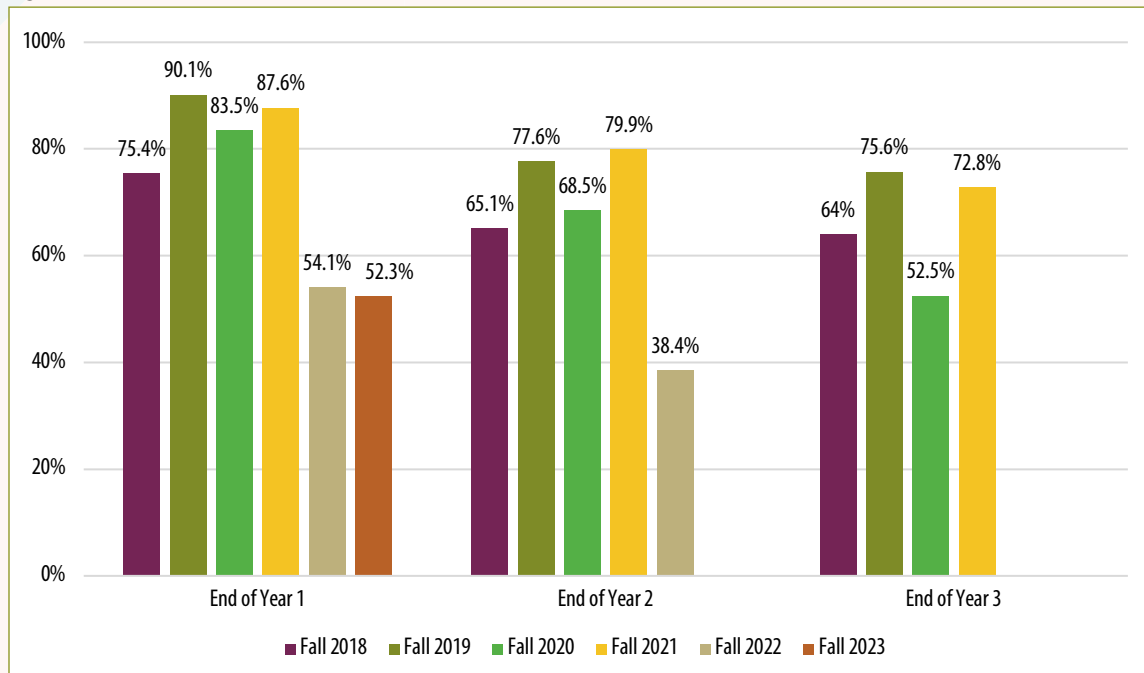
In *Figure 3*, in Fall 2023, 43% of NHPI students were Pell-eligible, and 57% were not Pell-eligible.

Figure 4. Overall enrollment trend for Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students, Fall 2014-2023.



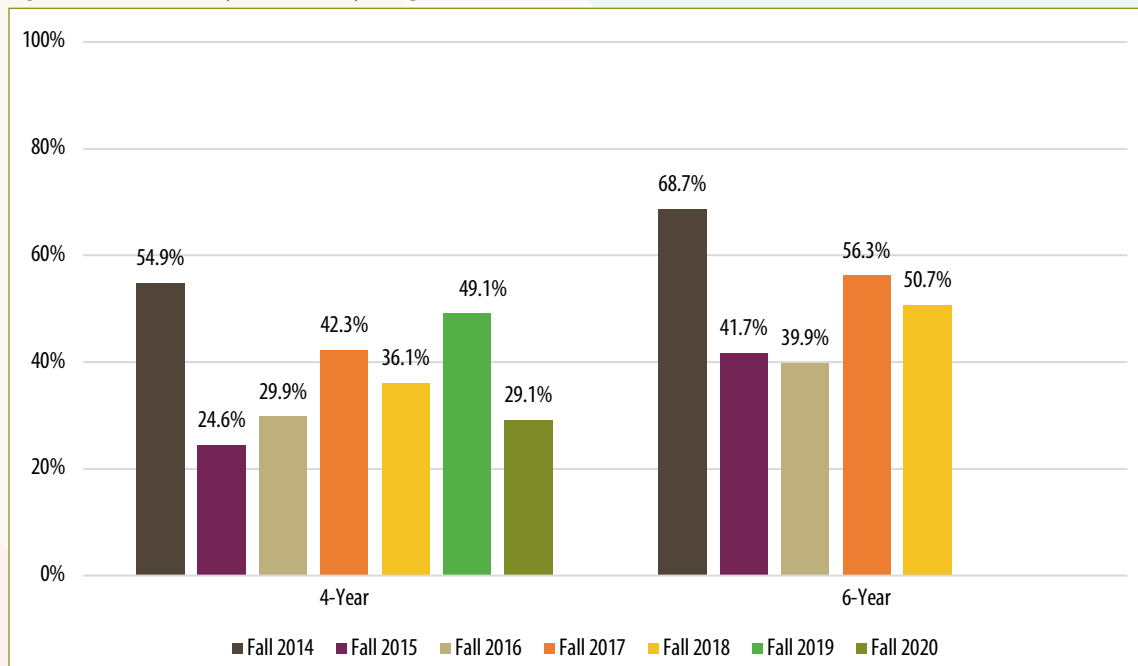
In *Figure 4*, the NHPI student population over the past ten years has remained relatively stable, with slight fluctuations: 711 in Fall 2023, 717 in Fall 2022, 715 in Fall 2021, 734 in Fall 2020, 707 in Fall 2019, 666 in Fall 2018, 711 in Fall 2017, 745 in Fall 2016, 728 in Fall 2015, and 726 in Fall 2014.

Figure 5. Overall enrollment trend for Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students, Fall 2014-2023.



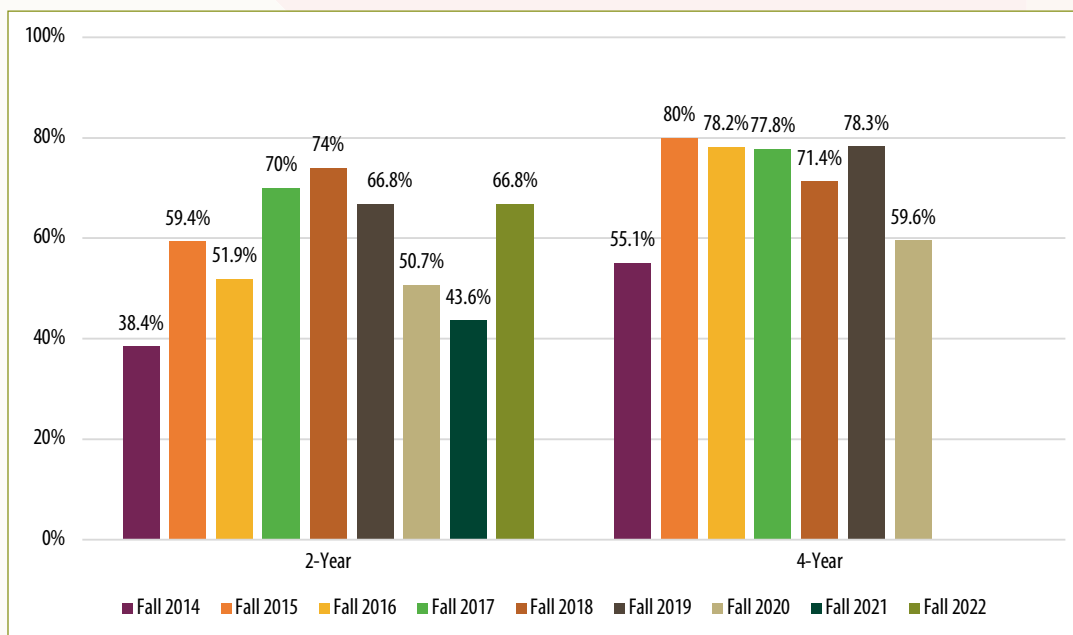
In *Figure 5*, overall enrollment trends for NHPI students from Fall 2018 to Fall 2023 show that retention from the end of Year 1 was highest for the Fall 2019 cohort at 90.1%, followed by Fall 2020 at 87.6% and Fall 2019 at 83.5%. By the end of Year 2, the highest retention was seen in the Fall 2021 cohort at 79.9%, while the Fall 2022 cohort dropped to 38.4%. At the end of Year 3, the Fall 2019 cohort had the highest retention at 75.6%, followed by Fall 2021 at 72.8%.

Figure 6. Overall, 4- year and 6- year graduation rates for first-time Pacific Islander students, Fall 2014-2020.



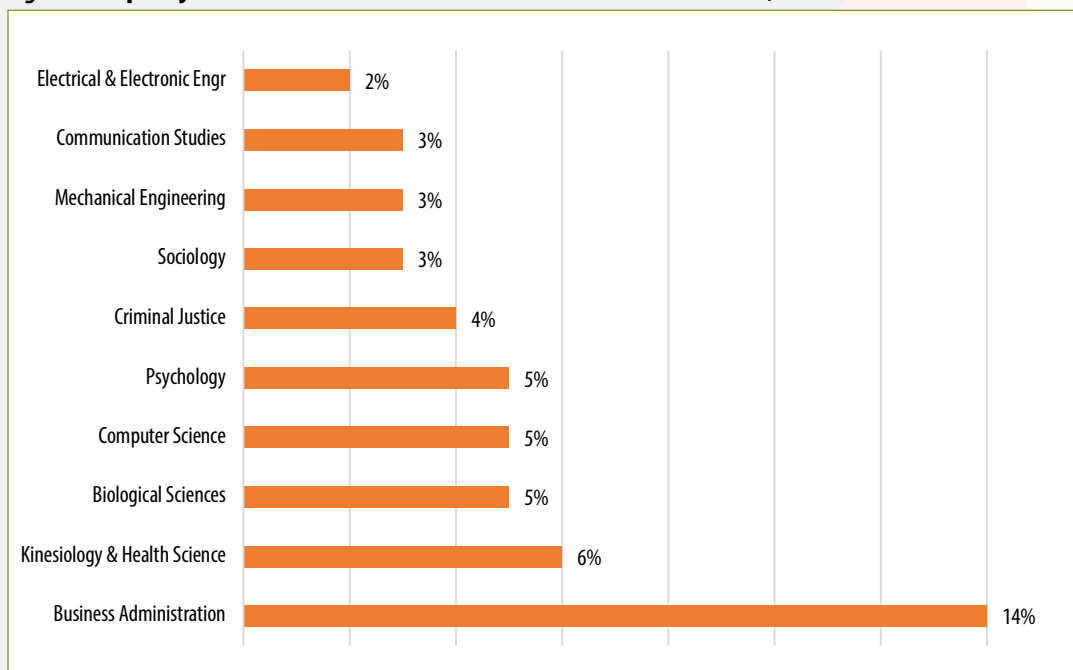
In *Figure 6*, the 4-year graduation rates for first-time NHPI students varied across cohorts, with the highest rate at 54.9% for the Fall 2014 cohort and the lowest at 24.6% for Fall 2015. The 6-year graduation rate peaked at 68.7% for the Fall 2014 cohort, followed by 56.3% for Fall 2017 and 50.7% for Fall 2018.

Figure 7. Overall, 2- year and 4- year graduation rates for transfer Pacific Islander students, Fall 2014-2022.



In *Figure 7*, the 2-year graduation rates for first-time NHPI students increased from 38.4% in Fall 2014 to a high of 74% in Fall 2018, before declining to 43.6% in Fall 2021. For 4-year graduation rates, the highest rate was 80% in Fall 2015, followed by 78.2% in Fall 2016, 77.8% in Fall 2017, and 71.4% in Fall 2018. The most recent cohort, Fall 2020, had a 4-year graduation rate of 59.6%.

Figure 8. Top majors for Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students, Fall 2023.

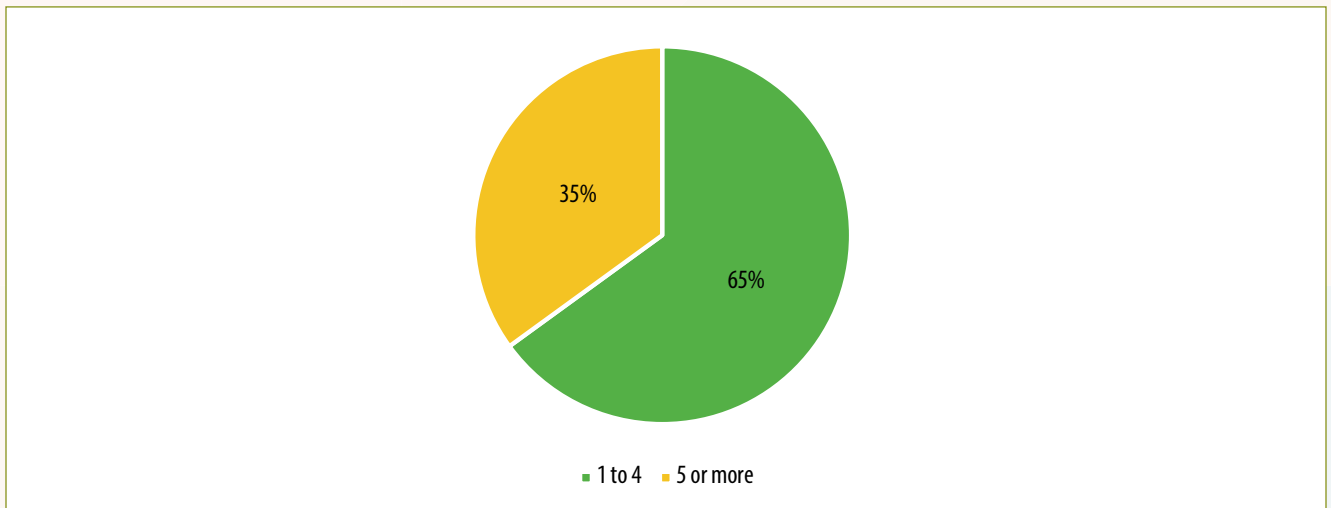


In *Figure 8*, the top five majors for NHPI students in Fall 2023 were Business Administration, Kinesiology & Health Science, Biological Sciences, Computer Science, and Psychology.

METHODOLOGY

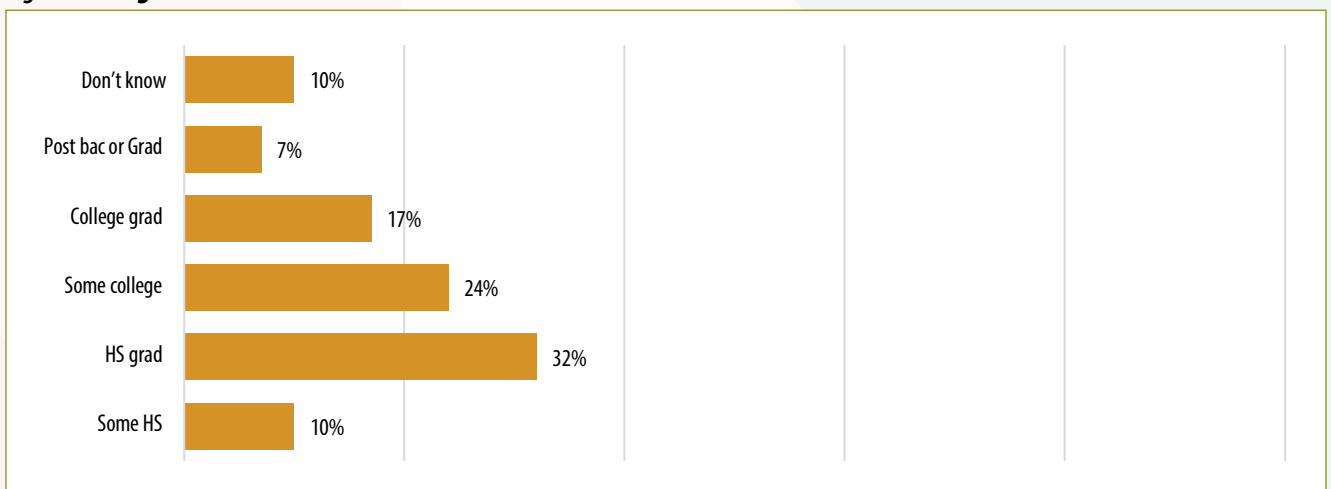
In Spring 2024, 83 Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students completed the questionnaire survey. This report consists of a single higher education institution in the greater Sacramento region, and therefore it only represents some Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students. This limited representation, therefore, cannot be used to generalize to the entire population of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students at the institution, not to mention in the region, the state, or the United States. Similarly, our findings can only be used to describe the social and cultural experiences of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students at Sacramento State.

Figure 9. Number of people in the household for students living at home.



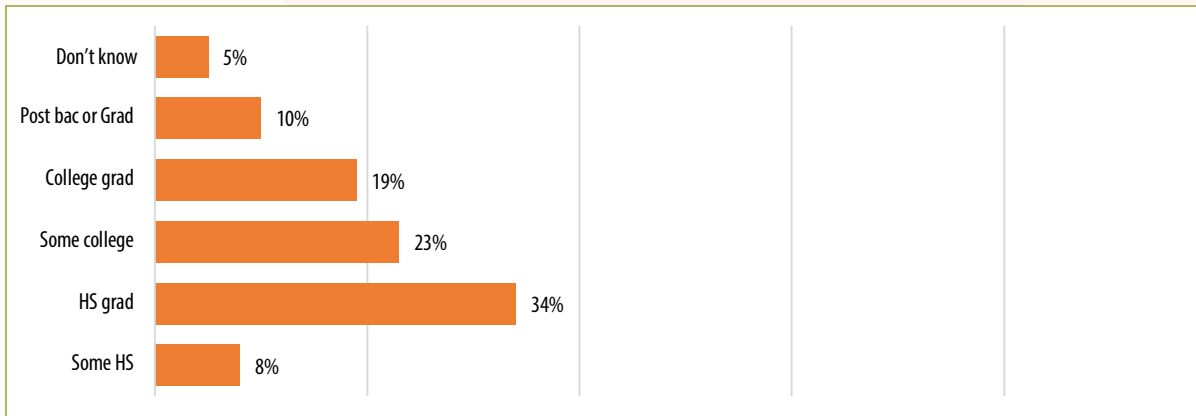
In *Figure 9*, approximately two-thirds of NHPI students reported living with four or fewer people in their household, while one-third reported living with five or more people.

Figure 10. Highest education level of father.



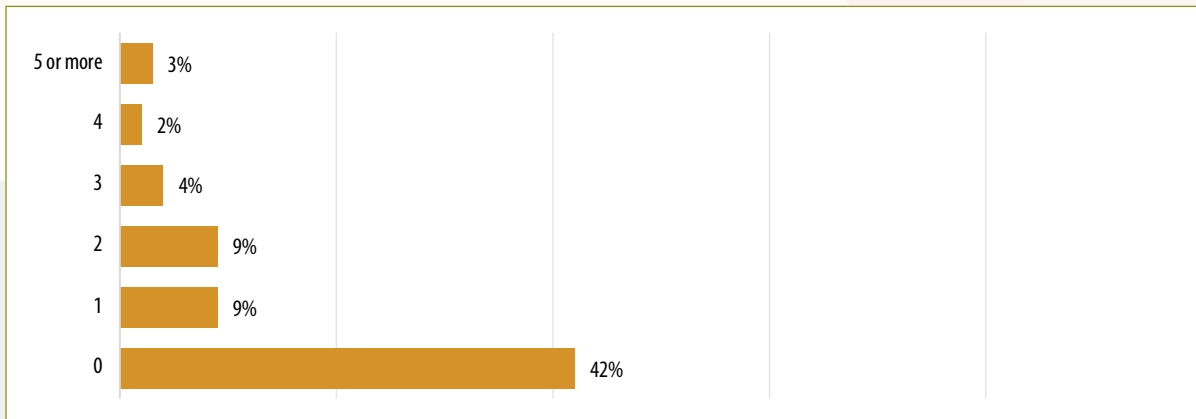
In *Figure 10*, the three highest levels of education for fathers were high school graduate at 32%, some college at 24%, and college graduate at 17%.

Figure 11. Highest education level of mother.



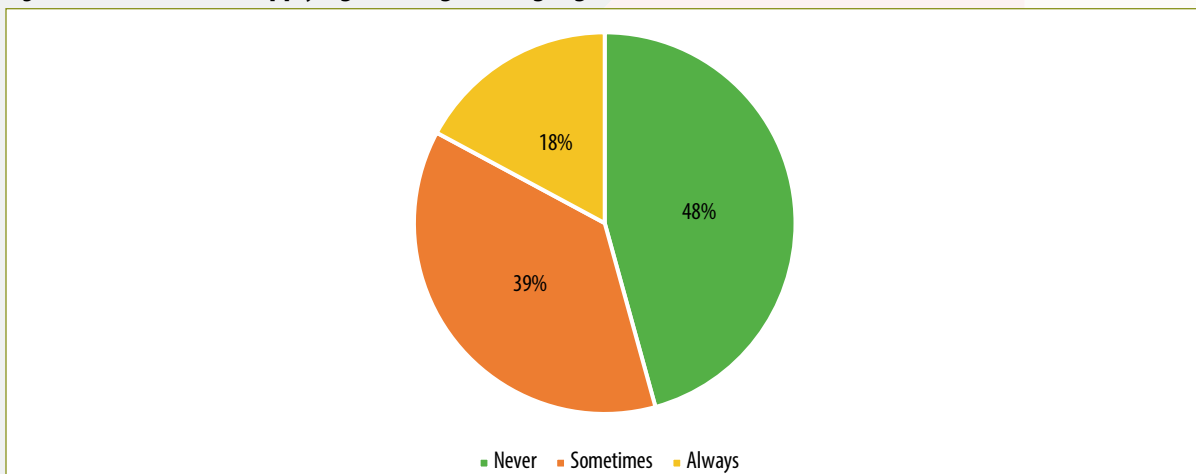
In **Figure 11**, the three highest levels of education for mothers were high school graduate at 34%, some college at 23%, and college graduate at 19%.

Figure 12. Number of immediate family who attended college and completed their college degree.



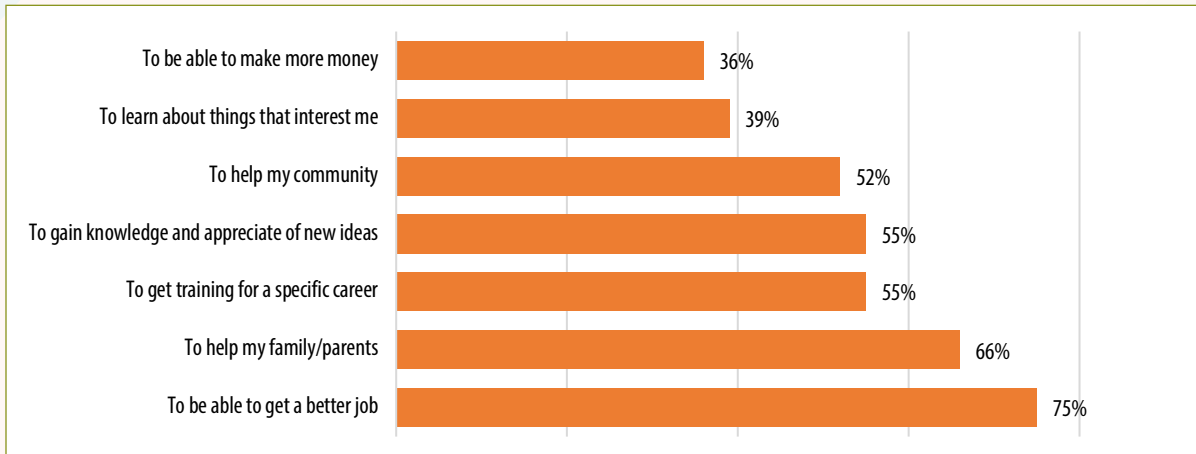
In **Figure 12**, the number of immediate family members who attended and completed their college degree was reported as follows: 42% of NHPI students had none, 9% of NHPI students had 1 member, 9% had 2 members, 4% had 3 members, 2% had 4 members and 3% had 5 or more family members.

Figure 13. Heard about applying to college during high school.



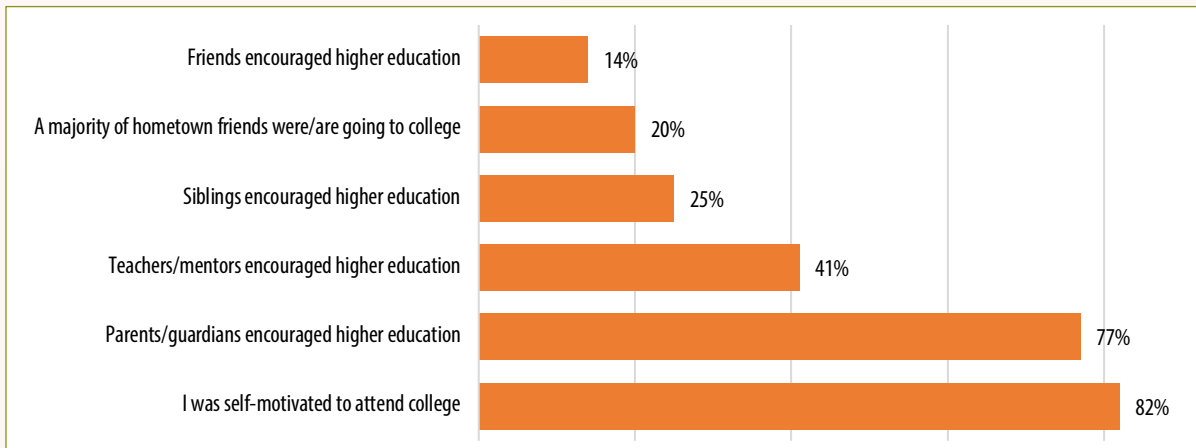
In **Figure 13**, 48% never heard about applying to college during high school, 39% sometimes heard about it, and 18% always heard about it.

Figure 14. Reasons for pursuing higher education.



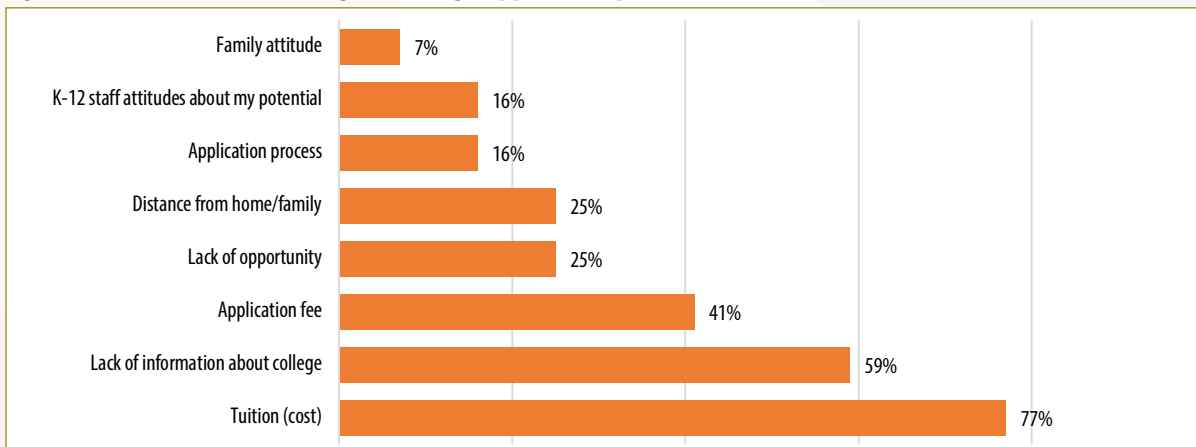
In *Figure 14*, the top three reasons NHPI students pursued higher education were to get a better job at 75%, to help family/parents at 66%, and to get training for a specific career at 55%.

Figure 15. Factors influenced decision to attend college.



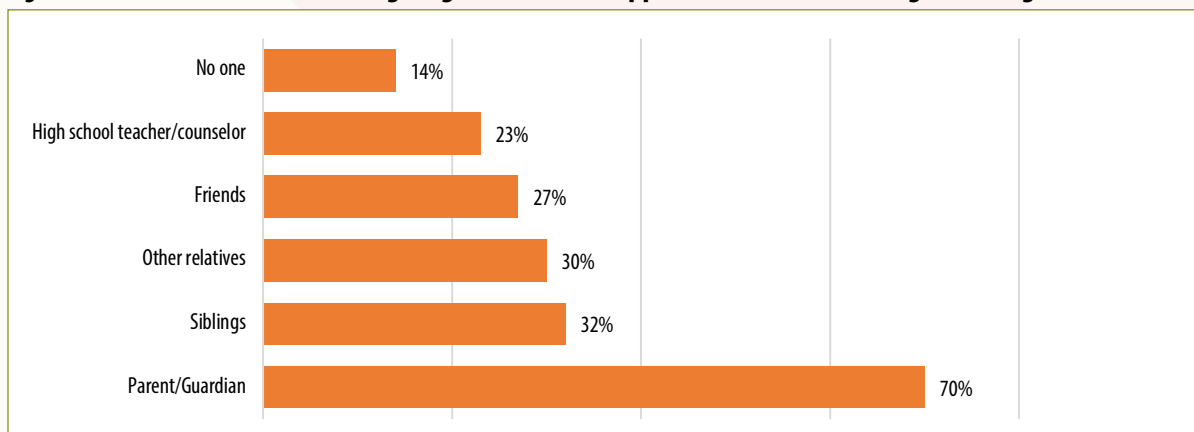
In *Figure 15*, the top three factors that influenced NHPI students to attend college were self-motivation at 82%, parents/guardians at 77%, and teachers/mentors at 41%.

Figure 16. Barriers faced during the college application process.



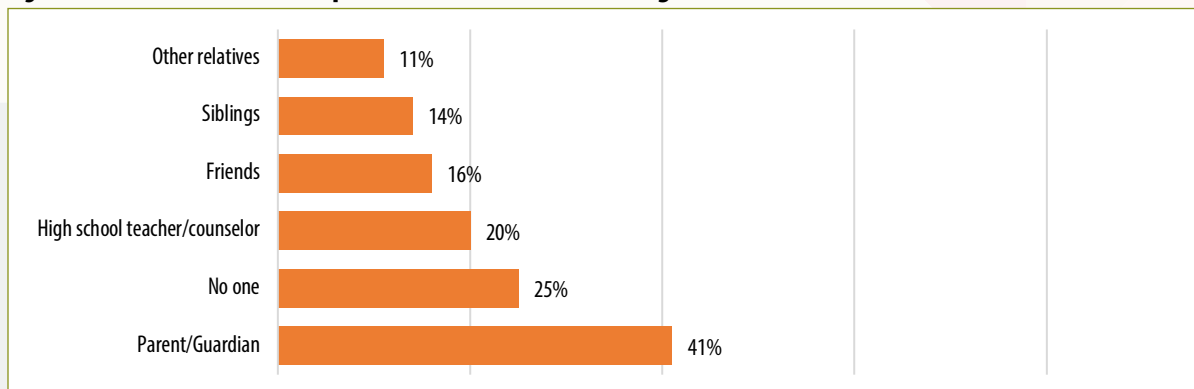
In *Figure 16*, the top three barriers NHPI students faced during the college application process were tuition at 77%, lack of information about college at 59%, and the application fee at 41%.

Figure 17. Individuals who encouraged, guided and/or supported their decision to go to college.



In **Figure 17**, the top three individuals who encouraged, guided, and/or supported NHPI student decision to go to college were a parent/guardian at 70%, sibling at 32%, and other relatives at 30%.

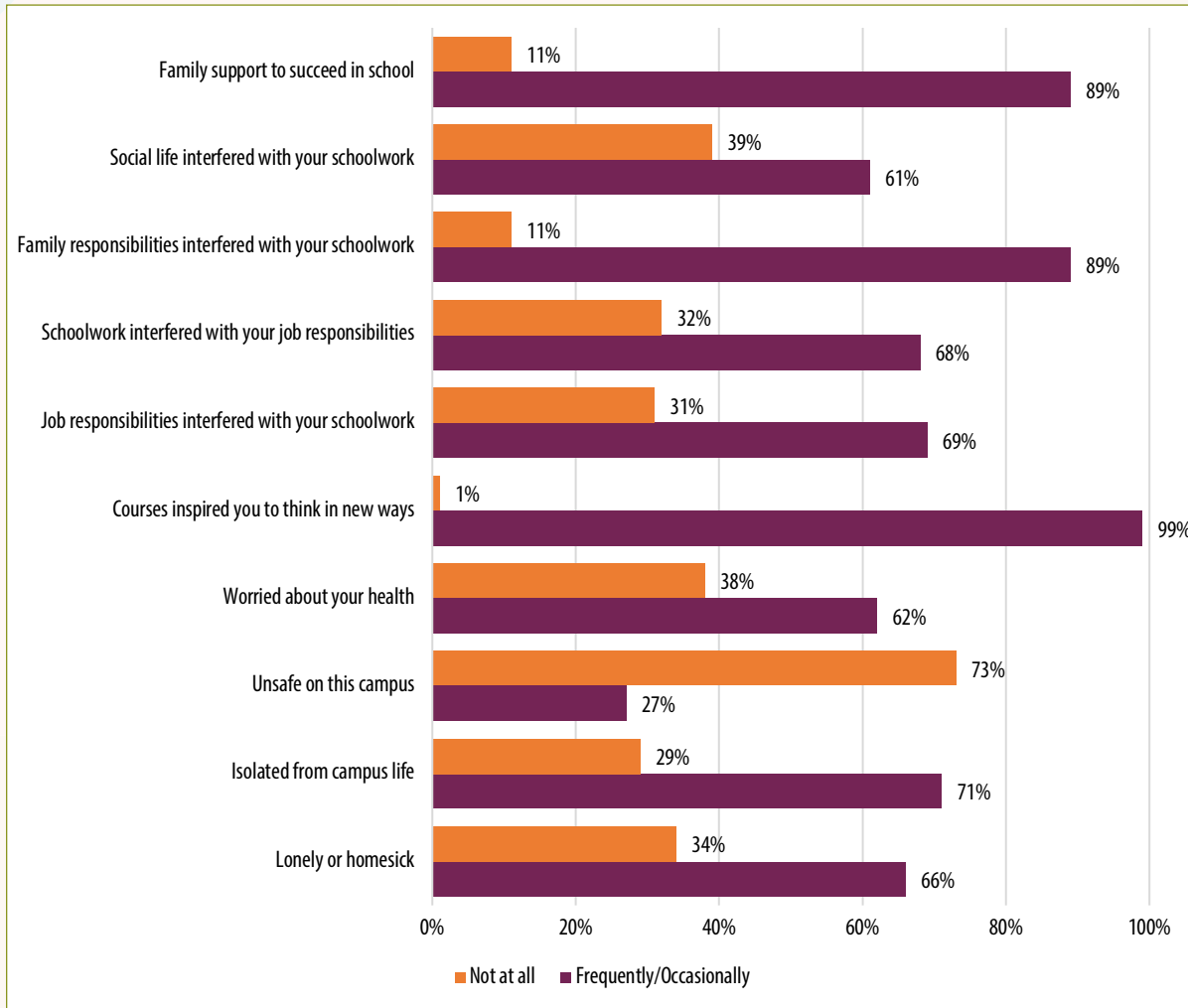
Figure 18. Individuals who helped their transition into college.



In **Figure 18**, the top three individuals who helped with NHPI students transition to college were a parent/guardian at 41%, no one at 25%, and a high school teacher/counselor at 20%.

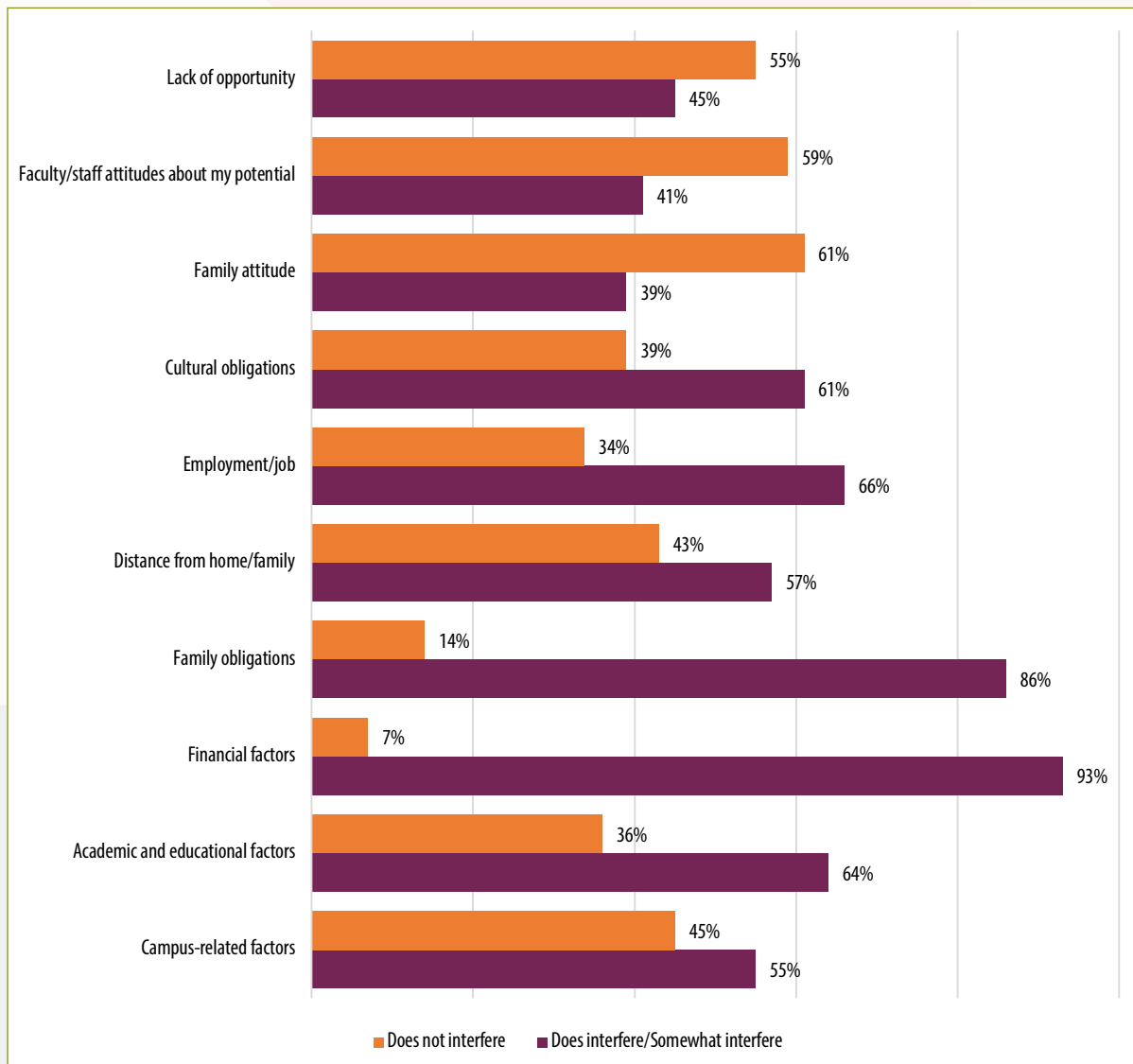


Figure 19. Multidimensional factors impacting overall wellness and campus engagement since entering college.



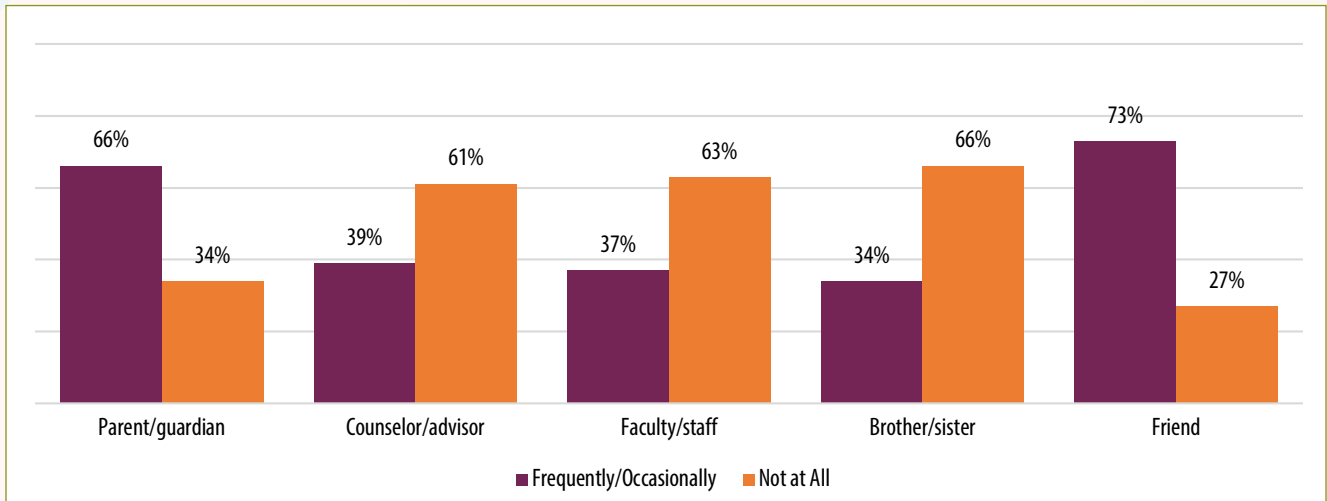
In **Figure 19**, key multidimensional factors influencing NHPI students' overall wellness and campus engagement included family support to succeed in school (89%), courses that inspired new ways of thinking (99%), and family responsibilities interfering with schoolwork (89%). Other notable factors were job responsibilities interfering with schoolwork (69%), schoolwork interfering with job responsibilities (68%), and feelings of isolation from campus life (71%).

Figure 20. Factors that interfered with their ability to complete a degree.



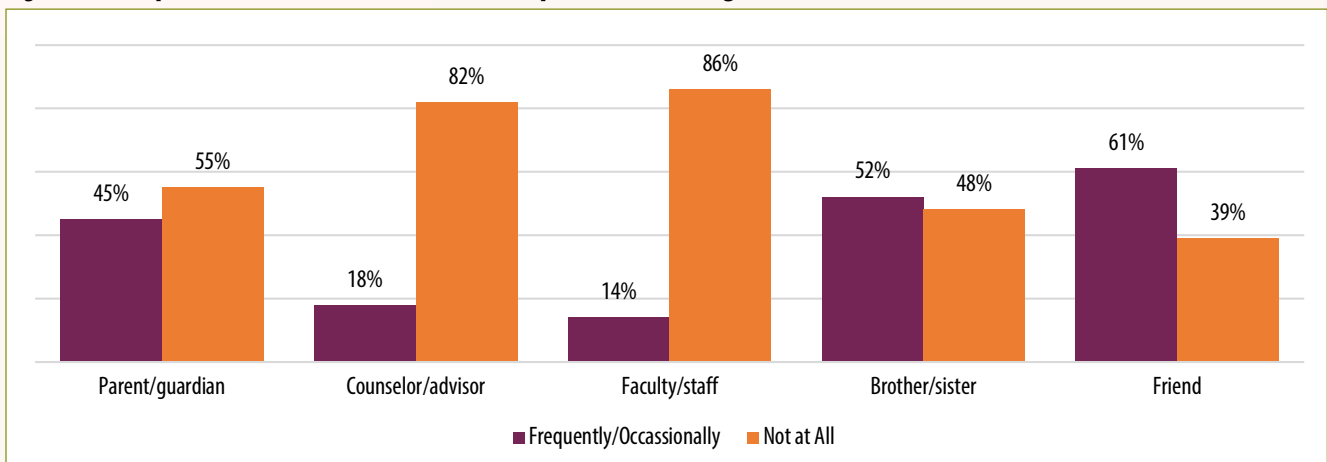
In *Figure 20*, the top five factors that interfered with NHPI students' ability to complete their degree were (1) financial factors at 93%, (2) family obligations at 86%, (3) employment/job at 66%, (4) academic and educational factors at 64%, and (5) cultural obligations at 61%.

Figure 21. People with whom students discussed academic challenges.



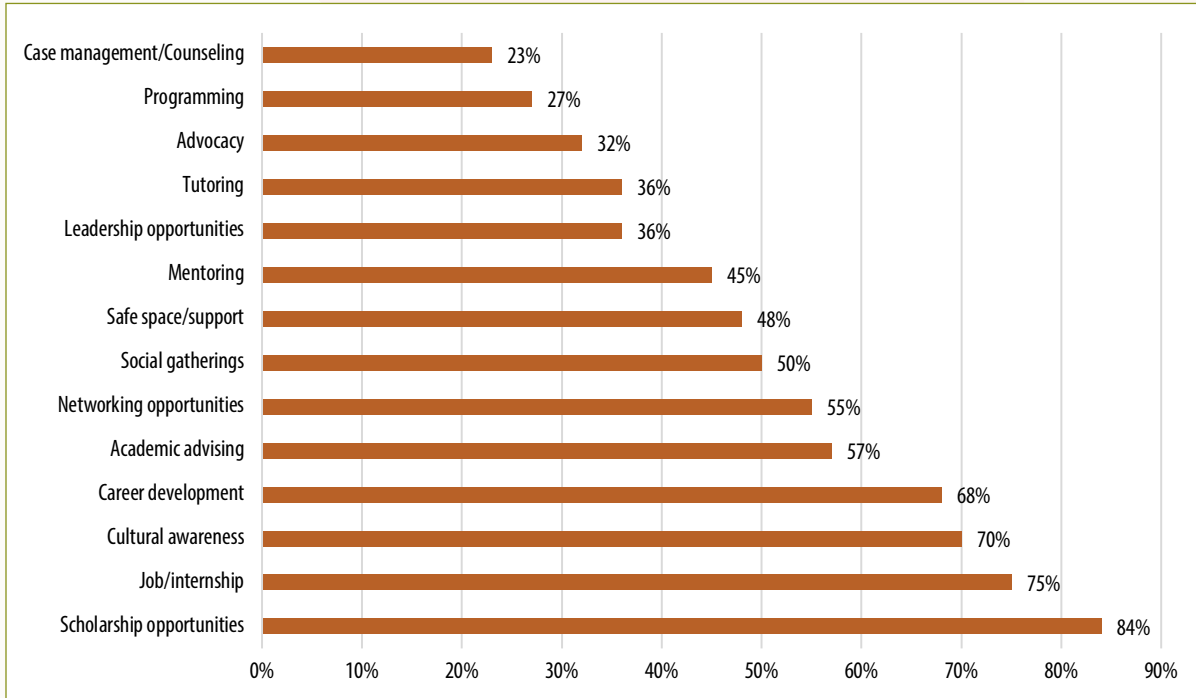
In *Figure 21*, people with whom NHPI students discussed academic challenges included a friend (73%), a parent/guardian (66%), a counselor/advisor (39%), faculty/staff (37%), and a brother/sister (34%).

Figure 22. People with whom students discussed personal challenges.



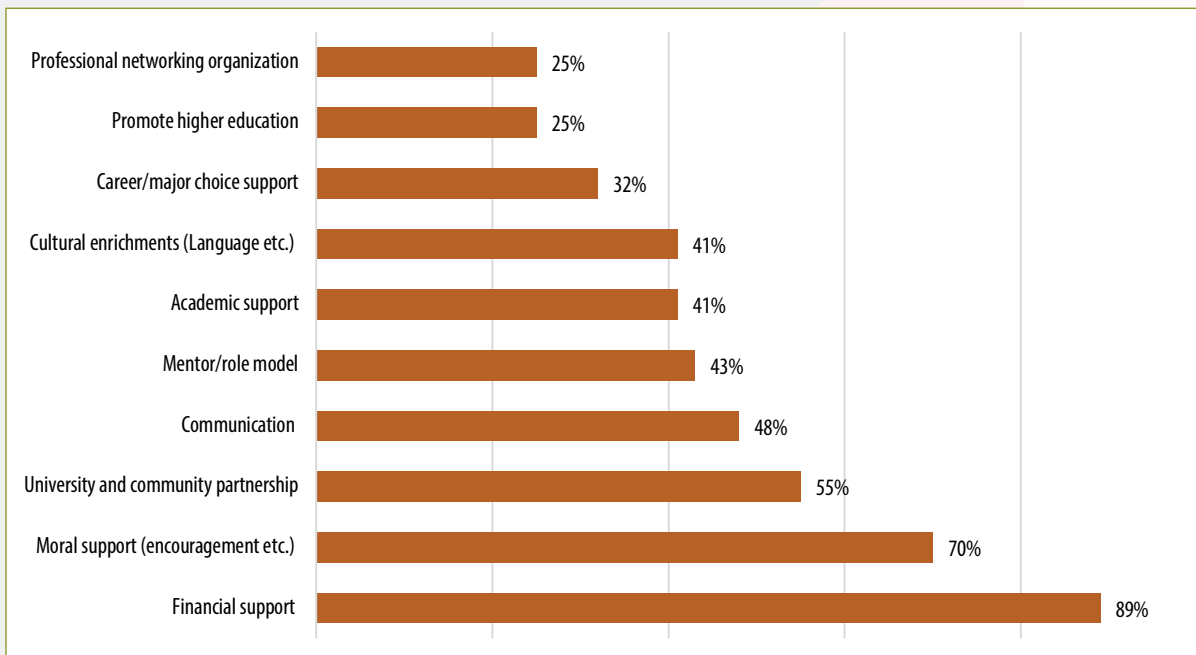
In *Figure 22*, people with whom students discussed their personal challenges included a friend (61%), a brother/sister (52%), a parent/guardian (45%), a counselor/advisor (18%), and faculty/staff (14%).

Figure 23. University support, information, or services would be most helpful to facilitate the successful completion of students' degree.



In **Figure 23**, the top five university supports, information, or services that would be most helpful in facilitating the successful completion of students' degrees were (1) scholarship opportunities at 84%, (2) job/internship opportunities at 75%, (3) cultural awareness at 70%, (4) career development at 68%, and (5) academic advising at 57%.

Figure 24. Family support that would be most helpful to facilitate the successful completion of students' degree.



In **Figure 24**, the top five overall supports needed for NHPI students are (1) financial support at 89%, (2) moral support at 70%, (3) university and Pacific Islander community at 55%, (4) communication at 48%, and (5) a mentor/role model at 43%.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICE

The following recommendations represent a framework to address the myriad educational needs of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students, ranging from broad to specific and from cultural to structural.

Recommendation 1:

- Annually collect, disaggregate, analyze, and report major institutional data sets related to the diverse experiences of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander student groups to inform data driven decision-making.

Recommendation 2:

- Increase access and collaboration with K-12 school districts and community organizations that target Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students to create transition programming to strengthen students’ college and career readiness.

Recommendation 3:

- Develop and institutionalize programs that foster a strong sense of belonging and support the educational success of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students.

Recommendation 4:

- Establish a meaningful and sustainable relationship with the community/family around cultural and social activities to promote intergenerational dialogue and discourse.



For practical application, here are some questions that faculty and professionals in student affairs can ask themselves to integrate these ideas into their everyday practices (Student Success Collaborative, 2017).

Senior Administrators

- Are there specific subpopulations or programs performing below the university average?

Deans

- Where do I need to adjust academic support resources to improve student outcomes?

Chairs and Faculty

- Which courses should I prioritize for review and possible redesign?

Staff/Advising

- What milestone/benchmark thresholds can I use to target overlooked students for early advising interventions?



CONCLUSION

Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students remain underrepresented in institutional data narratives. This report calls for increased data equity and visibility to ensure their experiences inform meaningful change on campus and in the broader community. This report is dedicated to NHPI students whose persistence and academic success reflect remarkable resilience in the face of structural and societal barriers. Their journeys are deeply shaped by familial and cultural values that continue to inform their aspirations and educational paths.





SACRAMENTO
STATE