

Stepping Up to College Success in Hawai'i

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Overview

- The Step Up Scholars Program
- Research Questions
- Methodology
- Results
- Discussion
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- Conclusion



Step Up Scholars Program

A group of diverse graduates in black gowns and caps, smiling and throwing their caps into the air against a blue sky with clouds. The graduates are of various ethnicities and ages, all appearing joyful and proud. Some are holding rolled-up diplomas tied with red ribbons.

Taking the more rigorous coursework required of the BOERD will prepare students to successfully enter and complete postsecondary.

Components of the Program

- **Campaign** to encourage students to pledge to earn the BOERD
- **Materials**, sent home, about the requirements of the BOERD and applying for college and financial aid
- **Incentives** for students who earned the BOERD



Research Questions

For students in the graduating classes of 2013, 2014, and 2015, what is the impact of the Step Up Scholars Program on:

- High school graduation with a regular diploma or BOERD?
- College enrollment at a four-year or two-year college?
- First-to-second-year college persistence?



Examining a Potential Mechanism

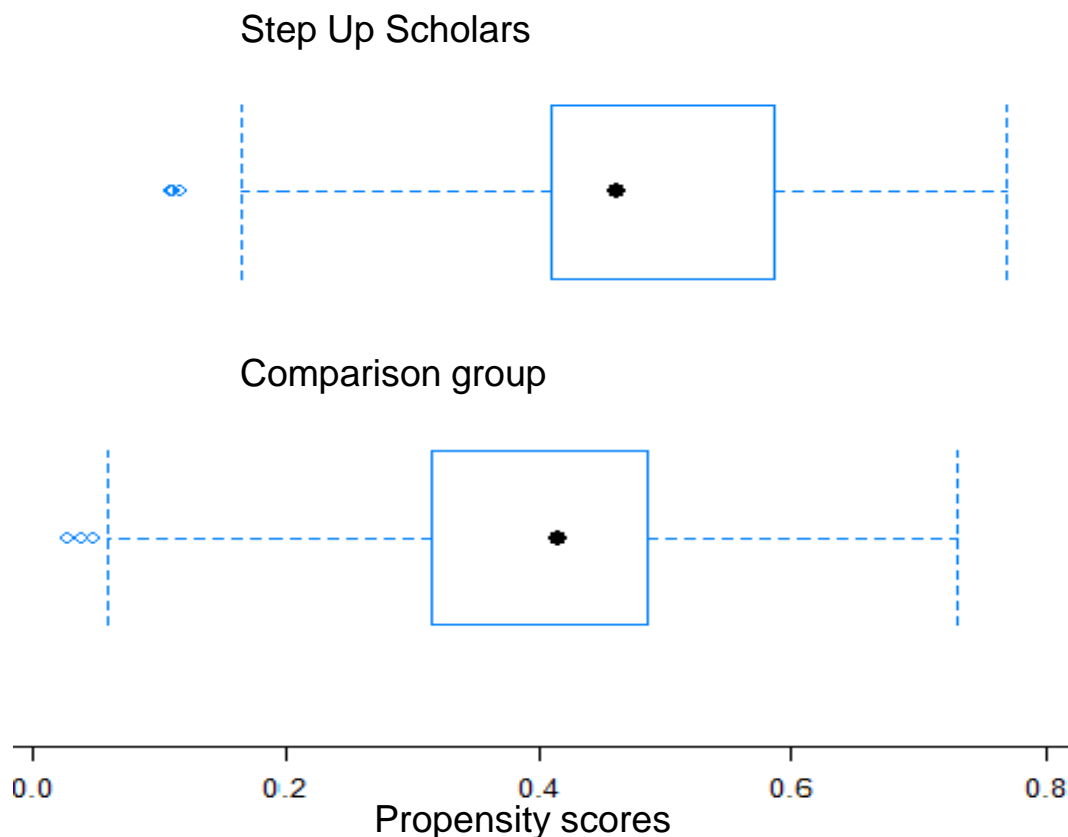
For students in the graduating classes of 2013, 2014, and 2015, what is the impact of the Step Up Scholars program on:

- Earning credit in Algebra II or beyond?
- Earning credit in any AP course?



Methodology

- Quasi-experimental methodology
- Overlap in propensity scores



Methodology

■ Weighting using propensity scores

	Unweighted sample		Weighted sample	
	Step Up Scholars	All other students	Step Up Scholars	All other students
Hawai‘i State Assessment score				
Eighth-grade reading	320.99	308.63	313.93	313.08
Eighth-grade math	313.60	297.57	304.45	303.35
Gender				
Female	57%	43%	49%	48%
Male	43%	57%	51%	52%
Program participation				
Eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (eighth grade)	45%	52%	49%	50%
Had an English language learner status (eighth grade)	11%	11%	11%	11%
Had an individualized education program (eighth grade)	6%	12%	9%	9%

Results: Graduation!

- A Step Up Scholar's likelihood of graduating from high school was 2.0 times greater than that of a non-Scholar.
- A Step Up Scholar's likelihood of earning the BOERD was about 2.3 times greater than that of a non-Scholar.



Results:

College Enrollment and Persistence

- Step Up Scholars were also 1.8 times more likely to enroll in a two-year college, and about 2.6 times more likely to enroll in a four-year college, than non-Scholars.
- Step Up Scholars who attended a four-year college were 1.5 times more likely to persist to the second year, and Step Up Scholars who attended a two-year college were 1.3 times more likely to persist.

Results:

Advanced Math & AP Credits

- Step Up led to a 0.25 credit increase in advanced math courses (Algebra II or higher)
- Step Up led to a 0.7 credit increase in AP coursework.



Why Such Large Effects?

■ Timing and content of information

“Nudges can help students overcome their attentional failure by providing reminders that are well-timed to correspond to the windows of opportunity during which students would optimally focus on particular tasks. Well-timed nudges may actually serve to capitalize on students’ relative impulsivity, encouraging them to make progress with a particular task in the moment rather than putting it off to an unspecified future time. Thus, there may be promise in low-touch nudges and reminders to support students both to and through postsecondary education. ” (Page & Scott-Clayton, 2016, p. 13)



Why Such Large Effects?

■ Materials sent home

“How Step Up has impacted me is that when Step Up mails things to students, they come to me to talk about it and I can get students to do things I have been telling them over and over to do but they never do. It is helpful for them to hear it from an outside source. **It is better that they get the information right at home.**”
-HI high school counselor



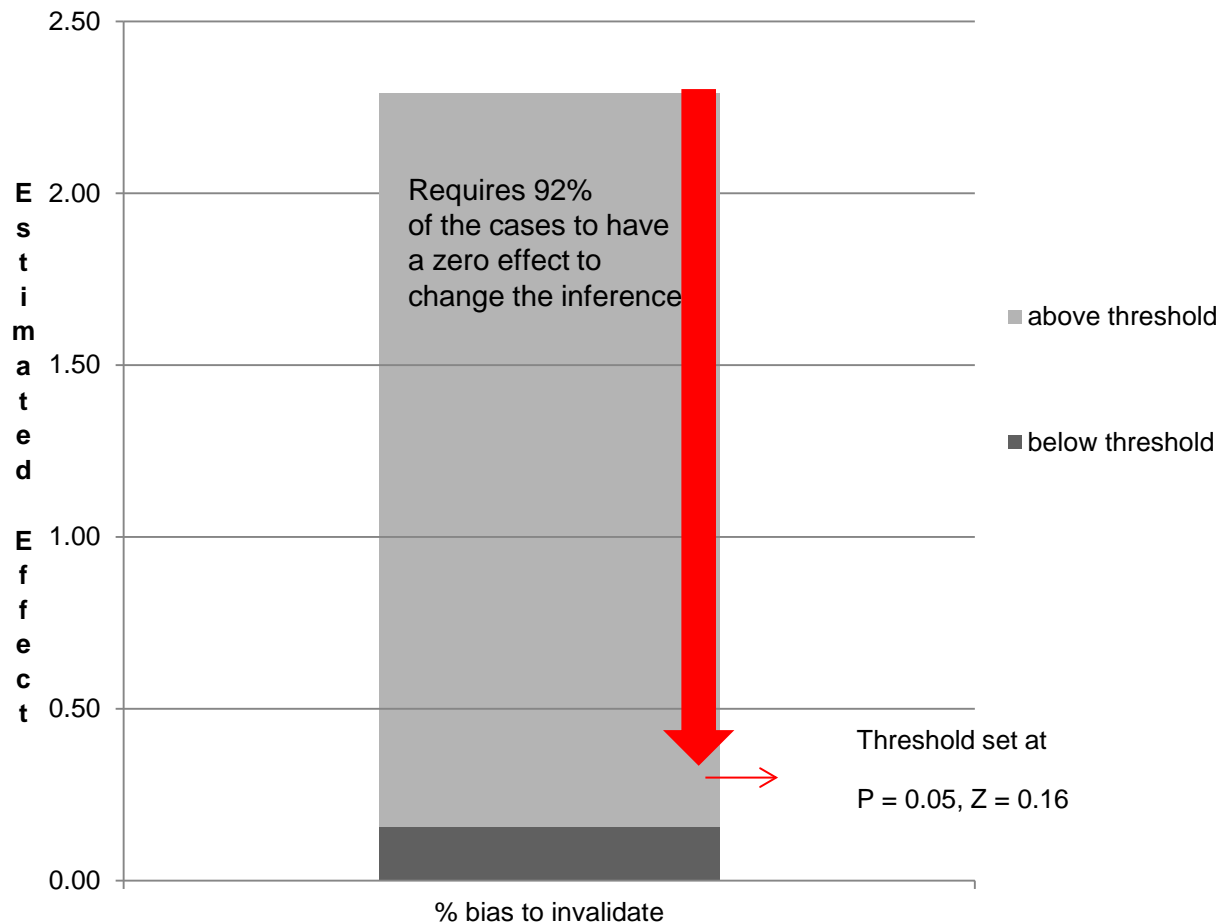
Limitations

- Some characteristics (such as motivation) are difficult to capture and measure, and we cannot account for them in the statistical models.
- Differences in high school and postsecondary outcomes may be due to these unmeasured differences in Scholars and non-Scholars rather than to the Step Up Scholars Program itself.



Sensitivity Analysis

Percentage of cases that need to be replaced to change the inference to a nonstatistical finding:



Report and brief are
available online:

[http://educationnorthwest.org/resources/
impact-step-scholars-program-college-
readiness-and-success](http://educationnorthwest.org/resources/impact-step-scholars-program-college-readiness-and-success)



Mahalo for your attention

Questions?

