

Evaluation of the Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Program and the Educational Partnership Program

Client: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Education

Project Overview

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office of Education operates a \$5M scholarship program that funds direct NOAA involvement through internships as well as partial tuition payments to students. There are 2 programs in place to support these scholarships: The Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Program (HUSP) and the Educational Partnership Program (EPP). The overall goal of these programs is to train students, especially those from underrepresented minority communities, in NOAA mission fields.



In turn, these programs aim to prepare these students for NOAA-related careers, thus contributing to the growth of such professions.

Insight is evaluating the success of these scholarship programs to:

1. Increase recipient-college graduation rates.
2. Increase the likelihood of students continuing their studies in graduate school.
3. Increase employment in NOAA mission-related fields.

For this 3-year contract, Insight will collect online data from grant recipients and nonrecipients as well as conduct site visits to institutions that have received NOAA funding for the EPP scholarship program. The purpose of collecting information about the HUSP and EPP scholarship programs primarily is to identify recipients' educational and career outcomes and trajectories. The educational and career outcomes of scholarship participants will then be compared to those of individuals who applied for but did not receive the HUSP or EPP scholarships in an impact analysis using the a regression discontinuity design (RDD). If the HUSP and EPP scholarship programs successfully meet their goals, more students from underrepresented groups will graduate in NOAA-related and science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM)-related majors, attend graduate school in these fields, and undertake careers in STEM and NOAA-related fields. A secondary purpose of this information collection effort is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the HUSP and EPP scholarship programs. By identifying how and in what ways the HUSP and EPP programs have helped to serve student scholars and how these programs can be improved, NOAA can further refine its programming and target efforts for future investment.

In sum, the mixed-methods evaluation incorporates a regression discontinuity design of scholarship recipients and those who applied but did not receive the scholarship, Web surveys, in-depth interviews, and site visits to institutions of higher education.

Core Activities

Document Review; Quantitative Analysis; Qualitative Analysis; Program Evaluation; Report Development and Presentation

Products

Insight will develop a final impact evaluation of the Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Program and the Educational Partnership Program.