

May 6th 2016
Pacific Islands Club
6:00-10:00P.M.

Project Aim Awards Ceremony Speech

I remember first hearing about *Project Aim* during my senior year in high school. That was in 2011, about 5 years ago. During that time the counselor who was assigned at our high school shared about Project Aim upcoming summer bridge program being held at GCC. That was my very first time hearing about Project Aim. On her presentation the counselor specifically mentioned about how the Project Aim summer bridge program will be primarily focused on two key subjects that will help students when they get to college. The subjects were Math and English. I knew that I had some ability to read and write, but I wasn't the best at it, and my math skills really needed a lot of help. I only attended my classes and gave it only half my best because I just needed to pass with a C or higher in order to play for our high school basketball team. Now I'm not saying that I'm an idiot, I just never really knew my potential because I never realized the importance of education at the time. Until Project Aim intervened.

I was now nearing the end of my senior year in high school and suddenly felt the pressure of the real world not knowing if I acquired enough legitimate skills to back me up in college. At the end of the counselors' presentation she asked the students in our classroom if there were anyone interested in signing up for the summer program. I was one of the first to raise up my hand. I raised up my hand for three reasons. The first reason was because I realized that I was lacking sufficient knowledge to perform well in college. The second reason was I wanted to get ahead start in college by getting help to improve my math and English skills specifically. The third reason was because Project Aim promised to provide free food during the entire summer program.

During the entire summer program, Project Aim not only provided delicious free chow, but I also discovered skills I didn't know that I had and gained new ones. I excelled in my writing skills and ended up placing in the EN110 on my first try at the placement exam, which would have not been possible without the help of the summer bridge program. For my math however, I ended up placing in MA085, but that was okay because coming in to the program I knew that math skills

would be my biggest challenge and indeed it was. I speak to myself when I say this, but in order to get somewhere, we need to take that first step. So that's what I did not realizing that my first step was actually when I raised up my hand in that classroom. The following two semesters at GCC were quite difficult not educational wise, but passion wise. I didn't what I was there for. So the following year I left GCC with an intention of just taking a semester break because I lacked the motivation in part due to not knowing what direction I was going, and also because I was doing very poorly in my math class. A semester break ended up being 2 years off from college.

With that long of an absence, I returned to GCC in summer of 2014 fueled with motivation to continue from where I left off. By fall I went back to the Project Aim office and re-registered. Project Aim was now located in a newly built building far different from when I left in 2012. To my surprise my old records from 2011 were still filed in the Project Aim records, so the process of re-entry was very easy. I was also warmly welcomed by none other than Mr. James. During the fall semester 2014, I was taking up Math108, it was by far one of the most complex math subjects I've undergone. But I passed that class with almost one hundred percent, and it wouldn't have been possible without the help of the Project Aim tutors. Seriously. At first I was very hesitant to ask for help from the tutors only because I thought that I could do it all on my own. But then reality took over and showed me that I did indeed need the help. From then on, Project Aim has guided me and helped me excel and succeed in college. Now, there's more to this than what my words can really express and say, the program has helped me tremendously. Bottom line.

I started from the bottom, now I'm here. Now we are here. I am very proud to say that I am not just an upcoming graduate from GCC, but a product of *Project Aim*. So to anyone out there who is unsure of their capabilities and strengths, Project Aim helped me discover mine, Project Aim could do the same for you. Thank you Project Aim.