



## **THE UNIVERSITY OF GUAM REACHES EVER UPWARD**

November 25, 2019

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**Ina, Deskubre, Setbe – To Enlighten, To Discover, To Serve** – is the mission of the University of Guam. Since its founding in 1952 as the Territorial College of Guam, and since its elevation to university status in 1968, raising standards of academic excellence and developing robust partnerships with the communities of Guam and the whole of Micronesia have been the core of the UOG enterprise.

According to its Charter, “The University of Guam is dedicated to the continuing search for truth, justice, liberty, happiness, and dignity among the people and islands of Guam and the Western Pacific. ... The University of Guam shall provide instruction in the arts, sciences, and professional and technical curricula. It shall provide all support services necessary for its functions and for the maintenance of accreditation; shall conduct research within any or all fields of study as resources permit, and shall provide public service, including consultation services, to the people of Guam. It shall be Guam’s Land-Grant Institution.”

UOG’s mandate to serve all the peoples of Micronesia makes it unique among American public universities in that it is directed by its sponsoring government to serve people beyond the jurisdiction of that government. As Micronesia’s university, it serves a special – even sacred – function as the primary keeper of island wisdom, including the languages, cultures, and customs of the CHamoru and other indigenous peoples of Micronesia.

UOG’s designation as a U.S. land-grant university in 1972 underscored the three-part mission of teaching, research, and service that is the foundation of the land-grant idea. Land-grant universities are charged to conduct research, teach the results, and share the benefits with the communities they serve.

Over the last 20 years, the University has achieved a best-practice level of institutional autonomy, which has allowed the institution to expand its academic offerings, launch new

programs and initiatives that generate revenue, and seek out partnerships that benefit Guam and the region. The University also developed a solid assessment process to support high-quality accreditation reviews resulting in an unprecedented 16 consecutive years of academic accreditation.

## **GOOD TO GREAT**

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In 2010, then President Robert Underwood launched a strategic plan that included the Good to Great (G2G) initiative to make the University more streamlined and more oriented toward true university-level research capacity. Among the 205 action items in the G2G program was the establishment of the Research Corporation of UOG (RCUOG), which has enabled the institution to secure and execute prestigious federal research grants.

The University had established the means to attract large and diverse federal grants to conduct distinguished research across a multitude of disciplines. In 2019, the University spent more than \$27.3 million in federal grant funding and employed nearly 250 grant-funded employees, ranking UOG among the top 250 of 902 U.S. universities in federal research grant expenditures.

UOG continues working its way to becoming a "Great University," and a new strategic plan has become necessary to maintain this upward trajectory, to assure constant engagement with faculty, staff, students, and stakeholders, and to be a University that meets the academic, professional, and social needs of the communities it serves.

## **PARA HULO' - EVER UPWARD**

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In January 2019, the 11th president of UOG, Thomas W. Krise, launched a new strategic planning process designed to build on the University's strengths and capacities developed over the last 20 years. The five-year plan, dubbed "**Para Hulo'**" – CHamoru for UOG's Latin motto "excelsior" or "ever upward" – will prepare UOG for its next WASC accreditation site visit in 2024 and continue UOG's desired trajectory toward greatness.

### **The Process**

The two-phase strategic planning process took place from February to August 2019. A Strategic Planning Committee (SPC), which included the 16-member President's Council and other members of the University community recognized by their colleagues as being exemplary employees with a strong commitment to improving the University.

The entire University community contributed ideas and input through several surveys and feedback through town hall meetings. The SPC analyzed, discussed, and identified the best and most impactful ideas for the University going forward. The SPC then developed a new Vision Statement and an expanded Mission Statement for the University and identified values shared by the entire University community.

## Vision Statement

Transforming Lives; Advancing Communities

## Mission Statement

*Ina, Deskubre, Setbe - To Enlighten, To Discover, To Serve*

The University of Guam empowers the region by uniting island wisdom with universal sources of enlightenment to support exceptional education, discovery, and service that respect and benefit local and global communities.

## Values

- Respect and Supportiveness
- Honesty, Integrity, Trustworthiness, and Dependability
- High Standards
- Diversity
- Community Engagement
- Sustainability and Campus Beauty
- Innovation and Proactivity

## Strategic Initiatives

*Para Hulo'* focuses on six strategic initiative areas that will further enhance UOG's ability to provide a valuable education and an engaging experience to its students, serve the needs of its communities in Guam and the region, and enhance the recognition of the University of Guam as the flagship research and partnership institution for all of Micronesia.

- 1. Be Recognized as a Research University:** In a region that is distinctive by its geography and indigenous cultures, the University of Guam has knowledge and capabilities that no other institution can offer. Because of its unique position, the University strives to become a nationally and internationally recognized research university as a *Doctoral Professional University (DP/U)* under the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. This classification will earn the University of Guam a respected voice in the global conversation on topics intimately familiar to and of concern to this region and its cultures, such as climate change and indigenous languages and cultures.

In working toward the D/PU classification, the University will expand its research facilities and implement doctoral degree programs in select fields, beginning with professional disciplines, such as education or business and eventually graduating to research doctorates in areas of particular strength – thereby attracting distinguished faculty and researchers, inviting mutually beneficial research collaborations, increasing the University's and the region's impact on a global scale, enhancing the academic experience and opportunities for UOG graduate students, and increasing opportunities for undergraduates to engage in research and to pursue graduate school.

- 2. Lead as a Partnership University:** The University of Guam touches all parts of community life – partnering with organizations and institutions region-wide to improve health care, education, natural resources, public policy, cultural preservation, and more. The University will work to attain the *Carnegie Community*

*Engagement Classification*, an elective classification that formally recognizes its commitment to the people in this region and that provides a roadmap for deepening its existing partnerships as well as developing new ones in all parts of the communities of Guam, the region, and beyond.

The classification will affirm to the people of Micronesia that the University of Guam invites collaboration on community challenges, and it will position the University to receive even more grant funding to pursue research and projects that benefit the community.

A prime example of strengthening partnerships will be enriching UOG's collaborations with other regional colleges: Guam Community College, College of Micronesia-FSM, College of the Marshall Islands, Northern Marianas College, and Palau Community College.

- 3. Enrich the Student Experience:** Providing a positive, supportive student experience is central to improving degree completion rates and timely degree completion. The University of Guam strives to be more closely engaged and proactive in supporting students on academic, financial, and personal matters, to include developing more peer mentoring and advising services so students are more likely to seek help and succeed.

Students will benefit from high-impact educational practices, such as undergraduate research, learning communities, capstone projects, and study-away opportunities. Improved retention and graduation rates will, in turn, improve career outcomes for UOG students and more human capital for Guam and the region. Other initiatives involve enriching the campus experience for residential and commuter students, including expanding on-campus job opportunities and internships with local companies and organizations.

- 4. Become a Model for Operations and Customer Service:** As a multi-faceted organization, the University of Guam aims to be an example of operational excellence in the government of Guam in the areas of customer service, professional development, grant management, and cross-functional online services. As the University works to reform and refine its own processes, it strives to develop a structure that others can model, extending knowledge of best practices for the benefit of the whole region.

These initiatives to improve operational efficiency will also strengthen UOG's reputation for excellent stewardship of government appropriations and private investments.

- 5. Grow the University's Financial Resources:** Faced with a decline in funding from the government of Guam, the University must shift its financial game plan from one of reliance to one of efficiency, sustainability, and entrepreneurship. The University is looking to develop a sustainable financial model to include the expansion of

revenue-generating enterprises and engagement in private-public partnerships. This model will allow for a continued investment in the programs and services that directly impact students' lives, community needs, and the workforce.

Diversification of revenue streams will strengthen UOG's mission and help it to thrive in an uncertain economic environment. New ventures, such as developing public-private partnerships and fee-for-service operations, combined with growing current revenue streams, such as non-credit training and professional development program offerings, as well as developing high-demand graduate programs and expanding government grants and contracts will ultimately enhance UOG's ability to accomplish its mission and lessen its dependence on government appropriations.

- 6. Build and Sustain Campus Infrastructure:** Modern and well-maintained facilities, equipment, and technology are crucial components of a competitive and globally relevant education. In conjunction with its initiative to grow financial resources, the University of Guam is looking to develop its campus facilities, infrastructure, and connectivity with a focus on environmental sustainability and accessibility.

The plan includes a number of initiatives to restructure and support best practices in sustaining campus facilities, and UOG is planning to build major new facilities, including the School of Engineering, the Student Success Center, and the Guam Cultural Repository. Additions to the Science Center and the School of Health are also underway. Building these in-demand facilities will enhance UOG's mission. Maintaining these and existing infrastructure in a sustainable and professional manner will be equally important.

The **Para Hulo'** plan builds upon the excellent work of the last 20 years or more, including the Good to Great initiative, to help UOG to become its best self – to serve its surrounding communities better, to foster heritage and languages, to develop human capital, to keep the best people here in Guam and the region, to innovate and develop new industries, and to help solve every challenge faced by this region.

## **THE FUTURE OF UOG**

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The **Para Hulo'** strategic plan's requirement that UOG seek external validation for its excellence in research and partnerships is a key way to honor and acknowledge how far the University has come as the emerging flagship university for all of Micronesia. The University's commitment to the student experience, operational excellence, diversifying revenue sources, and developing an infrastructure poised for growth will prepare and showcase progress for the next WASC SCUC accreditation visit in 2024.

Throughout the plan the University of Guam remains committed to the principles of the land-grant ideal that universities are:

*“publicly created, publicly supported and governed by public bodies for **public purposes** ... Our mission is a **mindset** as much as a program. The irreducible idea is that we exist to advance the common good ... [providing] an education that is both **liberal and practical** with benefits apparent to both students and the **larger society**...”<sup>1</sup>*

For UOG, that “larger society” includes all of Micronesia. For UOG, those “public purposes” include the preservation and flourishing of indigenous cultures and languages of Guam and Micronesia. For UOG, that “liberal and practical” education includes island wisdom passed down from generations in these islands from time immemorial. And for UOG, that “mindset” includes a vision for emerging as one of the most important universities in the Pacific Islands, ensuring *Ina, Deskubre, Setbe* for the people of this region, for the world, and for the future.

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<sup>1</sup> Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities in its report “Renewing the Covenant”; 2000. Quoted in <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED492537.pdf>.