REPORT OF THE WASC VISITING TEAM

EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

To the University of Guam

March 31 – April 2, 1009

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

Reaffirmation of Accreditation

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The evaluation team in conducting its review was able to evaluate the institution under the WASC Commission Standards and Core Commitments and therefore submits this Report to the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges for action and to the institution for consideration.

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I. Overview and Context

A. Description of Institution and Visit

Background Information. The University of Guam states its mission proudly in Chamorro, the indigenous language of Guam: *Ina, Diskubre, Setbe*: To Enlighten, To Discover, To Serve. The University presently offers 35 baccalaureate degrees and 15 masters degrees; it serves Guam and communities in Micronesia and other regions in the Western Pacific and Asia. In Fall 2008, the University enrolled 3,387 students (headcount), including 3,000 degree-seeking undergraduates, 293 graduate students, and 94 non-degree-seeking students. In 2007-2008, the University granted 279 bachelors degrees and 59 masters degrees. In Fall 2007, Pacific Islanders comprised almost 50% of the student body, Asians 40.2%. Of a faculty numbering 243, 76% were full-time, 63% tenured or tenure-track.

Founded in 1952 as the Territorial College of Guam, the institution was accredited in 1959 as a junior college. In 1972 it was designated a land grant institution and was accredited by WASC as a four-year degree-granting institution. The nine members of the Board of Regents are appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the legislature. In FY 2008, per published, audited financial statements, the University received $27,426,081, or 40% of consolidated revenues, from government of Guam appropriations, down from 54% in FY 2001. Other major revenues in FY 2008 included federal grants and contracts of $25,971,884 and student tuition and fees net of scholarship discounts and allowances of $9,127,200, or 38% and 13% respectively of total consolidated revenues.

Dependent upon tourism and the US military presence, Guam's economic well-being is fragile and moves with the economic vicissitudes of the outside world. It is remarkable that this economy and the small resident population of 150 thousand have been able to sustain a public education system that includes a community college and a comprehensive four-year and graduate studies university. To survive and succeed over the long term, the University of Guam must exercise continuous vigilance and ingenuity to remain financially viable while serving a relatively small primary market.

Recent Accreditation History. The University has faced many challenges in the years since its initial accreditation as a baccalaureate-granting institution. Recurring issues have included financial stability, autonomy from the executive and legislative branches of the government, strategic planning, and shared governance. Since 1984, the University has been placed on Show Cause status once and on Probation twice. It has responded in each instance by providing the Commission with evidence of satisfactory progress. The 2009 EER report and site visit confirm this pattern.

The current review cycle began with a proposal submitted in November 2004. Following its visit to the University January 31-February 2, 2007, the Capacity and Preparatory Review site team commended the University on a number of gains, including progress in student learning assessment, faculty governance, furtherance of the university's land-grant mission, and attempts to offer needed regional programs. The CPR team recommended action and continued improvement in several areas, including student learning assessment, review of programs and regional needs with a view to rightsizing, and, most emphatically, financial stability.

The Commission endorsed the site team's recommendations, continued the accreditation of the University, issued a formal Notice of Concern notifying the University that it must find longer-term solutions to its financial condition, and requested a progress report by March 1, 2008 on steps taken to ensure longer term financial stability. In response to the University's March 2008 interim report, the Commission recommended continued efforts to improve financial stability through a number of strategies, including careful monitoring of programs, broad participation in the University's capital campaign, and implementation of a conservatively balanced base budget.

The Visit. The University had prepared well for the EER site visit, providing the team with ample documentation before and during the visit. In the course of the three days on campus, the site team met with the governor, legislators, and community people, as well as a broad spectrum of the university community—27 separate groups and four academic departments—and held open meetings with faculty, staff, and students. Standing and *ad hoc* committees included representation from across the campus and from all levels; discussions were both informative and candid. A key event was the well-organized poster session, during which team members viewed presentations by every academic unit and the office of Enrollment Management and Student Services, each displaying the unit's current assessment efforts and products.

B. The Institution's Educational Effectiveness Review Report

Alignment with the Themes of the Proposal. The EER Self Study Report (henceforth, EER Report) was consistent with the November 2004 proposal. As is appropriate, the EER Report emphasizes student learning and student success, these comprising two of the four themes. The University's outreach programs are addressed in a third theme, and

both organizational and fiscal matters are addressed in the fourth. The EER Report

concludes with a summary of actions arising from the original proposal goals.

Proposal Issues	CPR Themes	EER Themes
Focusing on educational effectiveness and assessment	Establishing a systematic institutional plan for educational effectiveness	A. Enhancing academic quality B. Supporting student success
Building organizational structures	Clarifying academic administrative structures	D. Analysis of institutional effectiveness and efficiency
Supporting transfer and quality off-site programs	Defining a university with a regional mission	C. Land grant mission and engagement
Sufficiency and alignment of financial resources	Sustaining institutional capacity and planning	D. Analysis of institutional effectiveness and efficiency

It is clear that over the past five years, the institution has taken to heart the

Commission's admonitions and recommendations, while adapting to the distinct

emphases of the Capacity and Preparatory Review and the Educational Effectiveness

Review.

Overall Quality of the EER Report. The site team found that the EER Report made a

strong case for the University's commitment to student learning and continuous

assessment and improvement within an organization that functions well in both routine

matters and in response to severe financial crises. The report was well-organized and

portrayed accurately both the institution's strengths and areas where improvement is

needed, while describing the processes and structures that continue to evolve at all levels

of the institution. The report is an exemplar of the broad participation that characterizes

all major undertakings. Teaching and research faculty, staff and administrators from all

units contributed to the self-study that produced the report; representatives from all units contributed to the various sections of the report itself.

The report cited ample data and was rich in references to institutional documents that support its assertions about progress in educational effectiveness. It is apparent that contemplation of WASC recommendations and WASC standards has motivated much institutional action and change. During the period of the self study, the institution established new committees or reconstituted old ones; refined the structure of the colleges; developed new institutional learning outcomes; and moved all academic units forward in assessment practices and competence. While these activities involved broad participation, they were overseen by a capable administration that ensured that changes were consistent with clear priorities in educational and institutional effectiveness.

C. Responses to Issues Raised in the Capacity and Preparatory Review

Finances. In its July 2007 Action Letter to the University, the Commission stated that "the ongoing and seemingly never ending issue of finances. . . . will seriously impact UOG's ability to demonstrate effectiveness in all other areas of institutional endeavor and ongoing compliance with Commission Standards." The EER team found that the University has made substantial progress in managing these financial concerns.

In a relative sense, the University is in worse financial shape now than it was when the 2007 CPR team issued its report: the government of Guam has decreased its funding of the University since that report was issued. The EER team found, however, that UOG has now developed sustainable and highly effective strategies for planning, monitoring, and managing finances. The institution has become remarkably responsive to changes in its funding levels while managing to sustain and in some ways to improve the learning

environment. The sense of being on the brink of financial disaster and concern over "payless paydays" were not evident in the EER visit as they had been in the CPR visit. The Finance group and the campus as a whole demonstrated remarkable collegiality, flexibility and adaptability. The EER team's evaluation of UOG's achievements in this area is presented in section II, Theme D, Institutional Effectiveness and Efficiency.

Administrative Structures. In 2007, the CPR team noted that the University had completed a major administrative realignment "which resulted in a senior administrative structure of three Vice-Presidents reporting to the President and the combining of academic programs into three colleges from the previous five colleges." In 2009, the EER team found that University had eliminated the third Vice-President position and re-allocated these funds. The CPR team had also called for "a review of the University's reorganization endeavors to assure that the organizational structure is optimized and is achieving the goals outlined for restructuring." The University has since eliminated the College of Professional Studies so that the professional schools of Education, Business and Nursing are now independent entities reporting directly to the Senior Vice President. In 2008 the University followed other key CPR team recommendations by appointing a Director of Academic Assessment and Institutional Research and an Assistant Vice-President for Graduate Studies, Research, and Sponsored Programs. The EER team observes that these changes have resulted in a more effective organizational structure.

The EER team noted that negotiations had occurred with the faculty union to establish a newly defined position of division chair serving under each college dean, and that an Academic Officers Council that consists of Academic Deans, Associate Deans and other key academic officers has been created, with by-laws and other operating rules.

These changes are still being implemented: the EER team reviewed a draft decision-making matrix that may improve the clarity of decision-making processes.

The EER team observed that the Board of Regents has continued to address improvement in its operations. The Board successfully conducted a search for a new President utilizing the advice of the American Governing Boards Association (AGB). The Board engaged in a professional development program with AGB prior to undertaking the search. It has developed an evaluation process for the President. It is clear that the Board is engaged with the institution and is dedicated to its work with a clear understanding of its role and responsibilities.

The EER team's analyses of these and other changes in administrative structures are presented in each of the Theme sections below.

Academic Planning. Efforts at both the undergraduate and graduate levels have progressed to establish a sounder academic base for the University. It will be important for the University to address within a reasonable time frame those recommendations for right-sizing academic programs which are now being reviewed by the deans. The EER team's evaluations of the University's progress in all areas of academic planning are found in each of the Themes sections below.

Enrollment, Retention, and Graduation Planning. The CPR team and Commission called for a university-wide focus on retention and graduation rates and the development of integrated planning strategies to increase retention. The EER team found evidence of effective institutional responsiveness to these recommendations. A positive spirit of generative energy, creative new approaches to admission outreach, active assessment, and strong teamwork were much in evidence. The Dean of Enrollment Management and

Student Services has led the development of enrollment planning in partnership with the Director of Integrated Marketing and Communications. Many new outreach initiatives have been developed, and there are plans to track and evaluate these efforts to determine which ones hold the most promise for further development and investment. That these recruitment strategies are succeeding is indicated by the fact that student enrollment has grown at the undergraduate level, and, for the last two years, at the graduate level as well. The EER team's analyses of these and other changes in student success and retention are found in Theme B, Supporting Student Success; and the team's observations about UOG's graduate programs follow in the discussion of Theme A, Enhancing Academic Quality.

The CPR team also recommended strongly that the University be "more collegial and responsive in its collaborative relations with the Micronesian region's community colleges to determine and meet regional needs." The EER team found that efforts have been made to improve these relations; analysis of progress in this area is presented in Theme C, The Land Grant Mission and Engagement.

II. Evaluation Of Educational Effectiveness Under The Standards

Two important changes are underway that have changed the University substantially since the 2007 CPR visit. In May 2008 Robert Underwood became President of the University. A Guam native, a longtime territorial delegate to the US Congress, and for many years a professor of Education and Academic Vice President at the University, President Underwood is well respected in the community and the university. Soon after his appointment, he formulated three themes which, the EER team found, are already

giving focus and energy to many University activities: *UOG Green, UOG The Natural Choice*, and *UOG Leading Change*. The UOG Green Team leads the University's sustainability efforts, and the Natural Choice Team supports student recruitment, retention, and outreach efforts.

The Leading Change theme supports many efforts, in particular, preparation for the impending military build-up. Some months prior to the visit, the Guam community learned that the long-awaited increase in the US military presence on their island would, in fact, begin in 2010. This influx promises to bring tremendous social and economic change. The EER team observed that, through such groups as the Civilian-Military Task Force on Education, the University's leaders are already "leading change," in the vanguard of planning the community's responses to the build-up, while faculty are struggling to come to terms with what these changes will bring to their student population and their curriculum.

Theme A: Enhancing Academic Quality.

The EER team found much evidence, in the form of documents, web materials, and in the meetings with numerous groups, that confirms the University's assertion that its "administrators and faculty are committed to quality in the academic programs, and to evidence-based decision-making in support of academic quality; a commitment expressed in action as well as in policy" (EER Report, p. 7).

A Culture of Evidence. Documents and data presented in the report and discussions with faculty, staff, and administrators have convinced the EER team that the University has established a sound framework of quality assurance processes and a high level of

participation that can be strengthened and sustained over the coming years: in short, that the University has developed a vigorous culture of evidence (CFR 1.2, 2.3, 2.4).

The University recently committed to student learning assessment in the long term by establishing and filling the permanent position of Assessment Coordinator/Institutional Researcher, who reports to the Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs (SVP); and by funding assessment as a line item in the University budget. Originally set at $100 K per year, the allocation has had to be reduced to $80 K this year as part of the University's overall budgetary reductions. The University is to be commended for drawing from its diminished resources to support student learning assessment so definitively.

The EER team also commends the University's well-developed structures for engaging faculty in student learning assessment, as is evident in the accomplishments of the long-standing and broadly representative University Assessment Committee. The committee, working within the framework established by the 2006 Assessment Plan, has accomplished much since the CPR visit: all academic programs, undergraduate and graduate, have now developed student learning outcomes; a new assessment webpage on the University website now posts reports on institutional, departmental and college assessment activities and products. New faculty are routinely oriented into departmental assessment practices, and personnel reviews now recognize the value of assessment contributions.

The EER team observed that, in addition to the institutional assessment plan, each college has fostered assessment in its own way. Each college or school has developed learning objectives consistent with its mission, and all have developed or are developing

college assessment plans. Units are moving forward in different ways. Some colleges or schools have assigned a faculty member to serve as college assessment coordinator. The EER team reviewed the CLASS tentative assessment plan, dated March 2009. The assessment website indicates that assessment in CLASS is being conducted course by course rather than by programs. The College of Natural and Applied Sciences (CNAS) framework of expectations for program-level assessment is a model for other units: it has developed templates for syllabus, curriculum map, and assessment plan matrix that are used by all programs in the college. The office of Enrollment Management and Student Services is also developing assessment skills, undertaking as its first step assessment of ID 180, College Success Seminar, required of all students with 30 or fewer credits.

The General Education (GE) program divides requirements into nine categories; multiple student learning objectives have been formulated for the categories, and courses have been identified that meet GE criteria for each category. Most recently, the seven institutional learning outcomes (ILOs) have been mapped onto the objectives of each of the GE categories (GE Committee, "Alignment Matrix"). The EER team is concerned that the GE program appears to be too complex to assess in a sustainable and meaningful way. Indeed, Data Exhibit 7, attached to the *EER Self Study*, indicates that little progress has occurred with respect to identifying indicators, either formative or summative, or establishing systematic means of assessing learning across the disciplines or of closing the loop, for any GE category.

In the terms of the WASC GE Assessment rubric, UOG's program is at the initial and emerging stages (CFR 2.2a). The Senate's General Education Committee has been charged by the Senior Vice President to review and revise the GE program, and the

committee began this process with a survey of faculty during the February 2009 Faculty Development Day. The GE Committee and the university Assessment Committee have mapped the ILOs against the outcomes of each of the GE categories. The EER team infers that the University is progressing in GE assessment but urges it to move forward in reviewing the current GE program and transforming it into one in which learning assessment can be conducted in a systematic institution-wide manner.

Evidence of Student Learning and Closing the Loop. The EER team observed that, having established learning outcomes, programs are beginning to gather assessment data and to use these to make curricular or pedagogical improvements. On the one hand, Data Exhibit 7 indicates that most programs are at the emerging stage: while all programs have developed and posted learning outcomes, most appear to rely primarily on indirect assessment, with relatively few regularly conducting direct assessment of actual student work and fewer yet systematically interpreting and using findings. On the other hand, the EER report summarizes the practices and results of those programs accredited by national professional organizations, such as School of Education (SOE) (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education), and others using standardized national examinations, such as Chemistry (American Chemical Society). It reports a handful of other assessments recently conducted by Consumer and Family Sciences, Math, Psychology, and Business Administration. The report also presents evidence that each of the colleges and schools is striving to bring assessment through the complete cycle: most programs have reported assessment-based changes in pedagogy and/or curricula. Specific examples are given for each of the colleges and schools.

The assessment poster session supported the report's assertions: the team found documentation that all programs understand in broad terms how assessment works and why it is worthwhile, and that faculty in all programs are willing to learn how to document and assess student learning directly, by drawing on actual student work (CFR 2.3). A notable example of direct assessment is the School of Education's three-portfolio assessment sequence using LiveText: the faculty are able to track and assess multiple kinds of student performances beginning before they are admitted to the program and ending with the results of their student teaching.

However, the EER team observed that most curriculum matrices did not distinguish levels of attainment in program objectives between introductory, major, and advanced/capstone courses; the matrices should reflect the distinctions in expectation that surely exist in the classroom (CFR 2.3). Nor did the EER team see evidence of time lines for activities and progress in assessment in college or unit assessment plans, nor at the institutional level. The EER team strongly recommends that the University develop such timelines to guide the institution's next steps in assessment.

Moreover, a review of a sampling of syllabi indicates that at least some courses do not include course or program learning outcomes (CFR 2.2). This confirms the most recent report of the University's ongoing Syllabus Assessment Project, dated 2006-2007and drawing on 48 syllabi, concluded that "More work needs to be done . . . in linking syllabi to grading rubrics and student learning outcomes assessment projects." The team concludes that the University is on the right path and that, with appropriate faculty training and continued leadership from the Assessment Committee and the Director of Assessment, students will be fully apprised of outcomes and performance

expectations and all programs will be gathering and assessing authentic student work (CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.5). The EER team recommends that the University bring a fully qualified assessment expert to campus to provide faculty with training and consultation in program-level and General Education assessment .

Quality of Graduate Programs. The CPR team expressed concern about the quality of existing graduate programs. Since that visit, four new masters programs have begun, and two programs are being considered for elimination in the right-sizing review discussed under Theme D. In February 2009, the arrival of the Assistant Vice President for Graduate Studies, Research, and Sponsored Programs indicated the University's readiness to improve quality, order, consistency, and transparency in the University's administration of research and graduate programs. With respect to developing a true graduate culture at the University, the AVP has identified a number of issues: unevenness of rigor and quality across programs; inconsistent expectations about graduate student performance, including theses; the need for policies and procedures that would govern all graduate programs; the need for promotion/tenure and program review guidelines appropriate to graduate programs; and the need to foster scholarship among all faculty, in particular graduate faculty (CFR 2.1, 2.2b, 2.8, 2.9).

At the request of the Senior Vice President, the Graduate Curriculum Review Committee (GCRC) has developed a draft document "Criteria for Quality Examination of Graduate Programs," that links quality criteria with evidence. These criteria, subject to review by the Faculty Senate, will provide the basis for a quality review similar to the rightsizing conducted for undergraduate programs. The GCRC is also revising the

Graduate Program Review Handbook and plans to develop rubrics and exemplars to accompany the guidelines.

It is generally accepted that graduate faculty should be productive scholars in their field if they are to serve as models for their students (CFR 2.8, 2.9). While the EER Report describes student-faculty research in a number of departments, there are grounds for concern that graduate faculty in non-science fields might not receive adequate institutional support for such scholarship. Some faculty teaching in the MA in English program, for example, are carrying 4-4 teaching loads. It is true that at present, faculty may request load reductions if they document active research projects, some college and university funds are available to seed research projects, and there is college and institutional support for conference travel. However, the University's precarious financial status has already occasioned cuts, and further tightening of resources could encroach on support for scholarship. To protect the quality of its graduate programs, the University must provide appropriate support for faculty research.

Program Review. Program reviews in all programs are conducted in support of the University's commitment to "high quality academic programs that serve its mission and that meet or surpass accreditation standards" (*Undergraduate Handbook, "*Administrative Procedures"; *Graduate Handbook, "*Graduate Program Review Administrative Procedures"). The EER report (Appendix 5) indicates that program reviews are conducted in a reasonably timely manner: of the 46 undergraduate and graduate programs, 31 have undergone program review since 2005. However, five of the 11 graduate programs have not been reviewed in over five years (two others have only been in existence for two years). The *Undergraduate Program Review Handbook* (2003) and

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the *Graduate Program Review Handbook* (2006) both require that self study reports include descriptions of student learning assessment and assessment results. The undergraduate handbook has recently undergone some refinement, and the graduate guidelines are now being revised to include more rigorous assessment and reporting. (CFR 2.7, 4.4)

According to the EER report, a 2008 analysis of the follow-through on program review recommendations over three years showed that 59% of all recommendations had been implemented and 31% were pending implementation, awaiting faculty action or lacking funding, infrastructure, or staff or technical support. That the University is tracking such data is an indication of its commitment to data-driven decision-making (CFR 2.7, 4.4).

Recommendations

A.1. Develop and systematize long-term academic assessment plans with timelines, ensure that course syllabi include course and program learning outcomes and indicate how achievement of these will be measured, and document learning results and student achievement over time and program-by-program (CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.6).

A.2. Address issues of quality and consistency of expectations across graduate programs, ensure that there are uniform and appropriate policies and procedures governing graduate program offerings, and further improve guidelines for graduate program review(CFR 2.1, 2.2b, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 4.4).

A.3. Continue to support faculty research endeavors and to engage faculty and graduate students more closely in the research enterprise (CFR 2.8, 2.9).

Theme B: Supporting Student Success.

Striving to improve student success and retention while enrollments have increased, the University has employed a three-pronged approach as described in EER Report. The University has termed these (1) obtaining, (2) sustaining, and (3) maintaining student affiliations with the University. The EER Report (p. 17) presents the following definition of student success that incorporates this relational approach to serving students and building its applicant, student, and alumni bodies:

> [Student success begins] with success in obtaining an affiliation with a university that has programs and resources that are appropriate to the student's goals and capabilities. Student success continues with timely and appropriate advancement from lower- to upper-division courses (sustaining an affiliation), and culminates in learning as a lifestyle, a rewarding career in which the student applies what s/he has learned in college courses, contributes informed opinion and service to his or her community, and maintains a mutually beneficial affiliation with the university.

Student enrollment in the current academic year 2008-2009 has reached record levels, with 3,387 students registered for fall Semester 2008, a 3% growth from fall 2007. The team noted that the University enrollment increases are primarily in undergraduate and non-degree enrollment, but there have also been modest increases in graduate enrollments in fall 2007 (4% increase to 262 students), and a larger increase in fall 2008 (12% increase to 293) largely because of the recently initiated graduate programs. Over the last six years, enrollment headcount has grown by 13% in the fall semester and 19% in the spring semester. Entering freshman enrollment has increased by 28% over the past eight years.

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Recruitment ("*Obtaining Appropriate Affiliations"*): In the last two years, new academic programs that have been initiated have brought new student markets to the University, at least partially accounting for the enrollment growth since the CPR visit, as noted above. The new programs include an associate degree program in nursing, bachelors programs in health sciences and sociology, and masters programs in clinical psychology, English, social work, and business administration. As noted elsewhere in this report and fully acknowledged by the University, UOG will need to be thoughtful and nimble in assessing the interest in programs that will emerge through the military build-up and in realizing the potential for attracting military personnel and their spouses to the University. Based upon the recommendations of the University Planning and Budget Advisory Committee, the University's strategic planning process has ranked as growth initiatives professional workforce development (nurses, educators, mental health personnel, environmentalists, and accountants); and information technology and technology-enhanced student learning.

The Enrollment Management and Student Services (EMSS) group and the *UOG the Natural Choice* Steering Committee have led the efforts that have caused the University to exceed its enrollment goal of 3% annual growth. Visits to public and private high schools, College Nights, financial aid fairs in shopping malls, early admissions programs, career days, beginning work on a pipeline that will reach fifth graders, a veterans' financial aid workshop, the Best and Brightest campaign, and a graduate programs information fair are examples of successful new or reinvigorated outreach efforts to attract students. The Americorps outreach to high schools as well as tutoring support to enrolled students in the Student Center appears to be best practice. The EER team noted the number of

programs organized by such a small staff and encourages *UOG the Natural Choice*

committee to track, analyze and evaluate the most successful approaches to use staff time

to best advantage, given limited resources. The committee is also encouraged to

systematize its outreach efforts with an annual planning and events timeline.

Retention ("*Sustaining Appropriate Affiliations*"): The University faces challenges

as an open enrollment institution that draws from island communities that do not

evidence strong elementary and secondary school preparation. Significant effort is being

devoted to assessing student preparation for appropriate course placement with an

unusually large number of students participating in remedial preparation coursework.

The *EER Report* states that 60% of students who graduate with a bachelor's degree began

their studies in pre-college English courses. Still, the reported IPEDS six-year

undergraduate cohort graduation rate of 28% is alarmingly and unacceptably low.

The CPR team and the Commission urged the University to conduct analysis to

understand better the risk factors for attrition and then develop a focus and

interventions to improve retention and graduation rates, responsive to CFR 2.10 and 4.3.

The team commends the University for making *Supporting Student Success* one of the

themes of the EER self study and also commends University progress in developing a

stronger evidence base to understand factors related to student attrition and retention.

Of particular usefulness is the statistical study conducted to analyze the pattern of

freshmen withdrawals and stop outs that identified risk factors among students, and

among courses of study. For example, the study found that risk factors in courses of study

include failing to declare a major, coursework in particular subjects (e.g., mathematics;

chemistry), and programs enrolling greater numbers of full time equivalent (FTE)

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students per FTE faculty member. The study raised important questions for UOG that need to be pursued further to understand why certain courses, and certain programs, evidence disproportionately high percentage of freshman withdrawals.

Other successful examples from the past year that promise to improve retention of students are the discovery that students who did not complete credit hours with a passing grade were required to take an overload the succeeding semester, thereby setting them up for further failure. Through tracking and studying this data, the Dean of EMSS changed the student academic progress policy to require a minimum of 75% of credit hours with a passing grade, preventing the succeeding semester overload and possibly jeopardizing student success A second example of a data-based study revealed that too many students (800-900) appear to be reaching junior status without declaring a major. This finding was also flagged as being potentially important to retention and is now being addressed by the Office of Counseling Services and faculty advisors.

The EER team encourages the University to continue to give high priority to understanding the data and evidence that can improve persistence to degree completion. This priority is too important to be left to staff alone. Faculty knowledge of advising and the curriculum is critical to this effort and faculty expertise, such as that which contributed to the statistical study on freshman withdrawals, will be very helpful to the ongoing focus on retention and graduation. The University has provided faculty with released time for participation in high priority service such as this and should confirm structure and opportunity for such evidentiary and analytical approaches to continue.

The team noted the high levels of satisfaction of students who are retained to graduation, with over 92% reporting that they felt well prepared for positions in their

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fields of study and that they were satisfied with their majors (EER Report, pp. 24-25). In a brief qualitative pen-and-paper survey of students at the team's open meeting, students echoed other findings in the graduating student survey: for example, expressing high levels of satisfaction with faculty and staff interest in them and their success. Appreciation for small classes and having a four-year university available to them were also sources of satisfaction in this brief survey. Students in the Student Government Association reported some dissatisfaction with staff responsiveness and customer service friendliness in some administrative departments. Such issues will need to continue to be assessed and addressed as the University partners across departments in its work to promote student success, as required in CFR 2.12, 2.13, and 2.14.

Post Graduation ("*Maintaining an Affiliation*"): The EER Report makes note of its own recommendations to improve the operations of the Alumni Relations Office, where there has not yet been the same level of attention to assessment as has been evidenced in other parts of the University. In particular, a database on career and other post-graduation outcomes for alumni is needed to fully understand the outcomes of educational effectiveness. A searchable database of alumni in various careers that could be made available to students would aid in their career search.

Recommendations:

B.1. Establish a university-wide committee to conduct evidence-based analysis of factors related to persistence and attrition, much as *UOG The Natural Choice* committee is now convened to consider recruitment and visibility. The committee should have wide representation from each school and should also have

responsibility for recommending to the deans and administration action plans that

further support students and improve their experience (CFR 2.10, 2.11, 2.13).

B.2. Improve and then systematically assess the operations of the Alumni Office,

among whose functions should be development of an alumni data base on post-

graduation outcomes, including careers (CFR 2.10, 4.8).

Theme C: The Land Grant Mission and Engagement

To demonstrate the University's commitment to community engagement, UOG

provided in its EER Report evidence of survey results, program assessments, and project

reports that indicate high levels of relevant activity. The EER team's approach was to

confirm and expand this data by gathering evidence demonstrating that UOG has well-

established, mutually respectful regional partnerships which collaboratively and

successfully identify, design, fund, and deliver a rich portfolio of instructional, research,

and service projects throughout the defined service region.

With regard to instructional programs, the team's focus was on the two

collaborations previously approved during the time of the CPR review, namely, the BA in

Elementary Education at the College of Micronesia/Federated States of Micronesia

(COM/FSM) in Pohnpei, and the MA in Counseling and the MA in Administration and

Supervision at Northern Marianas College, offered in partnership with the public schools

of Saipan. Additionally, Individual Degree Programs (IDPs) are in place for

approximately 250 students throughout the islands, but these programs were not

examined in detail by the team. The team examined program reviews conducted in 2008

for both the "Partnership BA" with COM/FSM and the MA in Saipan. The program

reviews indicated that course syllabi are aligned with on-campus courses and NCATE standards, that advisement is in place at both locations, and that the programs are operating within budget parameters (CFR 2.1, 2.4, 2.7, 2.12).

The EER team also interviewed the UOG administrators, faculty, and staff responsible for delivering the programs as well as the key community college and public school partners on Pohnpei and Saipan, respectively. There was clear evidence both from UOG personnel and from the community college and public school partners that the partnerships themselves have been productive and mutually satisfactory. Everyone interviewed by the team from UOG and from each partner institution affirmed that their relationships were cooperative and professional. The "Partnership BA" with COM/FSM has involved 56 students to date and has already produced six graduates. Pell grants for the students help fund the program, and there is enthusiasm for continuing it. The MA programs in Saipan have been less productive. Low numbers of students necessitated combining the programs and using online and onsite instruction instead of the more costly videoconferencing system. Further, problems with lost or delayed student record processing caused some students to withdraw from the program. However, there is a strong commitment to serving the remaining students and even hopes of expanding offerings in the future. The EER team commends the University on its strong initial efforts and encourages UOG to continue strengthening these programs. As resources permit, the University is also encouraged to conduct needs assessments and feasibility studies to help identify candidates for additional collaborative regional programs, then screen, select, fund, and deliver them (CFR 1.8, 2.12, 2.14, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3).

A nagging problem cited by multiple community college partners is the lack of formalized, accessible articulation agreements for courses and degree programs between the community colleges and UOG. The current case-by-case, department-by-department process is perceived as inconsistent, unnecessarily slow, and generally undependable. A comprehensive development and electronic posting of articulation agreements would be of tremendous assistance to students and community college transfer advisers and would streamline the work of reviewing transfer applications. In addition, assessment of these agreements should include comparisons of student performance in subsequent coursework at the University. If needed, UOG and community college partners should work together to ensure that native students and students in articulated courses are equally prepared for subsequent coursework (CFR 2.2, 2.3, 2.10, 2.12, 2.14, 4.4).

Closer to home, the EER team interviewed two top administrators at Guam Community College (GCC) and learned from them that relationships have improved with UOG. Recent efforts by UOG administrators to reach out to GCC have been appreciated. However, the GCC administrators also cited evidence that opportunities are being missed and conflicts created by a continuing lack of active collaborative efforts from UOG on facilities (e.g., laboratories), programs where responsibility can be better shared (e.g., remedial education), and planning for new or expanded programs to meet the community's needs (e.g., the Associate Degree in Nursing). There is clearly additional work to do to optimize the UOG/GCC partnership. The University is encouraged to find ways to work more closely with GCC to share resources, divide labor, and collaborate in developing common or complementary programs (CFR 1.8, 2.1, 4.1).

With regard to research and service programs, the team reviewed the results of a survey of UOG administrators regarding community engagement projects in their respective units, and also the results of a "land grant and engagement survey" of 35 UOG personnel engaged in outreach projects. Every UOG school and college reported at least four, and as many as 21, projects directly serving the community. The surveys of outreach personnel documented a 94% rate of stakeholder input via interviews, focus groups, surveys, and assessment activities; extensive outputs in the form of products, curriculum, resources, services, and collaborative agreements; and widespread dissemination of outcomes via publications, annual reports, special forums, town hall meetings, and mass media delivery to regional communities.

The team also gathered evidence in the form of annual reports from the University's research faculty, centers and institutes (e.g., the Water and Environmental Research Institute, the Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education Research and Service, the Micronesian Area Research Center, and Cooperative Extension Services), and federal and local partners such as the military, the Department of Agriculture, the Bureau of Statistics, and Guam Preservation Trust, and various social service agencies. These documented the existence of mutually satisfactory partnerships, shared identification and design of programs, successful collaborative funding efforts, provision of internship opportunities to involve UOG students in community service, and joint dissemination of research results. There was also evidence that in some areas, notably agricultural development, additional research is needed and would benefit from the formation of an advisory board. The EER team commends the demonstrated strength of research and service partnerships, the number and scope of projects, and the positive

outcomes for the larger community. The University is encouraged to expand areas of inquiry, develop additional advisory boards as appropriate, provide additional internship opportunities for UOG students, conduct regular personal outreach to regional partners, and jointly seek additional funding to support instructional, research, and community service projects (CFR 1.8, 2.8, 2.9, 4.1, 4.2, 4.8).

In order to maximize the University's ability to serve its Land Grant mission, its use of technology assisted distance education must be improved. The Telecommunication and Distance Education Operation (TADEO) serves many videoconferencing functions related to communication and public safety throughout the region, but it is used only minimally for instruction. A new electronic communication system has been funded and constructed and is being equipped, but even with the new equipment few UOG faculty members are using either videoconferencing or online instruction to reach students at remote locations. Broader use of such technologies would improve delivery of programs while saving costs associated with travel, lodging, etc. The University Technology Advisory Committee, chaired by the VPAF, has developed a plan and budget to move the University forward in these areas. The University is encouraged to step up efforts to promote and support the faculty's use of technology assisted distance education (CFR 3.4, 3.7, 4.2).

Recommendations:

C.1. Lead an effort to (a) complete the formalizing of comprehensive articulation agreements course-by-course and institution-by-institution; (b) make these articulation agreements accessible on the web; (c) assess the comparative success of native and transfer students by analyzing how well each group performs in

subsequent coursework at the University; and (d) expand collaborative work with the community colleges to provide support to improve transfer student success (CFR 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.10, 2.12, 2.14, 4.4).

C.2. Step up efforts to encourage and assist UOG and regional colleagues in utilizing technology assisted distance education alternatives, both videoconferencing and online instruction, to deliver regionally extended instructional, research, and service programs (CFR 3.4, 3.7, 4.2).

Theme D: Institutional Effectiveness and Efficiency

The University provided the EER team with access to all University committees with direct or indirect input to financial planning and management; to the governor of Guam and several legislators; to published audited financial statements and a rich body of other fiscal materials (a list is found on pp. 34-35 of the EER Report). Drawing on these sources, the team found that the university's culture is now based on strong and creative leadership and broadly-based stakeholder and community input and collaboration. As shown above, these have functioned well in the other three areas reviewed by the team; in the financial area, they have granted UOG substantially more flexibility, adaptability, and effectiveness.

Since the 2007 WASC capacity review, the government of Guam had been paying UOG its allotments more consistently, but payments have continued to be unpredictable. The government paid the allotments in arrears from FY 2005 through 2007, but they have not fully paid the FY 2008 allotment as of the date of this writing, when UOG is owed $13 million of governmental appropriations, or 70% of what is due. It appears that the

government started withholding allotment payments in anticipation that they would be required to start making substantial payments under Court orders for landfill clean-up ($20 M), a new landfill ($140 M), COLA payments for government employees (currently $98 million) and other costs.

These pressures came to a head during the EER site visit, providing the EER team with a dramatic instance of the kind of fiscal crisis that UOG and the government of Guam have repeatedly had to address. Shortly before the EER visit, the government of Guam was ordered to pay $1 million per week towards financing a new land fill until they could produce a viable financing plan for the project. By the time the EER team left Guam, the legislature was grappling with a financing plan; it was anticipated that the legislature would approve a financing plan that the governor will support before the site team report is issued, and that there would be minimal impact on the University.

Financial Stability and Sustainability. The EER team found that UOG has developed systems, processes, internal engagement—and sheer will power on the part of University personnel—to adapt to Guam's perpetual fiscal stress and occasional spikes of intense distress like the one occurring during the site visit. At the same time, the University must continue to work closely with the Legislature and the Governor to obtain adequate budget appropriations and timely allotment payments (CFR 3.5, 3.6).

The UOG Business Office has adopted comprehensive and sophisticated cash management tools. They can react very quickly by accelerating some cash inflows or limiting cash outflows as necessary. UOG had five straight years of net asset surpluses in its published audited financial statements prepared under generally accepted accounting principles, but had a net loss in FY 2008 of $3.9 million. This was primarily due to two

factors: $2.8 million loss related to investment write downs due to the worldwide decline

in the stock market and economic factors and the $1.4 million allotment holdback from

the government for the year. UOG did not experience an operating loss; rather, it did not

generate enough accrued revenue to cover their non-cash expenses; e.g., depreciation

expense.

In a bold move, the University completely redesigned its budget for FY 2009 by

identifying a base budget and several growth initiatives. Questions of what should be

included in the base budget engaged many committees, with participants from across the

institution, who reviewed the budget preparation as a work in progress and identified the

growth initiatives that were to be proposed to the government of Guam. Despite

assurances to the contrary, the government of Guam did not fund the base budget

requirements. The University responded by re-engaging the community in a campus-

wide discussion: they reapportioned their budget with additional cuts, set revenue

generation targets and cost savings measures, and established a facilities and

administrative cost-sharing plan. As a result of these effective internal processes, the

University was able to fund its highest priorities even if they had not been funded in the

past (e.g. assessment, new positions in IR and graduate/sponsored programs) as well as

maintaining some level of funding for IT and physical infrastructure needs. The EER team

commends these efforts and the good result.

The Board of Regents has approved a policy of setting aside reserves and funds in

a University Stability Reserve as well as for equipment and facilities. Further, financial

planning and collaborations with the government of Guam have led either to payment or

financial statement recognition of all outstanding appropriation receivables as well as a better cash position.

Efforts at stabilizing and sound planning are ongoing across the institution. The University has established a new committee, the Enterprise Planning and Oversight Committee (EPOC), that has set its sights on fulfilling the campus's land grant mission with activities that will not only cover costs, but will also generate net revenues. New academic programs now require an assessment of projected financial impact while existing programs have been reviewed to assess their long-term financial viability. The review of existing programs is currently in the hands of the college deans and directors; final decisions on rightsizing will be made by the senior administration.

Meanwhile, the EER team observed that financial planning processes are being introduced to integrate programs, plans and budgets using strategic assumptions and program needs. The EER team commends the University's recent adoption of key performance indicators as means of improving effectiveness and efficiency. Among the products of this more systematic monitoring and measuring process have been improved ability to make rapid adjustments in spending and cash inflow (CFR 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6). UOG has become a designated low risk Federal auditee for the fourth consecutive year (CFR 4.4); consolidated two agricultural research programs(CFR 2.7, 2.9, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8); and has allocated significant budget allocations for IT priorities (CFR 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6). The EER team confirmed these and other actions via review of spreadsheets, audited published financial statements, performance indicators, and discussion with the Comptroller and Vice President for Administration and Finance.

New Revenue Generation. The EER Report (p. 39) points out that university-generated revenues, excluding investments, "have grown from $28 M (46% of gross revenues) in FY 01 to $49 million (61%) in FY 08," while grants and contracts increased to $27 million and tuition/fee revenues to $16 million. The EER team observed that real strides have been made to expand and diversify revenues so that the university is less dependent upon appropriated funds. New ventures are created based upon business plans that are reviewed and approved by EPOC. The University now boasts, rightfully, that the institution now leverages $1 of appropriated funds 1.54 times. The EER team recommends that UOG continue to find ways to promote collaboration among the colleges in developing net revenue-generating operations and (b) enhance its capacity for delivering self-supporting programs focused on work force development, distance education, and other extensions of it mission. (CFR 3.6, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)

The research centers are leaders in the steady growth in grants and contracts, as are the professional and international programs. However, the discipline of collecting full costs by maximizing overhead recovery is not yet built into the culture. UOG recognizes this issue and the new Assistant Vice President for Graduate Studies, Research, and Sponsored Programs is working with the administration and the faculty to change this (CFR 4.1, 4.2, 4.3). The EER team encourages the University to require that full costs be recovered as a matter of course and to develop clear guidelines with respect to charging the appropriate overhead, structuring arrangements for sharing any net revenues received, and using those revenues appropriately and transparently(CFR 3.5, 3.6, 4.4, 4.5).

Endowment Foundation and Alumni Association. Foundation and Alumni Association efforts remain in the developing phase. Several families have made substantial contributions to the Foundation, including one of $1 M. Approximately 400 smaller contributions have been made. The Alumni Association, with new leadership, is beginning to tap UOG alumni. A plan has been developed to undertake an annual campaign to generate additional private support which is jointly led by the Endowment Fund President and the University President. The EER team endorses plans for more vigorous initiatives.

Governance and Administrative Structure. The University has reorganized its administrative structure in several significant ways in order to improve and reinvigorate its college structure and to more clearly define roles, responsibilities and decision-making authority.

The campus has a full complement of standing committees charged with examining, analyzing, and making recommendations on UOG business. In addition to those already mentioned, the EER team met with the Board of Regents, Board of Regents Budget Committee, the University Planning and Budget Advisory Committee, and the University Technology Advisory Committee, and found that committee members clearly understood their roles, including the requirement to communicate the committee business to their constituencies so that everyone understands the situation and the decisions being made. In addition, Faculty Senate leadership were notably well-informed and engaged on these matters. The final decisions and immediate action are delegated to those most senior in the university. At UOG the senior leadership (President and two VP's) share a common understanding of what is important to university success and

prioritize spending with like minds (CFR 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 4.6, and 4.8). The EER team urges UOG to refine and implement their draft decision-making matrix and review the functions of the various advisory councils and groups such as the division chairs (CFR 3.8, 3.11).

Sustained Educational Effectiveness Using Scarce Resources. The EER team found that collaborative processes described above have enabled the University to stretch thinning resources to sustain high-priority learning resources: infrastructure, IT, assessment, and new programs. The Board approved, and the University established and is funding, a Capital Equipment Reserve to cover such costs as cyclical IT and library purchases; a Capital Facilities Reserve for renovation; and a Campus Maintenance Fund for deferred maintenance, and a Working Capital Reserve.

Deferred maintenance continues to be addressed. The Guam government provided funding for the new science and math classroom building with distance education capabilities. Aging heating, ventilation and cooling systems in classrooms, the data center and student buildings have been replaced. Renovations and expansions of nursing facilities were funded. Information technology equipment, technical assistants, wireless networks, student labs and web-based utilities support student learning and faculty, and the IT infrastructure has been improved with a new generator, and FY09 funding for air conditioning, power supply and backup will provide additional relief.

Recommendations

D. 1. Engage campus constituencies, government leaders and the larger community in defining the role that the University will assume in the response to the impending military buildup and agree on an appropriate funding plan (CFR 2.9).

D.2. Continue efforts to resize, redirect, and realign the University's base budget to live within its means; in particular, narrow its portfolio of program offerings, determining the relative size and balance of those offerings (e.g., undergraduate vs. graduate; professional vs. liberal arts/sciences, etc.), including which programs should be discontinued (CFR 3.5, 3.6).

D.3. Continue to diversify sources of revenue through alumni contributions, donations, major gifts, planned giving, capital campaigns, endowments of chairs, and entrepreneurial and self-support operations (CFR 3.6, 4.8).

III. Findings, Commendations, and Recommendations

The EER team finds that the University of Guam has fulfilled the outcomes it envisioned in its 2004 proposal for the comprehensive review. In striving to meet these self-set objectives in the face of fiscal obstacles and challenges that other institutions might have found insurmountable, the University has established stronger and more effective administrative structures, sounder fiscal practices and policies, more vigorous academic programs, and a highly participatory culture of evidence and continuous improvement.

Major Commendations:

1. The University has firmly established a culture of evidence with respect to student learning. All programs have established and publicized learning outcomes, and, while some are more advanced than others, all are developing systematic assessment of student learning and applying assessment results to curricular improvement. A Director of Academic Assessment and Institutional Research has been hired,

assessment support is a line item in the university budget, an assessment webpage

has been developed, and the campus Assessment Committee is taking leadership in

faculty engagement and training in assessment.

2. The University has demonstrated its commitment to improving the quality of its

graduate programs by establishing and filling the position of AVP, charged with

working with programs on such issues as uniform expectations of student

achievement, guidelines for assessment and program review, and a university

handbook for graduate program processes and policies.

3.   The University has accomplished a major shift in enrollment planning with a

stronger evidentiary approach and additional recruitment and outreach activities.

Strong, equal partnerships with stakeholders outside the University are well

developed and successfully guide the selection and design of a robust portfolio of

research and service programs throughout Guam.

4.   UOG administrators, faculty, and staff have all contributed to improving relations

with public schools, community colleges, and agency partners throughout the region,

facilitating the successful delivery of research, service, and instructional programs to

UOG's larger service area.

5.   Shared governance between the faculty and administration has matured

impressively, demonstrating clear policies and procedures, mutually respectful

relationships, University-focused collaborations that put the University first, and

successful consensus building on key issues.

6. The University has developed a comprehensive, sophisticated cash management system that has allowed UOG to continue to meet its financial obligations in a timely manner, and has built up modest reserves to assist in these efforts as well as detailed monitoring and spending restrictions as necessary.

7. In order to define the University's financial balance, UOG has taken a hard look at all its finances and made many tough decisions. It has come to agreement about a base budget and prioritized growth initiatives, reallocating funds so that the highest priorities are funded even if they had not been funded historically, and evaluating academic programs on their fiscal impact as well as their programmatic impact.

8. UOG continues to increase its non-appropriated revenues and to plan and evaluate new ventures in a systematic and collaborative manner.

Major Recommendations

Enhancing Academic Quality

A.1. Develop and systematize long-term academic assessment plans, ensure that course syllabi include course and program learning outcomes and indicate how achievement of these will be measured, and document learning results and student achievement over time and program-by-program (CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.6).

A.2. Address issues of quality and consistency of expectations across graduate programs, ensure that there are uniform and appropriate policies and procedures governing graduate program offerings, and further improve guidelines for graduate program review (CFR 2.1, 2.2b, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7).

A.3. Continue to support faculty research endeavors and to engage faculty and graduate students more closely in the research enterprise (CFR 2.8, 2.9).

Supporting Student Success

B.1. Establish a university-wide committee to conduct evidence-based analysis of factors related to persistence and attrition, much as *The Natural Choice* committee is now convened to consider recruitment and visibility. The committee should have wide representation from each school and should also have responsibility for recommending to the deans and administration action plans that further support students and improve their experience (CFR 2.10, 2.11, 2.13).

B.2. Improve and then systematically assess the operations of the Alumni Office, among whose functions should be development of an alumni data base on post-graduation outcomes, including careers (CFR 2.10, 4.8).

The Land Grant Mission and Engagement

C.1. Lead an effort to (a) complete the formalizing of comprehensive articulation agreements course-by-course and institution-by-institution; (b) make these articulation agreements accessible on the web; (c) assess the comparative success of native and transfer students by analyzing how well each group performs in subsequent coursework at the University; and (d) expand collaborative work with the community colleges to provide support to improve transfer student success (CFR 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.10, 2.12, 2.14, 4.4).

C.2. Step up efforts to encourage and assist UOG and regional colleagues in utilizing technology assisted distance education alternatives, both videoconferencing and online instruction, to deliver regionally extended instructional, research, and service programs (CFR 3.4, 3.7, 4.2).

Sustaining Institutional Effectiveness and Efficiency

D. 1. Engage campus constituencies, government leaders and the larger community in defining the role that the University will assume in the response to the impending military buildup and agree on an appropriate funding plan (CFR 2.9).

D.2. Continue its efforts to resize, redirect, and realign its base budget to live within its means; in particular, narrow its portfolio of program offerings, determining the relative size and balance of those offerings (e.g., undergraduate vs. graduate; professional vs. liberal arts/sciences, etc.), including which programs should be discontinued (CFR 3.5, 3.6).

D.3. Continue to diversify sources of revenue through alumni contributions, donations, major gifts, planned giving, capital campaigns, endowments of chairs, and entrepreneurial and self-support operations (CFR 3.6, 4.8).