

January 6, 2014

Robert A. Underwood  
President  
University of Guam  
303 J.U. Torres Drive  
UOG Station  
Mangilao, GU 96923

Dear President Underwood:

At its meeting by conference call on December 18, 2013, a panel of the Interim Report Committee (IRC) convened to consider the Interim Report submitted by the University of Guam (UOG) on November 1, 2013. The panel reviewed your Interim Report; the Commission letter of June 24, 2009; and the Interim Report Committee letter of June 16, 2011.

The panel appreciated the opportunity to discuss the report with you; Anita Borja Enriquez, Interim Senior Vice President Academic and Student Affairs and ALO; David O'Brien, Vice President Administration; Nicholas Goetzfridt, Faculty Senate President; Deborah Leon Guerrero, Director of Institutional Research and Assessment; Remedios Cristobal, Interim Dean Enrollment Management and Student Services; Zenaida Nace, Comptroller; John Peterson, Assistant Vice President Graduate Studies; and Mark Duarte, Director Financial Aid Office. The conversation was very informative and helped the panelists better understand the progress the institution has made in addressing the areas cited in previous letters.

The panel was very impressed with your Interim Report: it was well structured, thorough, self-reflective, and thoughtful. The panel also appreciated the honest, candid assessment of the University of Guam's current status, both in the report and on the conference call. There is much to praise including: significant improvements in the university's financial situation; a campus culture of collaboration and shared governance; strong presidential leadership; open, transparent and ongoing communication to constituents about the issues facing the university; and success in enrollment management, program review, and assessment efforts. The University of Guam is to be commended for these accomplishments.

The review by the 2011 Interim Report Committee identified four areas of concern: an unpredictable fiscal situation; low retention and graduation rates; an extensive array of degree programs that may not be sustainable in the long term; and underdeveloped processes for assessment and program review. The 2013 Interim Report Committee noted substantial progress in each of these areas:

**Financial sustainability.** The panel appreciated the detailed information provided about the university's financial situation and noted the excellent progress that has been made in a short period of time to improve UOG's finances. UOG is expecting a modest surplus in FY13 and anticipates balancing its budget for the next three years. Through strengthening enrollment planning and outreach to high schools, UOG has been able to generate additional tuition revenue

(without increasing fees). A recently launched five-year capital campaign, with a target of \$30M, has so far raised over \$6M. As a public institution, UOG is dependent upon the vagaries of funding from the government of Guam. The panel was pleased to learn that for the second year in a row, UOG has received a special appropriation from the government that enables the university to keep tuition at the same level. UOG is to be congratulated on its significantly improved financial situation. (CFR 3.4)

**Student success.** UOG has set itself a target of a 75% retention rate, with a 2% increase annually in retention between the freshman and sophomore year. New initiatives are underway to help achieve these targets, such as special competitive funding for departments that wish to put in place strategies for improving retention and graduation rates. The panel believes that UOG's retention initiatives, early alert system, and the strengthening of academic support programs show promise in improving retention and graduation rates. Time is needed, however, for these efforts to take root and yield the desired results. (CFRs 2.10, 2.13)

**Academic program offerings.** The Good to Great initiative has identified criteria, and a process is in place for prioritizing programs, in consultation with the Faculty Senate, that makes use of data and program reviews. The panel was impressed with the reflective, comprehensive way that UOG is linking mission, program planning, and resources to refine and support its educational offerings. To date, several degree programs have been reconfigured, revised and consolidated. This work will be ongoing as the university continues to shape its academic programs to meet the needs of Guam. (CFRs 4.1, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6)

**Assessment and program review.** The university has substantially strengthened its program review process and tied it to planning and resource allocation. In addition, the general education curriculum has been assessed; an annual assessment inventory is required for all academic programs; and work is underway, in preparation for UOG's comprehensive review in fall 2015, to assess the core competencies of composition and critical thinking. The panel appreciated the examples provided by the university showing how data from assessment and program reviews have been used to strengthen educational effectiveness. (CFRs 2.2, 2.6, 2.7, 4.3)

After extensive discussion of the progress that has been made by the University of Guam, the panel acted to:

1. Receive the Interim Report.
2. Request that the audited financial statements and management letter for FY13 that the University of Guam submits as part of its annual reporting to WASC be reviewed by WASC staff to ensure that the university continues to be financially stable. (CFR 3.4)
3. Request that the University of Guam provide, in its institutional report for its fall 2015 comprehensive review, the following:
  - a. Update on the economic status of Guam and prospects for future funding of the university. Has the government provided funds at the expected levels? (CFR 3.4)
  - b. Progress on the \$30M capital campaign. (CFR 3.4)
  - c. Update on enrollment trends and plans. (CFR 3.4)
  - d. Status of efforts to reconfigure and renew the university's academic programs. (CFR 4.1)

e. Current retention and graduation data. Have targets been met? (CFR 2.10)

The panel, again, reaffirms the hard work and important steps that the University of Guam has taken to address the issues that were the focus of the 2011 Interim Report. The Interim Report Committee looks forward to the university's continued progress.

I am available to help in any way that I can. If I can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Gross Davis".

Barbara Gross Davis, Ph.D.  
Vice President

cc: Anita Borja Enriquez, ALO  
Members of the Interim Report Committee