

APPENDIX E1

Faculty Senate President's Address to the 14th Faculty Senate
Nicholas J. Goetzfridt
April 16, 2015

This marks almost the end of my third year as Faculty Senate President. I wanted to first of all thank you for your support and efforts as Senators and as participants in all four of the Senate's standing committees. I also wish to express my gratitude to members of the Senate's Review Committees for their work on a variety of issues, opportunities and accomplishments.

This is also the near end of the Fourteenth Faculty Senate. This particular Senate has accomplished a number of things over the past academic year, not the least of which has been consistency in terms of upholding and advancing the strength of faculty involvement in University governance and in upholding the means by which the University of Guam moves further and further away from its politically constricted mode of operation that characterized too much of UOG during my career here. I could provide you with a list of these subsequent constrictions but I think it is more useful of our time and energies to recognize the fact that we are now firmly planted in the real world in which competitive outside forces and simply the moral obligation to selflessly provide quality education to our students, generate research and express ideas of high standards while offering meaningful service to Guam and the region are made clear. Anything of the past or, sadly, of the few currently remaining self-serving efforts outside of these realms of universal high standards, moral obligations, and community value are now forever destined to the historical dust bins in which they belong.

To slight or to diminish the necessary awareness of this transformation over the years is not only to forget the past and thus perhaps, as they say, be condemned to repeat it but it is also to fail to understand the full potential that this university now stands capable of realizing and of which the Faculty Senate is an important part. I have said as much during practically every faculty convocation and assembly. The significance of this university's struggle through the years and what one now sees as UOG moves upward within this competitive real world environment merits repeating again and again.

When we began this academic year, I noted a few important items for the Senate's Business:

- To build on the G2G implementation, to include development of a faculty development center and follow-through with issues and initiatives generated through this implementation;
- To complete the General Education Framework for the development of curricular substance at the program/division levels and to present recommendations to the Academic Vice President;
- To address Academic Master Plan issues and support division and program initiatives;
- To contribute substantially to the new WASC Institutional Report; and
- To open dialogue on how to encourage each faculty member to contribute her or his fair share of service toward academic quality and institutional integrity at UOG.

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The G2G implementation and the Academic Master Plan initiatives will continue to change the complexion and underlying academic constitutions of the university and thus funnel numerous future items of business for the Senate – some routine and others that will continue this trend of substantive transformations. The General Education Framework, thanks to efforts by the General Education Review Committee – particularly in this past year - has been constructed, endorsed by the Senate and approved by the Academic Vice President. As the substance of its three tiers is worked out along with its SLOS, the Senate can expect to receive updates and requests as the entire General Education program is finally realized and implemented hopefully by the end of the next academic year.

Most members of the Senate have contributed to the writing of the WASC Institutional Report. This Report constitutes an ongoing process that gets more attention as impending WASC deadlines – either for reports or visits – draw near. However, this should become more and more a recognizable, organic, and even daily process in which what the Senate does ties directly into administrative strategies and responses since we both – the administration and the faculty – not only have a joint stake in accreditation but both the administration and the faculty have unique opportunities and capacities to build upon what has now become more of a self-reflective study designed to better the University rather than to simply satisfy external expectations.

On this note, it has become increasingly more evident that there are new and old ad hoc committees that have unclear relationships with the Faculty Senate. The University Assessment Committee (UAC) for example was a response to the growing importance of assessment not only in evolving WASC standards but also in terms of the establishment of a culture of assessment for the sake of genuinely using the resultant data as a means to improve programs, regardless of what WASC may or may not say about them. This was not a nefarious creation meant to sidestep the Senate. It was instead an evolving reaction – perhaps even an evolving understanding – to the increased importance of assessment. But now that the idea and the function of assessment in the betterment of UOG have become integral to its academic well-being, the Faculty Senate needs to also become more integral to its study and application. Before I finished my third term as President and with the support of the Director of the Office of Academic Assessment and Institutional Research, I could have easily assigned Senate and/or Review Committee members to UAC to give the Senate a more direct voice and participation in this important component of institutional excellence. But I decided to leave this to the next Senate President so that that individual might use this opportunity to address the relationship of the Senate with University ad hoc academic related committees, beginning with the University Assessment Committee.

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Just as important – or perhaps more importantly – are the more intrinsic issues and consequences facing UOG that are not so much committee based as they are concerned with both personal and institutional perspectives and attitudes. To begin with, most of us are acutely aware of the increasing strain being placed on faculty involvement in University governance by the limited number of senior faculty members willing to serve on the Senate and on important committees such as the Promotion and Tenure Committee. This becomes particularly apparent either when an unexpected vacancy occurs during the year or in the March crush to fill seats scheduled to be vacated by expiring terms. I don't really know what the solution is to enticing those nonparticipants to serve. We certainly understand the short and long term consequences – in the short term time arena is sometimes rendered a resentment by those who serve faithfully year after year in relation to those who refuse to do so year after year. In the long term arena is the potential strain and weakening of the impact of faculty involvement in both university and academic governance issues – both of which can continue with a larger dependency upon administrative perspectives and action – but which will only serve to diminish the well-rounded nature of shared governance at UOG much to the detriment of the institution.

Again, I leave this to the next Faculty Senate and its President to consider, perhaps beginning with wide-ranging dialogues with the Faculty Union and College Deans on what actually constitutes levels of service, particularly among those faculty in the higher ranks who not only have the experience with which to benefit the University in these campus-wide service capacities but who also have the intrinsic responsibility to mentor and to demonstrate leadership to those faculty aspiring to reach their ranks. The Senate fully supports the Faculty Union's role in defining and protecting faculty rights at UOG. At the same time, it needs to be said that this does not subsequently mean that the Union should provide the means by which assumptions of privilege through accomplishment diminishes or protects one from this responsibility.

Related at least in part to this is the practical, applicability of current percentage assignments in the CFES areas of teaching, research, and service. Does a four class teaching load still necessitate research percentages that are nearly on par with others or is there some kind of expressible academic vision that is possible to create which offers greater focus on instruction for those so legitimately inclined while juxtaposing a complimentary vision that assigns greater research responsibilities in exchange for reduced teaching loads? Could or should these load assignments be more closely married into better expressions of what research aspirations the University of Guam currently or futuristically strives for in the pure sciences, social sciences, and in the humanities? This would not be a routine Senate item but UOG has certainly matured enough so that the Senate could find a means by which to effectively

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address and ultimately help resolve these issues and questions. In any event, faculty service on University-wide and thus highly impactful committees – and especially among those at the Professor and Associate Professor levels should, as a result, become more accessible and expected

And perhaps higher on the profundity scale, is the question of what actually happens to the individual lives the University of Guam touches once they graduate and leave? Is it even the University's responsibility – and thus the Senate's as well – to concern itself with the consequences students face when they enter what is often tritely referred to as "the real world?" I suspect that most faculty in this room as well as faculty across this campus believe that it is indeed the University's responsibility to concern itself with the fate of its students. But what exactly is to be done? How is it to be conveyed or expressed? More importantly, how is it to be used to help these students and the students who follow them? So far, there is only one alumni study available via the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs and the Office of Academic Assessment and Institutional Research that draws from approximately 400 UOG graduates with most (71%) graduating from the 2000s but going all the way back to the 1960s – essentially fifty years' worth of graduates but only 400 participants. 400 graduates out of the thousands and thousands of UOG graduates over these decades is a tiny percentage of these lives touched and for which, at least in the classrooms, the University felt responsibility for. And this is not meant to criticize either of these administrative offices for conducting this survey – in fact, it is a good start because this important subject – the lives of the people who once studied here – needs to have a baseline from which to start.

But what now? Even I myself know that there is a wide-ranging minimum wage job market facing even our graduates from the business school. How and indeed, how many graduates become locked for too long into this market and are unable to find their way toward more upward routes of mobility? At what point does this no longer become our problem? Or is it always our problem? There seems to be a wide range of professed responsibilities and, more importantly, action among U.S. universities in relationship to this issue. Certainly this university, in its evolving maturity, will have to come to terms with this existential question and decide to take definitive and meaningful steps in relation to whatever honest and clearly stated answer it comes up with. If it is always our problem, what exactly are we doing about it or prepared to do about it? In fact, why is this University not facing these raw, life-changing questions more directly – both for the sake of its own moral fortitude and for the sake of its legitimate, real-life institutional capacity to respond in terms of its graduates and its own programs? Should we just pretend that the fate of graduates from a university, say, in New York City and the fate of graduates from our university on Guam are essentially one and the same – that life is life and that

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while we might pray for their wellbeing at graduation, there is little more we can do. Or does the community within which we live provide us with a more distinctive culturally and historically driven reason and means to respond? Could one way of acquiring a more detailed and realistic understanding of our graduates perhaps start with College-based, specific approaches to understanding the fate of its own graduates – consistently on a semester-by-semester basis – and acting as deemed possible and appropriate via its Senate representatives who would play an important role in this new College based, life-after-graduation endeavor? Again, this would not be a routine Senate agenda item but rather a natural response to the Faculty Senate's maturity in furthering its capacity to help strengthen the University of Guam and the people that it serves.

There are many other issues that the Senate could become more involved in such as retention, graduation rates, and the growing efforts to make academic linkages between the Guam Department of Education and the need to reduce the number of new UOG students testing into developmental classes. And perhaps one direct route into more direct and meaningful Senate involvement into the realization of better results in these endeavors is indeed the Senate's more intimate relationship and contributions to ad hoc committee structures and to the administrative initiatives that lead to them. Again, I leave these things to the next Faculty Senate to consider. And I could go on about other possibilities that exist somewhat outside of the Senate's routine but crucial agenda items related to quality academic programs.

The good part about this ability to go on about other possibilities is that we are clearly at that stage at which the future role and impact of the Senate is only limited to the extent to which we see ourselves in the greater context of not only the University of Guam itself but also in the context of the communities that we serve. We have the capacity and we have the moral obligation to respond – and we should.