

President Emeritus Harold L. Allen Legacy Message

I feel privileged to have served as the ninth president of the University of Guam from 2001 to 2008. I had been away from Guam for more than four decades and had no immediate plans to return. As an academic, one tends to move between institutions based on career trajectory, job availability, and a host of other factors. It was only a chance reading of a position announcement in the Chronicle for Higher Education that resulted in my being nominated for and, following a national search, hired by UOG's Board of Regents.

Having grown up on Guam, I felt the presidency offered an opportunity not only to return to my childhood home but for me to give back to an institution experiencing a variety of challenges. Years earlier, I had attended George Washington High School and the Territorial College of Guam, the latter under the mentorship of Pedro Sanchez and Antonio Yamashita. Both ingrained in me the importance of giving back.

As an aside and for those unfamiliar with the Territorial College of Guam, the College was located in two large elephant Quonset huts immediately adjacent to the George Washington High School in Mongmong-Toto-Maite. The long row of large Quonset huts were, I believe, built as a military storage depot immediately after the end of WWII. When I attended the College in 1959 and 1960, the College's enrollment was small and the curriculum offered was limited. Those responsible for creating the College in 1952 possessed a vision, a vision of providing Guam with opportunities for a higher education. Just the presence of the College communicated a seriousness about building the island's capacity for growth. I felt proud to just be there.

On a personal note, my connections to Guam are deep. I attended Adelupe Elementary School and Agana Junior High School where my 7th grade teacher was Julie Tennesen, the wife of Richard Tennesen, who was Chairman of the Board of Regents during my tenure. While at GWHS, I took Spanish classes from Marge Driver. Marge was a critical resource at UOG's MARC for decades.

Following my on-campus interview, Marie Nelson, Chairwoman of the UOG BOR, and her husband, Peter, came to Cleveland to visit Carin and myself. I learned then and from conversations with WASC officials and others, that UOG's most urgent need was to address the decision by WASC to place the University on probation. If not promptly addressed, the University stood to lose its accreditation, student financial aid, other federal support, significant student enrollment and the ability to transfer academic credit to other institutions. Clearly, UOG's future was at risk.

The learning curve was steep but aided by Regents Nelson, Donna Muna-Quinata, Kenneth Paulino, Rick Castro and Mark Mendiola, who worked together to provide strong Board support for the difficult decisions and actions that I suspected would follow.

Fortunately, I had spent more than 25 years in faculty and senior level administrative positions in public, open-admissions higher education institutions, much like UOG. I also had worked closely with other regional accrediting organizations and I understood the standards-based review process and what would be expected of UOG.

As I listened to WASC officials characterize their concerns, it became obvious that the University's highest priority would be to craft a broad-based, campus-wide plan for demonstrating adherence to WASC's accreditation standards. I met with campus constituents and stakeholders, and scheduled meetings with the Board of Regents, senior administrators, deans and directors, the faculty senate and union leadership, the staff council, and student government as well as island leaders to develop a consensus about how best to move forward. I arrived at the beginning of November, 2001, and WASC was scheduled for a site visit in late March, 2002. Time was not on our side.

Helen Whippy, John Jensen, and Don Platt were immensely helpful in understanding campus politics and creating a framework for generating a response to WASC. I also sought advice from the Regents, Roy Tsuda, Hiro Kurashina, Don Rubenstein and others who had been at UOG for a long time. Historical memory is important to understanding past actions and decisions. The more I listened, the more I concluded that the University's response to WASC should be forward looking and not focused on explaining decisions made in the past.

By the end of December, 2001, it was clear that UOG did not have a strategic plan in place to guide internal decision-making and budgeting. As time passed, I also recognized that the University did not have in place a centralized database from which to track key performance measures so that trends and patterns of activity could be evaluated over time. Not only did the University not routinely benchmark its progress against that of peer institutions, or follow best practices at peers, many of the University's policies and practices seemed to have been lifted, at least in part, from Government of Guam past procedures and processes. This may help to explain why the University periodically encountered problems with institutional autonomy. Some individuals with whom I met openly questioned whether UOG was in fact a department of the Government of Guam. My response was to emphasize the importance of institutional autonomy and having an independent Board of Regents. Less than half of the University's annual operating budget in 2008 was received from local government resources. It is the BOR that approves how those funds are allocated and spent.

I know from past experience that planning and budget allocation needed to be data driven. If performance cannot be systematically evaluated against a plan and with measured outcomes, how have resources been allocated in the past? My thinking at the time was let's focus on WASC near-term but begin thinking about developing a University strategic plan with specific strategic initiatives that can be linked directly to budget allocation and outcomes measures.

A review of internal University budgets suggested that academic and support programs continue to be funded at near constant levels over time. There was very little evidence of

reallocation to focus scarce resources on new, more urgent or modified goals that track student demand or opportunities consistent with the University's mission. UOG's funding pattern seemed to encourage and reward a "silo" mentality, when what was needed was a system of goalsetting and funding around the benefits of interdisciplinary programming.

When asked, few deans and directors articulated how their units related to other programs, departments or colleges. Despite scarce resources, the University's long-term viability needed to be reshaped around changing student demand, changing employment opportunities locally and regionally, and areas of distinction or centers of excellence.

As the University community continued to engage in consensus building, it became clear that the University needed a single point of contact for responding to media inquiries and to communicating the many successes and ways by which UOG served Guam and regional Micronesia. A search was concluded with Cathleen Moore-Linn being hired to serve as UOG's first Director of Integrated Marketing and Communications. Publishing a UOG magazine dramatically helped to inform the campus and broader community. UOG's visibility was enhanced.

Looking internally, we began to consider what changes might lead to better efficiency and effectiveness. I felt that identifying best practices at a group of peer institutions would help to focus UOG's campus dialogue and engagement around benefits at all levels of the institution. Change doesn't occur by demanding it. Successful change occurs when constituents and stakeholders are directly involved in the process.

A key change that was made was to merge Academic and Student Affairs under a new Senior Vice President, and to establish an Office of Enrollment Management and Student Support Services under a new Dean. Following a search, Helen Whippy was selected as the first Senior Vice President. Helen's knowledge of the institution was comprehensive and she worked tirelessly to build internal relationships that would support change. We also established a new Vice President for University/Community Engagement. Jeff Barcinas was appointed to this position following a search. Jeff understood UOG's special land-grant mission and worked to expand outreach initiatives into UOG's service area for the benefit of Guam and the whole of Micronesia.

Following a search, David O'Brien assumed the position of Vice President for Administration and Finance. David was exceptionally skilled at bringing the University's business and administrative practices in line with best practices at peer academic institutions. David and his team worked hard to streamline internal procedures and policies to support academic needs and student goals. Procedures for tracking and managing resources were strengthened. The results of these efforts were clean audits and our ability to withstand the Government of Guam's practice of routinely withholding allocations while our focus remained on meeting important academic and support goals. I can only applaud our success in routinely managing through semi-crisis situations. The crises often seemed to come on top of one another.

One change that was viewed as controversial was to rename the Colleges of Business and Public Administration, Education, and Nursing and Health Sciences as individual professional schools. This had long been a common practice at Universities across the country. UOG's three professional schools have established themselves as key to meeting Guam's employment needs and Guam's future economic development opportunities.

At the same time as organization changes were being made, we implemented assessment at all levels of the institution. Annual assessment provided feedback for planning and budgeting and ultimately led to incremental refinement of strategic planning goals. UOG's solution was to implement a best practice by creating a University Planning and Budget Advisory Committee that forced the development of mission-oriented goals and accountability into the organization through the deans, chairpersons and directors.

An important part of strategic planning is being willing to move resources to areas of greatest need or to set aside funding to address areas of opportunity. To accomplish this objective, we initiated a cycle of academic program review with the objective of eliminating courses, majors and programs for which there was rapidly declining student enrollment or evidence of redundancy. The goal here was to gradually align programs, research and outreach initiatives to match student, local and regional demand while specifically focusing resources on programs and initiatives unique to Guam and Micronesia's needs.

Recognizing and further developing Centers of Excellence at UOG has always been an important element of UOG's mission. MARC, the Marine Lab, WERI, CEDDERS, and ISLA are examples of Centers that serve Guam and Micronesia in diverse ways. They represent a tangible and important connection to the communities that UOG serves.

It is important to single out the development of UOG's partnership with the University of Hawaii, an initiative that resulted in significant National Cancer Institute funding for a Cancer Research Program to better document, understand and respond to health disparities that exist on Guam and throughout Micronesia. Helen Whippy played a central role in building the capacity of the program to address unique island population needs. This is an institutional accomplishment of which I am most proud.

I look back on our progress during my presidency as one in which we rededicated the University to best practices and successful shared governance. I can highlight a few examples of initiatives that advanced UOG's mission. First, we secured unrestricted accreditation from WASC in record time through steps that left the University stronger and more successful. We also improved academic quality by securing NLN accreditation, initial accreditation for Social Work, and initial accreditation for Education, and increased student enrollment over eight consecutive semesters. (Helen Whippy worked closely with the deans and directors to ensure that the University made its strongest case for WASC and academic program specific accreditation.) We markedly increased extramural funding for major projects. One such example was laying the groundwork for UOG becoming a member of the federally funded Sea Grant consortium.

It needs to be emphasized that the Deans, departmental chairpersons and program directors played key roles in meeting the demands of change. Were it not for the five Deans working together and independently (Dr. Lee Yudin, Dr. Anita Borja-Enriquez, Dr. Mary Spencer, Dr. Marilyn Salas, and Dr. Margaret Hattori) and being committed to change, I seriously doubt that the needed changes would have occurred. To be sure, there was reluctance here and there to essentially reorganizing the University around best practices at peer institutions. The Dean's collectively fostered engagement and found creative ways to promote doing things differently. They were never fully recognized or thanked enough for their leadership and tenacity. They did a great job.

In retrospect, I believe the steps we took as an institution resulted in a strengthening of the University's competitiveness and visibility and positioned the University as a major player in Guam's and Micronesia's economic future. UOG's graduates occupy leadership positions on Guam, the Northern Marianas, and throughout Micronesia. They are Governors, members of legislatures, doctors, lawyers, engineers, and community and business leaders. There wasn't an alumni or friend-building event hosted on Guam or throughout Micronesia in which we didn't meet leaders and influencers who were UOG graduates. The influence UOG has had over the years is simply remarkable.

The University made good progress on most objective metrics of achievement. It took close to two years to craft and refine UOG's strategic plan, a plan that broadly identified four strategic initiatives: (1) enhancing academic quality, (2) supporting student success, institutional visibility and enrollment growth, (3) promoting the land-grant mission of the University through community engagement, and (4) strengthening institutional effectiveness and efficiency. Looking back, the plan was created by engaging the entire institution, by being willing to question past practices and outcomes and by being willing to move resources to new and merging areas despite our functioning in an atmosphere of scarce resources. With a strengthened and refined focus, the overarching goals of the plan remain in place today.

UOG's institutional success during my presidency was enhanced by our collective success in building UOG's endowment, often through the impact of our graduates and friends of the University. At the beginning of my tenure, I thought this to be a difficult task, primarily because the campus was losing enrollment following the decision by WASC to place UOG on probation. In retrospect, the community was waiting for evidence that UOG was moving in the right direction. Things changed after the WASC site visit in March, 2002. Shortly thereafter, we announced meetings with alumni groups on Guam and throughout Micronesia. As momentum developed, more serious discussions began about UOG's needs. Over the next several years we focused efforts on culturing relationships. These efforts resulted in several major gifts from the Leon Guerrero family, the Calvo family, from the Tan Siu Lin Foundation and from Lucio C. Tan.

The Leon Guerrero family gift from Eugenia and Jesus Leon Guerrero enabled the University to leverage funding from the USDA with which to build a \$14 million School of Business and Public administration building. Jerry Calvo was instrumental in building support for the Endowment Foundation. He worked tirelessly to facilitate the Tan Siu Lin

and Lucio C. Tan gifts, a significant accomplishment. Jesse Leon Guerrero was helpful in building the endowment through leveraged growth of the endowment and helping others to understand the University's urgent needs.

I believe that University presidents are largely stewards during their tenure. Frequently, they function as change agents. A president's only power is to help campuses realize their potential through persuasion, engagement and leadership decision-making. I look back and ask: Is shared governance valued and evident? Is the institution more engaged? Is it mission-focused and student centered? Have important changes been made permanent? Is the University on a solid base as it looks to the future? Is it widely respected by constituents and stakeholders? I believe the answers to these questions is yes. As a team, we made a difference.

Overall institutional progress during a president's tenure is never the work of one person or even just a few, but the work of an entire institution, the constituents it serves, its stakeholders and those who consider it a key valued resource. I felt privileged to have worked with a Board of Regents that provided continuous support during challenging times, especially given the magnitude of change we pursued. Marie Nelson, Ron Leach and Richard Tennesen provided strong Board leadership. All of the Regents at one time or another contributed individually and collectively to UOG's growth as a respected, competitive institution of higher learning. Regents Sandy Yow, Gus Delgado, Donna Muna-Quinata, Sonny Ada, Chris Perez and I had many, many meetings and conversations about UOG's progress in building core capacity and strength. We learned from each other and respected the roles we individually played.

There are many others who have played critical roles during my tenure as president of UOG. One such person is Chris Mababayag, who was the Executive Secretary to the President. Chris worked long hours, greatly helped me as a new president, and made the Office of the President a great place to work. Her advice and patience were greatly appreciated.

Two others contributed in important ways to the work of the Office of the President. One was Louise Toves who was Executive Assistant to the President. Louise often worked under tight time constraints to support Board of Regents meetings and the President. David Okada initially served as the University's planning officer but, over time, also took on various projects and priorities that needed attention. Both helped in important ways to balance the workload of the office as priorities shifted to meet timelines.

Marcy Santos and Vicki Renacia, as University Legal Counsels at different times, helped the University respond to challenges around autonomy, procedure, process and policy questions and day-to-day needs. Their expertise was greatly appreciated.

Several others played completely different but important roles, often behind the scenes. One was Carl Gutierrez, Governor during my first year on the job, and Felix Camacho, Governor during subsequent years. Both understood the University's needs and both helped the University to sustain its momentum.

Maintaining strong Legislative support was critical. Although Speakers and Senators of the Guam Legislature were consistently supportive of UOG's needs, it was Senator Larry Kasperbauer who stood out as a key advocate on behalf of the University. He was always available for help and advice and taught me much about Guam's political framework.

I know there are many, many others, on and off-campus, who helped, aided and supported the University and myself during my tenure. *Un dankulonasi Yu'usma'ase* to all.

It was a privilege for Carin and I to serve and support UOG. Biba, UOG!