



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GCC accredited for six more years

Guam Community College can continue educating and training Micronesia's workforce for the next six years. The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, informed GCC President Dr. Mary Okada on July 4 that the College's accreditation status has been reaffirmed for the maximum allowable period - until the next scheduled visit in the spring of 2018. An 11-member team visited the college on March 19-22, 2012. GCC was one of only three colleges to be given reaffirmation of accreditation by the Commission during its June meeting (visit www.accjc.org/actions-on-institutions to view commission actions on the 45 institutions under its purview).

ACCJC President Dr. Barbara Beno noted in her letter to Dr. Okada that "the College is commended for establishing and communicating to students and the community student learning outcomes for all of its courses and programs," for "its accelerated construction program," and for "its flexibility in managing financial resources and for its efforts to compensate for irregular cash flow issues."

"This is a very proud day for all of us at GCC – our students, faculty, and employees – and for Guam's workforce," Okada said. "ACCJC has confirmed that as a College, we are doing what we say we're doing with regard to what students learn in the classroom, how their education applies to the real world, how we manage our finances, and how we plan for expansion of our curriculum and our facilities."

GCC accreditation liaison officer Dr. Ray Somera says news of the reaffirmation of accreditation means that, "GCC students can continue to have confidence in our institution's ability to provide them with the quality education and training they will need to succeed in the workforce." He noted that being fully accredited means GCC will be able to continue to avail itself of federal grant money, qualified students will continue to receive Pell and other federal grant aid, and that GCC will continue its role as the leader in career and technical workforce in the region. Somera also pointed out that the College's dedication to participatory governance – including faculty, staff, students, and board members in the decision-making process – played an important role in the ACCJC decision.

"The faculty are overjoyed with the affirmation of our College's accreditation," said Dr. Clare Camacho, president of GCC's Faculty Senate. "The Commission's report and the self-study

report demonstrated the value of GCC's participatory governance process. We look forward to continuing working with administrators in improving the College's services with the focus on teaching and learning so that our students can realize their goals and dreams," she added.

"This is a proud moment for the board," said Gina Ramos, chairperson of the Board of Trustees. Board training and the review of board policies were issues during the 2006 accreditation visit. "The current board has clearly addressed AAJC concerns, and stands ready to support the College's important mission," said Ramos.

"For me as a student, accreditation is an important thing to look for when choosing an institution to earn your degree," said Ariane Nepomuceno, GCC Board of Trustees Student Trustee. "Every student deserves to learn from an institution that is credible, reliable, and accountable for what they teach."

GCC has been continuously accredited by ACCJC/WASC since 1979. Since 2006, the College's enrollment has increased by nearly 44 percent, as island residents prepare for even a scaled-down military buildup and an increasing tourism market from China and Russia by gaining more education and employment skills. GCC has constructed three new buildings on its campus in the last three years, and will open the fully renovated Foundation Building this fall. Curriculum additions include Surveying technology, Pre-architectural drafting, Medium/Heavy Truck Diesel Technology, Forensic Computer Examiner and Forensic Lab Technician concentrations in its Criminal Justice program, and Computer Aided Design and Drafting. All of these additions have been in response to consultation with industry advisory groups with regard to the demand for these types of skills in Guam's workforce. GCC is also preparing the curriculum for a photovoltaic installer course, in response to the increase in the development and use of photovoltaic solar panels as a source of sustainable energy on Guam and in the region.

Individuals requiring special accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services please contact 735-5597.
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