



PRESS RELEASE

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\$8.6M grant to fund construction of two buildings on UOG campus

Plans to construct two new buildings on the University of Guam campus will move forward following an \$8.6 million grant award that the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration [announced on Feb. 11](#). The projects are a second building for the nursing program and a new home for UOG's Water and Environmental Research Institute of the Western Pacific that will include the only comprehensive water testing lab in the Micronesian region.

The grant funds come from the Economic Adjustment Assistance Program, which received \$600 million in 2019 to support disaster relief and recovery for areas affected by certain natural disasters, including Typhoon Mangkhut in 2018. A condition of the \$8.6 million award requires the university to contribute \$1.7 million — for a total project cost of \$10.3 million. The local contribution is comprised of UOG Endowment Foundation and UOG funds.

“The damage caused by Typhoon Mangkhut in 2018 underscored the need for Guam to develop new capacity to protect its aquifer and to address a chronic shortage of health care workers,” said Dennis Alvord, acting assistant secretary of commerce for economic development. “This EDA investment will provide the University of Guam the additional infrastructure it needs to support the territory's economic growth and resilience to future disasters through research and training.”

New WERI facility

WERI monitors and studies the region's freshwater resources and water-related phenomena and also offers water testing services for commercial customers. Its new three-story, 12,000-square-foot building — to be built on Dean's Circle, opposite the

English Language Institute — will double the space of its existing Water Quality Lab, accommodating additional equipment that will expand the volume and types of work the lab can do. The facility will also house WERI faculty offices, student research assistant offices, a research library, and a classroom/conference space.

“The high-quality work of WERI’s faculty and staff has driven the need for the new, bigger, and better facility. Their work brought WERI the national recognition that made it competitive for this award,” said John W. Jenson, director of WERI.

Additional nursing building

The additional nursing building will facilitate the training of more nurses within the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, but it will also accommodate the new programs the school has launched in the past couple years: the three-month certified nursing assistant program and the Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program, which provides caregiver trainings for families and those who work with the elderly.

“The lack of lab space and classroom space has become particularly difficult since UOG began workforce development beyond the BSN program to address critical shortages,” said Margaret Hattori-Uchima, dean of the UOG School of Health. “The EDA funding is very exciting news for our aspiring nurses and nursing assistants and for the future of health care throughout Micronesia.”

The two-story, 12,540-square-foot facility will be connected to the existing School of Health building and will house four classrooms and a 2,500-square-foot laboratory.

The grant application and collaboration among WERI, the School of Health, UOG Facilities Management and Services, and the UOG administrators was spearheaded by the Research Corporation of the University of Guam, an entity established in 2014 to compete for and manage grants.

“This is the result of teamwork. Our administrators, former President Robert Underwood, and legislators had the foresight to create RCUOG for this very purpose, and we’re thankful for the great leadership from RCUOG Executive Director Cathleen Moore-Linn, WERI, and the School of Health that has made this possible,” said Thomas W. Krise, president of the University of Guam. “Growth is on the horizon for UOG, and it’s an exciting time.”

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Photo captions:



2021-nursing-student-sabrina-wiegand

Nursing student Sabrina Wiegand works with a mannequin in one of two nursing labs within the University of Guam's School of Health. A U.S. Economic Development Administration grant awarded to the university on Feb. 11 will fund the construction of a second building, to include a new 2,500-square-foot nursing lab and four classrooms, for the school's growing programs.



2021-weri-water-lab

Lab assistant Lyuqin Liu utilizes a flow injection analyzer while testing a water sample in the Water Quality Lab at the Water and Environmental Research Institute at the University of Guam. A U.S. Economic Development Administration grant awarded to the university on Feb. 11 will fund the construction of a new three-story facility on the upper UOG campus for WERI to move into that will double its lab space.

Photos courtesy of University of Guam