



# PRESS RELEASE

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## **UOG holds groundbreaking for Nursing Annex, WERI buildings**

The University of Guam and its partners celebrated the groundbreaking of two new buildings on Monday, November 17, marking a turning point for two projects that overcame a host of challenges including the COVID -19 pandemic, rising cost of construction, regulatory processes, and funding constraints.

The first project is the construction of a new three-story research facility for the Water and Environmental Research Institute (WERI) of the Western Pacific. It will include state-of-the-art laboratories and classrooms on 13,000 square feet of floor space and will meet the needs of WERI's role in the region monitoring freshwater quality and research.

The second project is the Margaret Perez Hattori-Uchima School of Health Nursing Annex, which is dedicated to the school's beloved dean who championed the growth of health professionals in Guam and the region until she passed away in December 2022. The Nursing Annex will expand the University's capacity for Nursing majors with additional laboratories and classrooms on 12,000 square feet of floor space.

"With these two new facilities, we will be contributing to the economic development of Guam, whether it is through workforce development or through the research and ensuring the quality of drinking water," said UOG President Anita Borja Enriquez, adding: "These projects will help improve the overall quality of life on the island."

Funding almost came up short for the two projects. When the bids were submitted, even the lowest bid turned out millions of dollars over budget. Construction costs in Guam have risen due to the escalating prices of construction materials and further complicated by labor shortages and supply-chain issues over the past several years.

But just when UOG faced the difficult choice of delaying the WERI building project, an opportunity to apply for additional funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce's

Economic Development Administration (U.S. EDA) came up in early September 2023. With just three days to apply, the chances looked slim.

“UOG received an award for an additional \$4.3 million from EDA and so that was a moment of sheer joy ... and that brings this narrative to today, right here, where we celebrate the groundbreaking,” said Cathleen Moore-Linn, Executive Director of the Research Corporation of the University of Guam who spearheaded the efforts on both construction projects.

The WERI and Nursing Annex construction projects are expected to cost \$22.7 million and funded through grants from the U.S. EDA, Department of the Interior funds allocated by Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero’s administration, the UOG Endowment Foundation, and the University of Guam, among the sources of funding for the two projects.

Acting Gov. Joshua Tenorio, a UOG student some 30 years ago, said the two projects are being constructed “as part of the infrastructure and foundation of our island.”

The two buildings are expected to be completed in 2025.

RIM Architects designed the facilities. The construction contractor is a joint venture involving Pacific Federal Management and Vertex Guam, both local companies.

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Photo captions:

2023-groundbreaking1

University of Guam President Anita Borja Enriquez, first from left, Acting Gov. Josh Tenorio, third from left, are among officials who participated in the groundbreaking for the construction of the two-story the Margaret Perez Hattori-Uchima School of Health Annex, and the three-story Water and Environmental Research Institute (WERI) of the Western Pacific facility. The groundbreaking occurred on campus on Monday, November 20, 2023.

2023-groundbreaking2

Representatives from the University of Guam and the UOG Endowment Foundation join Pacific Federal Management and Vertex Guam representatives and RIM Architects at the groundbreaking for the construction of the two-story the Margaret Perez Hattori-Uchima School of Health Annex, and the three-story Water and Environmental Research Institute (WERI) of the Western Pacific facility. The groundbreaking occurred on campus on Monday, November 20, 2023.

2023-groundbreaking-weri

The rendering of the three-story Water and Environmental Research Institute (WERI) of the Western Pacific facility.

2023-groundbreaking-nursing

The rendering of the Margaret Perez Hattori Perez Hattori-Uchima School of Health Nursing Annex.

*Photos courtesy of University of Guam*