



# PRESS RELEASE

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**For more information, contact:**

Louella Losinio

Science Communicator

Center for Island Sustainability and Sea Grant

University of Guam

Email: [losiniom@triton.uog.edu](mailto:losiniom@triton.uog.edu)

## **UOG graduate student receives national fellowship in marine policy**

A graduate student from the University of Guam is one of 85 early career professionals from all over the United States selected for the prestigious John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship. The Knauss Fellowship is administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Sea Grant College Program.

D'Amy Steward, a Master of Science in Biology student, is the sole awardee from Guam this year. She is also the second from UOG to receive the award.

The Knauss fellowship is a one-year paid opportunity open to current and recent graduates from advanced degree programs in areas such as marine and coastal science, engineering, environmental management, and public policy, among others, according to a release from NOAA.

As an executive fellow, Steward will serve in a federal government office in Washington D.C.

"The Knauss Fellowship has been a dream of mine since I first learned about it during my freshman year of college," Steward said, adding, "My time as a NOAA Hollings Scholar solidified my interest in pursuing this fellowship. I couldn't be more ecstatic about this incredible opportunity, and I am truly honored to have been selected."

UOG President Dr. Anita Borja Enriquez said the fellowship and others like it help to broaden UOG's sense of pride.

“Her dedication and success reflect the excellence of our academic programs, the transformative power of higher education, and the potential our students possess,” Dr.

Enriquez said. “We are confident that she will continue to excel and make meaningful contributions to marine policy and environmental science, both locally and nationally.”

Steward graduated from Duke University in 2020 with a double major in Biology and Environmental Science, specializing in Ecology and Marine Science and Conservation. During her tenure at Duke, she held the title of Rachel Carson Scholar, and her honors thesis focused on quantifying the benthic footprint of artificial reefs in the southeastern United States.

She spent the summer of 2019 in Saipan as a NOAA Hollings intern, where she worked on research related to the striped eel catfish. This experience brought her back to the region to pursue her master’s degree at UOG. During her first year, she received the Ecological Society of America Katherine S. McCarter Graduate Student Policy Award, which provided her with hands-on training and science policy experience.

As a UOG graduate student, Steward is collaborating with Dr. Laurie Raymundo, UOG Professor of Marine Biology, and Dr. Peter Houk, UOG Professor of Marine Biology, on her thesis, which involves modeling the outcomes of coral restoration efforts.

"The Knauss Fellowship is a highly selective program serving as a gateway for emerging scientists and policymakers to engage in federal initiatives and connect academic knowledge with practical policy implementation. Upon completion of their fellowship, they are equipped with advanced skills to drive positive change within their communities," said Austin Shelton, PhD, Director of the UOG Center for Island Sustainability and Sea Grant.

Dr. Jonathan Pennock, Director of the National Sea Grant College Program, highlighted that Knauss fellows have consistently and thoughtfully applied their unique knowledge and skillsets to develop solutions to national issues.

"We eagerly anticipate welcoming the incoming class of fellows and have no doubt that they will continue the tradition of serving through science," Dr. Pennock said in a recent visit to Guam.

Since starting in 1979, over 1,600 individuals have participated in the program, according to NOAA. Lauren Swaddell, a graduate of the UOG Master of Science in Environmental Science, was the first Knauss Fellowship Program awardee from Guam.

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**Photo captions:**

**2023-knauss1**

D'amy Steward, a University of Guam Master of Science in Biology student, documents efforts at UOG to help corals survive.

**2023-knauss2**

D'amy Steward is one of 85 early career professionals from all over the United States selected for the prestigious John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship. She is seen in Guam waters for her Master of Science in Biology studies at the University of Guam.

**2023-knauss3**

D'amy Steward, a University of Guam Master of Science in Biology student, earns a seat in the prestigious John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship.