



# PRESS RELEASE

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**UOG and University of Hawai'i Sea Grant partner to expand Green Growth Initiative**

The University of Guam recently announced the expansion of the Green Growth Initiative across the Western Pacific. A \$1.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of State via the NOAA National Sea Grant College Program will strengthen the partnership between the UOG Center for Island Sustainability and Sea Grant and the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program.

UOG made the announcement on September 12, during the National Sea Grant Association meeting at the Hyatt Regency Guam. This marked the first time that Guam hosted the biannual meeting, bringing together over 70 directors and representatives from nearly all the 34 Sea Grant programs nationwide.

The new grant will support efforts to expand the scope of Local2030 Islands Network and UOG's Guam Green Growth Initiative to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

During the press conference, Austin Shelton, Director of the UOG Center for Island Sustainability and Sea Grant, emphasized the potential impact of this collaboration, stating, "This seed funding will enable our island neighbors to hire their own Green Growth coordinators. We aspire to collectively strengthen our capacity across Micronesia and the Pacific to advance sustainable development."

"Our island neighbors are at the forefront of sustainability, and this partnership offers an exciting opportunity to expand capacity and knowledge exchange throughout the Pacific," Shelton added.

Randall V. Wiegand, Vice President of Administration and Finance/Chief Business Officer at UOG, acknowledged the transformative potential of the collaboration. "This partnership expands the ways we, as a region, can support each other in advancing the green economy and addressing climate change," he said.

Galvin S. Deleon Guerrero, President of the Northern Marianas College and one of the program partners, said partnerships like these "are essential to our collective efforts to improve the world."

"Our aspirations are as expansive as the Pacific our ancestors traversed, and as profound as the Marianas Trench," Deleon Guerrero added.

Darren Lerner, President of the Sea Grant Association and Director of the UH Sea Grant College Program, commended the long-standing partnership between the two universities. He praised UOG for its commitment to excellence, emphasizing the strength derived from the dedication of every program to this shared goal.

Jonathan Pennock, Director of the National Sea Grant College Program, also recognized the impressive growth of the UOG Center for Island Sustainability and Sea Grant program in a relatively short period of time. He emphasized its strong connection to the community and praised the program for effectively carrying forward the mission of Sea Grant.

In 2022, UOG achieved Sea Grant Institutional Status following a unanimous recommendation from the National Sea Grant Advisory Board and official designation from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) senior leadership.

The National Sea Grant College Program is a collaborative effort between universities and NOAA. It is dedicated to enhancing the practical utilization and conservation of coastal and marine resources, with a vision of fostering a sustainable economy and environment. The Sea Grant network comprises more than 3,000 scientists, engineers, public outreach experts, educators, and students.

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Photo captions:

2023-cispresscon1

Representatives from the University of Guam Center for Island Sustainability and Sea Grant, University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program, and the National Sea Grant College Program gather for a photo after a press conference announcing a \$1.4 million grant from the U.S. State Department and the National Sea Grant College Program on Tuesday, Sept. 12, 2023, at the Hyatt Regency Guam. From left, Northern Marianas

College President Galvin S. Deleon Guerrero; UOG Vice President of Vice and Administration Randall V. Wiegand; Darren Lerner, Director of the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program; Jonathan Pennock, Director of the National Sea Grant College Program; Austin Shelton, Director of the UOG Center for Island Sustainability and Sea Grant; Fran Castro, Associate Director of UOG Sea Grant; and Kyle Mandapat, Associate Director for Communications and Engagement of UOG Center for Island Sustainability and Sea Grant.

### **2023-cispresscon2**

Austin Shelton, Director of the UOG Center for Island Sustainability and Sea Grant, says the \$1.4 million grant from the U.S. State Department and the National Sea Grant College Program will enable UOG Center for Island Sustainability and Sea Grant and University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program to build capacity in the region.

### **2023-cispresscon3**

Jonathan Pennock, PhD, Director of the National Sea Grant College Program, commends the University of Guam Sea Grant Program for its growth since achieving institutional status in 2022.