



# PRESS RELEASE

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## UOG Social Work Program Accreditation Reaffirmed

The University of Guam's Bachelor of Social Work program has been reaffirmed for accreditation through 2031 by the Commission on Accreditation of the National Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).

The social work program, which runs under the Margaret Perez Hattori-Uchima School of Health, prepares its graduates to work in the field and pursue a master's degree in social work.

CSWE accreditation is recognized by educational institutions, licensing boards, and employers. The accreditation team visited the University in April, and the announcement of reaffirmation was made in late October.

"If you come from an accredited social work program, you can go anywhere and go into an advanced standing program, meaning you can get your accelerated master's in social work in a year," Social Work Chair Dr. Tricia Lizama explained.

UOG President Dr. Anita Borja Enriquez congratulated the faculty, staff, administrators, and students in the social work program.

"Accreditation shows that our program is recognized for meeting standards of quality," she said. "Our students, and our community can be assured that graduates of the BSW program are capable and knowledgeable."

Accreditation under CSWE is a rigorous peer-review process that assures graduates can think critically, solve problems and advocate for justice, equity, inclusion, and diversity. Students begin the UOG social work program as part of a cohort in their junior year. In their senior year, they are placed in internships and get hands-on experience under the supervision of field instructors.

Currently, there are 17 social work students placed in internships at Child Protective Services, Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center, Guam Memorial Hospital, and other agencies.

"When they graduate, they're very prepared," Lizama said. "In their internships, they learn how to do assessments, how to build rapport and trust with people, how to do treatment plans."

The program has graduated over 400 students. Many have gone on to work in government agencies, for non-profit organizations and in the private sector. Most of the field instructors are program alumni, Lizama said.

One of the graduates, Cori T. Aguon, works as an extension associate for the program. She said the program prepares students to work in a variety of professions that make up the social work field.

"My background in this program has prepared me to carry out the duties and working in an administrative role," she said. "Our program also equips students to go on to graduate school."

Aguon went to graduate school at the University of Washington before coming home to Guam.

Lizama, who graduated from the UOG program before its initial accreditation in 2003, received her master's degree from the University of Hawaii. Because UOG's program was not accredited at the time, she had to move to Oahu for two years and repeat some of the material that she studied.

With accreditation, the path to advanced degrees in social work became much smoother.

Since 2012, UOG has had an agreement with the University of Hawaii that allows UOG's Bachelor of Social Work graduates to complete the accelerated master's program in a year while living on Guam. There have been 64 students who have received their master's degrees through the UH program, with another 15 expected to graduate in May.

With accreditation reaffirmed until 2031, UOG's Bachelor of Social Work program underscores its unwavering commitment to educational excellence and professional standards. The program places an emphasis on real-world learning and its strong network of alumni and local partnerships create a pipeline of skilled professionals addressing critical social issues in Guam and throughout the region.

As the program continues to grow and evolve, it remains a vital resource for developing the next generation of compassionate leaders, advocates, and problem-solvers—a legacy that will benefit the island community for years to come.

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*Photo attachments*



**2024-UOG-SocialWork1.jpg:**

The Commission on Accreditation of the National Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has reaffirmed accreditation for the University of Guam’s Bachelor of Social Work program through 2031. CSWE conducted an accreditation site visit in April. From left to right: Dr. Tricia Lizama, Professor of Social Work; Dr. Yvette C. Paulino, Dean, Margaret Perez Hattori-Uchima School of Health, Dr. Selena Rodgers, CSWE Site Visitor, Cori T. Aguon, Extension Associate, and Dr. Gerhard Schwab, Professor of Social Work.



**2024-UOG-SocialWork-Faculty.jpg:**

University of Guam Social Work faculty gather at a recent Commencement Ceremony. The Commission on Accreditation of the National Council on Social Work Education reaffirmed accreditation for the UOG's Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program through 2031. From left to right: Dr. Lisa Linda Natividad, Professor of Social Work, Dr. Tressa P. Diaz, Associate Professor of Social Work, Dr. Gerhard Schwab, Professor of Social Work; ; Dr. Vivian Dames, BSW Program Founder & retired Professor of Social Work; and Dr. Tricia Lizama, Professor of Social Work.