

UOG Reflections 1988-2013

By

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I received my bachelor's degree from Clarion University, my master's degree from the University of Arizona, and my Ph.D. from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I've worked in higher education throughout the Pacific since 1971, and, in this role, I've visited most of the Pacific Islands. My family and I first came to Guam from Papua New Guinea University of Technology in Lae, where I was a Senior Lecturer in the Mathematics Department for 10 years. Before Guam, we were in Fiji. I went there as a Peace Corps volunteer, teaching mathematics at the newly formed University of the South Pacific. I saw an ad for a position at UOG in the Chronicle, and Papua New Guinea was becoming a most dangerous place to live, so I applied. I chose UOG because Guam is an island and I like islands. Also, I wanted my children to know they were Americans.

Back then, UOG was small and made up of buildings left over from WW2—many quonset hut type structures, with names like “Buildings A, B, and C.” There was no Student Center, no AG building, and no SBPA building. The Humanities building was built during my time as well. President Fred Leon Guerrero was in charge and he knew everyone. Registration was standing in line at the Field House, and collecting stickers and cards for the courses you wanted or needed. Faculty sat at long tables and signed up students for their courses. Everything took longer, especially scheduling classes. I had an office in one of the old buildings, which blew away during Typhoon Omar.

I was employed at UOG from 1988 to 2013, and I am currently an Emeritus Vice President. During my time there, I was a Professor of Mathematics, as well as the Senior Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs. I received the University Award for Service and a college award for teaching. I set up the first peer tutoring system for mathematics and redefined the developmental mathematics using evidence-based methods. Among my courses, I enjoyed teaching courses in number theory and calculus. I am not sure how much the students enjoyed it, but I like to think they did. Ultimately, I want to be remembered as someone who contributed to the reputation and growth of Guam and the University. I think I made two major contributions, in particular noted below.

First, the University of Guam's WASC accreditation. When I became Academic Vice President in 2000, we were on probation with WASC because of governance (Board and Faculty), assessment, student support and a range of other issues. We had two years to come into compliance. I took on the role of the Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) for UOG when the previous one quit. I learned about accreditation, took that information around to all the units on campus and began the task of focusing us on institutional effectiveness and student success. I set up the office for assessment, and faculty development. I was in on the ground level supporting the newly formed Faculty Senate, which continues to do good work for UOG. We hosted four WASC visiting team, and eventually, obtained eight years of accreditation, the longest period of accreditation UOG ever earned. My legacy then was to create the systems that made it possible and to leave good, well-trained, committed people in those positions. UOG will continue to improve and build on the strides made in those early years. Mentoring and attention to the

development of indigeneous faculty allowed the University to move forward in all areas, from academic and student affairs administration, to faculty leadership, to research.

The second area is research. I was the Principal Investigator, and primary author from UOG for the NIH-funded U56 Cancer Grant Partnership with the University of Hawaii Cancer Center. The U56 became the U54 and it continues to be funded. At the time, it was the largest single grant ever awarded at UOG. I also created and opened the physical facility to house the grant, called the UOG Cancer Research Center, located in Deans Circle. This has grown and flourished since I left in 2013. I was the Director of the Cancer Research Center and Principal investigator of the grant from 2003-2013. The grant was the catalyst for a new way of encouraging and supporting grants at UOG. The then University attorney and I wrote the language for the UOG Research Corporation and the Cancer Trust Fund, both of which continue to generate funds for UOG, and support cancer research. When this grant began there was no oncologist on island and no research or outreach concerning cancer. Now, there are both. I also included the Guam Cancer Registry in the grant, allowing it to be funded and produce cancer statistics to inform public policy and research. I am proud of both of these accomplishments, and that the systems and structures and very good people that I mentored continue to build on this legacy.

Biba, UOG!