



Newsletter



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*Advancing
Government
Accountability*

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President's Message



**By Vincent Duenas
President
AGA Guam Chapter**

Hafa Adai AGA Guam Chapter! February marks Early Careers Month, a month where we recognize and award the special contributions of our newest members to the accountability profession. We have dedicated this month's activities and general membership meeting in their honor.

Some of the highlights for this month include the AGA National Case Challenge Winners, CGFM updates, the University of Guam (UOG)'s Comptroller's Office, and the officer nominations for program years 2012-2013.

UOG Team Wins AGA National Case Challenge in D.C. Congratulations to UOG students Ruren Clemente, Edward Brobesong, Amber Castro, and Garry Yeoh for win-

ning **FIRST PLACE** in the 5th Annual AGA Government Finance Case Challenge held in Washington, D.C. last week. This accomplishment is a first for UOG and Guam. AGA National President Dick Bunce wrote to extend his congratulations and stated that this team "did a great job in both their publication of a CCR and in their presentation of the report to the panel of judges." I would also like to recognize Dr. Doreen Crisostomo, Professor Zeny Nace, and Dr. Ron McNinch for their assistance and guidance in preparing our students for this national competition. Way to go, Team UOG!

CGFM Updates. We will be joining Governor Edward J.B. Calvo on March 5, 2012 at the Ricardo J. Bordallo Complex in Adelup for the Proclamation Signing declaring March 2012 as CGFM Month. All CGFM's, potential CGFM's, and AGA members are welcome to join us. We will also be offering a free lunch to all CGFM's during our March 2012 general membership meeting.

Safeguarding Our University's Assets – UOG's Comp-

troller's Office. This month's featured organization is UOG's Comptroller's Office. Led by Comptroller Zeny Nace, the office is tasked with processing financial activities, maintaining student accounts, complying with federal and local laws, and safeguarding the UOG's assets. Please take a look at their organizational profile in our newsletter or view their Citizen-Centric Report at [http://www.uog.edu/ad
min/assetmanager/image
s/citizen%20centric%20re
port/uogcentric\(3\).pdf](http://www.uog.edu/admin/assetmanager/images/citizen%20centric%20report/uogcentric(3).pdf). Thank you to Zeny Nace for her assistance in featuring her office.

Nominations Committee. Are you interested in serving as an officer for program year 2012-2013? Nominations for President-Elect, Treasurer, and Secretary are now open until our election during our May 2012 general membership meeting. Please email all nominations to President-Elect and Chairperson of the Nominations Committee, Jason Katigbak at [ja-
son.katigbak@gu.ey.com](mailto:jason.katigbak@gu.ey.com).

For more information on AGA happenings, please visit <http://aga.guam.net>. Thank you.

"Celebrating Our AGA Membership"

Last Meeting

By Rachel Field
Secretary
AGA Guam Chapter

Last month, our guest speaker was Mr. Jason Miyashita, Senior Investment Management Consultant and Second Vice-President of Wealth Management of Morgan Stanley Smith Barney. His topic was on the *"Economic Outlook for 2012 and Investment Ideas to Consider for Investing in the Capital Markets"*.

The goal of the presentation was to provide different ways to invest given the economic outlook in 2011 and 2012. The year 2011 was difficult and much of a rollercoaster considering the events such as governmental budgeting issues, the U.S. credit downgrading, and catastrophic events in Japan.

Despite these events, 2011 ended in the positive Mr. Miyashita continued to share that the outlook for 2012

continues to be positive. Although the United States and Europe are in recession, a global recession does not appear to be on the rise. Also, inflation has not been an issue and may actually decrease.

When investing, Mr. Miyashita shared that the emerging markets are the future. Particularly, he mentioned the Brazil, Russia, India, and China markets and frontier markets. Nonetheless, when looking at retirement, the key is to live below your means now by putting 10-15% of your income into retirement.



From L-R: AGA Guam Chapter President-Elect Jason Katigbak, Guest Speaker Jason Miyashita, and AGA Guam Chapter President Vince Duenas

Right: AGA Guam Chapter Members listen to Mr. Miyashita's presentation.



Next Meeting



Topic: Status of Higher Education on Guam and the Pacific: GCC's Role in Developing Today's Workforce

Date & Location:

Wednesday, February 29, 2012
12:00 PM – 1:30 PM
Fort San Jose
Outrigger Resort, Tumon

Lunch Fee:

Members: \$12
Non-members: \$17

This month we have invited the President of Guam Community College (GCC), Dr. Mary A. Y. Okada. Dr. Okada became the first female President and Chief Executive Officer of GCC on June 18, 2007.

Dr. Okada's financial leadership and, for the last two years, her overall leadership, have led to GCC being consistently commended by both the public and private sectors for its development and support of workforce education.

Dr. Okada also served as Comptroller for the Department of Education. Her private sector experience includes having served as finance manager for Pacific Western Enterprises, and various financial positions with Payless Markets, Inc.

Dr. Okada received her Bachelor's degree of Business Administration in Accounting and Management and

her Master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Guam, and her Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from the University of Phoenix.

Please join us for our February General Membership Meeting. There will be a free lunch raffle, but you must be present to win!

Lunch Raffle



Congratulations to **Melody Pajaro** for winning the free lunch raffle from the January 2012 General Membership Meeting!

Treasurer's Report

Association of Government Accountants - Guam Chapter
Condensed Financial Statements
As of and for year ending January 31, 2012

	<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Community Svc.</u>	<u>Prof. Develop.</u>	<u>Memo</u>	7 months ending <u>1/31/2012</u>
Assets	\$ 11	\$ 8,473	\$ 57,208	\$ 65,693	
Liabilities	-	-	900	900	
Net Assets					
Earmarked	-	5,853	23,004	28,857	
Unrestricted	11	2,621	33,304	35,936	
Revenues	\$ 2,370	\$ -	\$ 2,060	\$ 4,430	\$ 43,914
Expenses	<u>1,090</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,060</u>	<u>3,149</u>	<u>26,955</u>
Increase (decrease) in net assets	<u>1,280</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,280</u>	<u>16,959</u>
Beginning net assets	(1,269)	8,473	56,309	63,514	47,835
Ending net assets	\$ 11	\$ 8,473	\$ 56,308	\$ 64,793	\$ 64,793

Resume Building Workshop



On Wednesday, February 22nd, our Early Careers Committee along with the Junior Accountants Society and the University of Guam's Professional & International Programs sponsored a "Resume Building Workshop" to assist college students looking to enter into the workforce. This one-hour workshop provided our participants the opportunity to understand the do's and don'ts when writing a resume. Thank you to our instructor Larry Gamboa, PIP Director, Carlos Taitano, and Russell Ocampo for their assistance.

Accounting for the Future

The AGA Guam Chapter would like to thank the Guam Community College (GCC) for inviting CGFM Chairperson Jojo Guevara, Past President and Education Co-Chairperson Rodalyn Marquez, and President Vince Duenas to speak at its 2nd Annual "Accounting for the Future" Accounting Conference on February 3, 2012 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Tumon, Guam.

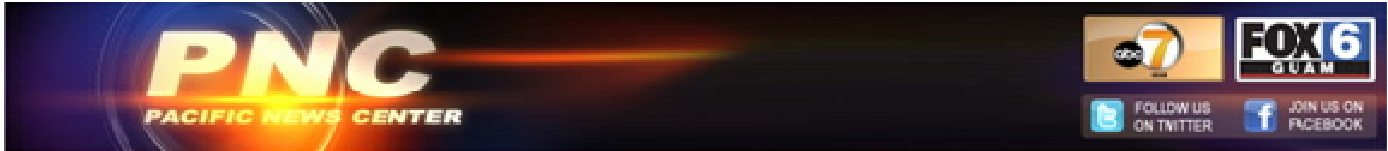
Mr. Guevara gave a presentation on what it takes to become a Certified

Government Financial Manager. Meanwhile, Mrs. Marquez and President Duenas gave a presentation on what it takes to become an auditor.

Other speakers for this event included a special agent from the IRS Criminal Investigation Division and a senior manager from Ernst & Young, LLP.

We congratulate the GCC Spring 2012 Accounting Principles Class and Accounting Advisor and Associate Professor Pilar Pangelinan for hosting a successful conference!





UOG Team Wins National AGA Government Finance Case Challenge in DC

Written by News Release
Monday, 20 February 2012 11:46

Guam - University of Guam accounting students Ruren Clemente, Edward Brobesong, Amber Castro, and Garry Yeoh won first place in the fifth annual Association of Government Accountants (AGA) Government Finance Case Challenge marking a first for UOG students and the School of Business and Public Administration.

The competition is open to all undergraduate students across the country in accounting, finance, and business. The task was to develop a written response to the City of Alexandria's performance in regards to its accountability and transparency. The teams had to create a citizen-centric report that details government finances in a visually appealing, clear, and understandable document.

After an initial round of judging, the three highest-scoring teams received invitations and stipends to attend AGA's National Leadership Conference held February 16-17 in Washington, D.C. At the conference, the finalists including the University of Guam, Old Dominion University, and the University of North Carolina - Pembroke presented their solutions before a panel of five federal/state/local government leaders, corporate partners and chief financial officers. Judges included the City of Alexandria's Chief Financial Officer, Bruce Johnson, and the AGA National President Richard Bunce.

The UOG team was announced the winner during the awards luncheon to the absolute delight of team members. "Our team would like to thank the University of Guam for both the financial and academic support we have received," said team member Ruren Clemente. "We thank Dr. Cristostomo, who provided great insight and advice that really helped our team win. We also thank

Zeny Nace for providing guidance on our presentation skills, Dr. Ron McNinch for attending our practices and providing feedback on our presentation, and President Underwood, Senior Vice President Whippy and SBPA dean Dr. Enriquez for their support. This win shows that UOG's education is just as good as other universities in the mainland."

"The UOG team was comprised of students in my FA11 BA401 government accounting course," said Doreen Cristostomo, UOG assistant professor of accounting. "I hope the island joins me in congratulating the team for a job well done!" The team received cash prizes and free one-year memberships to AGA. According to the AGA website, the Case Study Challenge experience, "promises to challenge students' moral reasoning, raise their awareness of the importance of government accountability and open doors to a future career in government." Additional information about AGA can be found on their website: <http://www.agacgm.org>

"The Finance Case Challenge gave me the opportunity to gain an understanding of the importance of citizen centric reporting and real world experience" - Amber Castro

"It was an honor and privilege to participate in the AGA Case Challenge and represent the University of Guam. We had a great group of teammates and UOG faculties, Dr. Doreen Cristostomo, Professor Zeny Asuncion Nace, and Dr. Ron McNinch, who helped made this possible. The opportunity to compete in Washington D.C. nationally has definitely been a fulfilling and rewarding experience." - Garry Yeoh



From L-R: Professor Zeny Nace, Garry Yeoh, Ruren Clemente, Edward Brobesong, AGA National President Dick Bunce, Amber Castro, and AGA Executive Director Relmond Van Daniker

The University of Guam's Comptroller's Office



The University of Guam (UOG)'s Comptroller's Office (Office) is committed to quality service in order to efficiently and accurately process the financial activity of UOG, maintain student accounts, comply with regulatory compliance under the Federal and Local laws, and safeguard UOG's assets.

The Office is part of UOG's Administration and Finance division under the leadership of David O'Brien, Vice President-Administration and Finance. Mr. O'Brien reports to UOG President, Robert Underwood.

The Office is supported by about 31 staff grouped under different sections: The Business Office (BO), Supply Management, Payroll, Bursar/Collections/Student Accounts, Budget, and an Administrative Assistant.

The BO is the largest section providing a wide variety of functions and services. It is divided into two main sectors: The General Ledger (GL)/Local Section and the Grants Management Section.

The GL/Local Section is responsible for the recordkeeping, financial reporting, and monitoring of the budgets and other funding sources of over

16 units accounted for under the General Fund (local fund), auxiliary services, discretionary, entrepreneurial, indirect cost and non-appropriated activities. These units are accounted for separately under the Colleague System, UOG's General Ledger System. General Accounting Supervisor Ms. Juliet Galeno heads this section.

The Grants Management Section under the management of Frances Tomboc, is responsible for the accounting of over 550 Federal (direct and pass-through) and Local grants. Frances manages the recordkeeping, compliance and financial reporting as required by the funding agency, both Federal and Local.

The B.O. supports the Bursar/Collections/Student Billing and Accounts Section in so far as the receipts of student tuition and the disbursement of PELL and Stafford Loans, merit and student stipends. There are about 3,721 students that are serviced by the Bursar Office. There is a strong and effective link between the BO and other units such as the Bursar/Collections/Student accounts, the Financial Aid Office and the Admissions and Records.

The development and preparation of annual budgets (General Operations, Auxiliary, NAF) is under the oversight of Associate Budget and Program Officer (ABAPO).

The Payroll Section is managed by a Payroll Supervisor (Vacant) with the assistance of 2 staff members. There are over 800 employees processed by this department. This section is responsible for paying the administrators, faculty, staff and students, withholding, benefits and filing related taxes and maintaining labor distribution, including the required Time and Effort payroll allocation.

UOG has its own procurement unit. Supply Management Administrator Vicente Borja oversees all purchases, bids, requests for quotations and proposals. He has one staff, a Buyer II (vacant).

The staff of the Comptroller's Office participate in periodic technical trainings and annual professional development workshops. There is one US CPA, one Philippine CPA, two MBAs, and two CGFMs. The Comptroller supports and encourages staff in the pursuit of higher education and professional certification.

The managerial and supervisory staff includes:

- Zeny Asuncion-Nace – Comptroller, MBA, CPA, CGFM, CrFA
- Bobbie Molarte – Associate Comptroller/Bursar
- Gloria Travis – ABAPO, CGFM
- Vicente Borja – Supply Management Administrator
- Frances Tomboc – GAS Grants Management
- Juliet Galeno – GAS General Ledger, MBA Philippine CPA
- Monica Medina – Accounts Payable Supervisor
- Julie Rosario – Collections Supervisor

AGA National News



Apply for 2012 National Academic Scholarships AGA National

Excerpt from AGA Topics (12.12.11)

Are you or a family member pursuing undergraduate or graduate studies in disciplines such as accounting, auditing, budgeting, economics, finance, information technology, public administration, etc.? If so, consider applying for an AGA National Academic Scholarship today!

Each year, AGA National awards:

- Up to four \$3,000 full-time merit scholarships to AGA members and their family members,
- Up to two \$1,000 part-time merit scholarships to AGA members and their family members, and
- One \$3,000 community service scholarship

The deadline for receipt of applications is Friday, March 30, 2012. Download a copy of the application, or contact Louise Kapelewski.

AGA Seeking Comments on OMB Reform Ideas AGA National

Excerpt from AGA Topics (02.27.12)

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on Thursday released an Advance Notice of Proposed Guidance on reform proposals for OMB Circulars A-87 and A-133, which relate to cost allocation and Single Audits. Reform ideas for other OMB Circulars are also in the document. The reform proposals were developed in response to several Executive Orders aimed at less-

ening red tape and improving regulation of federal financial assistance. OMB is soliciting public input on these ideas before developing specific proposals for formal rule-making later this year. A 30-day comment period will begin when the notice is officially published in the Federal Register, which is expected this week. A copy of the document can be obtained on the White House website.

Among the key reform ideas proposed by OMB are to increase the Single Audit threshold \$500,000 to \$1 million and to require agencies that expend between \$1 million and \$3 million to undergo a more focused Single Audit. Entities expending over \$3 million would continue to undergo a full Single Audit, but with more focus as well on certain compliance requirements. Greater emphasis would be placed on risk, auditing allowable and unallowable costs and improper payments in the Single Audit. In the area of cost principles, OMB is proposing to consolidate cost principles into a single document and to limit variations by type of entity. They have also put forth the concept of allowing recipients to establish a flat rate for indirect costs and exploring alternatives to time and effort reporting for salaries and wages.

AGA is asking its members to read OMB's reform proposal and to answer the questions posed by OMB at the end of the document. AGA is also encouraging comments on any other matters that relate to the proposed reforms. Please respond by March 15, 2012. AGA will summarize answers and provide them to OMB before the deadline. It is important for AGA members to express their views on these matters as they impact our work in a significant way. Send comments to OMBComment@agacgfm.org.



To retain the CGFM certification, all CGFMs must adhere to the AGA's Code of Ethics.

In addition, to continue using the CGFM designation after their names, CGFMs must be in an active status. To maintain your CGFM certification in an active status, you must:

1. Pay the CGFM renewal fee by the due date every year;
2. Complete at least 80 hours of continuing professional education every two years in government financial management or related technical subjects (within the designated two-year CPE cycle); and
3. Maintain and, if requested by AGA, provide detailed information on CPE hours completed.

The 80 CPE hours must be completed within the CGFM's two-year CPE cycle. The first CPE cycle starts on Jan. 1 of the year following the one when the CGFM designation was earned. The CPE requirements apply to all active CGFMs, whether employed or not and whether employed full- or part-time by a government or other organization.

Active CGFMs must complete a minimum of 80 CPE hours every two years to maintain their CGFM certification. While there is no minimum number of hours required to be earned each year, CGFMs are encouraged to earn CPE hours throughout their two-year cycle. For more info on CPE requirements, visit http://www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/maintain/cpe_requirements.aspx

Need CGFM review material?

Please contact Jason Katigbak at Jason.katigbak@gu.ey.com for details on borrowing the Guam AGA Chapter's CGFM Review Materials.

Community

Event:

11th Annual AGA 5k Run/Walk

Date: June 2012

Please contact Lou Perez at 483-3350 or guamperezlou@gmail.com or Jocelyn Untalan at 475-0390 ext. 218 or juntalan@guamopa.org if you are interested in joining the organization efforts.

Early Careers

Event:

Building Bridges Mixer

Date:

March 6, 2012

5:30 - 8:30 PM

SBPA Room 129

University of Guam

All AGA and GSCPA members in good standing and UOG and GCC accounting students are welcomed to join us.

Please RSVP with Ricky Hernandez at agaguamecc@gmail.com or JAS President Cheri Sumalpong at jasofficers@yahoo.com.

Training

Topic:

Leadership Workshop (3 CPEs)

Instructor: Dr. Karri Perez

Date & Location:

March 23, 2012

University of Guam

Fee:

CGFM and AGA CEC: Free

Limited seating will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Please email Jason Katigbak at jason.katigbak@gmail.com for more details.

Past Event



The AGA Guam Chapter presented the High School Essay winners with a certificate of recognition and a monetary reward at the Guam Legislature's Hearing Room on January 17, 2012. From L-R: President Vince Duenas, Senator Tina Muna-Barnes, Jeremiah Gallego, Erica Respicio, Noel Bien T. Carlos, Senator Judith Won Pat, Early Careers Chairperson Ricky Hernandez, Early Careers Co-Chairperson Zeny Nace, Doris Flores Brooks and the essay winners' family members.



AGA Officers pose with Lealan Miller after the Government Accounting Updates training on Jan. 20, 2012.

From L-R: Treasurer Yuka Cabrera, President-Elect Jason Katigbak, presenter Lealan Miller, and President Vince Duenas.

Participants of the GASB Updates training listen to Mr. Miller's presentation. The training was held at Room 129 in the University of Guam School of Business and Public Administration.



Excellence in Citizen-Centric Reporting

By Maripaz Perez, CGFM, CGAP
Accountability Chairperson
AGA Guam Chapter

Special thanks to:

Zeny Nace, CPA, CGFM, CFE
University of Guam Comptroller

AGA National issued a Certificate of Excellence in Citizen-Centric Reporting for entities that prepare and distribute high-quality Citizen-Centric Reports (CCR). To be eligible for the certificate, governments must incorporate into their report the program's high standards of content, visual appeal, readability, distribution and timeliness in reporting.

Judging guidelines include:

- How the entity is organized/operates (items such as vision statement and strategic goals);
- Key accomplishments surrounding key missions and service;
- Bar and/or pie charts to display revenues and expenses;
- Similar statements are listed: An independent audit was conducted, resulting in a clean audit opinion. Complete financial information can be found at www.xyz.gov;
- Future challenges affecting the entity;
- Similar statements are listed: We want to hear from you. Do you like this report? Do you believe it should include any other information? Please let us know by contacting xxx;
- Report is 'free' of technical accounting language; and
- Report incorporates pictures and other graphics to make it visually appealing.

We would like to congratulate the University of Guam (UOG) for receiving a Certificate of Excellence for the submission of its FY 2010 CCR. Ms. Zeny Nace, Controller,

prepared the UOG's CCR, which took about a week to put together.

According to Ms. Nace, Page 2, which presents how UOG performed, was the section she enjoyed writing the most. "It gives me a sense of perspective how the rest of UOG activities, other than the financial aspect, interface with our mission: 'Ina, Diskubre, Setbe' (to Enlighten, to Discover, to Serve)," Ms. Nace shared.

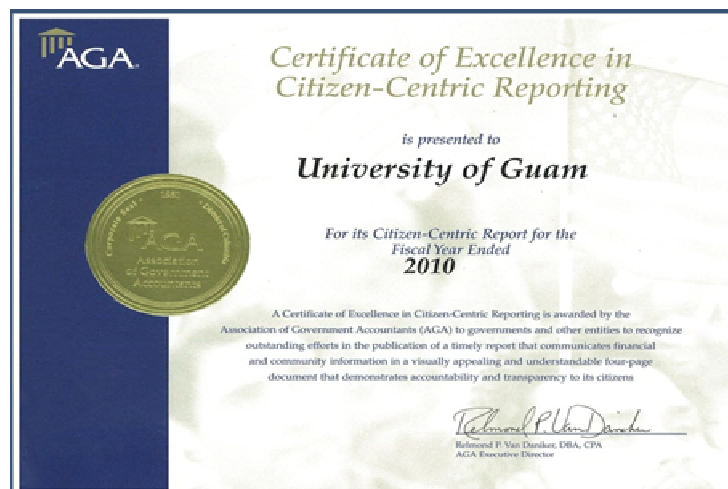
AGA believes that CCRs will make governments more accountable to their citizens, and will help citizens become better educated and better able to participate in government activities. It is an integral practical step that governments can take in raising their game in accountability and transparency.

In fact, Ms. Nace provides UOG's CCR to the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), who oversees UOG's academic quality and accreditation and its fiscal responsiveness. It has been a useful tool to assess UOG's fiscal and academic performance a glance. The CCR also apprises WASC of the future sustainability of its ability to service the students. Moreover, Ms. Nace shared that UOG's CCR is also provided to over 16 departmental units within UOG that may not be attuned to comprehensively reading and understanding UOG's financial audit reports.

Ms. Nace offers the following advice to other entities as they prepare their respective CCRs:

"For first timers: Do not reinvent the wheel as the AGA-Guam Chapter has a template that can be useful as a start up. The AGA-Guam Chapter and the OPA [Office of Public Accountability] are both entities that can help out in the start up process. For the repeat preparers: 'A picture is worth a thousand words'. It makes it possible for the reader to absorb large amounts of data quicker than reading words. So make your CCRs user friendly by using colorful and eye-catching graphs, tables, and even pictures."

We invite and encourage all entities to submit their respective CCRs to the AGA National and participate in the certificate program by completing the Certificate of Excellence in Citizen-Centric Reporting Application and forward along 5 copies of your report (and/or include a link to a website where the report is posted) to: The Citizen-Centric Reporting Program, AGA, 2208 Mount Vernon Avenue Alexandria, VA 22301 or via e-mail to ebarry@agacgfm.org. Visit this link for additional information: <http://www.agacgfm.org/citizen/award.aspx>



From The Editor

February ended with several AGA Guam Chapter accomplishments. To reflect this month's theme, we would like to close with the following words of wisdom: *"Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome. — Booker T. Washington"*

As always, we would like to hear from you! If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, concerns or interesting topics you would like to share to our AGA Guam Chapter community, please let us know. You may e-mail me, Joy Bulatao, at joy.bulatao@gmail.com or my Co-Editor, Matt Quinata at agaguamchapter@yahoo.com.

Chapter Executive Committee Directory

Position	Name	Email
President	Vincent Duenas	vduenas@guamopa.org
President-Elect	Jason Katigbak, CFE, CIA, CPA	Jason.Katigbak@gu.ey.com
Immediate Past President	Thomas Paulino, CGFM, CPA, CGAP	thomaspaulino@gmail.com
Treasurer	Yukari B. Hechanova, CPA, CIA, CGFM, CGAP	yuka@guamwaterworks.org
Secretary	Rachel Field	rfield@guamopa.org
Alternate Secretary	Gloria Travis, CGFM	gtravis@uguam.uog.edu
Accountability Chair	Maripaz N. Perez, CGFM, CGAP	mperez@guamopa.org
Awards Committee & Chapter Recognition Chair	Taling Taitano, CPA, CGFM	tmtaitano@gmail.com
By-Laws and Procedures Chair	Llewelyn Terlaje, CGAP	lterlaje@guamopa.org
By-Laws and Procedures Co-Chair	Thomas Paulino, CGFM, CPA, CGAP	thomaspaulino@gmail.com
CGFM Chair	Jojo Guevara III, CGFM	jbguevara@portguam.com
CGFM Co-Chair	Gloria Travis, CGFM	gtravis@uguam.uog.edu
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Community Service Chair	Lourdes R. Perez	guamperezlou@gmail.com
Early Careers Chair	Artemio "Ricky" Hernandez	artemiorh@gmail.com
Early Careers Co-Chair	Zeny Nace, CFE, CPA, CGFM	znace@uguam.uog.edu
Education Chair	Jason Katigbak, CFE, CIA, CPA	Jason.Katigbak@gu.ey.com
Historian	Jerrick Hernandez	jhernandez@guamopa.org
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Programs/Technical Meetings Chair	R. Joyce Castro	joyce.castro@doa.guam.gov
Scholarship Chair	Doris Flores Brooks, CPA, CGFM	dfbrooks@guamopa.org
Standards & Research Chair	Christopher Wolseley, CA	cwolseley@deloitte.com
Webmaster	Doreen Crisostomo, PhD., CGFM	doreentc@guam.net
Student Representative	Cheri Sumalpong	cherimarie.s@gmail.com

Job Announcement: The Department of Education has an opening for a [Part-Time Community Program Aide I](#). Interested applicants must submit an application form to the DOE Personnel Services Division. Application forms can be obtained at the 1st floor of the Governor Manuel F.L. Guerrero Building in Hagatna or at www.gdoe.net.

Excerpts from High School Essay Placers

4th Place

Noel Martin D. Rubio

10th Grade

Father Duenas Memorial School

I remember that there was once a stage in my life when the world was simply a big playground: I did not have any large responsibilities, I did not have to worry about how the actions of the people around me would affect my future, and I did not have to consider taking any decisive courses of action that would change the state of the society I lived in. Looking back, it was a completely carefree period. The only assurance I needed simply came from grown-ups telling me, "Everything is going to be okay." However, now I am a young adult, cognizant of the world around me and aware of the situation at hand. There came a time when I realized that it was no longer up to "Mommy" or "Daddy" to make every-

thing better.

[...] Having been elected by the general populace, the government exists to represent the best interests of the people. Therefore, a sense of answerability and accountability is ingrained in its very essence. It is only fair that the leaders of a population are transparent to the people they are serving. Ideally, there should be no secrets kept from the public and no concerns about conspiracy. I know, though, that flaws existing in all world governments prevent the above from happening. Furthermore, I believe that finding and carrying out the right actions toward ensuring reasonable levels of accountability and transparency is one of the most difficult things about being a leader.

[...] Reports of decaying situations, crippling statistics, and worldwide

crises only augment the burdens faced by Guam's leaders. And though there are many making steady and genuine progress towards bettering the outcome for all, so much more needs to be done before conditions stabilize and calming equilibrium is brought about.

[...] Although we feel that it is the whole community's responsibility to keep itself informed and to bring about necessary change, some people are left unsure about what exactly is happening in our society, and this state of confusion inhibits their efforts to try and help mitigate communal problems. Therefore, I believe that if more interaction happened between the government and the people, and government officials were more open and clear about the state of the community, everyone could work hand in hand to ensure a better society for all.

5th Place

Jannel Banks

12th Grade

Simon Sanchez High School

Just as a plant needs water and sunlight to survive, a representative government needs a certain degree of responsibility and openness to withstand the throes of society. [...] Perhaps the most critical problem facing the island's government today is that of accountability and transparency in budget management.

The Government of Guam is currently in a financial crisis, and it did not get there overnight. Its mountain of debt is merely the manifestation of years upon years of inadvisable transactions and budget mismanagement, which in turn were caused by an absence of accountability and transparency. If the Government of Guam had been accountable, it would have taken the responsibility for its citizens' money and fixed its budget

problems from the start. Instead, a glance at the history of Guam politics shows a lot of finger-pointing and conflict avoidance, which basically left problems unsolved. If the government had been transparent, it would have notified its citizens about its financial practices and the state of the budget. Instead, its semi-clandestine workings have citizens wondering what put us in such a predicament.

The situation is not hopeless. The Government of Guam can turn the tide of its misfortune with the necessary changes. In order to improve its accountability, it must identify the problems with its budget management, e.g. impolitic borrowing, unnecessary expenditures, misappropriated funds, etc. It must then work on those problems, regardless of who is to blame, until they are solved. The government can no longer afford to sweep its difficulties under the rug. An improvement in

transparency will also help with accountability. A more informed populace would be able to encourage government officials to make the right decisions. The best way to accomplish this would be to utilize technology. The Obama Administration has been a prime example of a government taking advantage of modern technology with the President's well-kept website, weekly addresses, and blog. Many Guamanians surf the Internet, giving it the potential to be an excellent mode of communication between them and the government. It would be highly beneficial for government officials to tap into the mind of their electorate through online polls and forums.

[...] Accountability and transparency are integral aspects of a well-running government, and, with the ever-increasing budget deficit, the Government of Guam must recognize this. The only question is: when will it?

Excerpts from High School Essay Placers (Cont.)

6th Place
Rico Chaco
12th Grade
Southern High School

Patrick Henry once said, "The Constitution is not an instrument for the government to restrain the people, it is an instrument for the people to restrain the government – lest it come to dominate our lives and interests." This is the concept of our youth today about our government. Today, our youth find it difficult to place our trust in a government that is hidden from the people. [...] What is our government's position concerning the welfare of those in need? Will Guam still be like this in generations to come?

The biggest problem we see in our government is not the system of government itself. Rather, the problem is the people who run it. In these dif-

ficult times in our island, our youth look to our leaders for direction and support just as children would look to their mother for love and comfort. Where is the help we were promised during election time? Where is the leadership we were so hoping to follow? Where are the leaders whom we have put our faith and trust into? When will our voices actually be heard and not just be taken into consideration? How will our government stand if our leaders running it are always divided?

We have elected leaders whose words we have put so much faith into. Now we ask ourselves, "Do those words mean anything now as they did during elections?" They promised a stronger government. How can this government remain intact when the Senators cannot cooperate with the Governor, or even when Senators cannot cooper-

ate with each other? Election time is over. Set aside affiliations with political parties and come together to work for the common good of those who have asked for your leadership.

No one can understand the stress and troubles our leaders go through. However, [...] when the job is being done the way it should be and that the intention is always for the common good, the blessings come back a thousand fold. Our youth put faith in our leaders and ask them to not be blind to the troubles of our island. We speak to the hearts of our elected leaders to find solutions to improve our government by improving affiliations among each other. We want to remind you that this is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Make us believe in these words. The decisions you make today affects us tomorrow.

7th Place
Edward Suarez III
11th Grade
George Washington High School

As Tom Stoppard once said, "It is not the voting that's democracy; it's the counting." This quote holds a lot of meaning, even though it is short and simple, and people can interpret it in many ways. Personally, the quote says that a democratic government, which is a system of government that we follow today, isn't defined by the actions that are performed for the public to see. They are defined rather by the actions that are performed behind the scenes. People say over and over again that our democratic government is corrupt, and then to add to that, our leaders are eventually judged by all the bad decisions that they make, while rarely receiving any praise for doing something good. This is probably because of the fact that our minds are wired to amplify the bad things rather than see-

ing things on the bright side, therefore we as the governed are as whole pessimists.

A recently proposed bill, Bill 318-31, is a big decision that needs to be made. It can either be a great decision, or just another thing people can fuss about. Giving the Governor the right to appoint the Superintendent of Education is an important matter. And of course for important matters, big questions will be brought up such as, whether or not it is just a scheme to take full control over the Guam Department of Education. Or would it actually be better because the Governor will choose someone responsible and highly capable of the job. These are the types of questions that make our government accountable, while being transparent.

Bill 318-31 isn't a very good bill. As one stated in the Guam Pacific Daily News, "A bill that would take

away the power of the Guam Education Board to hire the superintendent of the local education agency and give it to the governor is, at best, premature and, at worst, would gut the authority of the school board." There are many other ways to find the right person to run the Department of Education. The fact that there are, makes me start to think and ask, is this bill an act of frustration and impatience? Patience is a virtue and I think that if we want the most capable and responsible superintendent possible, we should let the Guam Education do their jobs and just continue to do what they are doing. It is better to wait for the right superintendent willing to do the work, rather than to appoint someone who might end up doing a mediocre job that will eventually affect all students in a negative way.

AGA & GSCPA

presents

Building Bridges

Mixer

**Tuesday, March 6, 2012
from 5:30pm to 8:30pm
at the UOG SBPA Room 129**

**Dinner to be served to attendees
Free to UOG and GCC Accounting Students,
AGA and GSCPA members in good standing**

**Please RSVP with
Ricky Hernandez at agaguamecc@gmail.com or
Cheri Sumalpong at jas_officers@yahoo.com**

On Tuesday, March 6, 2012, from 5:30pm to 8:30pm, the Association of Government Accountants (AGA) Guam Chapter and the Guam Society of Certified Public Accountants (GSCPA) will be hosting a student and professional mixer entitled the, "Building Bridges Mixer." The event will be held at the University of Guam School of Business and Public Administration Multi-Purpose Room 129. Dinner will be served at the event for all students and AGA Guam Chapter and GSCPA members in good standing with their respective organizations. The dinner will be free to attendees who RSVP on or before Sunday, March 4, 2012.

The Early Careers Committee is hoping to get at least 20 to 25 professionals to attend the mixer, but will be accepting more if necessary. All AGA Guam Chapter members are requested to RSVP with Ricky Hernandez at agaguamecc@gmail.com as soon as possible, but no later than Sunday, March 4, 2012. Please help to make this event a success and to help bridge the gap between our university and college students' graduation and first day on the job!