



May 10, 2016 11:00 A.M.

UPDATED RELEASE

GCC set to graduate largest class to date May 13th

Guam Community College is set to conferred 523* degrees, certificates, and/or diplomas upon 464 graduates at the University of Guam Calvo Field House at 6:00 P.M. on Friday, May 13, 2016. It is the largest graduating class, and the largest number of postsecondary degrees conferred, in the College's 39-year history.

"This is a banner year for GCC and for Guam's workforce," said Dr. Mary Okada, GCC president.

"Back in 2012, the College adopted a College Completion Agenda in line with President Obama's goal to increase the postsecondary graduation rate in our country by 2020," explained Okada. "Since then, our faculty, staff and administrators have been focused on encouraging students to complete courses and graduate," she added. "During fall semester 2015, we started a transformation process to focus on 100 percent student success. All of these efforts are coming to fruition, **with a 31 percent increase in the number of graduates as compared to last year, and a 22% increase in the number of credentials earned by graduates since last year.** It is an example of what all of us – students, faculty, staff, and administrators – can do when we plan a goal and work toward it."

GCC's 2016 Most Distinguished Graduate is Natsumi Kuranami, who is graduating with an Associate of Arts degree in Culinary Arts. Kuranami is a baker kitchen assistant under Chef Suharto at the Hyatt Regency Guam.

Graduating with an Associate of Science in Hotel Operations Management, Dilbedul Missy Ngiraklang is the 2016 Distinguished Graduate. Ngiraklang is a coordinator for the upcoming Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Annual Summit 2016 being held on Guam this month.

This year's commencement speakers are Dr. Laura Torres Souder and her husband, Dr. Samuel Betances. The couple are powerful motivational speakers who provide cutting edge training services to public and private clients in leadership development, educational transformation, bridging the student achievement gap, organizational change management, diversity and inclusion for mission and bottom-line success.

During the commencement, GCC will award U.S. Air Force Lt. (Ret.) Eduardo Dela Pena Jr. with the Distinguished Alumni Award for 2016. Mr. Dela Pena graduated from the GCC Voc Tech High School in 1981, and from the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado in 1988. He focused on Human Resources development over a distinguished 20-year career in the Air Force, serving on bases in several states and in Guam, as well as overseas in Saudi Arabia. Mr. Dela Pena and his wife Dolores are the foster parents of 10 children.

The number of credentials being earned by 2016 GCC graduates in each degree category is as follows:

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| Postsecondary | 346 | (272 associate degrees, 74 certificates) |
| Apprenticeship Completers | 78 | |
| Adult High School Diploma | 48 | |
| High School Equivalency | 50 | |
| Industry Certification (Cosmetology) | 1 | |
| Total number of graduates | 464 | |

Total number of degrees earned: 523*

*Please note that 57 graduates have earned more than one degree or certificate, which is why the total number of degrees awarded exceeds the total number of actual graduates.

Suggested photo caption:

Success!

From left: Elmarie Anderson, GCC Project Aim participant; Patricia Terlaje, GCC counselor; and Adrian Davis and Brent Garcia, Project Aim participants, celebrate at the GCC Project Aim Award Ceremony on May 6 at the Pacific Islands Club. With help from Terlaje, Anderson, Davis and Garcia successfully completed GCC's Adult High School program. This Friday, Anderson and Davis will be among the 464 students graduating from GCC. Both are earning their associate degree in Liberal Studies and plan to continue their education at University of Guam. The goal of the federally funded Project Aim program is to provide the academic and personal support necessary to help students graduate and transfer to a four-year institution.

GCC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Individuals requiring special accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services please contact 735-5597.

For more information, contact Jayne Flores, GCC Asst. Director of Communications & Promotions, at 735-5638 (office), 483-6409 (cell), or via email at jayne.flores@guamcc.edu.