



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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13 earn GCC TSA certificates

Now, 13 of Guam's TSA officers are better prepared to protect us.

The first cohort of Guam Transportation Security Administration employees to earn a Certificate of Achievement in Homeland Security were honored during the Guam TSA's Inaugural Achievement Ceremony today at the Guam Marriott Resort & Spa.

"You men and women are the backbone of our security procedures," said Arturo Ortiz, Asst. Federal Security Director – Screening, noting his pride in their accomplishment.

In fall 2010, the TSA partnered with community colleges around the nation to enable Transportation Security Officers (TSOs) to earn a TSA Certificate of Achievement in Homeland Security. At that time, only 14% of over 51,000 members of the TSO workforce reported having an associate's degree or higher and only 26% report having completed any higher education courses. TSA Guam, in partnership with Guam Community College, launched this first cohort of students in the fall of 2012. The 13 Guam TSOs completed their full three-semester coursework in fall 2013.

The nine credits the students earned in this certificate program can now be used toward an associate's degree in Emergency Management at GCC, noted Jose Munoz, chair of the Department of Criminal Justice and Social Sciences at the College.

Rayvic Garrido, one of the TSA certificate earners, spoke on behalf of the cohort, saying, "One of the core values of TSA is team spirit. That spirit was exemplified by my colleagues, as we worked on team projects for this program."

Brian Cahill, Deputy Federal Security Director, noted at the ceremony that nationwide, TSA invests approximately \$32 million in this program. "The return on this investment will be outstanding, I know," Cahill said to the graduates.

"You have reached this milestone," Dr. Mary Okada, GCC president, told the certificate earners. "Now it's time to plan for the next one." Okada encouraged the group to continue their educational journey at GCC, noting the importance of their jobs. "I'm a frequent flyer. I was

living in Alexandria on 911, so I understand the level of security needed post-911. We place our trust in your hands,” she said.

Suggested caption:

A stronger TSA: 13 Guam Transportation Security Officers earned certificates in Homeland Security today at the Guam Marriott Resort & Spa through a program teaming TSA with community colleges around the nation. The 13 TSA employees can now transfer their credits to GCC's associate of science in Emergency Management. Front row from left: Jorge Guerrero, Asst. Federal Security Director; James Cruz, TSA instructor; Harriet Alvarez, Edmund Bongato, Kimberley Chargualaf, Leandro Delacruz, Malcolm Duenas, and Rayvic Garrido, Guam TSOs; and Dr. Mary Okada, GCC president. Back row: Jose Munoz, GCC CJSS Dept. chair; Brian Cahill, Deputy Federal Security Director; Jenneth Lalu, Rosavelt Mafnas, Carina Orallo, Jeremy Tajjeron, Janeatte Tinoso, and Ann Wells, Guam TSOs, and Arturo Ortiz, Asst. Federal Security Director. (Not pictured: TSO Angel Santos)

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