



## PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 27, 2020

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### **Traditional navigators from Hawaii, Guam, and Yap to discuss the role of island wisdom in a global future at University of Guam conference**

The impacts of climate change and health emergencies expose both the vulnerability and resilience of islands. As repositories of ancient wisdom, islands carry lessons that can address some of the world's most pressing challenges. How can islands help navigate the way to a sustainable global future?

Traditional navigators will lead the discussion, when the University of Guam Virtual Conference Series on Island Sustainability continues at 9 a.m. (ChST UTC+10) this Friday (Thursday across the international dateline). Registration is of no charge at [www.uog.edu/cis2020](http://www.uog.edu/cis2020).

The fifth week of the series is titled "Ancient Winds Navigating Tomorrow." Rita P. Nauta, managing director of Guampedia, will moderate the panel, featuring:

- Larry Raigetel, co-founder of Waa'gey in Lamotrek Atoll, Yap
- Nainoa Thompson, president of the Polynesian Voyaging Society in Hawaii
- Vicente Diaz, founder and director of the Native Canoe Program at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

Raigetel co-founded Waa'gey, a community-based organization that "uses traditional skills to confront the social, economic, and environmental challenges faced by the people of Micronesia's most remote outer islands." Raigetel is an accomplished master canoe carver and a Weriayang Pwo Navigator. He serves as an instructor with UOG Sea Grant teaching courses on traditional navigation and climate change adaptation and was the keynote speaker for the 2019 CIS Conference. Raigetel previously served as a

diplomat within the Federated States of Micronesia and holds a master's degree in international relations from Oxford University.

Thompson is a *pwo* (master) navigator and the first Native Hawaiian since the 14th Century to practice wayfinding — the art and science of ancient non-instrument navigation — for long-distance ocean voyaging. He recently completed a four-year voyage around the world on the *Hōkūle`a*, a traditional double-hulled voyaging canoe. Through these travels, Thompson and his crew engaged with thousands of people, including world leaders to highlight the importance of ocean resources, cultural legacies, and protection of these critical places in the future.

Diaz is of Filipino and Pohnpeian descent and was born and raised in Guam. He conducts community-based research and learning in indigenous canoe culture and knowledge in ways that partner disparate indigenous communities' work in cultural and political resurgence with innovative relationships across humanities, social science, and STEM research. His most known project on “trans-indigenous” knowledge, politics, and relations also involves virtual and augmented reality development. Diaz holds a doctorate in history of consciousness from the University of California, Santa Cruz.

So far, the conference series has featured a distinguished lineup of speakers from across the globe on topics including COVID-19 impacts in island communities, clean energy, and the circular economy.

Last week, the conference featured CIS SEED Talks: Ideas Worth Cultivating. The program featured change-makers from the inaugural cohort of the Obama Foundation's Leaders: Asia-Pacific Program, along with Maya Soetoro, co-founder and senior advisor for the Institute for Climate and Peace in Hawaii and consultant to the Obama Foundation.

The virtual conference series continues to garner more viewers every week, with 1,200+ total participation over Zoom, 60+ countries, states, and territories represented, and 8,900+ views on social media. The virtual conference series will continue every Friday for the next few weeks. All sessions are available to view on the UOG Tritons YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/UOGTritons>.

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**Photo captions:**



*uog-cis-thompson*

Nainoa Thompson, president of the Polynesian Voyaging Society in Hawaii, navigates the *Hōkūleʻa*, a traditional double-hulled voyaging canoe in a recent four-year voyage around the world. Thompson will be joining the UOG Virtual Conference Series on Island Sustainability this Friday in a panel discussion on the impact of climate change and sea-level rise on Pacific Island nations and the tradition of seafaring.

*Photo courtesy of Polynesian Voyaging Society*



*uog-cis-raigetal*

Larry Raigetal, founder of Waa'gey in Yap, teaches a course on traditional navigation. Last year's keynote speaker, Raigetal returns to the UOG Virtual Conference Series on Island Sustainability this Friday in a panel discussion on the impact of climate change and sea-level rise on Pacific Island nations.

*Photo courtesy of Guam EPSCoR/Katie Mafnas*



*uog-cis-diaz*

Vicente Diaz, left, positions a model of a traditional canoe for a photo. A Guam native, Diaz is now the director of Native Canoe Program at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, and will join master navigators from across the Pacific to discuss the challenges of climate change to Pacific Island nations and the path toward a sustainable future.

*Photo courtesy of University of Minnesota*