



PRESS RELEASE

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UOG launches Drone Corps program

As the use of drones continues to rise throughout the island in both educational and commercial sectors, the University of Guam via NASA Guam Space Grant and NASA Guam EPSCoR will be offering its first-ever drone certification and training program for UOG students.

The UOG Drone Corps aims to build a team of Federal Aviation Administration–certified drone pilots who will practice flying unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) through Guam’s skies by capturing drone footage and data for local agencies. In addition to teaching students the regulations of proper flying operations, the program seeks to bring unique research opportunities to the island by encouraging researchers to utilize drones within their fields.

Leslie Camacho Aquino, executive director of NASA Guam EPSCoR, said this program will help propel the island’s technical expertise forward.

“We are excited about this workforce development opportunity for students since having our own corps of FAA-certified UAV pilots will make it easier and safer for researchers to incorporate drone technology in their work,” she said. “NASA EPSCoR is about building research and technical capacity throughout the island, and developing this cadre of pilots will help us support a wide variety of projects at the university and other agencies and organizations on Guam.”

Drones, now with advanced technological functionality that includes accurate data collection from aerial views and increased durability when faced with harsh environmental conditions, can allow local researchers to achieve previously unthinkable feats. Potential projects that would benefit from remote sensing, for instance, span a variety of research applications, including the mapping of coral reefs and the identification of erosion-prone areas.

The FAA requires commercial drone owners to be certified and registered. The UOG Drone Corps will cover fees for successful applicants to take the certification test, allowing the students to become licensed drone pilots. Members will also be eligible to receive a \$1,000 stipend upon successful completion of their FAA licensure and achieving 80 hours of flight time per semester.

“NASA Space Grant and NASA Guam EPSCoR are pleased to offer this fun and amazing opportunity for UOG students to become licensed FAA UAV pilots,” said Romina King, associate director of NASA Guam Space Grant and NASA Guam EPSCoR. “This is a great chance for students to earn FAA certification, practice in a safe environment, and collect data for various UOG research units and government of Guam agencies.”

The UOG Drone Corps will be accepting applications throughout the year. Both novice and experienced students are encouraged to apply. Applicants must be U.S. citizens, 18 years or older, and UOG students.

Interested students and research organizations seeking a partnership can apply and learn more by contacting King via email at roking@triton.uog.edu.

Complete details about NASA Guam Space Grant can be found at www.uog.edu/nasa-guam-space-grant/.

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Photo captions:



2019-uog-nasa

Members of the NASA Ames Laboratory for Advanced Lensing, assisted by the Pacific Islands Climate Adaptation Center at UOG, set up an unmanned aerial vehicle to map Guam's reefs on May 13, 2019. UOG students, through NASA Guam Space Grant and NASA Guam EPSCoR, now have the opportunity to become certified drone pilots through the newly launched UOG Drone Corps.



2019-uog-drone-workshop

Andrew Lu flies a Tiny Whoop aircraft during a UAV flight mechanics workshop held at the University of Guam in May 2019. UOG students now have the opportunity to become certified drone pilots through the newly launched UOG Drone Corps.

Photos courtesy of University of Guam