Awards issued prior to January 20, 2025, were funded under previous Administrations and may not reflect the priorities and policies of the current Administration.

United States Department of Agriculture
Project Initiation

Project Data for Accession Number 1035046

Project Title

Food and Agricultural Sciences: Improving Resident Instruction, Enrollment, and College Readiness Across Micronesia

Project Details

Sponsoring Institution National Institute of Food and Agriculture	**Project Status** ACTIVE
Funding Source NIFA Non Formula	**Grant Year** 2026
Grant No. 2026-70008-47044	**Cumulative Award Amt.** $500,000.00
Proposal No. 2026-07435	**Multistate No.** (N/A)
Project Start Date Sep 15, 2026	**Project End Date** Sep 14, 2029
Program Code [AA-Q] Resident Instruction Grants for Insular Areas	

Project Director

CAMACHO, J.

Recipient Organization

UNIVERSITY OF GUAM
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Performing Department

(N/A)

Non Technical Summary

The Food and Agricultural Sciences: Improving Resident Instruction, Enrollment, and College Readiness Across Micronesia program is a 36-month Collaboration Grant initiative led by the UOG in partnership with the NMC, COM-FSM, and PCC. The program establishes a framework that engages faculty and students across the Western Pacific Region to advance the following objectives:Convene an inter-institutional faculty committee to systematically document, evaluate, and align food and agricultural sciences curricula and degree requirements across all four partner institutions, identifying gaps, redundancies, and opportunities for improving existing programs (e.g., 2+2 Pathway in Agriculture) new program development, including certificate programs. The inter-institutional faculty committee creates a structured professional development environment in which faculty from all our institutions collaboratively inventory, evaluate, and align curricula -- enhancing their ability to advise students, sequence coursework, and identify new instructional approaches responsive to regional workforce needs.Expand direct engagement between UOG students

and undergraduates at the NMC, COM-FSM, and PCC through structured peer dialogue and student-led presentations that strengthen academic preparation and awareness of degree and career pathways in food and agricultural sciences. Project Directors, faculty, and UOG students will travel to Saipan, Pohnpei, and Palau to engage partner institution faculty and undergraduates directly. UOG students will deliver formal presentations on their research projects and career pathways, giving prospective students firsthand insight into degree and career options and building professional relationships that support their transition to UOG.Increase opportunities for undergraduate students at the NMC, COM-FSM, and PCC to participate in a two-week experiential learning internship program at the UOG. UOG will host six to nine students from NMC, COM-FSM, and PCC for a two-week residential internship at the UOG Land Grant Extension Service and agInnovation Research Stations, with all travel, accommodations, and a weekly stipend provided.?

Animal Health Component

Animal Health Component: 0%

Research Effort Categories

Basic	0%
Applied	0%
Developmental	0%

Classification

Knowledge Area (KA)	Subject of Investigation (SOI)	Field of Science (FOS)	Percent
903	0001	0001	100%

Knowledge Area

[903] Communication, Education, and Information Delivery

Subject Of Investigation

[0001] Administration

Field Of Science

[0001] Administration

Keywords

Guam, Insular Areas, P, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia

Goals / Objectives

The Western Pacific Region -- encompassing Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), and the Republic of Palau -- spans more than 2.2 million square miles of ocean and includes more than 100 inhabited islands. Food security, pest and disease management, community health and wellness, soil health and land degradation, and economic development are among the most pressing challenges facing island communities across the Pacific. Yet, enrollment in food and agricultural sciences across the region is

low, pathways from two-year to four-year degree programs are not aligned to maximize limited resources, and the degree program requirements in food and agricultural sciences -- at the University of Guam (UOG), the Northern Marianas College (NMC), the College of Micronesia-FSM (COM-FSM), and the Palau Community College (PCC) -- have not been systematically documented to evaluate and improve education programming and instruction delivery at each institution and across the region. Distance between institutions, changes in faculty and administrators, extreme weather events (i.e., typhoons), and limited economic and technological resources inhibit sustained collaboration across institutions.Prior activities undertaken through RIIA programs established face-to-face meetings as essential to strengthening collaboration across education institutions of the Insular Areas and building stronger connections with faculty and students of the Western Pacific Region (Marutani and Barber, Linking Insular Institutions for Higher Education Success, 2020-2023). Establishing a consortium of faculty from insular institutions with an identified objective and structured opportunities for discussion also greatly increases sustained collaboration (Marutani and Barber, 2020-2023). Previously granted RIIA projects have supported the improvement of Resident Instruction activities, including the enhancement of four undergraduate degree programs in food and agricultural sciences at the UOG (B.S. in Agriculture and Natural Resource Science, Tropical Agriculture Production, Human Nutrition and Food Sciences, and Family and Community Resource Development). RIIA funds were also critical to creating the only graduate degree program in food and agricultural sciences (M.S., Sustainable Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources) at the UOG.Goals and Objectives:1. Convene an inter-institutional faculty committee to systematically document, evaluate, and align food and agricultural sciences curricula and degree requirements across all four partner institutions, identifying gaps, redundancies, and opportunities for improving existing programs (e.g., 2+2 Pathway in Agriculture) new program development, including certificate programs. The inter-institutional faculty committee creates a structured professional development environment in which faculty from all our institutions collaboratively inventory, evaluate, and align curricula -- enhancing their ability to advise students, sequence coursework, and identify new instructional approaches responsive to regional workforce needs.??In the first three months, the Project Director and Program Coordinator will execute collaborative agreements with each partner institution, confirm the designation of faculty coordinators at the NMC, the COM-FSM, and PCC, and establish a shared virtual meeting platform and communication schedule for the duration of the project.Beginning in Month 1 and continuing through Month 6, the inter-institutional advisory committee -- comprising faculty coordinators from all four institutions -- will convene at least six structured virtual meetings progressing through a structured agenda:(a) meetings 1-2: inventory of existing courses, degree and certificate programs, transfer pathway requirements (e.g., the 2+2 Pathway in Agriculture), and current instruction delivery systems;(b) meetings 3-4: review and compare program inventories to identify curricular gaps, unnecessary duplication, and misalignments between two-year and four-year pathways; and(c) meetings 5-6: develop preliminary recommendations for curricular alignment, new program development, and improvements to transfer pathway advising.2. Expand direct engagement between UOG students and undergraduates at the NMC, COM-FSM, and PCC through structured peer dialogue and student-led presentations that strengthen academic preparation and awareness of degree and career pathways in food and agricultural sciences. Project Directors, faculty, and UOG students will travel to Saipan, Pohnpei, and Palau to engage partner institution faculty and undergraduates directly. UOG students will deliver formal presentations on their research projects and career pathways, giving prospective students firsthand insight into degree and career options and building professional relationships that support their transition to UOG.??The Project Director, Program Coordinator, faculty, and a team of three UOG students enrolled in food and agricultural sciences programs will travel to Saipan (NMC), Pohnpei (COM-FSM), and Palau (PCC). Each site visit will span three to five days and serve two concurrent purposes: curriculum alignment and student-to-student peer engagement. Faculty activities will include:(a) reviewing and finalizing curriculum inventory findings and developing formal alignment recommendations;(b) discussing the feasibility of proposed program modifications and new certificate options; and(c) campus tours and observation of instructional facilities.Three UOG students will lead formal presentations and workshops with undergraduates at each partner institution.3. Increase opportunities for undergraduate students at the NMC, COM-FSM, and PCC to participate in a two-week experiential learning internship program at the UOG. UOG will host six to nine students from NMC, COM-FSM, and PCC for a two-week residential internship at the UOG Land Grant Extension Service and agInnovation Research Stations, with all travel, accommodations, and a weekly stipend provided.Students will receive a weekly stipend of $200 and participate in

research mentorship, field visits to at least five partner farms and agricultural agencies, and at least three professional development workshops.

Project Methods

OutreachIn the first three months, the Project Director and Program Coordinator will execute collaborative agreements with each partner institution, confirm the designation of faculty coordinators at the NMC, the COM-FSM, and PCC, and establish a shared virtual meeting platform and communication schedule for the duration of the project.Beginning in Month 1 and continuing through Month 6, the inter-institutional advisory committee -- comprising faculty coordinators from all four institutions -- will convene at least six structured virtual meetings progressing through a structured agenda: (a) meetings 1-2: inventory of existing courses, degree and certificate programs, transfer pathway requirements (e.g., the 2+2 Pathway in Agriculture), and current instruction delivery systems;(b) meetings 3-4: review and compare program inventories to identify curricular gaps, unnecessary duplication, and misalignments between two-year and four-year pathways; and (c) meetings 5-6: develop preliminary recommendations for curricular alignment, new program development, and improvements to transfer pathway advising.Site VisitsThe Project Director, Program Coordinator, faculty, and a team of three UOG students enrolled in food and agricultural sciences programs will travel to Saipan (NMC), Pohnpei (COM-FSM), and Palau (PCC). Each site visit will span three to five days and serve two concurrent purposes: curriculum alignment and student-to-student peer engagement. Faculty activities will include:(a) reviewing and finalizing curriculum inventory findings and developing formal alignment recommendations;(b) discussing the feasibility of proposed program modifications and new certificate options; and(c) campus tours and observation of instructional facilities.UOG students will lead formal presentations and workshops with undergraduates at each partner institution.Guam InternshipUOG will host six to nine undergraduate students from the NMC, the COM-FSM, and PCC for a two-week residential internship at the UOG Land Grant Extension Service and agInnovation Research Stations. All travel to Guam and accommodations will be covered by this grant. Students will receive a weekly stipend of $200 and participate in research mentorship, field visits to at least five partner farms and agricultural agencies, and at least three professional development workshops.