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[Education](#)  
[Restaurant Guide](#)  
[Spotlight on You!](#)  
[Travel](#)

1. [Education](#)
2. » GCC launches Marine & Terrestrial Conservation Enforcement program

## **GCC launches Marine & Terrestrial Conservation Enforcement program**

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# GCC launches Marine & Terrestrial Conservation Enforcement program

by: . | .

Guam Community College | .

published: August 10, 2015

Students in the new Marine & Terrestrial Conservation Enforcement concentration of Guam Community College's Criminal Justice program launched the program's new boat for the first time this morning from the Hagatna Boat Basin.

GCC obtained a Carl D. Perkins CTE grant in the amount of approximately \$350,000 in order to provide CJ students with the means to undergo the necessary training to be able to enforce Guam's conservation laws on both land and sea. The program partners GCC with the Department of Agriculture's Fish & Wildlife Division, with the Guam Police Department, and with the Judiciary of Guam's Special Enforcement Tactics division. The grant funded the purchase of instructional equipment to include a 25-foot vessel, two vehicles, ATVs, jet skies, and corresponding safety gear.

"This program focuses on compliance with conservation laws, especially in protected areas on land or in the waters around our island," said Peter Roberto, chair of the GCC Criminal Justice & Social Sciences Department. "As part of the program, our cadets must undergo boat safety training in order to better understand law enforcement in the open waters such as enforcing compliance with fishing regulations or boarding vessels," Roberto added. "That is what today is all about."

Roberto said the 24 cadets in the 13th Criminal Justice Academy have already undergone classroom instruction hours for boat safety.

Two Guam Police Department vessels accompanied the 25-foot GCC vessel on its maiden voyage today. Lt. Andrew Quitugua, GPD's boating law administrator and an adjunct instructor at GCC, GCC CJ professor Donna Cruz, and several Judiciary of Guam officers accompanied the 24 cadets as well.

"GPD is proud to partner with GCC for this program," said GPD Chief Joe Cruz. "Boat safety is something that has to be inherent for the cadets so they can focus on the law enforcement part of their job when they graduate and become officers," Cruz said. Chief Cruz added that the Guam Police Department works diligently to enforce those laws applicable to Guam in order to make our waters safer for everyone. "We also urge the public to think 'safety' when operating any water craft and keep in mind that 'safe boating is NO accident.'"

"This program is one of many that we offer at GCC where we partner with other agencies or island businesses in order to provide needed workforce development in our community," said Dr. Mary Okada, GCC president. "The grant that allowed us to obtain this vessel was written because we are answering a need for increased marine and terrestrial conservation enforcement on and around our island, based on its increasing population."

The new Marine & Terrestrial Enforcement Conservation concentration is one of five in GCC's Criminal Justice program, along with Administration of Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement Administration, Forensic Lab Technician, and Forensic Computer Examiner.

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- [Home](#)
- [News](#)
- [Base Info](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Restaurant Guide](#)
- [Spotlight on You!](#)
- [Travel](#)

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- [Advertising](#)



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- [Site Policy](#)
- [Accessibility/Section 508](#)
- [Site Map](#)

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