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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Humanities Guåhan Secures NEH Funding to Co-Establish Pacific Islands Humanities Network, Development of New Digital Resource Center

Hagåtña, GU - In light of National Arts & Humanities Month, Humanities Guåhan is proud to announce its successful application for supplemental funding through the prestigious National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Pacific Islands Cultural Initiative. The news was excitedly delivered on September 28, 2023, at the first-ever White House Summit on Building Climate Resilient Communities. As one of four Pacific Islands councils eligible for this funding, Humanities Guåhan is committed to advancing its work in the Pacific Islands region and fostering collaboration among its fellow councils.

The Pacific Island Humanities Network (PIHN), a collaborative initiative led by Humanities Guåhan and our three Pacific Islands partners Amerika Samoa Humanities Council, Hawai'i Council for the Humanities, and the Northern Marianas Humanities Council, aims to create a vibrant culture of knowledge-sharing and collaboration in light of the humanities. NEH has committed \$1.3 million in its first round of funding for the Pacific Islands Cultural Initiative. This includes \$880,000 in supplemental funding over a three-year period to the four councils.

This network seeks to elevate the voices and experiences of Pacific Islanders, highlighting the diverse cultures, histories, and contributions of these communities. It also focuses on capacity building, professional development, community engagement, and fostering a collective sense of Oceania among these diverse populations. "Collaboration and partnership are at the core of this initiative. We are thrilled at the prospect of working closely with our three Pacific Islands council partners, as well as various educational, cultural, civic, and community organizations throughout the region. Together, we envision fostering a culture of knowledge sharing to elevate Pacific Islander voices and experiences and facilitate humanities capacity building with our island communities," says Executive Director Kimberlee Kihleng.

Humanities Guåhan will also utilize a portion of the supplemental funding for the archiving and digitization of its Resource Center. This initiative will preserve and enhance accessibility to valuable educational and cultural resources related to Guåhan, Micronesia, and the broader Pacific region. These resources encompass publications, exhibit materials, photographs, films, and other media created by Pacific Islander scholars, cultural practitioners, artists, and community groups. Currently available through a loan program that requires in-person visits, the archiving and digitization project will democratize access to these resources, benefitting residents in Guåhan, Pacific Islander communities, and diasporic populations across the globe.

Kihleng highlights the transformative potential of this newfound accessibility, stating, "The new Resource Center will be transformative as it encourages collaboration with cultural practitioners, artists, scholars, teachers, students, and community groups seeking humanities-based knowledge rooted in Guåhan, the Marianas, and wider Micronesia. Our Pacific Islander communities will be able to engage with resources that bring about critical conversations that highlight geopolitical and historical commonalities throughout Oceania while celebrating the region's remarkable diversity."

To ensure the success of the archiving and digitization project, Humanities Guåhan will allocate funding for staff training in digital humanities and participation in the annual Pacific Islands Association of Archives, Libraries, and Museums (PIALA) conference. Humanities Guåhan's commitment to this initiative reflects our dedication to fostering community engagement and dialogue, inspiring critical thinking, celebrating diversity and enriching the quality of life of island residents through the power of the humanities.

As part of National Arts & Humanities Month, Humanities Guåhan will also be featuring a range of digital content on our Instagram @humanitiesguahan to celebrate our staff, facilitators, community and our ongoing work on the island.

For more information about Humanities Guåhan and its involvement in the Pacific Island Humanities Network, please visit <https://www.humanitiesguahan.org/>. For more detailed information, view the September 28, 2023 NEH announcement through the link here <https://www.neh.gov/news/neh-announces-pacific-islands-cultural-initiative>.

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