

# **FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION REPORT**

College of Micronesia—Federated States of Micronesia

Post Office Box 159  
Pohnpei, FSM 46941

A Confidential Report Prepared for  
The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges  
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

This report represents the findings of the follow up evaluation team that visited COM-FSM

April 10-13, 2011

Sandra Serrano, Team Chair

COLLEGE OF MICRONESIA  
Follow-Up Visit Evaluation Team Roster  
Sunday, April 10 – Wednesday, April 13, 2011

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## INTRODUCTION

College of Micronesia-Federated States of Micronesia (COM-FSM)  
Follow-Up Evaluation Team Visit  
April 10 – 13, 2011

A three-member accreditation evaluation team visited the College of Micronesia-Federated States of Micronesia, April 10-13, 2011, for the purpose of evaluating the institution's Follow Up Report and its progress toward correcting deficiencies noted by Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACCJC or the Commission).

The AACJC, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting June 9-11, 2010, reviewed the College of Micronesia-FSM (COM-FSM) institutional Self Study Report and the report of the evaluation team, which visited COM-FSM, March 8-12, 2010. The Commission acted to **issue a warning** (action letter dated June 30, 2010) and directed the College of Micronesia- FSM to correct the deficiencies noted. The accredited status of COM-FSM continues during the Warning period. However, the college's accreditation will not be reaffirmed until the deficiencies that caused the warning status are resolved.

The Warning was issued for deficiencies identified in the report of the evaluation team, which are associated with Recommendations 1, 2, 6, 7, 8 and 9. The college is required to complete a Follow-Up Report by March 15, 2011, and demonstrate resolution of the deficiencies associated with the six recommendations issued specified below:

### **Recommendation 1.** *Improving Institutional Effectiveness and Leadership and Governance*

To fully meet this standard, the team recommends the college evolve its communication efforts to ensure broad-based participation and encourage purposeful dialogue in which all stakeholders participate in the exchange of different points of view and reflections that lead to genuine communication and participatory governance (I.B.4, IV.A.3).

### **Recommendation 2.** *Improving Institutional Effectiveness*

To fully meet this standard, the team recommends that the various plans of the college be integrated into the development of a comprehensive long-range educational master plan that is linked to and includes a long-range budget plan (I.B.4, III.D).

### **Recommendation 6.** *Physical Resources*

To fully meet this standard, the college must develop a facilities master plan that reflects the institution's long term educational goals and plans and is linked to an identified, reliable, and ongoing funding that supports the total cost of facilities ownership (III.B.2.a).

### **Recommendation 7.** *Technology Resources*

To fully meet this standard, the team recommends that the college systematically assess its use and need for technology and use the results to develop a new technology plan that is guided by the college's strategic goals and educational master plan (III.C, III.C.1a-d, and III.C.2).

**Recommendation 8. *Financial Resources***

To fully meet this standard, the team recommends that the college systematically integrate financial resources planning with the various college plans into a comprehensive master plan that is directly linked to the budget planning and allocation process (III.D.1.a).

**Recommendation 9. *Decision-making Roles and Process***

To fully meet this standard, the team recommends that the college evaluate its organizational structure and governance processes to ensure that college stakeholders are involved in decision-making processes and that the results of systematic evaluations, meetings, and decisions are broadly communicated (IV.A.1, IV.A.2, IV.A.2.b, IV.4.A.3, IV.A.5, IV.B.1.a, IV.B.2.a-b, IV.B.2.b, IV.B.2.e).

COM-FSM is located in the Western Pacific Ocean, approximately half-way between Hawaii and the Philippines. The single college, an institution of six campuses, is the only source of higher education in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). The college's administrative center is located on the National Campus in Palikir, Pohnpei. There is a COM-FSM state campus in each of the four FSM states of Pohnpei, Kosrae, Chuuk, and Yap, as well as the FSM Fisheries and Maritime Institute, located in the state of Yap.

The FSM is the largest and most populous sovereign nation to emerge from the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI). FSM is a developing nation of 607 islands and a population of over 107,000 people. More than 1,550 miles lie between the states of Kosrae and Yap, although land area totals only 270 square miles. Until 1978 the FSM was part of the TTPI, a United Nations trusteeship area administered by the United States. In July 1978, a draft FSM constitution was approved by the people of Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk, and Yap, but defeated by the people of Palau and the Marshall Islands, which became separate political entities from the FSM. The Compact of Free Association was entered into by the FSM and the United States (U.S.) and signed into law in 1986 and amended and approved by the U.S. Congress in 2004. The Compact provides for U.S. economic assistance, including eligibility for certain U.S. federal programs, defense of the FSM in exchange for U.S. defense and certain other operating rights in the FSM, denial of access to FSM territory by other nations, and other agreements. Compact funding is allocated by the Joint Economic Management Committee (JEMCO). Compact funding represents thirty-three percent of the Com-FSM annual budget revenue.

The follow-up evaluation team members received the COM-FSM Follow-Up Report on March 15, 2011. On March 21, 2011, the visiting team members were notified that the College of Micronesia – FSM, Board of Regents had taken action to accept the resignation of the college president, Mr. Spensin James, who had served as the chief executive officer for seven years. According to the action by the Board of Regents, the Vice President of Student Services, Mr. Ringle Ringle, immediately assumed the role of interim president. The naming of the new president of the College of Micronesia-FSM is expected in December 2011.

The College of Micronesia-FSM Follow Up Report was prepared under the direction of COM FSM President Spensin James. Commencing in July 2010, the president and his cabinet discussed actions to address the recommendations outlined in the Commission's action letter

dated June 30, 2010. By August 2010, a new Accreditation Liaison Officer assumed the role. A work-group designated by the college president prepared the report.

The COM-FSM Follow Up Report is organized in response to each of five recommendations. The response to each recommendation includes an excerpt from the visiting team findings and the college's resolution, analysis, evidence and additional plans to fully address the recommendation. The electronic COM-FSM Follow Up Report includes live links to some documents and an appendix with several agreements, reports, assessments and other work product as evidence of progress toward remediation. Missing were committee minutes, which ultimately reflected the actual work and progress of the college to address the recommendations.

The common facets to all six recommendations relate to broad based participation in campus governance; effective communications of college issues and the results of decision making processes; comprehensive long-range educational planning linked to budgeting.

The follow up evaluation team expected to validate progress made toward comprehensive institutional long range educational master planning and improving participation in the governance process leading to decision-making. The team's initial impression of the report is that the College of Micronesia-FSM is expectant with plans that are in the final stages of development and require additional work to identify resources, establish timeline, and key performance indicators plus explicit integration into the master plan.

The team was greeted warmly and provided open access to documents and to faculty, staff, students and administrators, as needed to collect evidence related to the COM-FSM Follow Up Report, which was prepared in response to Commission's action to issue a warning.

On Monday, April 11, 2011, the three follow-up evaluation team members commenced interviews with college representatives, collected and reviewed evidence, and discussed observations and findings. The three-day follow up evaluation site visit was limited to the National Campus and the Pohnpei State Campus, although telephone conference calling and VOIP meetings were conducted with the state campus directors for Yap, Chuuk and Kosrae, as well as members of the COM-FSM Curriculum Committee, which includes representatives from each campus.

By Wednesday, April 13, 2011, the team concluded that the progress made by the College of Micronesia - FSM to address each of the recommendations is dominated by the issuance of a plan, such as a Master Plan and various component plans related to Recommendations 1, 2, 6, 7, 8 and 9. For each of these plans, COM-FSM intends to employ existing procedures, such as the Institutional Assessment Plan, to analyze the ameliorative impact of each of the plans. In each instance, this will result in the college conducting a cycle of program review before determining the need for revision.

The team is concerned that some action taken by the college was in response to specific team findings associated with the Standards, rather than to address the broader intent of the recommendations to improve broad-based stakeholder participation in the processes of decision-making by engaging in purposeful dialogue and effectively communicating plans and actions that

enhance institutional effectiveness. Be that as it may, COM-FSM implemented several strategies in its efforts to develop a process for decision-making that offers broad-based participation and encourages dialogue that leads to improvement of institutional effectiveness. Communication will improve as administrators and committee chairs use strategies to solicit different points of view to encourage purposeful dialogue. Also, to improve communication of information, the college website content was expanded. However, the posting of committee minutes and Board of Regents meeting minutes are out-of-date or missing. (Recommendation 1, Standard I.B.4, IV.A.3 and Recommendation 9, Standards IV.A.1, IV.A.2, IV.A.2.b, IV.4.A.3, IV.A.5, IV.B.1.a, IV.B.2.a-b).

The institutional plans for physical, technology, and financial resources are a work in progress. Indeed these budding plans and the Instructional Master Plan are components of the institutional Master Plan. The planning conducted since June 2010 is improving the college's capacity for integrated planning. These plans are the framework to systematically evaluate and continuously improve the effectiveness by which the COM-FSM mission is accomplished (Recommendation 2, Standards I.B.4, and III.D, Recommendation 6, Standard II.B2.a; Recommendation 7, Standards III.C, III.C.1a-d, III.C.2; and Recommendation 8, Standards III.D.1.a).

COM-FSM made progress to ensure broad-based participation in the governance process and to encourage purposeful dialogue in meetings. Action taken by the college over the last year includes evaluation of its governance policy ,conducting a job audit and restructuring to streamline functional operations, modifying the role and duties of the State Campus Directors, expanding constituent participation at the President's Annual Retreat, and changing the selection criteria of committee chair selection and training them to use strategies to solicit input and encourage the exchange of ideas during meetings (Recommendation 9, Standards IV.A.1, IV.A.2, IV.A.2.b, IV.4.A.3, IV.A.5, IV.B.1.a, and IV.B.2.a-b).

COM-FSM is in transition: executive leadership changed; comprehensive and integrated planning is initiated and entering a cycle of development and assessment; and, the evolution of participatory governance is bringing about healthy dialogue.

## **Recommendation 1: Improving Institutional Effectiveness**

To fully meet this standard, the team recommends the college evolve its communication efforts to ensure broad-based participation and encourage purposeful dialogue in which all stakeholders participate in the exchange of different points of view and reflections that lead to genuine communication and participatory governance (I.B.4, IV.A.3).

### **Team Findings and Evidence**

The interim President is a personable individual who has high level experience at COM-FSM as the former Vice President for Student Services. Members of the interim President's Cabinet, leadership of the Faculty and Staff Senate and the Student Body Association all speak highly of him as a well-informed executive committed to inclusiveness and personal accessibility. It was reported that the interim president personally visits campus offices and conducts Cabinet meetings by actively drawing out the opinions of the least active participants.

The President's Retreat initiated under the aegis of the former President provides the most prominent example of the principles of informed, broad based participation in governance and planning activities. The annual President's Retreat along with its recent emphasis upon devoting a portion of the Retreat agenda to inter-campus departmental meetings is a practice that fosters collegewide broad-based participation and nurtures the exchange of ideas. These departmental meetings occurring at the Retreat, supplemented by the quarterly face-to-face division, program or subject area faculty meetings planned to begin in Fall 2011 under the guidelines of the Master Plan (p. 21) demonstrate that the college is taking steps to address the recommendation.

COM-FSM promotes inclusiveness in the governance process and it has implemented both non-cost items (removing Vice Presidents and Campus Directors from committee chair positions) as well as cost items (providing duly equipped meeting sites for committee meetings). The Governance Policy Evaluation report issued in January 2011 outlines recommendations to assure inclusive participation in collegial discussions and contributions to the governance process. Among the recommendations implemented to date are:

- Designating a college hour across all campuses to facilitate meeting attendance.
- Budgeting for expanded use of telephone conference calling in lieu of VOIP
- Designating committee meeting sites at each campus and furnishing it with equipment and technology that support effective communication
- Conducting training for committee chairs and members with an emphasis on soliciting opinions and creating dialogue

The team urges the college to continue to implement the recommendations set forth in the governance report, and specifically notes the importance of posting committee minutes on the college website, providing monthly summaries of committee action to stakeholders, providing on-going training in how to conduct effective meetings, and conducting quarterly face-to-face departmental/unit meetings, held to bring colleagues from their respective state campuses together. These actions represent fundamental contribution to the principles of participation. (I.B.4)

Distances among the six campus sites are great and communication links can be tenuous at times. Connections with State Campuses depend upon VOIP, telephone conference calling, fax machine, and satellite connections for internet/e-mail. Communications will nonetheless continue to be a challenge mitigated somewhat by the arrival of the fiber optic network to the National Campus. Finalization of the fiber optic volume and connections to the National Campus is pending. Nonetheless, the fiber or satellite connectivity is not under the control of the COM-FSM and therefore the college must take corrective action within its means to improve broad-based participation and effective communication.

Committee chairs and members have been trained in techniques used to conduct effective meetings, including soliciting input and building consensus by taking proactive steps to involve committee members separated by distance. The interim president models these techniques as described by faculty, staff and student leadership who participate in Cabinet and other meetings. Moreover, in observing a meeting of the Curriculum Committee, the chair exemplifies these techniques of leadership that are drawn from training and guidelines to conduct effective meetings.

The college administration is implementing recommendations to establish standing committee sites at all campuses with phone/VOIP connection; access to computer, Internet and smart board/LCD projector to assure that connections are made. Finally, the Master Plan specifically calls for quarterly face-to-face meetings to be held on a rotating basis to assure all departments are able to come together from all of the outlier campuses to discuss issues of concern

The college website shows noticeable improvements with the expansion of content and adding of face book, however minutes from key committees are not current. Moreover, minutes and notes of the President's Cabinet and the Board of Regents meetings are not posted to the college website.

The campus institutional research and planning officer believes that the posting of minutes to the web page may be amenable to a performance review system which evaluates employees and includes committee chair responsibilities such as posting meeting minutes to the website in a timely manner. To this end, a performance evaluation model using key performance indicators that are rated on a five point scale was developed and will be implemented by fall 2011. The performance rating will be tied to annual incentive compensation.

College surveys reflect a sense that communication is top down one way information sharing rather than dialog enhancing...only 30% of faculty characterize communication as good or very good. A follow-up survey referenced in the Governance Policy Evaluation (pgs. 10-11) reflects a continuing sense of mediocre progress with respect to governance issues. How deeply these sentiments are held is not possible to ascertain when the number of respondents is no higher than 43 out of some 370 faculty/staff...a response rate below 12%. The team recommends that the College take steps to assure that surveys produce a reliable return rate to determine whether there is a lack of opportunity or a lack of interest to participate in the governance process.

## **Conclusion**

The college has partially addressed Recommendation 1: Improving Institutional Effectiveness and Leadership and Governance and Standard 1: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness.

The college has implemented several changes in order to improve broad-based participation in decision-making processes, as well as to encourage purposeful dialogue. Essential to identifying new improvements and informing college decisions is the evaluation of the effectiveness of processes, policies and organization achieved through an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation. The Communication Plan dated February 2010 is past due for its one-year evaluation of effectiveness. The team recommends that the Communication Plan be evaluated and used to inform college decisions leading to further improvements and an updated plan of action.

## **Recommendation 2: Improving Institutional Effectiveness**

To fully meet this standard, the team recommends that the various plans of the college be integrated into the development of a comprehensive long-range educational master plan that is linked to and includes a long-range budget plan (I.B.4, III.D).

## **Team Findings and Evidence**

The college's new Master Plan is composed of four components:

1. Instructional
2. Facilities and Campus Environment
3. Technology
4. Long Term Financial

Each of the Master Plan components is an integral part of the entire plan.. COM-FSM plans to add additional components to the Master Plan in the in order to incorporate improvements identified through an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, planning and implementation. The plan's purpose statement indicates that "the master plan provides an integrated approach to planning and improvement at the college." It states further that "the core of the master plan is the instructional component which addresses the issue of quality student learning" and student success.

The Instructional Master Plan provides the framework for improvement of instruction and its impact on learning and completion. The various plans of the college have been created and are guided by the Instructional Master Plan. These plans were finalized in February of 2011.

At the time of the follow up visit, many of the plans provide strategies for which resources; timelines and key performance indicators had not been established nor implemented. Without defined timelines and key performance indicators, the integration of the Master Plan into the long-range budget plan will not be successful.

The Instructional Master Plan, Technology Plan, Facilities and Campus Environment Plan, Long-Term Financial Plan and Master Plan were each available by link from the COM-FSM Follow Up Report, March 15, 2011. The college intends to assess the effectiveness of these plans using the process defined in the college Institutional Assessment Plan (IAP), which was created in June 2008 and last updated in October 2009.

## **Conclusion**

The college has partially addressed Recommendation 2 and Standard I.B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness.

The college is in the process of developing and using plans, data collection, and evaluation.

The team found that the college is not yet operating at the proficiency level of implementation of the Commission Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness – Part II: Planning. The missing characteristics of institutional effectiveness in planning include:

- A fully developed comprehensive educational master plan that fully integrates all components of resource planning and long-term budgeting to achieve broad educational purposes
- A fully developed use of ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning to refine institutional key processes and improve student learning
- A fully developed culture of reflective dialogue about institutional effectiveness that is ongoing, robust and pervasive
- A fully developed continuous review and adaptation of evaluation and planning and budgeting processes

## **Recommendation 6: Physical Resources**

To fully meet this standard, the college must develop a facilities master plan that reflects the institution's long term educational goals and plans and is linked to an identified, reliable, and ongoing funding source that supports the total cost of facilities ownership (III. B. 2. a-b).

## **Team Findings and Evidence**

The Facilities and Campus Environmental Plan was completed in February 2011. The plan's purpose is to provide direction for the college in decision-making for facility planning, construction and maintenance. The plan is designed to prepare the college for the total cost of ownership of existing or new capital improvements. This plan has strategies that are designed to develop information that will identify the total cost of ownership of new and existing facilities. The strategies identified to implement the Facilities and Campus Environmental Plan have not been fully developed into action plans or integrated into the other plans, although it is included as a component of the Master Plan.

The Facilities and Campus Environmental Plan includes a budget plan that incorporates the total cost of ownership for future capital improvement projects. There is not currently a budget plan that includes the cost of ownership for existing facilities. While this plan is a start, it must be fully developed and linked to the institutions long-term educational master plan as well as an identified, reliable, and ongoing funding source.

A tour of the facilities at the National Campus and at the Pohnpei Campus confirmed problems identified in the previous visit had been addressed. Tile and fixtures were replaced in the women's dormitory lavatory. In the Gym, plumbing was working in bathrooms checked by members of the visiting follow up team.

COM-FSM reported that its Capital Improvement Projects were on hold as a result of a misunderstanding related to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges issuing COM – FSM a warning until deficiencies noted are addressed. At the U.S. and Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) Compact Joint Economic Management Committee (JEMCO) meeting conducted September 2010, a resolution was passed that suspended all Compact-funded capital project design and preliminary engineering work for the following COM – FSM projects:

- 1) Chuuk Campus - College of Micronesia Phase 1
- 2) Chuuk Campus - College of Micronesia Phase 2
- 3) National Campus - College of Micronesia Student Center
- 4) Pohnpei Campus – College of Micronesia Vocational Center and Classroom Building

According to the resolution, the suspension is in effect until the FSM submits and the JEMCO accepts the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) - approved College of Micronesia restructuring plan. Several college cabinet members, including the interim president, and members of the Board of Regents are attempting to correct the misunderstanding of the Commission's action to place the college on Warning by JEMCO.

Because the Yap State Campus classroom and Student Center were already funded and under construction, these two capital projects continue with construction as planned. As a result of the Compact-funded project suspension of the Chuuk Campus project, the COM-FSM Board of Regents allocated funding to continue the Chuuk Campus Phase 1 construction.

The COM-FSM Facilities and Campus Environment Plan includes an appendix with a list of prioritized and sequenced new construction. Included in the plan is the total cost of ownership for facility maintenance, including the total cost of ownership for scheduled maintenance and operations of the two Yap State Campus Projects currently under construction. Noteworthy is that although this plan was adopted in February 2011, the Capital Improvement Project and Budget Plan continues to reflect all Compact- capital projects as prioritized and funded although the suspension of funding was adopted by resolution in September 2010.

## **Conclusion**

The college has partially addressed Recommendation 6, Standard III. B. Physical Resources.

The Facilities and Campus Environment Plan was finalized in February 2011. The plan will be monitored and evaluated by the Facilities and Campus Environment Committee. The membership of this committee continues to be underrepresented by faculty, classified staff and students. Furthermore, meeting attendance remains poor, even though a proxy representative may attend. However, until the issues related to geography of FSM are resolved, meeting attendance will remain poor. Nonetheless, the plan is a good beginning to ongoing development.

The Plan will benefit from evaluation and on-going improvements to the prioritization of capital projects, scheduled maintenance and long-term funding and budgeting. The greatest impediment to the implementation of the plan is linking it to an identified, reliable and ongoing funding source that supports new capital construction and scheduled maintenance of new and existing facilities, grounds, infrastructure, furniture, fixtures and equipment (III. B. a-b).

### **Recommendation 7: Technology Resources**

To fully meet this standard, the team recommends that the college systematically assess its use and need for technology and use the results to develop a new technology plan that is guided by the college's strategic goals and educational master plan (III.C, IIIC.1a-d, and III.C.2).

### **Team Findings and Evidence**

The Technology Plan was introduced to the college in February 2011. The Technology Plan is a component of the COM-FSM Master Plan. This plan identifies the technological needs of the college and strategies for aligning resources to meet the requirements for implementation. This plan includes strategies and action steps that are specific, address identifiable outcomes and resources, have timelines, and are clearly tied to other plans or priorities.

The institution still suffers from an extremely poor Internet connection. The unreliable connectivity frustrates the institution's ability to effectively communicate or to utilize technology support to develop or enhance its education programs and services. The new fiber optic cable has been landed at Pohnpei and cable is currently being laid to the National Campus. This is expected to increase Internet performance at all campuses by freeing up satellite bandwidth.

The nation's bandwidth is saturated during business hours, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., which impedes college access to a reliable voice over IP. Without reliable VOIP, the impact to collegewide communication is demoralizing and prevents staff attendance/participation in meetings. During the course of the team visit, a Curriculum Committee meeting was successfully conducted using VOIP. Later, VOIP supported meetings scheduled with state campus directors were hindered by poor sound transmission and resulted in moving the meetings to telephone conference calls.

Access to college information relies heavily on the college website. The team searched the college website for committee meeting minutes and found outdated files, some outdated by two or three years. With expected improved connectivity and expanded bandwidth, use of the

college website is likely to increase. Continuous evaluation of how well technology meets the need for communication and training may improve the continuous development of an up-to-date web site that accurately presents the college's programs, activities, services, and contact information designed to enhance programs and service.

## **Conclusions**

The college has addressed Recommendation 7, Standard III.C: Technology Resources.

The Technology Plan includes action steps that are specific, address identifiable outcomes and resources, have timelines, and are clearly tied to other college plans and priorities.

Technology services, hardware and software are utilized to support operations and institutional effectiveness. Technology infrastructure and equipment are upgraded and replaced according to institutional plans that support student learning, operations and services and within the limits of financial resources.

The recently landed fiber optic cable to Pohnpei State is expected to increase bandwidth and thereby improve internet connectivity. It is anticipated that improved bandwidth and internet connectivity will facilitate the effective use of technology resources by college employees and students. Internet connectivity and college website content currency, specifically the concomitant impact on institutional communication, remain the two issues related to technology that when resolved will improve institutional effectiveness.

## **Recommendation 8: Financial Resources**

To fully meet this standard, the team recommends that the college systematically integrate financial resources planning with the various college plans into a comprehensive master plan that is directly linked to the budget planning and allocation process (III.D.1.a).

## **Team Findings and Evidence**

The Long Term financial Plan was developed and approved in February 2011. This plan is a component of the COM-FSM Master Plan. This plan provides the framework to develop long-term budgets based on new construction and the operating and maintenance cost of existing facilities.

All FSM national agencies and departments receiving FSM national funding are required to implement performance-based budgeting in order to integrate the agency strategic plan into the budgeting process. This nationwide performance-based budget process also requires agencies identify expected outcomes and the method for measuring outcomes. This requirement helped the COM budget managers understand the relationship between the strategic goals of the College and the budget required to achieve these goals.

The college has modified its budgeting process to allow better integration with the new Facility, Technology, and Instructional plans. Implementation of the new institutional budget planning process was delayed due to the development of the various institutional plans. The 2011-12 fiscal year budget was developed under the prior model with oversight of the process being conducted by the Planning and Resource Committee.

The Planning and Resources Committee develops the annual budget based on input from the annual President's Retreat and all of the college wide subcommittees. This committee prioritizes goals and makes budget recommendations to the Cabinet.

## **Conclusion**

The college has partially addressed Recommendation 8, Standard III. D. Financial Resources.

Through the Planning and Resources Committee (PRC), with membership representing each of the collegewide subcommittees, is the central hub for the merging of institutional planning and budgeting in that this committee reviews resources, data related to programs and outcomes, input from the President's Retreat, and demographic and environmental data in order to prioritize budget requests and to make recommendations to the President's Cabinet.

The various college plans are developed and the college included financial resources planning into the comprehensive institutional Master Plan. It is the Institutional Master Plan that will be linked to the budget planning and allocation process in the next budget cycle.

The FY2012 budget planning cycle commenced several months prior to the introduction of the various college plans. As a result, financial planning is not fully integrated with all college planning at this time.

The college currently has financial resources sufficient to support student learning programs and services and to improve institutional effectiveness. The distribution of resources supports the development, maintenance, and enhancement of programs and services. The institution plans and manages its financial affairs with integrity and in a manner that ensures financial stability. The level of financial resources provides a reasonable expectation of short-term financial solvency. Due to the dependence on the FSM and U.S. Compact agreement, which includes an annual step down in funding, the college needs to devise action plans in conjunction with its Long-Term Financial Plan to assure long-term financial solvency (III. D. a-b).

## **Recommendation 9: Decision-making Roles and Process**

To fully meet this standard, the team recommends that the college evaluate its organizational structure and governance processes to ensure that college stakeholders are involved in decision making processes and that the results of systematic evaluations, meetings, and decisions are broadly communicated (IV.A.1, IV.A.2, IV.A.2.b, IV.4.A.3, IV.A.5, IV.B.1.a, IV.B.2.a-b, IV.B.2.b, IV.B.2.e).

## Team Findings and Evidence

The COM-FSM Governance Policy Evaluation report endeavors to create the conditions for all College constituency groups to participate actively and productively to contribute to the decision making process. (IV.A.1.) The Governance Policy Evaluation report recognizes the need for such written policies and it provides an appendix from the Committee Review Working Group that represents preliminary steps toward satisfying the requirements of this standard. However there is no fully formed document that meets the criteria of this standard. (IV.A.2.)

The removal of Vice Presidents and Campus Directors from committee chair positions and the call for the election of chairs by the committee membership provides a major step toward putting participatory governance and collegial consultation into a more comfortable environment for faculty/staff and student participation. (IV.A.2.b)

A Presidential Retreat in May 2009 addressed the organization of the college and determined that the best organization for the college was to maintain the status quo with major modifications.

The range of possibilities considered at the Retreat included options such as:

- a reduction from six campuses nationwide to one National Campus in Pohnpei;
- State Campuses seeking separate accreditation;
- State Campuses reduced to the function and status of extension sites.

Subsequent actions to implement the direction chosen included the creation of an ad hoc Streamlining Committee to conduct a job audit that identified seventeen positions and seven independent contractors for reduction in force. The effects of streamlining went into effect on April 6, 2011. Moreover, the Committee, advised by a consultant from Australia, produced proposals to enhance the competitiveness of College salaries to approximately the mid-point among its direct competitors in the Pacific Basin.

Based on the decision to maintain the “status quo with major modifications” COM-FSM has re-defined the role of the of Campus Directors who have been re-instated as voting members of the President’s Cabinet with authorization to contribute to the setting of the Cabinet’s agenda. However the State Campus Coordinators of instruction, student services, and Cooperative Research and Extension have all been re-assigned as direct reports to their respective Vice President’s at the National Campus, or delegated by the vice president to the respective Directors at the National Campus. This reorganization results in the State Campus Directors having no direct supervisory or management authority of the employees assigned to the state campuses. The new focus of responsibility for the State Campus Directors is external stakeholder relations particularly with respect to coordination with the K-12 public education system, as well as workforce development initiatives responsive to business and industry.

The steps taken to restore Campus Directors to the Cabinet is responsive to a finding issued by the Visiting Team in 2010. The removal of direct reporting responsibility by State Campus Coordinators to the Campus Directors is a matter of concern and anxiety to three of the four Campus Directors. Although in the Governance Policy Evaluation (January 2011) provides for State Campus Management Councils to be chaired by Campus Directors, uncertainty about the

effectiveness of such a structure prevails at this time given changed supervisory relationship between the Directors and the Campus Coordinators. The State Campus Directors are unclear of their role and authority to promote the needs of the state campus, as well as direct the daily operations of the campus. Regardless, they remain optimistic about finding their way to advance the college in responding to the needs of State Campus constituency groups.

One Campus Director expressed the concern that they will not be responsible or credible with external stakeholders if they have no supervisory authority for staff performance on their own campuses. However, the most optimistic of the Directors sees the new structure as a means of focusing upon the external stakeholders without being distracted by the mundane demands of daily campus affairs. One Campus Director sees the opportunity to serve on the President's Cabinet by means of providing a holistic appraisal of affairs at the State Campus while concentrating on the development of external workforce initiatives and recruitment issues. Apparently, this new structure too is in response to the finding provided by the Visiting Team in 2010, which pointed out evidence from stakeholders that external relationships with business and industry were not adequate.

In other respects, the documents recently issued by the College provide reassuring developments for the prospects of more broad-based participation in college governance procedures. For instance, the Governance Policy Evaluation (January 2011) document calls for a common schedule of classes to accommodate a college hour designated as regular meeting time on M-W-F at 1 p.m. A proxy system has been developed to allow absent parties to recruit a replacement. Additionally, assigned meeting sites for committees and State campus participants in committees have been established to include the necessary media and communications equipment needed. More importantly, the principle that Vice Presidents and Campus Directors should no longer chair major committees has been established in the Governance Policy Evaluation Report. Finally committee chairs are trained and encouraged to practice the techniques of consensus building and inclusiveness in accord with guidelines identified by a consultant. The techniques used to promote dialogue include proactive, non-threatening techniques of soliciting participation by unseen committee members on outlier campuses should they not be participating voluntarily in the discussion.

The Governance Policy Evaluation report explicitly calls for "formal periodic evaluation of the college's governance structure at the institution and committee level." Additionally the Institutional Researcher devised an ambitious program for quarterly performance evaluations of individuals by their supervisors. Typically such evaluations are intended to be used as the basis for improved performance. (IV. A. 5.)

The Board of Regents is clearly the policy setting body for the College and it will determine the process for the recruitment of a new President just as in the past it has given final approval to the re-adjustment of reporting lines to include the Campus Directors and the Institutional Researcher as direct reports to the President.( IV B.1. a)

The Presidential Retreat is described earlier as an example of broad-based participation in collegial consultation and participatory governance. Additionally, the Institutional Researcher

who reports to the President has produced informative reports that attempt to cover all the bases. (IV.B.2.b.)

## **Conclusions**

The college has addressed Recommendation 9: Decision-making Roles and Process and Standard IV: Leadership and Governance.

The Governance Policy Evaluation report endeavors to create the conditions for all College constituents to participate actively and productively to contribute to the decision making process.

The Governance Policy Evaluation report recognizes the need for such written policies and it provides an appendix from the Committee Review Working Group that represents preliminary steps toward satisfying the requirements of this standard.

The College has established structures, processes and practices that incorporate all constituencies in the consideration of governance issues. It also recognizes the need to provide the structures and processes in writing and has taken the first step in that direction by means of its Governance Policy Evaluation report.

The Governance Policy Evaluation report explicitly calls for “formal periodic evaluation of the college’s governance structure at the institution and committee level.” The Institutional Researcher devised an ambitious program for quarterly performance evaluations using key performance indicators. (IV. A. 5)