EVALUATION REPORT

College of Micronesia—Federated States of Micronesia

Post Office Box 159
Pohnpei FM 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 evaluation team that visited
COM-FSM on March 8—12, 2010

Sandra Serrano, Team Chair

College of Micronesia
Comprehensive Evaluation Visit Team Roster
Monday, March 8—Friday, March 12, 2010

Ms. Sandra Serrano (Chair)
Chancellor
Kern Community College District

Mr. David Barney
Professor, Film-TV
De Anza College

Ms. Carolyn Bloch
Senior Nursing Instructor
Los Angeles County College of Nursing and Allied Health

Mr. David Clarke
Instructor, Biology
College of the Siskiyous

Mr. Douglas Dykstra
Chancellor
Windward Community College

Ms. Kate Pluta (Assistant)
Professor, English
Bakersfield College

Mr. Sean James
Vice Chancellor Operations Management
Kern Community College District

Mrs. Mary Ann Laun
Assistant Dean, Library Services
Pasadena City College

Mr. Ricardo Navarrette
Vice President, Student Services
Santa Rosa Junior College

Ms. Martha Tilmann
Dean of Technology
College of San Mateo

INTRODUCTION
College of Micronesia—Federated States of Micronesia (COM-FSM)
Accreditation Team Visit: March 8—12, 2010
Team Chair, Sandra V. Serrano

A ten-member accreditation team visited the College of Micronesia–Federated States of Micronesia (COM-FSM) from March 8 through March 12, 2010 for the purpose of evaluating how well the institution is achieving its stated mission, analyzing how well the college is meeting the Commission Standards, providing recommendations for quality assurance and institutional improvement, and submitting recommendations to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) regarding the status of the college.

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, and 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. The climate is humid year-round due to the heavy rainfall. 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.

In preparation for the accreditation evaluation visit to COM-FSM, team members attended an all-day training session on February 10, 2010 in Oakland, California. The training, which was conducted by the ACCJC staff, provided a review of Commission history, purpose, standards of accreditation, requirements for evidence, and the roles of the evaluators and team chair. A brief team meeting was conducted during the course of the training meeting, and eight evaluators of the ten-member team were assigned primary responsibility to evaluate one or more of the four standards of accreditation.

Prior to the scheduled accreditation visit, team members read, analyzed, and synthesized the COM-FSM self-study report. Each team member completed the Team Member Written Report Template, which included evaluations of the self-study report and an analysis of one or more standards to begin the team evaluators' preparation toward completing the team report.

Due to the lengthy travel from California to Micronesia, the team traveled in two segments, the first from California to Hawaii and the second from Hawaii to FSM. Upon arriving in Hawaii for an overnight stay, a team meeting was conducted. The team spent several hours

discussing their observations of the self-study and identifying questions to be asked during the team visit especially by the three members visiting the state campuses and the FSM Fisheries and Maritime Academy, located in the states of Yap, Chuuk, and Kosrae, while the remaining team members were visiting the National Campus and the state campus located in the state of Pohnpei.

During the visit, the team evaluators met with numerous faculty, staff, administrators, students, members of the governing board, and external stakeholders, including the U.S. Ambassador to the FSM and the Vice President of the FSM. The team also conducted two public forums to allow for comment from any member of the COM-FSM or the college communities. The public forums were conducted from the National Campus in Palikir, Pohnpei, and the Pohnpei State campus, and were broadcast to the state campuses in Kosrae, Chuuk, and Yap, via audio conferencing.

The college—the National Campus, four state campuses and FSM-FMI—was well prepared for the accreditation visit. The visiting team simultaneously visited the four states for the first two or three days of the five day visit. The team members were greeted by college campus staff at the various airports and transported to their hotels. College staff and faculty were very accommodating to team member requests for meetings with staff, regents, and students, and quickly provided access to requested evidence.

The team felt that the self-study report was redundant in several sections and therefore unnecessarily long, and lacking adequate information in other sections. However, the self-study report, overall, provided an accurate assessment of the college's educational quality as set forth in the ACCJC Four Standards of Accreditation, as well as the Commission policies.

After carefully reading the self-study report, as well as other material provided since the last accreditation evaluation in 2004, including the Progress Reports dated October 2004, April 2005 and March 2006, and the Progress Report Visit conducted in April 2006, plus the Midterm Report dated March 2007, and the Follow-up Reports dated October 2008 and March 2009, and finally the Team Visit Report dated April/May 2009, the team was understandably curious about the status of progress toward addressing Commission recommendations and the overall quality of the college's educational programs and services and student learning outcomes. After examining evidence, interviewing college personnel and students, and discussing the findings in light of the 2002 Standards of the Accreditation Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, the accreditation evaluation team makes the following observations and recommendations to the College of Micronesia–Federated States of Micronesia (COM-FSM).

Observations

The team applauds COM-FSM for demonstrating a strong commitment in support of the development of the Federated States of Micronesia. The college administration, faculty, staff, and students exhibited to the visiting accreditation team that COM-FSM is a student-centered and continuously improving institution of higher education that is responsive to the needs of a developing country.

The visiting team recognized the following college accomplishments as noteworthy:

Clearly the college has employed a dedicated and talented staff to support student learning and success.

The teamwork and *esprit de corps* at the state campuses is exceptional.

Student participation in student government and campus activities is praiseworthy.

The preservation of Micronesian cultural studies and the collection of the unique and highly utilized Pacific and Micronesian collections at each of the campuses are impressive.

Administrative leadership is recognized for the remarkable progress the college has made since the 2004 accreditation visit to meet the ACCJC Standards of Accreditation, including the creation of a governance policy and the support of professional development of its faculty's pursuit to attain bachelor and master degrees.

The implementation of a broad-based student services program demonstrates a commitment to providing continuity of services at each of the campuses.

Development of a homegrown student information system demonstrates a commitment to student success.

Recommendations

The team concluded that the college dramatically improved its scope of planning, instruction, student support services, as well as upgraded facilities at each of its campuses. However, in order to continue to fully meet the Standards of Accreditation and to improve, the visiting team makes 10 recommendations for the college to fully meet the Accrediting Standards and 5 recommendations for the college to make institutional improvement.

<u>Recommendation to Fully Meet the Standards of Accreditation</u>

Standard I: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

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 (IB4, III.D).

Recommendation 3. *Improving Institutional Effectiveness and Leadership and Governance*
To fully meet this standard, the team recommends that the college advance the institution's movement towards proficiency in the cycle of continuous improvement by completing the development of the student information system (SIS) and providing for additional research design, analysis, and reporting (I.B.6, IV.B.2).

Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services

Recommendation 4. *Instructional Programs*
To fully meet this standard, the team recommends that the college develop a plan and schedule in order to reach the proficiency level by 2010 for student learning outcomes assessment by aligning its course SLOs with degree and certificate SLOs; by identifying and practicing multiple methods of assessment practices of SLOs for all courses, programs and degrees; by preparing comprehensive assessment reports that are completed on a regular basis; and by providing evidence of student awareness of goals and purposes of courses and programs in which they are enrolled (II.A, II.A.1, II.A.1.a,II.A.1.c; II.A.2, II.A.2.a-b, II.A.2.e-I, II.A.5).

Recommendation 5. *Library and Learning Support Services*
To fully meet this standard, the team recommends that the college evaluate and ensure the adequacy of its library collections and ensure that there is reliable access to all library resources, both print and electronic (II.C.1, II.C.1c).

Standard III: Resources

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, 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).

Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

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).

Recommendation 10. *Board and Administrative Organization*
To fully meet this standard, the team recommends that the college president and his cabinet develop a communication plan that promotes outreach to the community and develops effective partnerships with the communities served by the college (IV.B.2.b).

Recommendations to Improve the Institution's Programs, Services and Outcomes

Standard I: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

Recommendation A. *Institutional Mission*

To improve the clarity of the college mission, the team recommends that the college clearly define its intended student population (I.A.).

Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services

Recommendation B. *Student Support Services*

To improve the effective allocation of student support resources, the team recommends that the college evaluate whether continuity of services requires identical services with identical staffing or equivalent staffing based on student enrollment and other factors (II.b.1, II.B.3.c, II.B.4)

Recommendation C. *Student Support Services*

To improve college catalog access to general information, requirements and major policies, the team recommends that the college include in its catalog transfer articulation course requirements for its primary university partners, the student complaint policy and procedure, and an index to subject matter information (II.B.2).

Recommendation D. *Student Support Services*
To improve the security and confidentiality of student records, the team recommends that the college immediately ensure that the student personal information and academic records are secure from breach of confidentiality (II.B.3.f)

Standard III. Resources

Recommendation E. *Human Resources*

To improve the consistency of regular evaluation of part-time faculty, the team recommends that the college take the steps necessary to ensure that all part-time faculty are evaluated systematically and at the stated intervals (III.A.1.b).

Evaluation of Institutional Responses to Previous Recommendations

<u>**Commission Concern 1**</u>: **Communication Updates**
The college should update the Commission on all work done since the Focused Midterm Report to continue to improve communication, providing evidence of those efforts. The college should systematically evaluate the effectiveness of the measures taken in order to facilitate a cycle of continued improvement of communication.

This concern has been partially met. The Focused Midterm Report was submitted by the college in March 2007. The college has made good progress toward improving communication, but too often the resulting communication has been viewed by the college community as merely implementing telecommunication and establishing a governance process, as well as information sharing instead of engaging in dialogue that honors different points of view and analysis for reflective dialogue the informs a collective understanding of complex issues.

The use of surveys to evaluate progress toward improved communication has been hampered by occasional lack of, or low, participation, particularly by the campuses not located in Pohnpei. Also hampering the effective use of surveys to evaluate progress is the untimely analysis and untimely reporting of results. The development of monthly reports has been viewed as useful and helpful, as evidenced by team interviews with campus leaders across the college.

While telecommunication and information sharing have improved communication, the fundamental issue to be examined is whether true interactive dialogue that reflects a comprehensive institutional perspective to promote continuous improvement of institutional effectiveness is being encouraged to promote participation that is vital to communication.

<u>**Recommendation 1**</u>: **Improve Communication**
The college must develop and implement a collaborative process that:
- *Includes faculty, staff, students, and administrators at the college's six sites (Standards IV.4, IVA, IVA.1, IVA2.a, IVA.2b, IVA. and IVB.2b),*
- *Identifies the roles and scope of authority of the faculty, staff, students, and administrators in the decision-making processes (Standards IVA, IVA.1, IVA.2, IVA.2a, IVA.2b, and IVA.),*

- *Identifies the roles and scope of authority of college committees in the decision-making processes (Standards IVA, IVA.1, IVA.2, IVA.2a, IVA.2b, and IVA.), includes dialogue as a means to develop, document, implement, and evaluate assessment plans for student learning outcomes in both instruction and student services (Standards IB.a, IB.5, IIA.1c, II B.4, and IIC.2), and*
- *Includes formal pathways for effective communication links so that information and recommendations are distributed across the college's six sites (Standards IVA.1, IVA.2, IVA., and IVB.2e).*

This recommendation has been partially met. The committee structure is in place, but the practicality of having committee meetings include true participation from the six campus sites has been problematic. All major committees list members from the campuses, but all too often the only actual committee participation is from National and Pohnpei campuses, as evidenced in minutes of committees and in dialogue with committee members and leaders from the campuses. The good intention of using technology like VOIP to allow participation has had poor results. The removal of a voting voice by campus directors on president's cabinet seems counter to this collaboration effort, both to the team and to the directors themselves.

The role and scope of authority for decision-making is established in board policy. The disconnect between the actual limited role of participation versus the written role of participation was of concern across the college except among the executive administration centralized on the National Campus. With travel so limited and technology so lacking, the reality is that very few voices are heard, especially from internal and external stakeholders from Kosrae, Chuuk, and Yap.

Engaging dialogue has room for improvement; the college has responded to this recommendation to the extent that program review including assessment of learning outcomes is reviewed and analyzed by a broad base of faculty and administrators beginning at the program level and moving along from there. The Curriculum Committee and Assessment Committee both review and respond to the analysis of learning outcomes data with an option at each level to ask the program faculty for clarification of the analyses provided. After the completion of these preliminary reviews the documents continue to the Planning and Resources Committee to be considered as part of the budgeting phase of the review process. With this process in place the college is able to employ student learning outcomes analysis along with indirect measures of student achievement to produce curricular and course improvements at the program level, as well as using the program reviews in their entirety to make budgetary decisions at the college level.

Email is the means of distribution of information throughout the college. The internet connection is still problematic at most sites, which hinders access to electronic transmission of information. The impending installation of the fiber link from Guam to FSM is expected to improve the electronic connectivity to each college campus site, but this remains to be demonstrated. Regardless of the reliability of the electronic structure and pathways to facilitate communication, this is only a means for bringing together stakeholders to engage in

collegial consultation and reflective dialogue that informs a collective understanding of the complex issues to be addressed by the college.

Recommendation 2: Improve Communication

The college must develop, document, and implement an organization of administrative responsibilities across the six sites that ensures continuity in student support and instruction and gives a clear, consistent line of administrative authority, such as

- *For all instructional programs across the sites to the Vice President for Instructional Affairs (Standards IIA.1, IIA.2, IVB.2, and IVB.2a)*
- *For all student services programs across the sites to the Vice President for Support and Student Affairs (Standards IIB.1, IIB., IVA, IV B.2, and IVB.2a), and*
- *For all learning resources programs across the sites to the Director of Learning Resources Center (Standards IIC.1, IVA, IVB.2, and IVB.2a).*

This recommendation has been met. The college responded to this recommendation to produce the staff lines of responsibility leading from the Vice President for Instructional Affairs (VPIA) to each of the state campus sites by means of Instructional Coordinators. By doing so the college has added a new level of administrators that contributes to a ratio of administrators to full time faculty that is surprisingly high (47 administrators to 108 faculty members according to the Fact Book). However, this development has given the VPIA an additional level of assistants who are coordinated by the Director of Academic Programs located at the National Campus to implement academic policies including the efforts to implement student learning outcomes assessment across all campuses and programs.

The team found that support for the new student services organization is widespread but not without criticism. The crossing lines of authority and reporting among staff members and administrators makes dual reporting prevalent, with an over burden of reporting to both campus administration and to the National Campus administration. The continuity of student support and instruction, including the learning resource programs, has been interpreted to require identical staffing at each campus site instead of equitable staffing based on total number of students and faculty. Because the increased staff includes increased costs, there is criticism and questioning as to what is intended to be equitable continuity of student support and instruction. Assessment of the new structures should provide for ongoing improvement of organization and communication.

Recommendation 3: Improve Communication

Once the collaborative processes (Recommendation 1) and the organization of administrative responsibilities (Recommendation 2) are developed, documented, and implemented, they must be periodically and systematically evaluated to facilitate a cycle of continued improvement (Standards IB.7, IIA.2, IIB.4, IIC.2, IVA.5, and IVB.2).

This recommendation has been met. The college developed a new organizational chart, approved by the Board in September 2004. During 2005 supporting activities took place, including creating new job descriptions and developing implementation strategies and plans. The organizational structure was evaluated in 2007 and again in 2008. In 2009 a systemwide

satisfaction survey was conducted, and the results reviewed by the team. Only 30 percent of faculty characterized communication as good or very good, indicating that further work is needed. In interviews the team found a frequent comment that communication was, for the most part, one way–down to them–with information transmittal being mistaken for meaningful communication.

Recommendation 4: Integrate Planning
The college must develop and implement college-wide planning that
- *Includes all six sites (Standard IB),*
- *Integrates all aspects of planning, evaluation, and resource allocation (Standards IB.3, IB.4, IIA.1, IIA.2, IIB.4, IIC.2, IIIA.6, IIIB.2b, IIIC.2, IIID.1a, IIID.2g, IIID.3, IVA.5, and IVB.2b),*
- *Includes a technology plan that evaluates, supports, and plans for the future of instructional, student services, and administrative functions across the college's sites (Standards IIIC.1c and IIIC.2), Is driven by the college mission and goals (Standard 1A.4),*
- *Relies on involvement of faculty and staff across the college's sites (Standards 1B.4, IVA.1, IVA.2, and IVA.3),*
- *Incorporates research and data in a strategic plan that contains measurable outcomes (Standard 1B.3, IIA.2f, and IIC.2),*
- *Guides decision-making for both short-term and long-term planning (Standards IA.4, 1B.3, and IIID.1c),*
- *Is well-documented and widely disseminated (Standards IB.4 and IB.5), and*
- *Is periodically reviewed to assess the validity of the process (Standards 1B.6 and IB.7).*

This recommendation has been partially met. The President's Retreat of 2005 included representatives of all sites and representatives of external stakeholders. The result of this retreat was a board-approved (September 2005) Strategic Plan 2006–11. This plan guides the college for planning, assessment, resource allocation, and reporting of institutional effectiveness.

Strategic plans guided by the college mission and goals have been developed in enrollment management, facilities, and technology. The technology plan as developed in 2005 is now outdated due to the many improvements implemented by the information technology department.

The college has made a good faith effort to develop and implement collegewide planning through its development of the Institution Assessment Plan that addresses program review and its relationship to planning and budgeting. Annual Improvement Plans, quarterly work plans, and assessment reporting are submitted from each site. The quality of these documents varies, and more work is needed to bring them up to a meaningful level (I.B).

Memberships of standing committees show a cross section of the college community; however, faculty are still under represented in the process (IB.3, IIA.2f, and IIC.2).

The college has implemented and revised a performance-based budgeting process. This process now ties the budget with strategic goals of the college and incorporates measures to evaluate progress towards the goals. The implementation of the revised budgeting process occurred in the 2009 budget year, and full analysis of the results has not yet been completed. (IB.3, IB.4, IIA.1, IIA.2, IIB.4, IIC.2, IIIA.6, IIIB.2b, IIIC.2, IIID.1a, IIID.2g, IIID.3, IVA.5, and IVB.2b)

The college has established a Planning and Resource committee to "advise the president in matters related to planning and resource allocation." This committee is designed to integrate the planning process with the allocation of resources. A review of the minutes of this committee and the institutional priorities developed at the annual President's Retreat indicates a clear focus on annual priorities. There is no evidence that these priorities are translated into the budgeting process. The institution still lacks long-range financial budgets that are connected to long-range planning. The long-range budgets are projected based on enrollment trends and expected cost increases but do not connect to any long-range academic planning. Without long-range academic planning it is impossible to determine if the budgeted expenditures in the communications plan and facilities plan support the overall goals of the college (IA.4, 1B.3, III.D.1a, III.D.1c).

The library and other learning support services evaluate their services and are integrated into the planning processes at the college. The services are loosely tied to student learning outcomes although only traditional measures are currently used (II.C.2).

Human resources planning is fully integrated with institutional planning. Systematic assessment of the human resources effectiveness is now used for program improvement (III.A.6).

The Facilities and Campus Environment Committee is responsible for monitoring, assessing, and improving the facilities plan. According to the fall 2009 Quarterly Report, the facilities plan was deferred until the completion of the Instructional Master Plan. The Instructional Master Plan was never completed, which calls to question the integration of facilities planning. Meanwhile, the FSM awarded a $10 million compact infrastructure grant that will allow the construction of new facilities on each campus site. Maintenance money has also recently been awarded to each site. Facilities planning is mentioned in the college Strategic Plan, but it is unclear how the plan connects to the new capital outlay for building construction and the newly received maintenance money (III.B, III.B.1, III.B.1a, III.B.1b, III.B.2, III.B.2a, III.B.2b).

While the team questioned whether the mission has clearly defined its intended students, the college does keep the mission central to the planning and budget processes (1A.4).

The planning process has not yet been reviewed to assess the validity of the process. Documentation of the process is done but is not widely or reliably distributed (I.B.4, I.B.5, I.B.6 and IB.7).

In March 2009 the Board of Regents adopted a continuous improvement policy to formalize

this requirement and activity. Each standing committee identifies areas for improvement and provides recommendations to the cabinet and president for implementation.

A collegewide student information system (SIS) was implemented, permitting greater data collection and providing for timely use of data in planning and evidence-based decision-making.

The Institutional Research and Planning Office administers surveys across the campuses, including student satisfaction, employer satisfaction, and a communication survey. It provides all data for the college, but the culture of evidence-based decision-making will require data-based research to measure institutional effectiveness and to create needed change for continuous college improvement of programs, services, and student learning.

Recommendation 5: Identify and Assess Student Learning Outcomes
The college must develop and implement student learning outcomes across the six sites in order to determine the effectiveness of college programs and services on student learning including:
- *Instructional programs at course, program, degree and certificate levels (Standards IIA.1c, and IIA.2i),*
- *Student services throughout the students' matriculation at the college (Standards IIB, IIB.3, and IIBA),*
- *Links between student learning outcomes and the planning process (Standard IB),*
- *Mechanisms for measuring student learning outcomes (Standard IIA.2a), and*
- *Mechanisms for using those measurements to improve courses, programs, and services (Standards IIA.lc, IIA.2e, and IIA.2f).*

This recommendation has been met. The college has responded to this recommendation by ensuring that program review including assessment of learning outcomes is reviewed and analyzed by a broad base of faculty and administrators beginning at the program level and moving along from there. The Curriculum Committee and Assessment Committee both review and respond to the analysis of learning outcomes data with an option at each level to ask the program faculty for clarification of the analyses provided. After the completion of these preliminary reviews the documents continue to the Planning and Resources Committee to be considered as part of the budgeting phase of the review process. With this process in place, COM-FSM is able to employ student learning outcomes analysis along with indirect measures of student achievement to produce curricular and course improvements at the program level.

The college has implemented student learning outcomes for its courses, and these SLOs are available in course outlines and faculty course syllabi. The Curriculum Committee is developing a common format for course outlines. A learning outcome assessment report from one of the state campus sites dated summer 2008 was completed meticulously in an honest effort to do a complete job, but complained of the 57 SLOs that had to be reported. The college is on the right track as it seeks to re-write its SLO at all levels to be more comprehensive.

Although the college is working systematically to assure that the careful reviewing of data collected through different methods in order to achieve a more accurate and valid estimate of qualitative results for SLO assessment data is presented by each instructional program, much work remains to be done to actualize this laudable goal. For instance program reviews occasionally provide analysis of the distribution of final course grades for program courses as a learning outcomes assessment. In other instances the programs present an analysis of final exam scores as a learning outcomes assessment. In many other instances the second leg of the different methods of assessment strategy calls for pre-test/post-test results that have not been implemented yet. Finally the third leg of the strategy tends to be student perceptual surveys (potentially a very valuable indirect assessment measure) of their learning which also have often not been implemented. The overall emphasis on a multiple-method strategy of assessment is a good one, but much work remains to be done to complete the deployment of assessment practices across all programs and campus sites.

In respect to student support services the college has provided evidence that they have made significant progress in their efforts to systematically utilize student learning outcomes and assessment at each campus of the college, resulting in the attainment of the proficiency level in most student support services program.

The addition of a General Education Assessment Coordinator will aid the overall process of providing direction to SLO assessment. Much work remains to be done to by 2012 when the college is expected to be at the "Proficiency" level in SLO assessment.

Recommendation 6: Create Continuity
- *The college needs to standardize instruction, student services, learning environments, and quality of instruction across the college's six sites. Specific areas that require greater continuity at this time are:*
- *A written policy manual for the Board of Regents (Standards Iv.B.1.b., IV.B.1.d., and IV.B.1.e.),*
- *The delivery of comprehensive and consistent student services at each of the college's sites (Standards II.B. l and II.B.3a), and*
- *The provision of adequate facilities for instruction at all sites; at this time the college must immediately provide an adequate faculty for student learning at the Chuuk site (Standards III.B.1. and III.B.1.b).*
- *All issues related to continuity at the college's sites are to be regularly evaluated to establish a cycle of improvement.(check ACCJC doc for relevant standard citations)*
- *The governing board establishes policies consistent with the mission statement to ensure quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and services and the resources necessary to support them (Standard IV.B.1.b.).*

This recommendation has been partially met. The COM-FSM Board of Regents establishes policies consistent with the mission statement to ensure the quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and services and the resources necessary to support them. The 2004 accreditation recommendations propelled college efforts to implement a new organizational structure and processes to standardize the programs of instruction, types of support services, and the quality of instruction and the learning environment at each campus. The college mission statement and strategic goals have guided

the change, much of which is documented in planning documents and board policy. The college policy manual is available, although not necessarily current.

Based on campus site visits and interviews, the delivery of comprehensive and consistent student services is standardized at each campus site except the FSM-FMI. College plans for new facilities have been funded and will address the need for adequate facilities at each of the campus sites. The Chuuk state campus has a new permanent site under construction. The Yap state campus has had ground breaking and site preparation for its two new facilities, and the Kosrae state campus is approved for the construction of a learning resource center. The Pohnpei state campus will begin construction of a learning resource center and vocational classroom building. Additionally, each campus has been allocated funding to conduct facility maintenance and repair. There are long-range issues to address in upgrading instructional facilities at all sites, but the team commends the college for its remarkable progress in this arena.

The primary work yet to be done is to establish and conduct a cycle of evaluation of all issues related to continuity at the college campus sites.

Recommendation 7: Diversity of Board Membership
Membership of the college's Board of Regents must have the diversity of viewpoint that is required by its own policy, national law and accrediting standards (Standard IV. 1.a., IV.1.e.).

The membership of the COM-FSM Board of Regents complies with national law and accrediting standards. Whether the governing board reflects the diversity of the FSM population and different points of view is a matter that remains questionable to the 2010 accreditation evaluation team, but could not be determined with documented evidence. This recommendation has been met.

Recommendation 8 (from Focused Midterm Report and Recommendation 2 (from June 2006 Commission Action Letter): Secure Permanent Campus for Chuuk

- *The college must make significant progress in securing the Chuuk High School campus as the site for COM-FSM's permanent Chuuk state campus or, if it is unable to within its deadline of 2008, find another acceptable site.*

With regard to Recommendation 8 above, the Commission asks that COM-FSM provide an update on the new plans to build Chuuk state campus on a location that had been previously declared "unbuildable."

This recommendation has been partially met. The Commission conducted a site visit to Chuuk in April 2009. The visiting team indicated the designated Nantaku site as the permanent site and indicated that the "issue at stake [to determining the viability of the Nantaku site as a permanent site for the Chuuk campus] is whether the college can develop an access road to the site." The permanent site for the Chuuk campus was visited in January 2010 during the previsit to COM-FSM to determine whether the college had proceeded with

improvements to the access road. Indeed the road to the campus was graded and coral was laid to a small part of the road. In March, the permanent site was visited again to determine progress to development of the access road and the building site. The land designated as the location for the first building to be constructed on the new campus was cleared for site preparation; however, based on photographs, it was not distinguishable whether any more coral has been laid on the access road in preparation for concrete covering.

Eligibility Requirements for Accreditation

1. AUTHORITY

College of Micronesia, Federated State of Micronesia (COM-FSM) operates under enabling law Title 40, Chapter 7, Section 4 of the Code of Federated States of Micronesia and is accredited by the Accrediting Commission of the Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

2. MISSION

The college's current mission statement was adopted by the COM-FSM Board of Regents in 2005, and it is publicized in the college catalogue and website, as well as available in all planning documents.   The statement is appropriately inclusive and defines the educational purposes of the college to provide academic, career and technical education opportunities. The mission statement defines institutional commitment to achieving student learning as an institution that is student-centered and committed to continuous improvement.

3. GOVERNING BOARD

The enabling law that created the autonomous College of Micronesia, FSM, also established a seven-member, although now five-member, Board of Regents to administer the COM-FSM. The five-member governing board is appointed by the President of the Federated States of Micronesia, with the advice and consent of the FSM Congress, for a staggered three-year term. The law specifies that four regents, one from each state, are appointed representatives from their respective states, and the fifth member is appointed to represent the National government.

The governing board is responsible for the quality, integrity, and financial stability of the college and for ensuring that the college's mission is carried out. This board is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the financial resources of the institution are used to provide a sound educational program.

The governing board makes policy for the college and exercises oversight of its operations. The members of the governing board adhere to a conflict of interest policy enacted as national law that restricts board members from participating in any action involving a possible conflict of interest.

4. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The COM-FSM president, Spensin James, was Board-appointed chief executive officer in 2005. The president, whose full-time responsibility is to the COM-FSM, possesses the requisite authority to administer board policies. The president serves as a non-voting ex-officio member of the Board of Regents.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY

The college has sufficient staff with appropriate preparation and experience to provide the administrative services necessary to support its mission and purpose. The college complies with the Commission standard that all faculty and staff meet minimum qualifications that are validated and degrees are certified as equivalent to U.S. degrees.

6. OPERATIONAL STATUS

COM-FSM is operational, with students actively pursuing its degree programs at each of the six college campuses.

7. DEGREES

According to the college catalogue, and as verified in interviews, about half of the college's programs are degree programs. Most of the students enrolled at the college register with the intent of attaining a degree or certificate, and some intend to transfer to four year universities.

8. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

COM-FSM offers a range of degree and certificate programs that are consistent with the college mission, are of sufficient content and length, are conducted at levels of quality and rigor appropriate to the degrees offered, and culminate in identified student outcomes.

9. ACADEMIC CREDIT

COM-FSM awards academic credits based on generally accepted practices in degree-granting community colleges. The college has several articulation agreements with accredited four-year institutions, which is evidence that COM-FSM awards academic credit that complies with generally accepted practices.

10. STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT

The college's catalogue contains student learning and achievement outcomes for all academic programs. The college is engaged in the assessment of its learning outcomes for programs and degrees.

11. GENERAL EDUCATION

The college has a clear general education component in its degree programs. The general education component is designed to ensure that all students demonstrate competence in writing and computational skills. The general education program introduces students to major areas of knowledge with comprehensive student learning outcomes that are appropriate for higher education.

12. ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The college policy on academic freedom can be found in the college catalogue. COM-FSM faculty are free to examine and test all knowledge appropriate to their discipline or area of major study as judged by the faculty and approved by the curriculum committee review process and educational administration. The college maintains an atmosphere in which intellectual freedom and independence exist.

13. FACULTY

The college has an adequate core of qualified faculty with full-time responsibility to the institution. The number of faculty is sufficient in size and experience to support all of the institution's educational programs. Faculty responsibilities are defined in the college's personnel manual, and all faculty evaluation includes a statement of assessment of students' learning.

14. STUDENT SERVICES

The student services provided by COM-FSM to its students are appropriate student services that support student learning and development within the context of the institutional mission. The college plans and measures the effectiveness of its student services by using enrollment management indicators, the strategic plan, and regular reporting of indicators of success.

15. ADMISSIONS

The admission policies of the college are publicly available in the college catalogue, on the website, and in several published documents. The admission policy is consistent with the qualifications adopted by the governing board.

16. INFORMATION AND LEARNING RESOURCES

The college operates learning resource centers and libraries at each of the six campuses of the COM-FSM, and provides access to its library collections and electronic databases. In Kosrae, the library is a partnership with the national Department of Education. The college provides interlibrary loans within FSM and also with Hawaii. Due to limited internet connectivity, access to electronic databases can be impossible during peak use hours, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

17. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The COM-FSM operates on an 11.5 million dollar budget. The funding comes from tuition and fees and from the FSM national government. The allocation from the national government remains steady at 3.8 million dollars annually. Securing adequate funding from the FSM is unpredictable and recently resulted in increased student tuition and fees, including the implementation of a technology fee. The combination of student fees and the

FSM allocation are adequate to support student learning; however, the college needs to identify new revenue in order to budget for needed scheduled maintenance and capital outlay. The college has not developed any long term budget projections to incorporate long-range priorities into a planning and budgeting process.

18. FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The college continues to maintain a strong financial position. The unrestricted fund balance is in excess of 40 percent of the budgeted expenditures for 2008-09. The ending cash balance for the same period was 31 percent of the actual expenditures for the year. The financial documents including the budget, annual audit report, financial reports to the accreditation commission, quarterly board reports, and reports to the finance committee all reflect an appropriate allocation and use of financial resources. There were not any audit findings that required a response in the last three years.

19. INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING AND EVALUATION

The team found evidence of planning for improvement of institutional structures and processes, student achievement of educational goals, and student learning. The college's policy on continuous improvement provides the overall linkage among the components of planning, assessment, and budget allocation. The implementation of performance-based budgeting will facilitate the college's integrations of planning and budgeting. COM-FSM is assessing progress toward achieving its stated goals and making decisions regarding improvement through an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation. Work remains to be done to fully integrate planning in to a comprehensive educational master plan that includes long-range budget planning,

20. PUBLIC INFORMATION

COM-FSM has a catalogue with all of the required general information that is to be readily accessible to the public. The catalogue is published biannually. Most if not all of the requisite general information may be found on the college website, although not all sections of the college website are current and some are under construction. Policies can also be found in the manual of administrative policies and procedures.

21. RELATIONS WITH THE ACCREDITING COMMISSION

COM-FSM communicates regularly with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges through its Accreditation Liaison Officer. The college regularly updates the Commission through required reporting and annual fiscal reports. The college updates the college community and the public regarding accreditation through email, news releases, and through a website dedicated to accreditation.

STANDARD I: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

The institution demonstrates strong commitment to a mission that emphasizes achievement of student learning and to communicating the mission internally and externally. The institution uses analyses of quantitative and qualitative data and analysis in an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, implementation, and re-evaluation to verify and improve the effectiveness by which the mission is accomplished.

A. Mission

The institution has a statement of mission that defines the institution's broad educational purposes, its intended student population, and its commitment to achieving student learning.

General Observations

The COM-FSM has a mission statement, approved by the Board of Regents in September 2005. It is an appropriately inclusive statement and defines educational purposes without explicitly defining its intended students. It directly states that the college will provide academic, career, and technical educational opportunities in the development of the Federated States of Micronesia.

Findings and Evidence

The mission statement appears on the college website and in the catalogue. The Board reads aloud the mission statement before each of its quarterly meetings. After the 2004 accreditation, the college revised its mission statement in September 2005, as evidenced in board minutes. The mission statement was further developed to include eight institutional goals, which drive college planning. The eight institutional goals were expanded to nine goals as of September 2006 and verified by Board minutes. All activities of the college are measured against these goals in planning, execution, and evaluation. Discussion of the mission is a part of the president's now-annual retreat, as substantiated in minutes and reports.

<div align="center">The Mission Statement of the College of Micronesia-FSM</div>

> Historically diverse, uniquely Micronesian and globally connected, the College of Micronesia-FSM is a continuously improving and student centered institute of higher education. The college is committed to assisting in the development of the Federated States of Micronesia by providing academic, career and technical educational opportunities for student learning.

In discussions with campus leaders, the team found that there are external forces that might impact the mission of the college going forward, including

- ongoing out-migration of the college-aged population,
- serving seriously under-prepared entering students,

- declining college enrollments,
- enrolling of non-traditional students, for example part-time, older, returning, and employed,
- declining support from the national government (FSM),
- continuing step-down in level of support from the ~~approaching renegotiation of the~~ Compact of Free Association between the U.S. and FSM, and
- relocating the U.S. Marine base to Guam from Okinawa.

Based on the many interviews with college stakeholders, the team determined that the institution establishes student learning programs and services aligned with its purposes and student population. The college mission statement does not clearly define its students. In fact references to "uniquely Micronesian" and the "Federated States of Micronesia" imply the institution serves the entire population.

In its planning agenda for this standard, the college recognizes the need to revise the mission as needed and further, to develop goals and objectives to address better the "uniquely Micronesian" component of the mission.

Conclusion

The college meets the requirements of Standard I.A. Institutional Mission. However, in order improve the clarity of the institution's intended student population, it is recommended that the college conduct a review of its mission statement.

Recommendation to Improve the Institution's Programs, Services and Outcomes

Recommendation A. *Institutional Mission*

In order to improve the clarity of the college mission, the team recommends that the college clearly define its intended student population (I.A).

B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness

The institution demonstrates a conscious effort to produce and support student learning, measures that learning, assesses how well learning is occurring, and makes changes to improve student learning. The institution also organizes its key processes and allocates its resources to effectively support student learning. The institution demonstrates its effectiveness by providing 1) evidence of the achievement of student learning outcomes and 2) evidence of institution and program performance. The institution uses ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning to refine its key processes and improve student learning

General Observations

Since the last accreditation visit the college has made significant and widespread improvement in developing an ongoing cycle of planning and assessment that is linked to performance-based budgeting. In response to the 2004 accreditation recommendations, the

college developed a new organizational chart and reporting structure to clarify and organize responsibilities, processes, and authority for decision-making.

Using a new continuous improvement cycle, the college is now well-placed to proceed with an integrated planning and assessment model. The institution adopted student learning outcomes across the curriculum and implemented the systematic collection and analysis of data that is used for making informed decisions. The college also developed an institutional assessment plan (IAP) as well as implemented a collegewide student information system (SIS) and universal program reviews. Among the many processes and policies developed since the last accreditation visit are monthly reporting and clarified authority for collegewide decision-making. Recently the college implemented performance-based budgeting with the development of the 2011 institutional budget.

The IAP is relatively new, with only one formal cycle of the process completed; nonetheless, it demonstrates that the institution has a viable process to make improvements and follow-up appropriately.

As with all processes, the challenges and need for fine-tuning remain, but the team found among college stakeholders an almost universal belief that COM-FSM is a markedly improved institution and heading in the right direction by emphasizing planning, measuring performance, and conducting regular evaluation throughout the institution.

Findings and Evidence

In discussions across the college, the team found that there has been a strong focus on communication since the last team visit. The college leadership has made good progress toward improving communication, but too often the college community at-large views the resulting existing communication as more one-way information-sharing than true interactive dialogue.

The college developed a new organizational chart, approved by the Board in September 2004. During 2005 supporting activities took place, including the development of new job descriptions and the development of plans and the implementation of strategies to improve communication and decision-making. The organizational structure was evaluated in 2007 and again in 2008. The team reviewed a 2009 systemwide satisfaction survey, and the results show that only 30 percent of faculty characterized communication as good or very good, indicating that further work is needed. In interviews the team found a frequent comment that communication was, for the most part, one way–with information transmittal being mistaken for meaningful communication. As of the team visit, in March 2010, the Vice President for Administration completed a communication improvement plan addressing these issues. The communication improvement plan is being circulated for comment prior to implementation and is scheduled for evaluation at the one-year mark (I.B.3-4).

College efforts to develop a broad dialogue around student learning and institutional processes continue to be hampered by distance, time, and technology. Other communication issues also limit participation. The team found that buy-in from some constituent groups is

negatively affected by their belief that the committee structure and the organization structure itself result in a perceived lack of opportunity for meaningful input from the various key internal stakeholders. A good example referenced in the self-study and confirmed in team meetings on site is the organizational change that excludes State Campus Directors from agenda-setting and voting on president's cabinet items. The exclusion of the State Campus Directors from the decision-making is seen as contrary to promoting meaningful involvement and institutional effectiveness (I.B.4).

According to meeting minutes of various committees, real or authentic committee participation from campus representatives continues to be problematic. For example, campus faculty participation in the faculty and staff senate from sites distant from Pohnpei appears to be limited if not absent. Committee participants from locations other than Pohnpei must participate via voice over IP (VOIP), which provides unreliable service.

The inauguration of the fiber optic link between Pohnpei and Guam, now scheduled for April 2010, is supposed to benefit each of the state campuses' ability to participate in meeting via Internet conferencing (VOIP) with audible sound, but it remains to be determined if it will and, if it does, if it will improve inter-campus participation, collaboration, and moreover meaningful dialogue.

Also hampering effective participation in consultation and communication is the small number of faculty at non-Pohnpei campus sites. Each full-time faculty must serve on multiple committees, a problem which has no clear solution, even if efforts for committee participation by VOIP and other technology become successful.

The college has inaugurated a student information system, which has made information and student data available at each campus. Student services personnel applaud this technology although the team found some dissatisfaction with the level of reporting available and with the perceived burdensome process for requesting reports as well as the lack of timely response to requested reports, which are developed and generated at the national campus.

In its self-study the college recognizes several areas of needed improvement, including clarity and consistency of decision-making across the six campuses and additional training in and development of support for the new organizational structure. The latest IAP survey results underscore these needs. For example, the team found that the multiple reporting lines are often confusing and an impediment to clear and timely reporting, thus hindering effective communication.

Monthly reporting is prevalent across the college, including reports from instruction, student services, IT, maintenance, LLRC, Upward Bound, CRE, fiscal, and campus directors. Monthly reporting is used to measure activity and progress toward attaining the nine institutional goals.

The board-approved continuous improvement policy describes planning, evaluation, feedback, and resource allocation as fundamental to the operation and success of the college. There are five parts of the plan:

1. Development of long range plans.
2. Development of annual improvement plans.
3. Implementation of plans with action steps.
4. Evaluation and reporting.
5. Adjustment/improvement of plans (I.B.2-4).

Growing from this policy are several supporting plans and activities:

- college strategic plan, 2006-11,
- institutional assessment plan,
- technology plan,
- communications plan,
- student learning outcomes,
- program review,
- satisfaction surveys,
- performance-based budgeting,
- annual improvement plans,
- the annual President's Retreat, and
- the committee structure established by the college (I.B.1-3).

The college has made remarkable progress in the development and use of plans, data collection, and evaluation. The next step is to draw together the various independent plans into a comprehensive educational master plan, and to use the comprehensive plan to align long-term institutional needs with long-term budget planning.

The team found evidence that the college has identified student learning outcomes (SLOs) for all its courses; that program reviews are in place for all aspects of the college; and that program reviews are evaluated and used for planning (I.B.6-7).

In meetings with various constituencies, the team found that the communication of evaluation and research findings to all stakeholders is a matter that needs some attention. Too often employers, possible employers, the FSM Department of Education, parents, primary and secondary school leaders and others are not included in dialogue about student demographics and student learning. The college has done a good job internally in gathering data and preparing reports, and now it must develop a plan to make sure valuable information is broadly communicated to constituents that are both internal and external to the college, including each of the state campuses. In conjunction with this finding, the team found the college website is frequently outdated or inaccurate, with links missing or empty, which negatively impacts research, access to information, and communication (I.B.3-6).

Conclusions

The college partially meets the requirement of Standard I.B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness.

The team found that for the most part the college is operating at the proficiency level of the Commission Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness – Part II: Planning of institutional effectiveness. The missing part is that the institution has yet to integrate its various plans into a comprehensive plan to achieve its broad educational purposes.

Furthermore, the college needs to continue to improve communication across the institution not merely by improving the use telecommunication, but by improving dialogue across the college and with the community by implementing methods that promote meaningful dialogue that encourages different points of view and fosters interaction among all stakeholders. Additionally, the college needs to provide access to current and accurate information, including on the college website, in order to promote informed discussion.

Recommendations to Fully Meet the Standards of Accreditation

Recommendation 1. *Improving Institutional Effectiveness*

To fully meet this standard, the team recommends the college evolve its communications efforts to ensure broad-based and 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 (IB4; III.D).

Recommendation 3. *Improving Institutional Effectiveness*

To fully meet this standard, the team recommends that the college advance the institution's movement towards proficiency in the cycle of continuous improvement by completing the development of the student information system and providing for additional research design, analysis, and reporting (I.B.6; IV.B.2).

Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services

The institution offers high-quality instructional programs, student support services, and library and learning support services that facilitate and demonstrate the achievement of stated student learning outcomes. The institution provides an environment that supports learning, enhances student understanding and appreciation of diversity, and encourages personal and civic responsibility as well as intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development for all of its students.

A. Instructional Programs

The institution offers high-quality instructional programs in recognized and emerging fields of study that culminate in identified student outcomes leading to degrees, certificates, employment, or transfer to other higher education institutions or programs consistent with its mission. Instructional programs are systematically assessed in order to assure currency, improve teaching and learning strategies, and achieve stated student learning outcomes. The provisions of this standard are broadly applicable to all instructional activities offered in the name of the institution.

General Observations

The college serves the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) by providing student learning programs of quality that are systematically reviewed, committed to assessing student learning, and applying the results to continuous improvement cycles at the course and program levels. The college is persistent in its efforts to deploy learning outcomes strategies across six campus sites throughout the FSM. Although work remains to be done, recent developments at the college bode well for the prospects of reaching expected levels of proficiency for learning outcomes assessment by 2012.

Findings and Evidence

The college offers more than forty degree and certificate programs in keeping with its mission to provide academic, career and technical education to assist in the economic and social development of the Federated States of Micronesia. The National Campus provides most of the A.A. degree and A.S. degree programs, and the Pohnpei Campus provides A.A.S. and Certificate of Achievement programs in career technical fields. Outer island state campuses offer selected degree programs in both education and in public health fields, along with selected certificate programs offered on Chuuk and Kosrae. Several certificate programs germane to maritime studies are offered in Yap at the Fisheries and Maritime Institute, and all sites other than the National Campus offer the General Studies Certificate of Achievement, a one-year program for students at the remedial/developmental level.

At the time of the team visitation the college had broached a discussion conducted by the senior level of administration with selected support faculty and staff from the National Campus concerning the future of the General Studies certificate program. The college was considering a change to college entrance policies that would reduce or eliminate the General Studies program. College leaders were wrestling with the issue of low scoring students'

ability to benefit from the program. The Certificate in General Studies program comprises 34 credits of mostly remedial/developmental level courses, and the college was concerned that the level of preparation for students emerging from the certificate program was neither sufficient for further academic work nor was the General Studies credential appropriate for entrance into the employment market. Student achievement data fueled this inquiry, and the conundrum facing the college is that the Certificate in General Studies program offered at each of the state campuses enrolls significant numbers of students at those campuses (e.g., over 25 percent of the students at Pohnpei Campus). Options appear to include closing the program or restructuring it to establish more stringent entrance requirements and upgraded expected outcomes. Although discussion was taking place at the National Campus level concerning this program at the time of the team visit, the fate and/or modified nature of this program will presumably follow established program review procedures to assure a full opportunity for administrative and faculty at the state campuses to provide input (II.A, II.A.1, II.A.1.a, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.A.6.b, II.A.6.c).

The college has deployed a common vocabulary of student learning outcomes assessment and in particular the faculty and administration are attuned to the need to "close the loop." The understanding evinced by the self-study as well as in curriculum committee and assessment committee minutes has been made possible in part by the college's commitment to bringing in knowledgeable learning outcomes consultants on several occasions in the last six years. The consultants have offered services to a broad-based audience in the college and have made site visits to the state campuses to do an effective job of disseminating throughout COM-FSM sites the relevant concepts and issues related to learning outcomes assessment (II.A, II.A.1, II.A.1.a, II.A.1.c, II.A.2, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.e, II.A.6).

The college is in the process of reducing its course and program learning outcomes to manageable levels in the range of three to five program outcomes as an ideal;.. As the self-study indicates the Curriculum Committee recently "began discussion on a common format for course outlines" in fall 2009. Versions of the course outlines found on the college website included a limited number of "General Objectives" and often numerous (10 to 20+) "Specific Objectives" in the outlines. A learning outcome assessment report from one of the state campus sites dated to summer 2008 was completed meticulously in an effort to do a thorough job, but the campus staff complained of the onerous burden of 57 SLOs that had to be assessed and reported. The college is on the right track as it seeks to re-write its SLOs at all levels to be less numerous and more comprehensive. The Third–Year Certificate of Achievement for Related Services Assistants provides a model of program learning outcomes expressed succinctly and employing an imaginative array of action verbs for its six program learning outcomes (II.A, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f).

The college must complete its recently determined (fall semester 2009) common format of course outlines to identify a manageable number of student learning outcomes and fully deploy the college's learning outcomes assessment strategies for all learning outcomes in all degree programs, certificate programs, and courses at all campus sites taking into account the challenge of deploying a common strategy throughout a faculty that is small in number and with a regular turnover among those hired through World Teach (a "Peace Corp" model for teaching). The administrative infrastructure should be sufficient to move to the proficiency

level for student learning outcomes assessment, as outlined in the Commission Rubric for Institutional Effectiveness, in light of the coordination of activities by the Director of Academic Programs working in concert with the Instructional Coordinators at each of the state campuses. Moreover, the programs seem well on their way to adopting standardized and multiple research methods plans to gather both direct and indirect measures of student learning as the heart of instructional program reviews. Finally, the college is on the cusp of hiring a General Education Assessment Coordinator to focus efforts on standardizing the techniques of assessment across programs and campuses (II.A.1, II.A.1.c, II.A.2, II.A.2a, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f).

Although the college is working systematically to ensure the careful review of data collected through different methods in order to achieve a more accurate and valid estimate of qualitative results for SLO assessment data is presented by each instructional program, much work remains to be done to actualize this laudable goal. For instance, program reviews occasionally provide analysis of the distribution of final course grades for program courses as a learning outcomes assessment. In other instances the programs present an analysis of final exam scores as a learning outcomes assessment. In many other instances the second leg of the multiple method assessment strategy calls for pre-test and post-test results that have not been implemented yet. Finally the third leg of the strategy tends to be student perceptual surveys (potentially a valuable indirect assessment measure) of their learning, which also have often not been implemented. The overall emphasis on a triangulated strategy is a good one, but much work remains to be done to complete the consistent deployment of assessment practices across all programs and campus sites (II.A, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.A.2.g).

The addition of a General Education Assessment Coordinator in the near future will be an aid to the overall process of providing direction to SLO assessment. However, much work remains to be done to establish these positive developments by 2012 when colleges are expected to be at the proficiency level in SLO assessment. This is not to say that the college has not produced exemplary pilot efforts that include elements of external validation to assess learning outcomes. The college is able to offer evidence of pilot efforts in the English Department, Micronesian Studies Department, and the Education Department that are notable as efforts to provide external validation of learning outcomes achieved by students. However, generalizing similar commitment and results of outcomes assessment across the programs of the college requires continued and accelerated effort (II.A, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.A.2.g).

The college employs a system that places the chairpersonship of the curriculum committee in the hands of the Vice President of Instructional Affairs or her designee. However, faculty membership holds a majority of seats, and the faculty representatives to the committee are comfortable that the structure and the operation of the committee fairly reflect the central role of faculty in curricular review and advice (II.A.2.a). The college provides a perfunctory statement of its general education philosophy accompanied by well defined general education learning outcomes that provide a fuller understanding of its expectations for general education (II.A.3, II.A.3.a, II.A.3.b, II.A.3.c). The college catalogue provides a cursory description of its policy for transfer students into the institution and nothing on transfers out

to the most common of its transfer partners (II A.6, II A.6.a).

Conclusions

The college partially meets the requirement of Standard II.A. Instructional Programs.

<u>Recommendation to Fully Meet the Standards of Accreditation</u>

Recommendation 4. *Instructional Programs Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment*

To fully meet this standard, the team recommends that the college develop a plan and schedule in order to reach the proficiency level by 2012 for student learning outcomes assessment by aligning its course SLOs with degree and certificate SLOs; by identifying and practicing multiple methods of assessment practices of SLOs for all courses, programs and degrees; by preparing comprehensive assessment reports that are completed on a regular basis; and by providing evidence of student awareness of goals and purposes of courses and programs in which they are enrolled (II.A; II.A.1; II.A.1a; II.A.1c; II.A.2; II.A.2a; II.A.2b; II.A.2e; II.A.2f; II.A.2g; II.A.2h; II.A.2i; II.A.5).

B. Student Learning Programs and Services

The institution recruits and admits diverse students who are able to benefit from its programs, consistent with its mission. Student support services address the identified needs of students and enhance a supportive learning environment. The entire student pathway through the institutional experience is characterized by a concern for student access, progress, learning, and success. The institution systematically assesses student support services using student learning outcomes, faculty and staff input, and other appropriate measures in order to improve the effectiveness of these services.

General Observations

The college provides an appropriate array of student support services at each of the state campuses that reflect the college's institutional mission and strategic goals. The student services division has identified a programmatic emphasis that clearly aligns with college priorities, such as enrollment management, equitable access to core services, personal development, student engagement, overall retention, and academic achievement. The team encountered evidence of integrated planning, program assessment, and systematic commitment to sustain effectiveness in meeting the support service needs of a very diverse student population. In addition the college collects, analyzes, and sets priorities based on a growing body of student demographic and longitudinal data extracted from their new student information system (SIS).

Based on the accreditation commission's "Student Learning Outcomes Rubric," the team found that the college has progressed to the proficiency level in relation to its assessment of student support services. The college provided evidence that they have incorporated the results of outcomes assessment into program improvement and effectiveness, in some cases

through the second cycle of evaluation. Their efforts to firmly integrate program review, evaluation, and student feedback in their support service program action plans demonstrates a realistic commitment to "close the loop" throughout the assessment process.

Institutional goals identified in the college's strategic plan reinforce their intent to ensure the comprehensive nature and reliable delivery of support services. The use of an annual "Student Satisfaction Survey" has become the cornerstone of their evaluation efforts, enabling them to disaggregate survey data for each of the state campuses and by various other key student characteristics. In the future, campuses are preparing to conduct focus groups to consider more in-depth response from identifiable student cohorts. The college has successfully competed for TRIO program grants and has targeted its Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Special Services to assist high risk, low income students at various campus sites. Financial Aid is awarded to an estimated 95 percent of their full-time enrollment and is packaged to combine Pell grants, special opportunity grants, and campus employment to sufficiently cover the cost of education for virtually all of the college's matriculating students at each campus.

The Student Services Committee is composed of a cross section of state and national campus representatives providing a consistent vehicle for collaboration and institutional dialogue. The recently initiated Retention Committee is the result of the college's decision to place student retention as its highest priority strategic goal in 2010-11. The implementation of a new student information system (SIS) includes a robust student portal, "My Shark," and an automatic email account for each student, thereby enhancing communication in the college community and assuring technology access across socio-economic strata. While the SIS is currently in phase I, the next series of phases promises to introduce a degree audit system for students and real time online transaction services.

It has been verified through several interviews that the overall financial resources dedicated to student support services have improved dramatically over the past several fiscal years, primarily because of the expanded services and thereby increased staffing at the state campuses. The team has also found, through its site visits and examination of the college's documentation, that the quality and scope of services at each campus are consistent with the expectations of the accrediting standards.

Findings and Evidence

The team found evidence in the catalogue, the college's website, evaluative documentation, and interviews with the college community that student support services address the identified needs of students. The college has strengthened the scope of services at its six campus sites by determining a core set of programs to be delivered "across all sites of the college to all students," as stated in the self-study. The augmented support services at each campus site include Financial Aid, Recreation and Sports, Academic Advising, Counseling, Tutoring, Health Services, and Peer Counseling (II.B, II.B.1, II.B.3.a, II.B.3.d)

The biennial college catalogue, published in both print and web-based formats, is accurate and contains most current information as required by accreditation standards. It is an easy-

to-read publication with specific instructional program and course sequences for degree and certificate majors. The catalog does not have an index nor does it outline transfer articulation course requirements for its primary university partners. The fact that the college did not have a published student sexual harassment policy at the time of publication reflects a serious omission from the catalog. The catalog also does not contain information describing the complaint and grievance procedures for students. Despite the fact that college staff indicate an awareness of the complaint process and new student orientation covers this topic, the next edition of the college catalog should publish both the sexual harassment policy and complaint procedures in their entirety (II.B.2.a-d).

The college website is still developing the breadth of information available for students and should eventually contain a complete mirror of catalog-referenced material. All students have access to a college-based email account via the student information system. The "My Shark" portal has been well received by students based on their survey data and will permit expanded transaction services in the upcoming phases of its implementation. The team conducted student and staff interviews at the state campuses that yielded testimonials that SIS has improved timely student enrollment as well as class roster and grade functions for faculty (II.B.2.d, II.B.3).

The college systematically assesses student support services using program review, learning outcomes, student satisfaction surveys and data from its student information system. Although some of its assessment data is detailed in specific campus reports, it was not evident how the baseline satisfaction survey has been analyzed for each campus (II.B.3, II.3.B.c-f).

The college has appointed a Student Services Committee to coordinate the integration of services, enhance collegiality, promote program effectiveness, and develop the division's strategic goals. Based on minutes of their meetings and the extensive representation of division leaders, the team found that this committee is stimulating an overall improvement in collaboration. In addition, the team found that the Vice President of Student Services encourages shared leadership and accountability in administering the college's efforts to assure equitable access, performance continuity, and resource allocation across all campus sites (II.B.3, II.B.4).

Resident life is supported at the National Campus through separate men's and women's dormitories. Student resident advisors are selected who are in their second or third year of studies in order to provide on-site security, mediation, and personal transition services for students. Students interviewed by the team stated they enjoy the communal and planned activities of dorm life. Overall the dorms are in fair condition, although the team did respond to reported complaints by examining dorm rooms and bathrooms. The team found that the restroom privacy doors and toilets should be repaired or replaced and that a scheduled maintenance program should be implemented to maintain the student residences in better condition (II.B.3.b).

Many scheduled activities of the college promote the understanding and appreciation of diversity. A college environment that inspires personal and civic responsibility is anchored

by numerous clubs and co-curricular events, primarily evident at the National Campus. Student engagement is also supported in varying degrees at each state campus, based on an underlying value to develop cross-cultural understanding and leadership opportunity. There is an active student government association which provides a formal experience for student involvement in college governance and policy decisions. The college's curriculum is expanding its course offerings in subject matter that addresses the diversity of its indigenous cultures and languages, in particular through a Micronesia History general education requirement in the social sciences and a popular Micronesian Studies academic major (II.B.3.d.).

The college has designed a counseling and academic advising model that incorporates professional counselors, special program advisors, faculty advisors, and peer counseling. The college decided to implement identical student services at each campus and has assigned a counselor to and established peer counseling on each state campus, except the FSM Fisheries and Maritime Institute. The college's goal to provide identical services at each campus is laudable; nevertheless, the decision raised the question whether identical services require equal staffing at each campus without consideration to student enrollment. (II.B.1, I.B.3.c, II.B.4).

The Student Information System Phase II will provide a robust series of student information screens created to facilitate the academic advising function. The team found that the counseling function is regularly evaluated through designated surveys and department outcome assessment. The student-to-counselor ratio has been applied consistently to each campus in regard to determining counselor assignments. The innovative use of peer counselors has enabled the college to provide intervention and follow-up services for students with high risk academic or personal needs. The team determined that the college will need to plan ongoing training sessions in order to keep faculty advisors abreast with program changes and the institution's high profile retention goal (II.B.3.c).

The college uses a locally developed instrument, COMET (College of Micronesia Entrance Test), to assist with course placement and to determine levels of student readiness for college. The college acknowledges that COMET's critical impact on admission to the college's degree, certificate, and remedial programs needs to be systematically validated for reliability and disproportionate bias. The team found current validation of COMET to be complete although there are plans to conduct an analysis of the test's effectiveness and potential to be modified as a diagnostic tool in conjunction with the GATES reading instrument. The team also found that numerous college staff are concerned about the proposal to raise the admission score, especially in relation to the potential impact on enrollment at the state campuses. The team advises the college to conduct a thorough research project and solicit input from campus leaders in order to forecast the probable enrollment and community effects of changing their admission standards (II.B.3.e).

The college maintains student records permanently, securely, and confidentially in its student information system (SIS) computer database. Unfortunately, the team found that the centralized hard copy student records archived at the National Campus are not protected in a secure and confidential storage system. The outdated metal record cabinets in the Records

Office have been damaged, and there is visual evidence that the locking mechanisms have been removed. This hard copy record status does not meet the commission standard nor does it meet the related record management protocol established by the professional association of college registrars. Even though record access is allowed only to appropriate staff, the fact that the entrance door to the Office of Admission, Records and Retention is a simple door handle lock represents another high risk the college should address. Furthermore, as the college progresses to Phase II of its SIS project it will need to assure the confidentiality of electronic student personal information and provide extensive training for the advising and support staff who will utilize student records in their routine daily work (II.B.3.f).

Conclusions

The college meets the requirements of Standard II.B. Student Support Services.

The team found a sophisticated student support services division that has become a proactive institutional leader clearly aligned with the mission of the college. The staff employed through the distinct college campuses work cohesively, are well qualified, and seek to reinforce student access, progress, learning and success in measurable ways. Their contributions serve to elevate the educational reputation of the college. The support service commitment to program review, intra-campus continuity, and student learning outcomes is commendable.

On the other hand, the team concluded that the resident life dormitory deserves serious attention since it appears the restrooms are in disrepair, a recurring condition that should be remedied. Even more seriously, the college must address the student academic record security issues (failure to have locked file cabinets holding student records) before a breach undermines the college's academic integrity.

Recommendations to Improve the Institution's Programs, Services and Outcomes

Recommendation B. *Student Support Services*

To improve the effective allocation of student support resources, the team recommends that the college evaluate whether continuity of services requires identical services with identical staffing or equivalent staffing based on student enrollment (II.b.1, II.B.3.c, II.B.4)

Recommendation C. *Student Support Services*

To improve access to college catalog general information, requirements and major policies, the team recommends that the college include in its catalogue transfer articulation course requirements for its primary university partners, the student complaint policy and procedure, and an index to topical information (II.B.2).

Recommendation D. *Student Support Services*

To improve the security and confidentiality of student records, the team recommends that the

college immediately ensure that the student personal information and academic records are secure from breach of confidentiality (II.B.3.f).

C. Library and Learning Support Services

Library and other learning support services for students are sufficient to support the institution's instructional programs and intellectual, aesthetic, and cultural activities in whatever format and wherever they are offered. Such services include library services and collections, tutoring, learning centers, computer laboratories, and learning technology development and training. The institution provides access and training to students so that library and other learning support services may be used effectively and efficiently. The institution systematically assesses these services using student learning outcomes, faculty input, and other appropriate measures in order to improve the effectiveness of the services.

General Observations

The Library and Learning Resource Centers (LRC) are hubs of information resources for all campuses. They are centrally located and provide a wide range of services that adapt to changing needs and increasing demand. The National Campus Library is open 63 hours a week, and all other campus libraries are open a minimum of 40 hours a week. The Learning Resource director has oversight for all Library/LRC activities for the college. Monthly reports provide information by campus site related to LRC activities including student use, visitors, and reference inquiries. This information provides a basis for collection development, which is centralized at the National Campus. Each campus has a collection of Pacific/Micronesian cultural materials, which is heavily used.

Faculty librarians and library technicians select resources for the campuses. The college relies on its Ebsco electronic resources for a wide range of academic journals and periodicals. Librarians and library technicians have been working closely with faculty, divisions, and students to provide print, media, and electronic resources to support the curriculum. The campuses all have numerous learning services such as tutoring centers, labs, and media support. Library and learning resources address the informational competency core General Education outcome adopted by the college.

Findings and Evidence

While the National Campus appears to have significant resources, they are not sufficient in quantity, currency, depth, and variety to support educational offerings. The team noted that many resources are outdated and in need of replacement. Additionally, state campus site visitors noted that state campuses have insufficient print and nonprint resources as well as unreliable accessibility to online resources. According to the college's self-evaluation and survey results, "materials collections need to be improved" and the accreditation team agrees with this assessment (II.C.1a).

Libraries face issues of maintenance and security especially at the National Campus where the detection gates have not functioned consistently for several years. Additionally, the Kosrae campus faced challenging issues related to termites and rodents. A new Kosrae

Library/LRC is among the approved new capital projects. The Pohnpei Campus will have a new building soon which will help address the space needs for students who use this facility. The quantity measure of 30 volumes per student should be reevaluated in terms of a base core collection that is of academic quality, currency, depth and variety. Additionally, the college should provide maintenance and security of its collections (II.C.1c, II.C.1.d).

The college relies on its electronic resources for journals and periodicals, but students are severely hampered by unreliable Internet connections. In addition, campuses outside of the National Campus as well as the site visitors have been unable to view the National Campus' much more extensive library collection on the web. This also impinges on students' ability to request interlibrary loans. Issues with the Follette software have blocked access for the last two months. The web presence for the Libraries/LRC also revealed electronic resources that were inaccessible or incomplete, such as FSM Digital Library and the research tools. This severely limits the National Campus' ability to expose its collections to students at the other COM-FSM campuses. The self-study also acknowledges that **"**much of the instructional support equipment is at the end of its useful life and needs replacing and updating*"* (II.C.1a). As the technology infrastructure improves, it is hopeful that it will support reliable remote access and that extended services to students at off-campus sites can be enhanced (II.C.1, II.C.1c).

The librarians and library staff at the National Campus provide instruction for users of the library as well as training on equipment for staff of other campuses. In addition, the college adopted a new general education core outcome for information competency in July 2009. The library provides the information resources and instruction in the use of resources for this competency. This outcome is assessed in both the expository writing class as well as in a class in the Micronesian studies major.

Through an instructional program of library orientations, drop-in workshops, course-integrated instruction, and one-on-one instruction at the reference desk, librarians are actively involved in developing students' information competencies. All of the library and learning resource services have strong liaisons with teaching faculty and staff at each campus. The college uses several methods of evaluating its effectiveness, such as the adoption of a formula that establishes 30 volumes per student as a measure for determining the adequacy of the library collection, conducting faculty and student surveys evaluating traditional library use data, and reviewing library system generated reports. The libraries monitor LRC computer usage, reference inquires, and programs and services; and the aggregated information is reported monthly. As reported in the college self-study, the college recognizes the need to use its library/LRC evaluation methods to directly correlate measures of student success (II.C.2).

While the libraries and learning resource centers are clearly a part of the process established in the Institutional Assessment Plan (IAP), it is clear that some of the critical needs of collections, staffing, facilities, and other resources have not been fully addressed in the relevant planning agendas. There is a need to articulate LRC needs for each of the campuses in relevant institutional plans (II.C.2).

Conclusions

The college partially meets the requirements of Standard II.C. Library and Learning Support Services.

The librarians and staff are dedicated to delivery of services to faculty, staff, and students; however, the resources at each campus are insufficient in depth, variety, and currency to support the institution's educational goals. Furthermore, the lack of reliable Internet connectivity during core operational hours (9 a.m.- 4 p.m.) to web-based resources, including to the National Campus' web catalog and Ebscohost journals and periodicals, severely limits the college's ability to deliver resources to students and faculty. The collections at all campuses are considered to be insufficient to meet instructional needs (II.C.1, II.C.1c).

Recommendation 5. *Library and Learning Support Services*

To fully meet this standard, the team recommends that the college evaluate and ensure the adequacy of the quantity and currency of its Library collections and ensure that there is reliable access to all library resources, both print and electronic (II.C.1, II.C.1c).

STANDARD III: Resources

The institution effectively uses its human, physical, technology, and financial resources to achieve its broad educational purposes, including stated student learning outcomes, and to improve institutional effectiveness.

A. Human Resources

The institution employs qualified personnel to support student learning programs and services wherever offered and by whatever means delivered, and to improve institutional effectiveness. Personnel are treated equitably, are evaluated regularly and systematically, and are provided opportunities for professional development. Consistent with its mission, the institution demonstrates its commitment to the significant educational role played by persons of diverse backgrounds by making positive efforts to encourage such diversity. Human resource planning is integrated with institutional planning.

General Observations

The accreditation team visited all six campuses in the four states of Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, and Yap. The college has a diverse student, faculty, and staff population. The team examined documents of evidence as well as conducted interviews to validate the self-study reports regarding personnel policies and procedures, planning initiatives, and evaluation of the services provided by the college's Human Resources department.

Findings and Evidence

The College of Micronesia-FSM provides human resources services that are centralized at the National Campus and deployed to each campus. The Human Resources department has a clear role in the full range of human resource functions, including recruitment, selection, and evaluation of faculty and staff; validation of foreign degrees; determination of classification and pay; records maintenance; staff development; grievance resolution; and employee relations. The department works with the Personnel Committee to systematically review and approve extensive policies and procedures and to address the criteria, qualifications, and procedures for employment of all personnel. The committee also addresses other issues such as compensation, leave policies, benefits, staff development, incentives, evaluations, terminations, discipline, staff development, and nepotism. Policies and other documents related to human resources are also available on the college website (III.A.1a, III.A.3). Human Resources conducts on-site training annually, has an assigned staff member at the Chuuk campus, and designated staff at the other campuses who handle HR concerns as part of their assignment. In fall 2008 and spring 09, the director of human resources made visits to the Chuuk, National, Pohnpei and Kosrae campuses. The director also visited the Yap Campus and FMI in fall 2009 (III.A.3).

Requests for positions are prepared by the department head and are then reviewed by finance, planning, HR and the President. Positions are announced through mail, email, online resources as well as print sources in order to secure a broad pool of applicants. The team reviewed a draft of the planning agenda entitled "Procedures and Timelines for Hiring,"

which is scheduled for implementation in fall 2010.

Faculty are involved with the hiring committees related to their instructional division. Faculty selection committees include four faculty and the division chair. Current job announcements for faculty require appropriate minimum qualifications as well as experience with the establishment and assessment of student learning outcomes. Degree validation and reference checks are the responsibility of the Human Resources department. Because of the unique nature of the geographic locations of COM-FSM and each campus site, many interviews are conducted by telephone (III.A.1).

Upon recommendation of the Commission, the college now validates all degrees from non-U.S. institutions through the credential validation services of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars Admissions Officers or the World Education Services. The team interviewed staff and reviewed current records which verified that degree audits of personnel are conducted as part of the hiring process. Job announcements specify the responsibilities of applicants to submit transcript information to these agencies. Agencies respond directly to the Director of Human Resources who opens the sealed evaluation and determines verification of applicant degree attainment (III.A.1a).

The college has a strategic goal to "invest in sufficient, qualified and effective human resources." Progress toward this goal is reported in the monthly reports of the HR director to the college president as well as in the assessment plan worksheets, mission and outcomes/objectives development worksheets, and detailed performance reporting forms to the Board of Regents.

The college has established systematic, annual evaluation processes for all classifications of employees. Documents for evaluation are located online and in print in the *Personnel Policy and Procedure Manual,* which includes the performance evaluation for classified and professional staff (Appendix J), employee progress report for management (Appendix K), and instructional faculty evaluation form (Appendix N). Classified and professional staff are evaluated based on job understanding, self-management, and communication abilities (20 factors). Additional factors are added for those with supervisory responsibilities. Also, the management personnel have a new evaluation form scheduled to be implemented in 2010.

Faculty evaluations include a checklist of 13 items ranging from professional responsibilities and personal characteristics to teaching and learning abilities. The faculty evaluation check list includes a category for the "responsibility for student progress toward achieving stated learning outcomes, communicates desired learning outcomes to the students, shows a commitment to effectiveness in producing those learning outcome." The evaluation is merely a check mark indicating that the faculty either "meets" or "needs improvement" in the category. In the investigation of the adequacy of this evaluation method, faculty reported to the team that this category related to SLOs is fully addressed in the formal assessment of the class that is completed and reported at the end of the semester.

The faculty evaluation check list is accompanied by a classroom observation and student class evaluations. A peer evaluation is optional. Supervisors are encouraged to add narrative

commentary to the faculty evaluation.

Overall, there is evidence that all full-time faculty and staff are on a scheduled timetable for evaluation with follow-up reports for managers who have not fulfilled this obligation. One problematic area identified in the self-study and verified by the team is the inconsistent regular evaluation of part-time faculty (III.A.1b).

The college has a code of ethics for faculty and staff (policy 005). HR confirmed that management is included in this code of ethics as members of the staff. The United States Embassy in Pohnpei conducted a workshop on ethics at the National Campus.

The college is proud of its 14 diverse ethnic cultures. The faculty code of ethics includes a diversity statement that encourages faculty to learn about different student cultures and to treat all students with respect: "As members of a diverse, multicultural community, faculty members have a responsibility to cultural, gender and ability sensitivity that goes beyond tolerance and deference. The faculty model these sensitivities in the classroom, on campus, and in the wider community." There is not a parallel statement in the staff code of ethics that includes a diversity statement (III.A.4.b-c). There is clearly global diversity of faculty and staff; additionally, there is demonstrated consideration to promote the development of Micronesians to meet employment needs of the college.

The college also has a policy addressing academic freedom and faculty responsibilities. The college utilizes guiding principles from the college's *Policy and Procedure Manual* as well as in public law 7-79 to ensure fairness in employment practices. Personnel records are securely held in locked cabinets in the HR director's office, and employees have a process to review their personnel records. A policy on personnel records will be developed in 2010 (II.A.3).

Staff development initiatives and activities are coordinated from the National Campus, and each campus has a person with designated responsibility to facilitate staff development at the local level. Supervisors in all areas are responsible for evaluating individual staff development needs. The staff development support to faculty and staff is very generous with tuition reimbursements and time off to pursue the attainment of educational degrees. Since the 2004 accreditation evaluation, faculty and staff have obtained their minimally required degrees. The college implemented an exemplary program of support for faculty and staff to attain necessary higher education to effectively perform their jobs (III.A.5).

The HR plan for policy development and the department's monthly reports provide evidence that HR is integrated with institutional planning. The monthly reviews to the president include IPEDS reporting, information for enrollment management and marketing strategy, policy development and research, staff development, data gathering and assessment for HR performance, annual objectives, reorganizations, evaluation training and notices for compliance, organizational charts, major functional responsibilities and decision grids. The strategic plan includes agendas related to the development of a collegewide staff development plan with an emphasis on implementation of the strategies across the college's vast geography to include all six campus sites. In addition, the college plans to assess current

recruitment and retention policies and practices in order to develop and implement innovative strategies to improve the recruitment and retention of employees.

Conclusions

The college meets the requirements of Standard III.A. Human Resources

The self-study addresses all the major aspects of Standard III.A, which the team has verified is accurately reported. The college systematically develops policies and procedures, as well as evaluates practices in place to support the quality and integrity of its programs and services. The Personnel Committee has broad constituent representation from each campus. The college maintains a sufficient number of qualified faculty with full-time responsibility. For most employees, regular evaluations of faculty and staff are conducted; however, steps should be taken to ensure the regular evaluation of all part-time faculty. The college's demonstrated understanding of and concern for issues of diversity and civility are laudable.

<u>Recommendation to Improve the Institution's Programs, Services and Outcomes</u>

Recommendation E. *Human Resources*

To improve the consistency of regular evaluation of part-time faculty, the team recommends that the college take the steps necessary to ensure that all part-time faculty are evaluated systematically and at the stated intervals (III.A.1.b).

B. Physical Resources

> *Physical resources, which include facilities, equipment, land and other assets, support student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness. Physical resources planning is integrated with institutional planning.*

General Observations

Prior to 2005 the college received limited annual capital project funds from the FSM national government, which limited the college's ability to achieve its facilities and maintenance goals. The Commission's recommendations regarding the poor conditions of buildings and equipment spurred a new commitment from the national government that was supported by the FSM Economic Policy Implementation Council (EPIC) and allocated by the Joint Economic Management Commission (JEMCO) a $10 million Compact revenue-funded infrastructure grant. Annual Compact funding is provided by the United States to the FSM in exchange for US military access to the islands. The JEMCO infrastructure grant is allowing each campus to build several greatly needed facilities. Work on many of these projects has already begun and will substantially improve the conditions of each of the campuses.

In addition to the needed new building projects at each of the six COM-FSM campus sites, scheduled maintenance and repair warrant attention collegewide. Currently the maintenance needs of facilities at all six campuses are minimally met. Rain and humid weather conditions

as well as inadequate fiscal resources take their toll on the facilities. To protect both existing and future facilities, the college needs to budget for annual maintenance support and calendar scheduled maintenance at each campus. Yap Campus currently has a preventative maintenance schedule but will likely need additional fiscal resources as buildings are constructed.   Pohnpei Campus saves what it can throughout the year in order to address its major maintenance priorities, yet it will likely need additional support when its new Learning Resources Center is constructed. Janitorial services will also need to be increased as new facilities are brought on line.

Findings and Evidence

The College of Micronesia is one college with six campus sites located on the four island states of Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae. The National Campus' eleven buildings include classrooms, a learning resources center, student center, cafeteria, dormitories, offices for faculty and administration, a gym, maintenance facilities, and a relatively new multipurpose building. The campus is in good condition and generally well maintained, except for the dormitory lavatories and the women's restroom in the gym. The dormitory lavatory, especially in the women's dorm, has broken, stained, and missing tile. Also, shower heads, toilet seats, and shower doors are missing.   The mildew and overall unsanitary conditions may pose a health hazard. In the gym, the plumbing is broken in the women's restroom; without a water supply the restrooms are not accessible and not sanitary (III.B.1, III.B.1.a-b).

The state campuses and the FMI are in varying stages of disrepair. The Pohnpei Campus includes 15 buildings, some which require repair and some in need of complete renovation or removal. This campus is scheduled for a new LRC and Vocational Center/Classroom building which will replace the most deteriorated buildings on the campus. The Pohnpei campus grounds are well maintained, although the walkways are uneven and inaccessible in some places, as are some stairs (III.B.1, III.B.1.a-b).

The Kosrae Campus is comprised of six buildings, some of which were being painted during the team's visit. The grounds are maintained and building interiors are clean and maintained. One notable exception is the FSM Department of Education building that houses the library, nurse station, and counseling offices. This building is in great need of repair. There have been recent infestations of rats and termites that have destroyed part of the library's collection. There is a plan to move these services to the new Kosrae campus building scheduled for completion within the year (III.B.1, III.B.1.a-b).

The Chuuk Campus includes 12 buildings that are in adequate condition. The utility company power source to the campus, which continues to experience brownouts and blackouts, is backed up with two campus generators. The location of the two generators, which were initially installed too close to classroom buildings and therefore disruptive to the learning environment, have been moved to the edge of the campus and secured behind a fenced area. During the pre-visit and the team visit, the campus power source was reliable, including during torrential rains that caused blackouts in other locations of the city. A new campus, referred to as the permanent campus in the self- study, is scheduled for completion over the next three to five years, an ambitious time line. The permanent site was visited both

during the pre-visit and the team visit. The access road to the new site is graded, and the road is being prepared with coral. By the time of the team visit, site preparation included the clearing of land in preparation for the start of building construction (III.B.1, III.B.1.a-b).

The Yap Campus facility is generally good. Ground breaking and site preparation were evident during the visit. Two new buildings will include classrooms, student services, and meeting space. The FSM Fisheries and Maritime Institute (FMI), also located in Yap, has buildings that were constructed in the 1960's and are in need of rewiring and plumbing upgrades. Although the facilities are painted on the exterior, the classroom building is deficient, unsafe, and maybe unhealthy. There is exposed wiring, black mold in the bathrooms, and a plywood partition blocking the toilet area. The classrooms are dark and dank. In general, the FMI facilities do not provide the appearance of a safe, secure, or maintained facility that provide an adequate learning environment. In light of the limited resources for facilities construction, operation and maintenance, the separate locations of the FMI and Yap state Campus seem worthy of evaluation (III.B.1, III.B.1.a-b).

Only Chuuk and FMI Campuses All state campuses now have backup generators. Chuuk Campus has two generators to cover the four hour rotating black outs as well as unplanned brown outs and black outs. The National Campus is installing a generator to remedy the recent trend of periodic black outs.

None of the COM-FSM campuses, including the National Campus, has an Emergency Preparedness Plan. Although the team was informed that the national government has a comprehensive emergency plan, this plan is not available on any campus nor is staff or faculty trained in emergency procedures.

Facilities planning is conducted by the Facilities and Campus Environment Committee whose membership includes 15 administrators, one faculty, and one student. This underrepresentation of faculty, classified staff, and students makes questionable whether claims that there is constituent involvement in the planning process are accurate. Moreover, among those listed as committee members, meeting attendance was poor, even though a proxy is allowed. Poor meeting attendance may be hampered because a calendar of regularly scheduled meetings could not be located (III.B.2, III.2.a-b).

The use of data for purposes of planning for physical resources is absent in the college self-study and in team interviews related to facility planning. This is curious considering the recent precipitous decrease in the enrollment of 20-24 year olds. The declining and flat enrollment trends at campuses other than Yap and Pohnpei are acknowledged, as is the trend of out-migration of FSM citizens. And while administration and some faculty reference enrollment declines, there does not appear to be a link between demographic trends and facility planning. This is an alarming occurrence and demands further review as it relates to planning for resource allocations, particularly long-range planning for physical resources such as capital outlay, operations, and maintenance and the total cost of ownership (III.B.2a).

All college campuses recently received maintenance money that is actively being used to remedy several maintenance deficiencies noted during the visit. Whether the college sustains

ongoing resources allocation for scheduled maintenance after the visiting team's departure remains to be seen (III.B.1b).

Conclusions

The college partially meets Standard III B. Physical Resources.

There is no specific plan that prepares the college for the total cost of ownership of existing or new capital improvements. This constitutes an unfunded future liability in maintenance, operations, staffing, and utilities costs that are evident in the existing buildings and will continue and be exacerbated by the new construction. The recent allocation for campus maintenance will remedy some of the poor conditions and disrepair, but history does not support the sustainability of this effort.

With a recent history of tropical storms and threat of a tsunami, an emergency preparedness plan should be developed, widely shared, and accompanied with staff training.

<u>Recommendation to Fully Meet the Standards of Accreditation</u>

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.2a).

C. Technology Resources

Technology resources are used to support student learning programs and services and to improve institutional effectiveness. Technology planning is integrated with institutional planning.

General Observations

Nearly all college operations are supported by technology; however, the functions or areas that will not operate effectively or efficiently without reliable technological connectivity and equipment include the Financial Aid Office, the Office of Admissions and Records, the Business Office, the Learning Resources Center, and the Student Information System. The electronic information systems for each of the listed functional areas are centrally located at the National Campus; however, none of the campuses could operate for more than a day without electronic access via technology.

The administration and execution of information systems and services is well done, yet poor Internet connectivity and lack of bandwidth impede the effective and efficient use of technology on each of the college's campuses. The technological limitations associated with the poor Internet connectivity and lack of bandwidth also hinder other effectiveness of telecommunication between and among campus sites and delay the implementation of distance education and video conferencing.

Students regularly use technology to conduct research, write papers, and surf the net. Every computer lab, especially those in the LRC on each campus, is fully utilized during hours of operation. With the implementation of a student technology fee, the designated technology fund is robust and supports the acquisition of lab computers, classroom projection systems, teleconferencing equipment, IT services, and Internet communication charges. Despite having access to needed equipment, the lack of stable Internet connectivity between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. impedes effective access to information by students and staff.

Evidence and Findings

The IT unit consists of a director located on the National Campus and a coordinator at each campus. The director reports to the Vice President of Administration, who is also located on the National Campus. Decisions related to information technology rely heavily on the expertise of the information technology (IT) director, due to his subject area knowledge. The IT director informs the Information Communication Technology Committee (ICTC) of all issues involving technology services, including hardware and software that are used by the college. ICTC is responsible for advising the president on the technology needed to maintain and expand IT services throughout the college.   ICTC has members from all constituencies, including two faculty, The charge of the technology advisory committee and the role and authority of the director and coordinators are clearly articulated in institutional policies that were reviewed by the visiting team (III.C.2).

V~~ideo~~oIP conferencing among the campus sites is used for general communications; however, poor transmission and limited bandwidth throughout FSM limit its effective use by the college campuses.   Computers and projection systems are available in some classrooms on each campus and are in good working order (III.C.1.)

Technology is used for distance education by faculty and staff to earn degrees from outside educational institutions. Internally, the discussion of distance learning has just started, and COM-FSM is positioning itself to implement online instruction once bandwidth is increased (III.1.d.).

Given the limitation of resources of the college and the great distances between and among the college's six campuses, the college relies on the availability of communication technology to assist the exchange of information across the nation. The college installed a voice-over-IP (VOIP) phone system on each campus, purchased and installed Elluminate software to improve intercampus communication at each campus and established an online forum which can be accessed from all campuses. To reiterate, the VOIP effectiveness is limited by the poor Internet connection and slow transmission, which is a national bandwidth dilemma.

The college has implemented a student information system (SIS) that provides information on students, courses, grades, and other relevant data. The SIS is accessible at all campuses along with the recent successful implementation of its faculty and student portal. Currently SIS is underutilized, but it holds an important key to the college's ability to make evidenced-

based decisions (III.C.1.a.).

Technology planning is done by the Information Communications Technology Committee whose 17-person membership is relatively balanced between administrators, faculty, and staff. Missing was a calendar of scheduled meetings. A technology policy was approved in 2002. This policy provides a detailed description that sets forth the purpose and direction for technological planning and implementation throughout the college. The 2005 Technology Plan is outdated and has not been updated as goals are achieved and strategies implemented or changed. Many technological improvements have been made since 2005, and there are many more changes planned by the IT director and coordinators although little of improvements or future plans are documented. The college should update the technology plan to include a long-range strategies and an implementation timeline (III.C.2).

The new fiber optic cable running from Guam to Kwajalein with a landing in Pohnpei is scheduled to be operational by the end of April 2010. This could dramatically improve connectivity and thereby improve college operations not only to the National and Pohnpei campuses but to the other three state campuses as well.

Internet Service is provided by FSM Telecommunications, with all of its bandwidth provided by satellite connection. The nation's bandwidth is saturated during business hours, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., which impedes college access to reliable connectivity during the prime hours of college business and instructional operations. The impact to the college is unreliable access to VOIP. Without reliable access to VOIP, the impact to collegewide communication is demoralizing for the staff that relies on VOIP for participation in collegewide meetings. (III.C.1.a)

All students and faculty have college email addresses. This holds great potential for facilitating improved communication within the college community. Although email communication is underutilized, this too may improve when reliable and timely connectivity is provided by FSM Telecommunications.

A forum based on the college website allows students to address concerns with services and to suggest improvements. The faculty currently have webpage space on the servers, but there is little use of this application.

Technical training for faculty and staff is available. Instruction is provided in small groups and individually. In general, training is related to office productivity tools. Training is adequate based on the current utilization of technology. As the college begins to increase its use of different applications for purposes of email communication, tracking, and distance education, additional training and support may be necessary. Specialized training for computer technicians is difficult to obtain due to the geographical remoteness of FSM; however, there is a concerted effort made among all IT staff to stay current. Summer workshops are offered, occasional conferences are attended outside the country, and technical sites such as Safari are utilized (III.C.1b).

Equipment and data are mostly secure. The added backup generator at the National Campus

will provide additional security to preserve college data in the case of power outages. There are also plans for storing a mirror image away from the National Campus at another island site (III.C.1g).

The COM-FSM web site successfully "brands" the college with its blue logo and use of look-alike template pages. There appears to be a recent flurry of improvements to the site that facilitate searches and access to information. Overall, however, content on the web site is inconsistent, incomplete, and sometimes inaccurate. Many links are dead and several pages are empty. Content is often dated, in some cases going back to 2003.

Conclusions

The college partially meets the requirements of Standard III.C. Technology Resources.

The technology resources available at each college campus are used to improve institutional effectiveness and student learning programs and services. For all COM-FSM has done to assure that any technology support it provides is guided by its goals to improve institutional communication and to support student learning, due to no fault of its own, 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. COM-FSM has appropriately advocated for improved service and remains hopeful that the new cable to Pohnpei will increase Internet performance by freeing up satellite bandwidth (III.C.1, II.C.2).

With expected better Internet connectivity, the college should continue to build a comprehensive, up-to-date web site that accurately presents the college's programs, activities, services, and contact information designed to enhance programs and service (III.C, III.C.1, III.C.1a-d).

Recommendation to Fully Meet the Standards of Accreditation

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, III.C.2).

D. Financial Resources

Financial resources are 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 both short-term and long-term financial solvency. Financial resources planning is integrated with institutional planning.

General Observations

Financial resources are used in a manner consistent with the mission and goals of the College of Micronesia and are sufficient to support the student learning programs, student services, and to improve institutional effectiveness.

Funding for the college is primarily from student tuition and fees and an annual allocation from the national government (FSM). The funds from the FSM are primarily from the Compact Agreement between the FSM and the United States. This combination of funding creates a stable funding base into the future.

While there was deficit spending in the unrestricted general fund during the 2007 and 2008 fiscal years, it was primarily due to the college's efforts to implement the 2004 accreditation recommendations related to improving communication, planning, assessment, and providing continuity of student support services equally available on each campus, except FSM-FMI. The improvements required a hefty investment of fiscal resources to acquire technology and to hire human resources. The resulting deficit spending was addressed by increasing tuition and technology fees. These increases had relatively little impact on the majority of the students because over 90 percent of the students have their cost of education funded through U.S. Federal Pell grants and other federal financial assistance awarded by the U.S. Department of Education grants. The college was careful to ensure the increase in the cost of education would be funded through increased Pell grant awards. The preliminary operating results for the 2009 fiscal year indicate there will be a year end balance and therefore an increase in the unrestricted fund balance.

The college has implemented performance-based budgeting effective with planning for the 2011 fiscal year. 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 performance-based budget process also identifies expected outcomes and the method for measuring outcomes. This change has helped the budget managers understand the relationship between the strategic goals of the department and the budget required to achieve these goals.

There are substantial reporting requirements from the national government and other funding agencies which ensure the integrity of the accounting and reporting system. The financial statements are audited by an independent accounting firm and conform to U.S. auditing standards. The college has a record of clean audit opinions with no findings included in the audit reports for the last three years.

Findings and Evidence

The college continues to maintain a strong financial position despite two years of deficit spending in fiscal years 2007 and 2008. The unrestricted fund balance was in excess of 40 percent of budgeted expenditures for the 2008 fiscal year. The budgeting process includes realistic estimates of revenues and creates expenditure budgets within the available revenue sources (III.D.1b).

In 2008 the college established a Planning and Resource Committee in an effort to link budgeting with the planning process. This committee has representation from each of the planning committees. While this structure brings the planning committees into the budgeting process, there is no evidence the budgeting process is driven by the institutional planning process (IIID.1a). While full compliance with the standard has not yet been achieved, progress has been remarkable. The institution has developed forums and tools, such as the Planning and Resource Committee, Finance Committee, the President's Retreat and performance-based budgeting, which now provide a foundation to complete the transition to an institution that uses the planning process to drive the budgeting process.

The Planning and Resource Committee is currently working on a streamlining plan that reviews all aspects of the college. If the results of this review are used to create a comprehensive and integrated institution master plan which is the source that is used to create and modify the budget, then full compliance with the standard will be achieved (III.D.1a).

In the last six years, the college has not developed any long-term financial plans. The lack of long-term financial plans demonstrates a failure to incorporate long-range priorities into a comprehensive and integrated planning and budgeting process (III.D.1c).

The budgeting process is led by the Finance Committee, which includes membership from appropriate stakeholders throughout the college. Annual budget hearings are held after the budget departments have developed budgets based on guidelines and timelines provided by the Finance committee. The process is clearly defined, and all constituencies have the opportunity to participate.

The financial documents including the budget, annual audit report, financial reports to the Commission, quarterly board reports, and reports to the Finance Committee all reflect an appropriate allocation and use of financial resources. There were no audit findings that required a response in the prior three years (III.D.2a). Each of the listed financial documents was reviewed by the visiting team.

There is a regular distribution of budget reports and other relevant financial reports throughout the institution and to the committees and agencies that provide oversight to the institution (III.D.2b). This was confirmed through interviews with stakeholders.

The institution's ending unrestricted reserve based on the 2008 fund statement was 40 percent, and the ending cash balance was 31 percent of the actual expenditures for the year. The fund balance, cash reserves, and the use of insurance policies reduce risks from financial emergencies and unforeseen occurrences to an acceptable level (III.D.2c).

The finance department's reliance on policies, procedures and reporting requirements effectively monitors and exercises oversight of financial aid, grants, compact funds, auxiliary organizations, and institutional investments and assets (III.D.2d). All resources are used with integrity, and contractual agreements are consistent with the mission and goals of the

institution (III.D.2e-f). Processes were audited and reports were reviewed to ensure compliance with these standards.

The Board of Regents, College President, Vice President for Administrative Services, as well as members of the Finance Committee, regularly monitor and evaluate the financial management process. The college has made substantial changes to the administrative structure and budgeting process based on self assessment. It was evident to the visiting team that the college systematically evaluates its structure and processes and makes changes based on its evaluation results (III.D.2g).

As previously noted, the college instituted a new performance-based budgeting system that incorporates assessment as a measure of performance. The college has not yet completed a full cycle of assessment. Without a completed assessment cycle there are not any assessment reports to use as a basis for improvement. The process is in place and the institution intends to use the results of their assessment evaluation in developing their next budget (III.D.3).

Conclusion

The college partially meets the requirements of Standard III.D. Financial Resources.

The overarching recommendation to improve institutional effectiveness, including the effective allocation of all resources—physical, technological, human and fiscal—is referenced in Standard I, Recommendation 2. Institutional Effectiveness. It is recommended that the college integrate all of its various plans into a comprehensive educational master plan and that this integrated plan should be linked to a budget plan.

The institution has made significant progress in its resource planning and budgeting since the last accreditation visit. Many of the standard requirements are in place, and once the full cycle of implementation and assessment is completed and the results are used to develop the next budget that is linked to an integrated comprehensive educational master plan, the college is expected to demonstrate that it fully meets and will sustain compliance with the requirements of this standard.

<u>Recommendation to Fully Meet the Standards of Accreditation</u>

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.1a).

Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

The institution recognizes and utilizes the contributions of leadership throughout the organization for continuous improvement of the institution. Governance roles are designed to facilitate decisions that support student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness, while acknowledging the designated responsibilities of the governing board and the chief administrator.

A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes

The institution recognizes that ethical and effective leadership throughout the organization enables the institution to identify institutional values, set and achieve goals, learn, and improve.

General Observations

The self-study described several initiatives to support its assertion that the college had made great strides to achieve effective leadership, communication, collegial consultation and defined, clear lines of authority to support student learning and promote institutional effectiveness. The degree of the college's progress and achievement, however, was not appreciated until the accreditation team conducted its visits to the state campuses and the National Campus. Interviews with campus stakeholders supported the efforts implemented by college leadership and acknowledged the many attempts to increase communication (IV.A.1-2a-b, 3).

It is clear that the college has made strides toward implementing a governance model that is inclusive and broad-based. The annual President's Retreat facilitates dialogue and is an excellent indication of the college's commitment to participatory governance (IV.A.3). Regardless of the many real attempts to facilitate participatory governance, the existing processes and practices require ongoing improvement to create an environment that genuinely encourages all constituent groups to take initiative in improving the practices, programs, and services in which they are involved (IV.A.1).

There are two general areas that pose particular challenges to recognizing and utilizing the contributions of leadership to facilitate continuous improvement and institutional effectiveness. First, the state campuses are not able to participate as fully as necessary to best represent the needs of their populations. Second, the faculty at each campus do not participate as fully as the Governance Policy anticipates (IV.A.1, IV.B.2.a-b).

Findings and Evidence

There is a governance structure outlined in the Governance Policy document, and the college has aligned itself with the governance structure described in that document. However, within the defined structure it is apparent that existing opportunities for participation are not integrated into the culture of the institution as evidenced by meeting attendance, survey results, and interviews with various stakeholders.

The table below is derived from meeting minutes for the Student Services, Human Resources, Planning and Resources Committee, as well as the Curriculum Committee for fall 2009 and early spring 2010. From the minutes, it was possible to ascertain who attended the meetings and their position classification–faculty, student, classified staff, or administrator. The number of representatives for a group for a committee was multiplied by the number of meetings for which there were minutes. Then the number of the representatives for each committee was totaled for the meetings. For example, there are two representatives of the Faculty and Staff Senate on the Planning and Resources Committee. There were four meetings and at none of the meetings was a senate representative present. Attendance by proxy, video conference, and voice over Internet protocol (VOIP) was included in the tally.

BODY	MEETING DETAIL	TOTAL ATTENDANCE/TOTAL POSSIBLE ATTENDANCE			
		State Campus	Faculty/Staff Senate	Student	Employee Grp Reps
Student services	3 mtgs Fall 09	1/15	1/6	1/6	NA
Human Resources	1 mtg Dec-09	0/5	NA	NA	2/6
Planning&Resources	4 mtgs F09-S10	2/16	0/8	NA	NA
Curriculum	4 mtgs F09	1/16	22/40	NA	NA

This data indicates that representatives do not regularly participate, resulting in functional committees dominated by management at the National Campus, at least as reflected by the minutes. Also, data presented on page 227 of the self-study indicates that one-third to one-half of respondents are unclear as to their roles and responsibilities as committee members. This evaluation is consistent with the sample meeting attendance results. Contributing factors to the apparent lack of participation in governance venues should be sought through outreach and assessment with stakeholders (IV.2.b, IV.2.e).

The most obvious challenges impeding state campus participation are the geographic distance of the campuses coupled with the difficult air travel schedule, as well as cost and time for travel. The college is making efforts to improve its ability to hold technology-assisted meetings, but technical difficulties associated with limited bandwidth prevent success. There is, however, reason to expect that in the near future successful VOIP will be the rule rather than the exception. The college has also conducted more face-to-face meetings with participants at each of the state campuses, yet the associated travel costs and time needed to travel continue to restrict their number.

Technical difficulties that hinder effective communication do not fully explain the lack of faculty/staff senate participation, however. For most college meetings the faculty and staff senate representatives are located on the same campus as the meeting location. National Campus faculty cited two factors that hinder their participation in college governance. First, at the National Campus there is a limited pool of faculty with the experience and motivation to participate on the great number of committees. The result is an overextension of those

faculty members inclined to volunteer. Second, meeting times often clash with class times, and when faced with choosing to teach their students or attend a meeting, faculty choose the students. Again, circumstances should be identified and solutions found to encourage active participation in governance (IV.A.5).

Other factors that impede effective governance include the lack of clear directions for distributing committee agendas and minutes to the college community; the barriers to functional representation and participation by faculty and staff senate representatives; and the barriers to functional participation of state campus administrative leadership in effective discussion, planning, decision-making, and implementation (IV.A.3).

Though the formal structures that are supposed to facilitate dialogue are currently problematic, there is a great deal of informal communication, primarily via email, and therefore unreported. Since this unreported communication is not followed up by parallel dialogue in scheduled meetings, different points of view that may enrich dialogue and influence decision-making are often not communicated (IV.A.2.a.)

Finally, there appears to be a need to assess whether the geographic distance between the campuses fosters functional isolation. Many state campus faculty report that they do not feel like they are members of a larger collegewide academic discipline. In fact, many report that they feel colleagues and peers at the National Campus disregard their connection with COM-FSM. To some extent this feeling also applies to staff and administration (IV.A). .

Despite problems in implementing the governance policy and facilitating effective communication as noted above, it is clear that "through established governance structures, processes, and practices, the governing board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students work together for the good of the institution" (IV.A.3). The informal discussions, the President's Retreats, and the *esprit de corps* displayed on each of the campuses are evidence that there is a great deal of unity of purpose and a can-do attitude.

The college has been very responsive to the Accrediting Commission. The various reports to the Commission between the 2004 accreditation team visit and the 2010 Accreditation Self-Study clearly demonstrate that the focus of the college over the last six years has been to address each Commission recommendation. Indeed, the college moved expeditiously to respond to recommendations made by the Commission (IV.A.4).

Evidence of external relationships is noted with agencies such as the national Department of Education (FSM DOE). For example, the Kosrae campus has an existing partnership with the FSM DOE. Interviews with the U.S. Ambassador to FSM and the FSM Vice President revealed that relationships do exist with these external agencies. Both the Ambassador and the FSM Vice President were aware of issues affecting education in general and COM-FSM in particular. Established working relationships with existing business and industry, however, were not evident, and while relationships with some public schools were revealed, the relationships do not reflect a level of effective partnership that might address the dismal rates of K-12 student success. The noted examples support the *"institution's role as advocates and demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relationships with external agencies*

and to comply with Accrediting Commission standards, policies, and guidelines, and Commission requirements" (IV.A.4).

Conclusions

The college partially meets the requirements of Standard IV.A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes.

There is a cohesive management structure in place. There are structures and modes of telecommunication in place designed to increase stakeholder participation in governance processes. It is questionable, though, whether those structures are functionally effective. With the exception of management participation, active participation by constituency representatives in committees is negligible.

There are three overarching reasons that these issues exist.

- There are logistical issues associated with the geography of FSM. While improving technical capabilities will partially address this problem, correcting the current deficiency in posting to the college website committee meeting agendas, meeting minutes, and material important to decision-making brings into question the college's genuine interest in promoting participation in the governance process.

- There appears to be neglect of faculty input, especially from the state campuses to the national campus.

- There is no evidence of a well-designed and ongoing evaluation of the governance and decision-making processes, such that the issues that might be hindering participatory governance could be identified and resolved

Recommendations 1 and 3, noted in Standard I.B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness apply to the college to fully meet Standard IV.A. Decision-making Roles and Processes.

<u>Recommendations to Fully Meet the Standards of Accreditation</u>

Recommendation 1. *Improving Institutional Effectiveness*

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

Recommendation 3. *Improving Institutional Effectiveness and Leadership and Governance*

To meet this standard, the team recommends that the college advance the institution's movement toward proficiency in the cycle of continued improvement, by completing the

development of the student information system (SIS) and providing for additional research design, analysis, and reporting (I.B.6, IV.B.2).

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.2b, IV.4.A3, IV.A.5, IV.B.1a, IV.B.2a, IV.B.2b, IV.B.2e).

B. Board and Administrative Organization

In addition to the leadership of individuals and constituencies, institutions recognize the designated responsibilities of the governing board for setting policies and of the chief administrator for the effective operation of the institution. Multi-college districts/systems clearly define the organizational roles of the district/system and the colleges.

General Observations

Nearly all of the evidence cited for Standard IV.B.1. Board Organization consists of comments from the board. While self-evaluation is an important component of an evaluative process, it is not, in and of itself, sufficient, and leaves several components of this standard only partially met.

There are several portions of the self-study that are not responsive to the standard, and adequate evidence requested for those standards was not presented for the visit. This results in those parts of the standard not being met for lack of adequate evidence.

Findings and Evidence

Board meeting minutes reviewed by the team indicate that the governing board acts as a whole and functions as an advocate for the college and the constituents the college serves.

While the college is to be commended for the effort to diversify the board, it still does not appear to constitute a representative cross-section of the Federated States of Micronesia. The 2004 Accreditation Recommendations indicate that the "Membership of the college's Board of Regents must have the diversity of viewpoint that is required by its own policy, national law and accrediting standards" (recommendation 7). In reviewing the biographies of the incumbent governing board members, the team concluded that the governing board is dominated by members with very strong connections to government (both federal and state) and education. This may create a condition in which the board considers matters before it from a narrow point of view, perhaps depriving itself of broader views that might better serve the college. Furthermore, because the board evaluation process consists entirely of self-evaluation, the diversity of board representation may not be viewed as an issue by the incumbent board members (IV.B.1.a, IV.B.1.e.).

COM-FSM policies are consistent with the mission statement and address the quality of educational programs and student services. The policies promote the need for assessment and continuous quality improvement (IV.B.1.b).

The Board of Regents is ultimately responsible for the quality of educational programs and the fiscal integrity of the institution. Board policy clearly declares its responsibility for quality, legal matters, and financial stability (IV.B.1.c).

The college produces a board policy manual which enumerates board composition, duties, structure, and meeting requirements. The college should include the Board Policy Manual on its web site to ensure readily available access by internal and external constituents (IV.B.1.d).

Minutes reflect that the board is well-guided by its policies and bylaws. The self-study notes that there is a plan for the review of board policies, but evidence was not presented to validate this assertion. A review of the policies themselves reveals much that is out-of-date. For example, in two places the board members are listed, but the listed regents reflected in the document are the board members holding office in 2005 (IV.B.1.e).There is a mechanism for governing board continuity and staggered terms, and the college president conducts an orientation for new board members. There is not, however, a formal board development program or evidence of board updates between regularly scheduled meetings, which are quarterly. Among the three of the five regents who were interviewed, one stated that board development was inadequate (IV.B.1.f).

The policy for board self-evaluation clearly defines the process to be followed. The Board of Regents' self-evaluation has been performed over the last six years according to historical records; however, the number of responding regents in any one of those six years is unknown. What little information is reflected in the available records indicates that the board evaluations should be conducted annually and a summary report should be prepared for and discussed by the board members. The results of the evaluation and discussion should yield a plan for board development over the course of the year (IV.B.1.g).

Board policy includes a code of ethics for the board that includes a policy for dealing with code violations (IV.B.1.h). Board minutes and board interviews indicate that the board is informed about accreditation process and college reports (IV.B.1.i).

The Board of Regents has the responsibility for selecting and evaluating the college president. The process for selection was defined in 2000, but has not been included in policy (IV.B.1.j).

It appears the president has been the leading driver of all of the progress the college has made since the 2004 reaffirmation of accreditation. Among the accomplishments was the revamping of the organizational structure, which attempted to clarify reporting relationships and defined authority for decision-making (IV.B.2.a).

The governance process as set forth in policy and institutional practices establishes expected values, goals, and priorities. The President's Retreats are an indication of the collegial

process, as is the informal and undocumented collaboration widely reported during the visit (IV.B.2.b.).

While the planning aspect of the Institutional Research and Planning Office is strong, the research aspect is weak. Evaluation processes, survey design, and overall analysis are not at a level that allows the institution to make data-driven decisions (IV.B.2.b).

The performance-based budgeting process is an excellent step in linking overall planning with resources guided by expected student learning outcomes

Overall, institutional improvement is guided by the president with the goal to improve teaching and learning. (IV.2.b.).

The president ensures the implementation of legal statutes and regulations, as well as governing board policies. College practices are consistent with the mission statement and board policies (IV.B.2.c).

While the college faces formidable future revenue challenges due to the step down of compact funding, historically, the college has effectively controlled its budget and expenditures. Evidence, findings, and conclusions related to fiscal resources and financial stability are set forth in Standard III, C. (IV.B.2.d).

Based on conversations with business owners and government officials, all college leaders should be encouraged to work more effectively with the communities served by the college's six campuses to address the abysmal rate of educational achievement among grade school and high school students and the need for workforce development especially in construction trades, technology, education, child development, and health care. Several external stakeholders lamented the lack of timely response of workforce development to implement a nursing program and to effectively respond to preparing Micronesians for jobs related to the military build-up in Guam (IV.B.2.e.).

At the president's direction, overall communication within the college has improved, as reflected by the survey cited in the self-study; it is, however, still an institutional issue requiring improvement. This issue extends to the president's office. According to the self-study survey at least one segment of the campus community, the faculty, does not feel that the communication from that office is adequate.

Conclusions

The college substantially meets the requirements of Standard IV.B. Board and Administrative Organization.

Overall, the College of Micronesia has made a good faith effort to address problems and recommendations identified by the Commission. The Board of Regents is somewhat more diverse. There is a clear organizational structure in place. The president and regents are committed to ensuring the overall effectiveness of the educational environment and student learning outcomes. Planning is quite good and fiscal conditions, though challenging, are

controlled. However, there are concerns with the currency of the board policy manual. Moreover, issues of effective communication persist, even though improvement is significant.

Recommendations to Fully Meet the Standards of Accreditation

Recommendation 10. *Board and Administrative Organization*

To fully meet this standard, the team recommends that the college president and his cabinet develop an external relations and communication plan that promotes outreach to the community and develops effective partnerships with the communities served by the college (IV.B.2.b).