



COLLEGE OF MICRONESIA-FSM

P.O. Box 159, Palikir, Pohnpei
Federated States of Micronesia 96941
www.comfsm.fm

Phone: (691) 320-2480/2481/2481

Fax: (691) 320-2479

*Office of the VP for
Instructional Affairs*

March 30, 2020

Dr. Stephanie Droker,
President
ACCJC
10 Commercial Boulevard, Suite 204
Novato, CA 94949

Dear Pres. Droker:

The College of Micronesia-FSM (COM-FSM) is writing to request a shortened term for academic year 2019-2020 due to the health emergency COVID-19. The Federated States of Micronesia and each of the four states have declared National Public Health State of Emergencies (Appendix A). These declarations include severe travel restrictions, closure of schools, and recommendations to discontinue public gatherings.

COM-FSM started its fall 2019 semester classes on August 19, 2019 and ended on December 16, 2019 for a total of 17 weeks. Spring 2020 semester classes began on January 13, 2020 and we suspended classes due to COVID-19 on March 16, 2020 for a total of 9 full weeks. This adds to a total of 26 weeks for this academic year. According to information released on March 5, 2020 from [Federal Student Aid](#) one possible response to coronavirus is:

Length of Academic Year

The Department is authorized under 34 CFR § 668.3 to approve a reduced academic year. If at any point an institution determines it will close as the result of a campus health emergency, it may contact the School Participation team to request a temporary reduction in the length of its academic year.

Ms. Martina Fernandez-Rosario, our school participation team contact person, approved the shortened term in an email dated March 21, 2020 (Appendix C).

Hello again Karen,

The school's reduction of the term to 26 weeks is fine.

Thank you again for the notification.

Please take care and stay safe.

Martina

This request is for all degree and certificate programs offered at the college (Appendix B) and for the remaining weeks of the spring 2020 semester that ends May 7. Students were awarded credit with letter grades except for several courses that run on compressed schedules (6 weeks) and had only started on March 9, 2020. The students in these courses were given incompletes and will be given sufficient time to complete the course work. These courses consist of a third year certificate course in General Business and the intensive English and math courses.

The reasons for closing the college and suspending classes rather than selecting the online or correspondence mode are as follows:

- 1) Students were sent home except for about 47 students in the National Campus residence halls and 54 students at the Fisheries and Maritime Institute. A great number of our students do not have Internet connectivity at home because they cannot afford it or do not have a device. 90% of our students are eligible for Title IV funding and live in homes where the income is below poverty level. Other students do not have electricity on the islands where they live. Asking these students to meet in a place where service might be available is what we are trying to avoid. The issue of student equity comes to mind if only a few are able to continue with online or correspondence delivery modes.

Any student remaining on National campus will be well taken care of:

- a. Students will remain in a restricted community on campus beginning Friday, March 20, 2020 at 5:00pm. This area includes the residence halls, dining hall, counseling office, bookstore, and gym. Select college employees will remain on campus with the students until further notice and staff this area. The college has secured sufficient food, medicine, and other items to keep the students safe for at least 3 months.
 - b. We will check the students' and employees' health status regularly. Any one showing symptoms or getting sick will be moved to an isolation room in the gym and transported to the hospital if necessary. College employees have been trained by health professionals on how to administer proper care to anyone showing symptoms.
 - c. We will support students to make informed decisions about the developing situation and the options and risks present.
 - d. No one is allowed into the restricted community. If anyone chooses to leave the restricted community, that person will not be allowed back in.
 - e. The same support and precautions have been arranged for the cadets at FSM-FMI. The entire campus at FMI is the restricted area.
- 2) The islands do not have sufficient medical services to deal with a pandemic. Our best solution is PREVENTION. This is the reason for educating the public and especially our students prior to closing on good hand hygiene, social distancing,

proper ways to control a sneeze or cough, staying home if not feeling well, and most importantly staying healthy. FSM remains COVID-19 free at this time due to the proactive measures put in place.

Further background information on the college is available in the introduction of our last [Institutional Self Evaluation Report, 2015](#) or on our website at www.comfsm.fm.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request. These are certainly new and untried times, as most of us have not experienced anything like the COVID-19 pandemic. The college looks forward to favorable consideration of our request. If you have questions or need more information please contact me through email at ksimion@comfsm.fm or (691) 320-2480 ext. 119.

Appendix A

[Declaration of National Public Health State of Emergency – Coronavirus](#), Palikir, March 14, 2020

[Constitutional Emergency Order – Pohnpei State/Coronavirus](#), Palikir, March 11, 2020

[FSM Government Updates and Restrictions](#), Palikir, March 30, 2020.

Appendix B

Course, Program and Degree Offerings Degree Programs

Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education

Associate of arts degrees are offered in:

- Liberal Arts
- Liberal Arts/Health Career Opportunity Program
- Micronesian Studies
- Pre-Teacher Preparation

Associate of science degrees are offered in:

- Agriculture and Natural Resources Management
- Business Administration
- Computer Information Systems
- Hospitality and Tourism Management
- Marine Science• Public Health
- Nursing

Associate of applied science degrees are offered in:

- Building Technology
- Electronic Technology
- Telecommunications Technology

Third-year certificates of achievement are offered in:

- Accounting
- General Business
- Specialist in Public Health
- Teacher Preparation-Elementary

Certificates of achievement are also offered in the following areas

- Agriculture and Food Technology
- Bookkeeping
- Community Health Sciences-Health Assistant Training Program
- Public Health• Secretarial Science
- Cabinet Making/Furniture Making
- Career Education-Motor Vehicle Maintenance
- Carpentry
- Construction Electricity
- Electronic Engineering Technology
- Refrigeration and Air Conditioning
- Nursing Assistant
- Trial Counselor

Appendix C

From: "Fernandez-Rosario, Martina" <Martina.Fernandez-Rosario@ed.gov>
Subject: RE: Request to School Participation Team for Shortened Term
Date: March 21, 2020 at 2:12:31 AM GMT+11
To: "Karen Simion" <ksimion@comfsm.fm>
Cc: "Harmon, Tina" <Tina.Harmon@ed.gov>

Hello again Karen,

The school's reduction of the term to 26 weeks is fine.

Thank you again for the notification.

Please take care and stay safe.

Martina

From: Fernandez-Rosario, Martina
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2020 4:26 PM
To: Karen Simion <ksimion@comfsm.fm>
Cc: Harmon, Tina <Tina.Harmon@ed.gov>
Subject: RE: Request to School Participation Team for Shortened Term

Hello Karen,

I apologize for the delay in providing you with a response.

I will follow-up with further information by COB today.

Thank you for your patience. The Department is also very concerned for the safety and well-being of the students, staff and faculty at all schools.

I'll be in touch later today. Please take care, and stay safe.

Martina

From: Karen Simion <ksimion@comfsm.fm>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2020 4:04 PM
To: Harmon, Tina <Tina.Harmon@ed.gov>
Cc: Fernandez-Rosario, Martina <Martina.Fernandez-Rosario@ed.gov>
Subject: Request to School Participation Team for Shortened Term

Dear Ms. Harmon,

I sent the attached request to Ms. Fernandez-Rosario since she is our school's contact person. However, I am not sure of the email address. Please forward or assist if possible.

I understand these are extremely busy and unique times for everyone. I must stress that due to our location and access to medical services our best hope for treatment is prevent. Thus what may seem to be extreme measures or over reaction to others is really our best option.

Sincerely,

Karen Simion

Karen Simion
VP for Instructional Affairs/ALO
College of Micronesia-FSM
PO Box 159
Kolonias, Pohnpei 96941
(691)320-2480
ksimion@comfsm.fm