CORE INQUIRIES

College of Micronesia FSM
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The Core Inquiries are based upon the findings of the peer review team that conducted Team ISER Review on October 4, 2022.

Rosevonne Pato, Ed.D.
Team Chair

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College of Micronesia - FSM

Peer Review Team Roster

Team ISER Review
October 4, 2022

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Summary of Team ISER Review

INSTITUTION: College of Micronesia Federated States of Micronesia (COMFSM)

DATE OF TEAM ISER REVIEW: October 4, 2022

TEAM CHAIR: Rosevonne M. Pato

A ten (10) member accreditation peer review team conducted Team ISER Review of College of Micronesia Federated States of Micronesia on October 4, 2022. The Team ISER Review is a one-day, off-site analysis of an institution's self-evaluation report. The peer review team received the college's institutional self-evaluation report (ISER) and related evidence several weeks prior to the Team ISER Review. Team members found the ISER to be a comprehensive, well written, document detailing the processes used by the College to address Eligibility Requirements, Commission Standards, and Commission Policies. The team confirmed that the ISER was developed through broad participation by the entire College community including faculty, staff, students, and administration. The team found that the College provided a thoughtful ISER containing several self-identified action plans for institutional improvement. The College also prepared a Quality Focus Essay.

In preparation for the Team ISER Review, the team chair attended a team chair training workshop on August 3, 2022 and held a pre-review meeting with the college CEO on September 21, 2022. The entire peer review team received team training provided by staff from ACCJC on August 29, 2022. Prior to the Team ISER Review, team members completed their team assignments, identified areas for further clarification, and provided a list of requests for additional evidence to be considered during Team ISER Review.

During the Team ISER Review, team members spent the morning discussing their initial observations and their preliminary review of the written materials and evidence provided by the College for the purpose of determining whether the College continues to meet Accreditation Standards, Eligibility Requirements, Commission Policies, and US ED regulations. In the afternoon, the team further synthesized their findings to validate the excellent work of the college and identified standards the college meets, as well as developed Core Inquiries to be pursued during the Focused Site Visit, which will occur in March of Spring 2022

Core Inquiries are a means for communicating potential areas of institutional noncompliance, improvement, or exemplary practice that arise during the Team ISER Review. They describe the areas of emphasis for the Focused Site Visit that the team will explore to further their analysis to determining whether standards are met and accordingly identify potential commendations or recommendations. The college should use the Core Inquiries and time leading up to the focused site visit as an opportunity to gather more evidence, collate information, and to strengthen or develop processes in the continuous improvement cycle. In the course of the Focused Site Visit, the ACCJC staff liaison will review new or emerging issues which might arise out of the discussions on Core Inquiries.

Core Inquiries

Based on the team's analysis during the Team ISER Review, the team identified the following core inquiries that relate to potential areas of clarification, improvement, or commendation.

Core Inquiry 1:
Library

The team would like clarification on the implementation and frequency of implementation of library, tutoring, and computer lab assessment tools, as well as the frequency and depth of analysis of the assessment results, and whether those analyses led to continual improvements. The team would also like to learn more about how the College determines sufficiency for quantity of librarians, tutors, and student computers across campuses. The team would like to learn more about library services to distance education students.

Standards or Policies:
II.B.1, II.B.2, II.B.3

Description:

The team reviewed evidence of library instruction and SLO evaluation tools, student and faculty surveys, library pamphlets, tutoring services, library and counseling assessment plans. Clarification is needed on regular and ongoing assessment and use of assessments for library instruction, collection, reference services, computer assistance to students, tutoring services to students. Clarification is also needed regarding sufficient quantity of library staff across all campuses, student computers in libraries, and tutors across all campuses. Clarification needed regarding faculty participation in selecting and maintaining library materials. Clarification needed regarding services to students regardless of location or means of delivery.

Topics of discussion during interviews:
   a. Evaluation and improvement of library instruction.
   b. Assessment of library SLOs.
   c. Analysis of data for ongoing improvement of currency, depth, and variety of library collection.
   d. Availability of library services and material regardless of location or means of delivery.
   e. Participation of faculty in selecting and maintaining library materials.
   f. Availability of computers to students in labs across campus.
   g. Computer assistance to students using computer labs.
   h. Evaluation of computer assistance and availability of computers to students.
   i. Availability of tutoring services across all campuses.
   j. Evaluation and improvement of tutoring services.

Request for Additional Information/Evidence:
   a. Collection Age by Subject (unable to open in Dropbox)
   b. Additional faculty surveys (2018 survey from Yap campus received)
   c. Additional student surveys (2018 survey from Yap campus received)
   d. Description of reference services to students regardless of location or means of delivery.
   e. Description of remote instruction to online courses.
   f. Results and analysis from SLO pre- and post-tests.
   g. Library instruction materials for live sessions, such as outlines, bibliographies, or handouts.

Request for Observations/Interviews:
   a. LRC Director
   b. Library Employees (librarians and library technicians)
   c. LRC Staff for Chuuk, Kosrae, CTEC, Yap campuses
   d. Lead Counselor or counselors responsible for tutoring programs
   e. ACE mentor coordinators
   f. Tutors
   g. ACE mentors
   h. Instructional Coordinators
   i. Curriculum Committee Chair
   j. Office of Institutional Effectiveness
   k. Director Information Technology Office
   l. Students

Core Inquiry 2:
Course Level Student Learning Outcomes Assessment/Improvement, and Sustaining Campus-wide Effectiveness Practices
The team would like to learn more about SLO assessment practices as they inform course-level changes that lead to improving student learning. Additionally, the team would like to learn more about the progress made in ensuring that the structures and practices that inform campus wide program effectiveness measures.

Standards or Policies:
II.A.3; II.A.16

Description:
With focus on the assessment of student learning, the team has observed that the college commits a tremendous amount of energy and resources to the effort to assess learning outcomes across the six campuses and has created a support infrastructure that include Instructional Coordinators at each campus to assist in assessment and aggregate SLO data at program and institutional levels. However, what is not clear is the assessment activity and how learning gaps are addressed at the course level, leading to improvements in learning and success, as well as year-to-year gains in learning at the program and institutional level.

As detailed in the ISER, the college has experienced the departure of key personnel that have served a vital role in facilitating key processes that support the campus-wide assessment and program effectiveness efforts; the restrictions brought by the COVID pandemic have delayed the timely recruitment and hiring of qualified candidates for these vacant positions. The team would like to learn more about how assessment/improvement practices are sustained as the college manages this transition.

Topics of discussion during interviews:
   a. Structures/practices for identifying learning gaps and developing improvements designed to improve student learning at the course level
   b. Practices for providing support and/or training to assist faculty in assessment efforts
   c. Tools used for course-level assessment and improvements documentation
   d. Documenting progress on action plans identified in the annual Institutional Assessment Report
   e. Status of the transition to Canvas and plans to implement assessment capabilities in Canvas
   f. Continuity of assessment/effectiveness efforts while key vacancies are filled
   g. Tour of TracDat, focusing on course-level assessment and improvement

Request for Additional Information/Evidence:
   a. A detailed tour of TracDat
   b. A broad selection of course-level assessment reports, that identify learning gaps, plans for improvement, and assessment evidence documenting gains in learning.
   c. Documented summaries of faculty dialogue/meetings that are focused on course-level changes that target improvements in learning.
   d. Timelines for upcoming changes/modifications to assessment infrastructure (transition from COVID period/ prepare for distance education/shift to Canvas, etc.)

Request for Observations/Interviews:
   a. Vice President of Instructional Services
   b. Dean of Instructional programs
   c. Instructional Coordinators
   d. Members of the Assessment Team (may include others in this list)
   e. Instructional Faculty

Core Inquiry 3:
Long Term Facilities Planning
The team would like to know more about how the college plans for long-term facilities planning, especially in relation to national infrastructure planning.

Standards or Policies:
III.B.1, III.B.4

Description: The team noted that the College has a facilities master plan that is connected to the national government's infrastructure plan. The team observed some inconsistency between the College's planned facilities costs and what is found in the government's planning documents. The team would like to know more about the relationship between the two plans.

Topics of discussion during interviews:
    a. The adaptability of college long-range facilities planning to changing governmental priorities or administrations.
    b. Prioritization of facilities planning at the college.

Request for Additional Information/Evidence:
Request for Observations/Interviews: a. Vice-President for Administrative Services

Core Inquiry 4: **Human Resources** The team would like to know more about how the college effectively staffs the college including how it determines sufficiency of staffing, both institutionally and per campus, and how personnel are evaluated through processes that are cyclic and systemic.
Standards or Policies: I.B.4 III.A.1, III.A.3, III.A.5, III.A.7, III.A.9, III.A.14 IV.B.1, IV.B.2, IV.B.3 IV.C.3
Description: The team noted across several standards that the ISER referenced staffing challenges (e.g. turnover, vacancies, contractual terms, expectation of length etc.). We would like to know more about how the college determines sufficiency of staffing resources across the institution and for each campus. The team would also like to know more about how existing personnel are evaluated regularly and systematically to ensure effectiveness.

Topics of discussion during interviews:
    a. Recruitment plan for vacancies
    b. Processes for determining sufficiency and qualifications of staffing for the institution
    c. Processes for determining sufficiency and qualifications of staffing per campus
    d. Processes for maintenance of institutional stability, momentum, and long-term planning during interim staffing
    e. Progress on Improvement Plan as listed in III.A.5
    f. Systematic evaluation of personnel across the institution

Request for Additional Information/Evidence:
   a. Non-administration classified staffing numbers and qualifications
   b. Updated organizational chart with regular, interim, and vacant position statuses noted
   c. Any other documentation explaining how staffing is allocated (e.g. student/faculty ratio)
   d. Verification of annual evaluations of CEO
   e. Update on any actions taken in regard to Improvement Plan as listed in III.A.5

Request for Observations/Interviews:
   a. Director of Human Resources
   b. HR Services
   c. VP, Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Assurance
   d. Institutional Effectiveness Staff
   e. Campus deans
   f. Leadership team
   g. Dean of Academic Programs

Core Inquiry 5:
Communication
The team would like to know more about how the college disseminates information internally to inform processes and support institutional effectiveness.

Standards or Policies:
I.C.3
II.C.5
III.D.2, III.D.5
IV.A.6
IV.C.7, IV.C.11, IV.C.12

Description:
The team noted across several standards that the ISER referenced documents and processes that crossed departments/units. The team would like clarification about how the information about these documents and processes is transmitted between departments and units, as well as how information is generally disseminated broadly across campuses.

Topics of discussion during interviews:
  a. Dissemination of information regarding emergencies, such as technology outages, power outages.
  b. Dissemination of planning and budgetary information across campuses and constituencies.
  c. Formalization of interactions between levels of governance and units, particularly in regard to planning documents and processes (e.g. Institutional Educational Master Plan, Facilities Master Plan, Participatory Governance Manual etc.)
  d. Process of cyclical updating of official information repositories (e.g. website, documents)
  e. Routine update of key documents that provide timely, useful and accurate information to students, such as the College Catalog, Student Handbooks and Guides, and similar materials.

Request for Additional Information/Evidence:
  a. Emergency broadcast procedures
  b. Documentation of meetings (e.g. agendas, minutes) for major committees
  c. Documentation of financial information dissemination internally
  d. Any other evidence that shows wider dissemination of campus information, decision-making and activities (e.g. town halls, forums, campus wide events)

Request for Observations/Interviews:
  a. VP for Administrative Services
  b. Campus deans/directors
  c. Academic Deans
  d. Director of Maintenance and Security
  e. Leadership team
  f. Stakeholders (faculty, staff, students)

Core Inquiry 6:
Distance Education
The team would like to know more about how the college plans for, supports and sustains distance education, maintaining continuous improvement through cyclic, systemic evaluation processes.

Standards or Policies: Standards Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education
II.A.5, II.A.6, II.A.7
II.C.1, II.C.3
III.C.1, III.C.3

Description:
The team noted across several standards that COM FSM has rapidly implemented distance education, including student services, widely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The college submitted a substantive change proposal for expansion of distance learning programs that was approved, and promptly passed Board Policy 3400 soon afterwards, providing the authority and structures for implementation of distance learning across all academic programs at the college. A Distance Learning Program Planning Group was established in the policy, but it's not clear if this body has convened yet. The college is currently continuing to offer online courses, but it's not clear how planning these current offerings are taking place. The team would like to better understand long term planning for effective instruction, student support and resource allocation for distance education.

Topics of discussion during interviews:
   a. Analysis of student success and student learning outcomes attainment in online versus face to face instruction institutionally and between various sites
   b. Transition to and implementation of new student portal (MyShark) and learning management system (Canvas, Schoology)
   c. Long-term planning for distance education, including how distance education is incorporated into other long-term plans, including budgetary plans
   d. Scheduling of distance education offerings as components of recommended program sequences in the catalog
   e. Distance Learning professional development planning
   f. Discussion of online systems experience and satisfaction

Request for Additional Information/Evidence:
   a. Onsite tour of the Learning Management System (Canvas and Schoology). Sample of courses offered in Fall 2022 via LMS.
   b. Documentation of remote access to tutoring, library services, books, reference materials, etc.
   c. Sample student schedules from several different programs showing which courses should be completed in person and which should be completed online.
   d. Computer replacement schedule and implementation on campus (i.e. other than at dedicated computer labs)

Request for Observations/Interviews:
   a. VP Instruction
   b. Campus Deans
   c. Director of Distance Education
   d. Faculty and Staff
   e. Learning Resource Center Director
   f. Instructional Coordinators
   g. Stakeholders (i.e. faculty and students)

Core Inquiry 7:
Budgeting Process
The team would like to know more about how the college plans for and budgets revenues

Standards or Policies:
III.D.1, III.D.4, III.D.11

Description:
The team noted that there are policies and procedures to address budget processes, but requests clarification regarding revenues. The team would like to affirm that practices related to revenue forecasts and planning reflect accurate assessment of financial resource availability.

Topics of discussion during interviews:
a. Revenue planning
b. Revenue sources
c. Endowment payouts
d. Support for physical and technological infrastructure growth and maintenance

Request for Additional Information/Evidence:

Request for Observations/Interviews:
a. Comptroller
b. Budget Committee members
c. Campus Deans
d. Personnel associated with financial management, including grants