

# PPEC

Pacific Postsecondary  
Education Council

Report to

# ACCJC

Accrediting Commission of  
Community & Junior Colleges

January - June

# 2021



GUAMCOMMUNITYCOLLEGE

# **American Samoa Community College**

## **Introduction:**

The American Samoa Community College (ASCC) was established in 1970 to provide post-secondary education opportunities in the liberal arts, teacher training, vocational-technical education and general education to the residents of American Samoa. ASCC received its initial accreditation in 1976 and continues to remain accredited under the purview of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). ASCC offers Associate of Arts, Associate of Science degrees and a Bachelor's in Elementary Education, as well as certificate programs in a variety of academic and technical areas.

## **Accreditation Updates:**

ASCC continues to finalize its Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) that is due to the Commission in June 2021. This self-evaluation process considers the institution's strengths, weaknesses, and achievements. The ISER provides a foundation for the accreditation process. In February 2021, the ASCC Accreditation Steering Committee completed its five-day review of the College's Accreditation ISER second draft. ASCC is now finalizing its report in preparation for the final reading, prior to the submission of the ISER to the Board of Higher Education for their review and final approval. The ASCC ISER was presented to the Board and external stakeholders in of April 2021, prior to the final submission to the Commission.

The College completed and submitted the ACCJC-ASCC required Annual Report. The College will submit its Fiscal Report once the 2020 audit report is received from the auditors. The ACCJC annual reports are comprised of two separate reports that include the Annual and Fiscal reports. These reports serve as an annual monitoring mechanism for the ACCJC with regards to the College's status on student achievement and financial stability.

## **Governance:**

The ASCC Institutional Strategic Plan (ISP) 2021-2026 was approved by the Board of Higher Education in their quarterly meeting for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter. This approval allows the College to identify its annual priorities for Fiscal Year 2021. The 2021-2026 ISP identifies four Institutional Priorities, which form the acronym STAR:

S – Successful entry by students into the workforce.

T – Transfer by students to institutions of higher learning.

A – Awareness of Samoan culture and the Pacific

R – Research and extension in human and natural resources

The College has also completed its update of the 2021-2026 Total Cost of Ownership and Comprehensive Maintenance Plan which is an internal document approved by the President in support of the 2021-2026 ISP.

### **Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic:**

During the first half of 2021, ASCC continued to face challenges from restrictions applied due to the COVID – 19 pandemic. This has led to move toward technological system advances and the development of online program and service components.

The HEERF Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplementary Appropriations (CRRSAA) in the amount of 2.6 million (\$2,669,776.00) was received by the College in February 2021. The College will utilize the CRRSAA funds to continue with its plans to upgrade the College’s technical infrastructure and systems to enable services pertinent to online registration, online student/faculty portals, online support and administrative services, and to strengthen online learning for the College. This includes purchasing equipment to assist in the cloud upgrade and necessary supplies to ensure the College’s compliance with social distancing.

### **General Highlights:**

- (50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY/EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION DINNER) ASCC had intended to hold its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in 2020, but the onset of the pandemic in March of that year necessitated the postponement of any official large-scale gatherings. By 2021, with the easing of social distancing restrictions, the College held its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration on Friday, March 12<sup>th</sup> in the form of an Employee Appreciation Dinner. The majority of the College’s faculty and staff attended this gala event held at DDW Café in Utulei. Beginning in the late afternoon, the ASCC staff enjoyed good company, in-house entertainment, and continuous prize giveaways. Speeches by ASCC President Dr. Pato and ACNR Director Aufa’i Apulu Ropeti Areta provided perspectives on the significance of the occasion, and the College’s origins and future direction. For all who attended, the event helped instill a sense of unity as well as an awareness of the great strides the College has made in its 50 years.
- During the spring 2021 semester, the ASCC Political Science Club hosted a series of talks by local public figures who shared their perspectives on local society, economics and politics. The series culminated in April with a talk by newly-elected Governor Lemanu Peleti Mauga. The Governor spoke of his own journey through life, his experience in local government, and the aspirations of his current administration.
- Each semester, the ASCC Teacher Education Department (TED) hosts Educators Night, which is open to all of the island’s teachers from the public and private schools. The most recent Educators Night took place in early May, and more than 150 teachers joined the TED

for an evening of information sharing and networking. Guest speakers included Lt. Governor Eleasalo Va'alele Ale and local Chamber of Commerce chairperson Mrs. Ella Gurr.

- The 74<sup>th</sup> ASCC Commencement Ceremony will take place on Friday, May 21<sup>st</sup>. The scheduled Keynote Speaker is local attorney and ASCC alumnus Mrs. Lornalei Meredith.

## **The College of the Marshall Islands (CMI)**

### ***Mission***

*The College of the Marshall Islands will provide our community with access to quality, higher and further educational services, prioritize student success through engagement in relevant Academic, Career and Technical Education, and be a center for the study of Marshallese Culture. It will also provide intellectual resources and facilitate research specific to the needs of the nation. (Revision approved December 1, 2020)*

### ***Introduction***

The College provided educational services to 1169 students in the spring semester, 2021 with an average age of 23 years. Of those, there were 762 full-time and 407 part-time students from across the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), the Micronesia region and further afield. The number of first time students increased by 50% from spring 2020 to 141 with an average age of 20 years old. The following report covers the period from January – May 2021.

### ***General Accreditation Updates***

Preparation for CMI's 2021 comprehensive review, with widespread participation continued up the virtual site visit by the ACCJC peer review evaluation team, which occurred March 16 – 19, 2021. The draft Peer Review Team Report was received on April 2<sup>nd</sup> and a few corrections of fact submitted on April 6. The final Peer Review Team Report was submitted to ACCJC on April 23, and the CMI will appear before the Commission during its session on June 9-11. Since the visit, the newly reconstituted Accreditation Steering Committee, which includes faculty, staff, and students, is meeting monthly on an ongoing basis to ensure that accreditation is a process of continuous, quality improvement at CMI and that the college is prepared for future reports and review.

### ***Governance***

The 5 areas of CMI's Strategic Operation, termed Wapepes (Governance, Human Capital, Enrollment Management, IT, and Facilities and Security) have been now been reviewed and updated. This resulted in an updating of the Strategic Plan 2019 - 2023.

The participatory governance structure and processes were reviewed this spring, and 15 recommendations for improvements were made and were approved by the Board of Regents at its March meeting.

### ***General Highlights***

85% of students were retained from Fall 2020 to Spring 2021. This figure is roughly ten percentage points higher than past fall-to-spring retention rates have been, so it is very likely that CMI will meet the 63% retention goal for Fall 2020 to Fall 2021. Interventions that led to improve fall-to-spring retention this academic year include an expanded orientation with careful attention to social-emotional needs and the building of a sense of belonging, increased student engagement through student activities including student-led clubs with funding, targeted workshops from counseling including a group for part-time students, and the broad adoption of Moodle to support the classroom experience.

During the academic year 2020-2021, CMI identified students who started in Fall 2018 and had the potential to graduate by spring 2021. Through a series of large and small group meetings, these students were provided with additional support and advising. If all of the students who are currently candidates for graduation pass all of their spring 2021 courses, CMI will exceed the Institution-Set Standard for the 150% graduation rate. All CMI Champion Navigators—students who complete their programs within the 150% mark—will be recognized in the graduation program.

The Board of Regents approved the Recognition of Prior Learning policy at its March meeting. Procedures have been developed by the Enrollment Management Committee and are pending Executive Council review.

Certificate of Achievement and Certificate of Completion programs in *Atoll Agriculture and Sustainable Livelihoods* are currently going through the participatory governance process for curriculum and budget review. It is anticipated that at least one will be ready for the Board of Regents to review at its June meeting.

A new program to train Community Health Workers, developed in collaboration with the RMI Ministry of Health and Human Services, will be presented to the Board of Regents in May.

CMI has continued to track Alumni to gather employment data. Employment data for 2020 was 70% or 67 employed out of the 96 students reached via survey. With the RMI minimum wage salary set at \$6,240, CMI's definitions for gainful employment is attaining a salary of more than \$10,000 per annum or an hourly rate of \$4.80. Of these employed students, 63% have salaries above \$10,000.

The College opened its first 'Hall of Fame' <https://cmi.edu/hall-of-fame/> on April 16 when it recognized its first set of five distinguished alumni.

CMI also published the March and April editions of its recently revived interactive newsletter *Jilel* <https://indd.adobe.com/view/3261ab1a-9996-4210-9fd1-ef898b004dda>

The college has acquired Jenzabar as CMI's new Student Information Services (SIS) System tested Fall 2021 and fully implemented Spring 2022 fully.

All CMI Institutional Data Services are now electronic and centralized in Institutional Research. Financial Management systems are web-based and have been migrated to the Cloud.

At its March meeting, the Board of Regent approved a Facilities Fee increase designated to secure the necessary financing of two new buildings as proposed under the CMI Master Plan.

### ***Impact and Response to the Coronavirus at CMI***

The major impact of the pandemic on the College of the Marshall Islands has been with respect to hiring faculty from overseas. While Marshallese faculty and staff have gradually been repatriated, 10% of instructors remain overseas, having made arrangements to either teach online or with deferred appointments.

CMI served as a vaccination center for the Uliga community as well as students, staff and faculty of the college itself. All students wishing to be accommodated in college residence will be required to have proof of vaccination unless medically exempted. New college ID's indicate vaccination status. Summer and fall classes will run as usual except if there is at least one confirmed COVID-19 case on island: Once lockdown is announced by the RMI Government, classes will continue as distance learning courses. Likewise, since there have been no confirmed COVID-19 cases to date in the RMI community, the usual graduation ceremony to take place on May 29.

### ***Summary***

The current Travel Advisory, #25 has extended the travel ban on incoming passengers until 31 May, 2021. The College remains well-placed to continue classes in the modes required.

## **College of Micronesia-FSM**

### ***Introduction***

The College of Micronesia-FSM Mission Statement reads, *“The College of Micronesia-FSM is a learner-centered institution of higher education that is committed to the success of the Federated States of Micronesia by providing academic and career and technical educational programs characterized by continuous improvement and best practices.”*

The College of Micronesia-FSM (COM-FSM) is a multi-campus institution with the National Campus located in Palikir, Pohnpei, and a state campus in each state. COM-FSM also includes the FSM Fisheries and Maritime Institute located in Yap. The area most directly served by the college is the Federated States of Micronesia, which includes approximately two-million square miles of the western Pacific Ocean and a population of over 110,000. The college offers 1

baccalaureate degree, 14 associate degrees, and 17 certificate programs. The college offers fisheries and maritime instruction for fishing, navigation and engineering that meet the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) regulations and traditional navigation.

### *Accreditation Updates*

COM-FSM submitted a substantive change for distance learning to ACCJC on January 3, 2021. The ACCJC substantive change committee reviewed the proposal and approved distance learning for most COM-FSM programs on February 24, 2021.

The 2021 annual report for COM-FSM was submitted to ACCJC on April 6, 2021.

The college named Jennifer Helieisar as the new Accreditation Liaison Officer on April 21, 2021. Ms. Helieisar is the Director of Learning Resources and has worked for the college twenty-four years.



Institutional Self-Evaluation Report preparation is on schedule with first drafts of analysis and evaluation of the Standards due by end of May 2021. The next phase is to get committee review of the Standards for completeness and accuracy of information. The college held two quizzes to orient all college employees and students to various aspects of accreditation and gave “Welewel” paraphernalia to the winners. “Welewel” is a traditional navigation term meaning to stay on a straight and honest path.

### *General Updates*

- Construction of a multi-purpose technical education building at the Career and Technical Education Center in Pohnpei is expected to begin construction by summer 2021. A second construction project is the student center at National Campus in Pohnpei also scheduled to begin summer of 2021.
- The college is highly encouraging COVID-19 vaccinations and sponsored an employee and student vaccination day at the two campuses in Pohnpei. A survey was taken to see how many employees are vaccinated and 58% of those responding to the survey had received at least a first dose of vaccine. Personal protection equipment kits were distributed free to all students and college employees. The kit contained masks and hand sanitizer. The college continues to promote social distancing, temperature screening and personal hygiene on all campuses.
- In an ongoing series of online sessions to bring together members of the community, a mini-summit for each of the four states was held in early 2021. The themes were based upon the findings of previous summits and focused heavily on workforce readiness.

- The college disbursed \$1,814,739.60 in HEERF II student financial aid money to a total of 1,392 students spring 2021. This is the second disbursement from U.S. COVID-19 response funding going directly to students.
- The college received \$3.7m dollar grant from the government of Japan to enhance programs at the Fisheries and Maritime Institute. The grant will be used to build additional cadet quarters, class rooms and provide a training ship and small craft. This grant compliments a project with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to begin providing class 4 navigation and engineering certifications.
- FSM received approval for its first single-country funding proposal titled, “*Climate resilient food security for farming households across the Federated States of Micronesia*” in the amount of \$9,393,350 for five years from the Green Climate Fund. The Green Climate Fund is one of the world’s largest dedicated international fund with a mandate to help developing countries like FSM to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. The college is one of the executing entities working with the Micronesia Conservation Trust on this grant.

## **Guam Community College**

### ***Introduction***

Since its inception through the Community College Act of 1977 (as amended by Public Law 31-99 in 2011), Guam Community College continues to fulfill its mission to be a leader in career and technical workforce development, providing the highest quality, student-centered education and job training for Micronesia. GCC serves as Guam’s State Agency for Career and Technical Education under the United States Vocational Education Act of 1946 (and subsequent amendments). As a multi-faceted, public, career and technical education institution, the College currently offers 1 baccalaureate degree, 24 associate degrees, and 17 certificates. GCC delivers postsecondary education on campus in fall and spring semesters and during summer. Off-site, the College primarily delivers secondary career and technical education at six Guam public high schools, as well as short-term, specialized training at local businesses. Additionally, GCC offers adult education programs and services, namely English as a Second Language, Adult Basic Education, High School Equivalency preparation and testing, and Adult High School Diploma.

### ***General Updates***

Enrollment for the spring 2021 semester dropped by approximately eleven percent (11%) to 1564 when compared to the enrollment in the prior year spring 2020 semester. When compared to the enrollment ten years ago in spring 2011, the spring 2021 semester enrollment dropped by approximately thirty-nine percent (39%).

The Spring 2021 College Assembly was held online for the first half of the day and the afternoon breakout sessions were held face-to-face on campus as well as online. With over two hundred and twenty (220) employee attendees, the assembly provided an opportunity for the campus to begin the transition back to the physical campus environment. Topics included an update on the College's progress with the Institutional Strategic Master Plan, Title IX updates, a session on Cybersecurity and sessions on classroom engagement strategies, methods for teaching both online and face-to-face modalities at the same time and through mirrored classrooms, coping with anxiety, and stress management techniques. The College Assembly assessment survey showed that ninety-nine percent of attendees rated the assembly as excellent, good, and average with less than one percent rating the assembly as poor.

The College continues to be vigilant and steadfast in its efforts to ensure students' needs are met during this pandemic and every avenue exhausted to provide the education and support necessary to achieve our educational mission. The laptop and MiFi loaner program will continue through the College's bookstore loaner program. The student feedback from the Spring IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction Survey indicates a continued need for the laptop and MiFi loaner program and even suggests increasing the MiFi speed.

The Center for Student Involvement continued to offer student activities through the virtual environment. The Spring New Student Orientation was held via Zoom with information provided by Admissions and Registration, Counseling, Financial Aid, Accommodative Services, Student Support Services, Reach for College, Career Placement, Title IX, and Student Organizations. The 2021 GCC Student Leaders Election was held in April via an email vote. The Edge Student Conference was held virtually and hosted a virtual career fair, including a skills workshop for job interviews and money management techniques. The Meet the President sessions with President Dr. Mary A.Y. Okada was held virtually via Zoom.

### ***Accreditation Updates***

The College received approval from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) to offer its first distance education program, the Associates of Science in International Hotel Management. The College has adopted the eThink Moodle Learning Management System as its official LMS. An Instructional Designer dedicated purely to the College's Distance Education program was hired during this reporting period. Logistics for campus-wide training on Moodle is being organized through the summer and into the fall semester.

Finally, the Bachelor of Science in Career and Technical Education had a program Accreditation site visit during this reporting period. The final report states, "GCC is to be commended for developing and implementing the Bachelor of Science in Career and Technical Education Degree program. This program directly supports the college's mission statement by providing 'high quality student-centered education and job training in Micronesia.' In addition, the program is

responding to the continuing shortage of certified teachers for Guam schools, most especially in the area of Career and Technical Education. GCC administrators, faculty, and students all expressed enthusiastic support for the implementation of this program.”

## **Palau Community College**

### *Accreditation Updates*

RPPL 4-2, Palau Higher Education Act requires Palau Community College to be an accredited institution. Today, Palau Community College (PCC) has been an accredited institution for 44 years by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) – Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). It received its first accreditation status in 1977 and has continued to be an accredited institution of higher learning since then. PCC submitted its last required report, the College Midterm Report 2020 to the ACCJC-WASC in March 2020. On June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the Commission commended the College for its evident achievement and charged the College to continue its efforts in the best interest of its students.

The next required report by the College to the Commission is the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) which is required for submission to the Commission in August 2022. The period to be reported in the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report covers seven years from 2016 to 2022. After the submission of ISER to the Commission; the Formative/Summative Comprehensive Review will take place in October 2022; and the Focus Site Visit (campus visit) will be held in April 2023. With the responsibility of the required ISER, the College re-affirmed the membership of its Accreditation Steering Committee (ASC) on August 25<sup>th</sup> and has its initial organizational meeting on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020. The work of ASC is currently ongoing.

Institutional Effectiveness Workshop for Academic Programs was held on Wednesday, January 6, 2021 by the College Accreditation Office. The workshop was attended by faculty, instructional assistants and Academic Affairs Division staff. The workshop focused on Accrediting Commission for Community & Junior Colleges (ACCJC) Educational Series. During the workshop, faculty and Academic Affairs Division staff viewed six different educational videos from ACCJC and spent a little time doing self-assessment as well as discussed in groups ways to improve services for spring semester 2021.

In February 2021, College non-academic and non-instructional units underwent Spring 2021 Institutional Effectiveness Workshop conducted by the College Accreditation Office. The workshop included the six ACCJC Educational Series where participants enhance understanding of ACCJC purpose and its relationship with the U.S. Department of Education. Over 50 staff attended the workshop with round table discussions.

## *College Program Highlights*

- On January 04, 2020 Palau Community College (PCC) held a New Student Orientation for the students enrolling in the spring semester. The orientation introduced the new students to the programs and services available at the college. PCC President Dr. Patrick U. Tellei began the orientation by welcoming the new students and thanked them for choosing PCC as a next step in their education journey and advised the students to prioritize their education but never forget to have fun.
- On March 17-18, 2021, Palau Community College (PCC) hosted a Career & Technical Education Awareness Week. Over 350 students from the local high schools and elementary schools including community participants converged at PCC campus to visit academic programs and CTE demonstration stations to learn about the programs available at the college. Both high school and elementary students were able to witness first-hand demonstrations and presentations made by PCC students in their respective fields of study. The Career & Technical Education (CTE) activities aimed to introduce the career and technical programs, such as Business Administration, STEM, Environmental/Marine Science, Information Technology, General Electronics, Construction Technology, CTE Lab School, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration, etc. to prospective students at an early stage of their education in order to help each consider the opportunities available at their local community college.
- Palau Community College President Dr. Patrick U. Tellei named Dr. Christopher U. Kitalong as the new Vice President of PCC Cooperative Research and Extension (CRE). The announcement came to fruition after the passing of Vice President of CRE, Thomas Taro in April of 2020. Mr. Taro had been working at PCC for over 28 years having first started as an instructor, then in 1997 he became Director of the Research/Demonstration Station, and in 2000 became Interim Vice President of CRE, assuming full vice presidency in 2005. As Vice President of PCC-CRE, Taro oversaw the College's Land Grant program which included research activities that ultimately support local farming and fish farm ventures. From February 17, 2020 to March 24, 2021, Vice President of Administration & Finance Jay Olegeriil assumed the acting position of Vice President of CRE to carry on the former Vice President Thomas Taro's tutelage and legacy. Under his supervision, Cooperative Research and Extension continued services to the community. Dr. Christopher U. Kitalong assumes Vice President of CRE position having graduated from University of Notre Dame in 2002 with Bachelor in Science-Business, Master of Science from Toyoma Medical and Pharmaceutical University in 2007, Master of Philosophy in Biology from City University of New York (CUNY), and Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) in Biology from CUNY in 2014.
- On May 14, 2021 PCC celebrated its 58th Commencement Exercises. A total of one hundred five (105) students received their two-year degree from Palau Community College; thirteen (13) students completed their diploma requirements with the PCC Adult High School Program; and twenty-nine (29) students received their Bachelor of Arts Degree in Liberal Arts and Sciences with a major in Interdisciplinary Studies for Educators with San Diego State University.