

# **FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION REPORT**

**College of Micronesia - Federated States of Micronesia**

**Post Office Box 159**

**Pohnpei, FSM 46941**

**A Confidential Report Prepared for The Accrediting Commission for  
Community and Junior Colleges**

**Western Association of Schools and Colleges**

**This report represents the findings of the Follow-Up  
evaluation team that visited COM-FSM  
April 23 - 25, 2012**

**Steven M. Kinsella, DBA, CPA, Team Chair**

**Susan Murata, Team Member**

## **Team Member Roster**

Dr. Steven Kinsella, CPA (Chair)  
Superintendent/President  
Gavilan College  
5055 Santa Teresa Boulevard  
Gilroy CA 95020  
E-Mail: [skinsella@gavilan.edu](mailto:skinsella@gavilan.edu)  
Telephone: 408-848-4712  
FAX: 408-847-5102

Ms. Susan Murata  
Head Librarian  
Kapiolani Community College  
4303 Diamond Head Road  
Honolulu HI 96816  
E-Mail: [smurata@hawaii.edu](mailto:smurata@hawaii.edu)  
Telephone: 808-734-9267  
FAX: 808-734-9453

## INTRODUCTION

### **College of Micronesia-Federated States of Micronesia (COM-FSM) Follow-Up Evaluation Team Visit April 23-25, 2012**

A two member accreditation evaluation team visited the College of Micronesia-FSM April 23-25, 2012, for the purpose of evaluating the institution's Follow-Up Report dated March 15, 2012 and submitted to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC or the Commission). In spring 2010, COM-FSM underwent a comprehensive evaluation visit that resulted in fifteen recommendations, 10 of which were to fully meet Accreditation Standards. The Commission acted to place COM-FSM on **Warning** and require a Follow Up Report demonstrating resolution of recommendations 1,2,6,7,8 and 9 by March 2011, to be followed by an evaluation team visit. In June 2011, the Commission acted to place COM-FSM on Probation and to require the College submit a Follow Up Report on recommendations 1,2,6 and 8 by March 2012, to be followed by an evaluation team visit. A Follow-Up Report was prepared in response to the Commission's letter dated June 30, 2011 in which the Commission notified COM-FSM that it was placed on **Probation**.

The Commission identified four recommendations that were to be addressed in the March 15, 2012 Follow-Up Report. The Recommendations are:

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

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

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

To fully meet this standard, the team recommends that the various plans of the college be

integrated into the development of a comprehensive long-range educational master plan that is linked to and includes a long-range budget plan (I.B.4, III.D).

**Recommendation 6. Physical Resources**

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

**Recommendation 8. Financial Resources**

To fully meet the 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)

## **General Observations**

A year after the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges placed the College of Micronesia -FSM on Probation with instructions that it submit a Follow-Up Report by March 15, 2012, the College has made important improvements in establishing a collaborative communication network that now includes all constituency groups in the decision making processes of the College. While this is significant and a key building block in the creation of a broad based collaborative decision making process, this accomplishment along with others that will be identified in the body of this report fall short of the requirements of Accreditation Standards included in the four recommendations that were to be addressed in the Follow-Up Report.

With a new president having been hired in December 2011 and reporting to the college February 2012, the college has relied on consultants who have direct experience in responding to accreditation findings and the Standards of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges. The consultants worked closely with college staff in the preparation of the follow-up report and in assisting the college in developing processes that are in compliance with Commission Standards.

Over the course of the time visiting the College and reviewing its operations, it became apparent that there is strong support by the community and by key leaders who understand that the College is the nation's only institution of higher education. It is also the team's impression that the College is making rapid progress now that the transition of leadership has occurred. Some other factors that the team felt were important on the progress of the College in implementing the full range of the requirements of the Standards is that the College has secured the talent of consultants who have demonstrated skill and expertise gained either as a college president of an member institution subject to ACCJC Standards or as a previous Commissioner of ACCJC. While the College has hired consultants with a good deal of knowledge and experience with ACCJC standards, it is important that the College employees themselves develop a clear understanding of accreditation standards and demonstrate the ability to translate that understanding into

action. As an observation the evaluation team was concerned about the institution's mastery of the requirements of the standards.

Some College personnel have attended training conferences presented by the Commission. A number of the College's personnel have taken the Commission's online course that serves as an introduction to the Standards. To gain a greater understanding of practices used at other peer institutions, the team encourages qualified faculty and administrators to consider submitting a request through the College President to the Commission requesting an assignment to a future evaluation team. The application process can be found on the ACCJC web site. By attending Commission training available to all member institutions and by participation on a Commission evaluation team, the College can greatly increase its internal capacity to comply with Commission Standards and thereby also reduce the reliance on consultants over time.

The College also has a new Accreditation Liaison Officer and a new President who are highly committed to moving the College off sanction. In addition, the College has strong advocates on the Board of Regents who are well placed to keep the President of the Federated States of Micronesia apprised of significant changes, and to propose new resolutions through Congress in support of the College. Community support is strong, there is a strong national pride in the College and everyone would like to see the College succeed. The team's assessment of the tone of operations observed while on the College is that the broader College community will embrace necessary changes that will bring the College into compliance with the Standards.

In summary, the evaluation team has identified areas where the College has complied with parts of the Standards included in the four recommendations. There are also areas where the College has not fully implement each element of the Standard and the team concludes that the College of Micronesia-FSM does not yet meet the requirements of the Standards. Justification for our conclusions is included in the body of the report.

**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).*

**Observations and Evidence:**

In March 2011, the college President of seven years decided to return to a faculty position and resigned from the presidency. An Interim President (Mr. Ringlen Ringlen - Vice President, Student Services) was assigned from March 2011 until the arrival of Dr. Joseph Daisy in February 2012. A new Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) was appointed in August 2011. As 2012 began the College had a new President and a new Accreditation Liaison Officer.

The college operates at six sites that are located in two different time zones with 1,550 miles between the two most distant states of Yap and Kosrae (equivalent distance is San Francisco to Austin, TX). Transportation to the college sites mostly depends on air travel offered by the one airline that serves the island States.

The most common and effective method of holding meetings among campus sites of the College is through teleconferencing and phone conferencing. Communication has improved but there are still challenges with all connections including the stability of electrical power. To illustrate that point there were power outages on each of the three days when the team was conducting interviews or working in the team room.

Communication technology is improving but remains a challenge due to the nation's infrastructure that experiences interruptions at various times of the day. With patience

and persistence the College personnel are able to complete transmission of messages and participate in meaningful dialogue across the sites throughout the nation.

College staff commented that the National campus at Pohnpei is receiving an upgraded telecommunication network that uses optic fiber. Despite the challenges of the inconsistency in the communication networks the College is able to adapt to whatever circumstances it operates in and has done what it can to mitigate interruptions in both the communication networks and instructional activities when electrical power is lost. At the National campus multiple electrical generators automatically start when electrical power is interrupted.

The revised Participatory Governance Policy's (2012) purpose is to ensure decision-making, involving the commitment and participation of all campus constituencies. The college has a number of standing committees (Presidents Cabinet, Financial Aid, Curriculum and Assessment, Human Resources, Finance, Facilities and Campus Environment, Information and Communications Technology, Planning and Resources, and Recruitment, Admissions, and Retention) and evidence of their meetings and discussions are posted on the public college website, which shows a significantly improved level of participation. Minutes of meetings are not verbatim conversations but they include sufficient detail of the conversations and the conclusions of the Committee meetings.

The committees were restructured in 2011 from 18 committees down to 9, and faculty at all campuses is now required to serve on a standing committee. Faculty are elected and empowered to lead the committees, and as more than one committee confirmed, this has led to a greater dialogue and accountability for decisions. The new structure also gives faculty direct access to the President via their committees, or through the Council of Chairs.

In order to determine the College's compliance with the Standards and to gain a better understanding of the situation identified during the 2010 accreditation evaluation visit,



this team reviewed the requirements of the Standards as well as the situation documented in the 2010 evaluation report and from which this recommendation was first made. Since communication that promotes participation in the decision-making processes of the College has been a persistent problem, the evaluation team was encouraged by the changes made in the Participatory Governance Policy by the College over the past year to engage faculty, staff and students in the operations of the College.

The team conducted interviews with Chairs of the Committees during visit. A noteworthy shift that placed faculty members as the Chair person of all but two committees of the College has resulted in stakeholders feeling empowered and vested in the activities of the Committees. As a result of the faculty members assuming responsibility for running the Committees, the College appears to have solved this long standing concern about the lack of participation by College personnel in the decision making processes. Now that the Chair is a member of the faculty there is much greater communication and involvement in what is occurring at the College.

Minutes are published on the college website and the local wiki. Committee pages provide open, monthly summaries of committee actions. Comments can be posted directly onto the wiki to continue discussions with those who did not attend the meeting. The minutes are public and students are able to view and comment, and get additional access to the newsfeed from the student portal, myShark, or from the college Facebook site. Committee chairs also disseminate approved minutes via email for information sharing. An electronic bulletin board (currently installed only at the National campus, but to be installed at all campuses) also continuously updates announcements and current classes being held. The electronic bulletin board content will be managed by each individual campus to localize the newsfeed.

To improve communication, the Board of Regents have continued their quarterly meetings but hold them ‘town hall’ style, rotating among the four states, to invite a broader audience. Effective fall 2011, the president and each state campus director hold individual, monthly All Campus meetings with all stakeholders.

The president has hired several consultants (Floyd Takeuchi in fall 2011 as well as Sandy Pond Consulting in spring 2012) to assist him in bringing the College into compliance with Accreditation Standards. This objective requires a number of underlying assumptions one of which is that there is a desire by College personnel to actively participate in planning processes and the work of the consultants who are developing processes that will meet the requirements of the Standards.

The consultants are known for their expertise in working with the Pacific Islands and the president would like to expedite the work. The consultants have recently received the data from the Communications survey in April 2012 (college had administered a survey in 2011 but judged it to be invalid) and will complete their analysis and recommend changes by May 2012. The timeline calls for implementing recommended changes between June – August 2012, with another follow-up communications survey and assessment for December 2012.

The College has recently established the practices noted as a change in communication processes at the institution. The processes have not yet been evaluated to determine how they led to improvement of institutional effectiveness or whether the processes need to be refined because of concerns that would arise during an evaluation. Upon completion of the evaluation of these processes, the College will have completed a full cycle. At that point full implementation of this Recommendation will occur.

**Conclusion:**

Standard I.B.4 requires there be a broad-based planning process that offers opportunities for input by constituencies, that the process receives adequate resources to accomplish the planning objective, and that there is a process leading to improvement of institutional effectiveness. There is broad-based planning work being conducted in the committees as evidenced by meeting minutes. For example, The Working Group on Educational Master Plan states that the Group reviewed departmental level strategies from the 2006-11 Strategic Plan and identified work completed, the work to be completed and priorities

where no work had been started. The Group then mapped out work that needed to be completed, sources of evidence that are identified for analysis, and the due dates for completion of steps in the development of the Integrated Educational Master Plan were listed. Conversations with faculty and staff who participated in committee meetings reinforced comments recorded in the minutes of committee meetings about the content discussed over the course of the meeting. Planning activities were occurring but planning documents were not completed or put in writing for distribution.

The team's conclusion is that college participants are now actively engaged in planning work being conducted during committee meetings. Communication problems previous noted as a barrier to progress in the development of plans and an integrated planning process have been resolved. College personnel from all constituency groups are engaged in planning activities but the actual plan documents that show the results of planning activities have not been prepared. As a result, although portions of the planning process appear to be complete, until the product of the planning activities is generated in the form of a plan that is supported by evidence and based upon data the team cannot conclude that the College meets the requirements of Standard I.B.4.

The team concludes that there is broad participation in the Committees as a result of assigning faculty members to the Chair position on the Committees. These committees are involved in the planning activities of the College and the team found evidence of broad participation by committee members during the meetings where planning activities were occurring. What remains to be completed are the plan documents that would show the proposed courses of action, the data analysis used to arrive at the proposed course of action, and measurable goals and objectives that can be evaluated so the college can verify how its planning processes have resulted in actions that improved the effectiveness of the College.

Standard IV.A.3 requires the College have established governance structures, processes, and practices, and that the governing board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students work together for the good of the College. Standard IV.A.3 also requires that these

processes facilitate discussion of ideas and effective communication among the institution's constituencies.

There is evidence that the college has created a structure for broad-based participation and communication, and there is a formalized process in place with much discussion. The process is documented through their Terms of Reference for each committee and their new policies. The team concludes that the communication improvements and the direct involvement of faculty and staff who are now running Committees that are part of the participatory governance process are sufficient to conclude that the portion of the Recommendation 1 addressing broad campus wide dialogue and broad based participation has been implemented. Moreover, the various constituency groups are knowledgeable of their roles in the planning process.

In reviewing the information in minutes of Committee meetings and further supported by interviews with College personnel, the College has been evaluating and assessing data to support establishing priorities and compiling the plan documents that can be used in the appropriate plan. What has not yet been accomplished is the creation of measurable goals and objectives that provide a mechanism to assess performance and to serve as a pathway of activities necessary to achieve the desired vision of the plan. The College has resolved previously reported problems with communication and the top down decision making style that was a concern in the past. The planning activities conducted during Committee meetings is based on information, data and program review information developed at the department level. Once the plans are completed they will then progress through other relevant committees until reaching the President and the Board of Regents who bear ultimate responsibility for approval. Planning work is occurring but it was not finalized into plan documents by the time the team arrived. The team notes that without actual plans the evaluation process cannot occur.

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

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

### **Observations and Evidence:**

The college has developed various plans all of which are independent of each other. A committee has been set up with a timeline to integrate the plans into a single Master Plan. A draft Educational Master Plan 2012-2017 shows objectives to include: Academic Planning, Human Resources, Facilities, Student Services, Technology, Financial Resources, Institutional Planning, and Community Outreach Planning.

The process has been documented with minutes, the lists of those who have participated, and the outcomes of the meetings all provide evidence that a broad-based planning process has been occurring. Two examples below provide evidence of partially meeting Standard I.B.4 for this recommendation:

- Academic Plan & Program Prioritization – the college has been working on prioritizing academic programs and services since August 2011. Course level assessment is done each semester, program assessment every year, and Program Review assessment is done every 3 years. The Curriculum Assessment Committee completed their 5-year review of all course outlines and has aligned their SLOs with the PLOs. All faculty were invited to participate.
- The Curriculum and Assessment committee worked with the Director of Academic Programs to develop an approved process to prioritize the programs. Ten criteria from Dickeson (2010) and the program reviews were used to rank 26 out of 40 programs (65%) and results were collated by February 2012. The results were presented to the Planning &

Resources Committee and then to the Council of Chairs for evaluation and discussion.

The president noted that while the first phase of this process was not perfect (some program reviews were incomplete or missing), he was excited by the dialogue and the process has already yielded recommendations as a result of the reports from the committees involved. Recommendations for changes are being discussed with the Director of Academic Programs, Vice President for Instructional Affairs, and the President's Cabinet for resolution.

A Facilities and Campus Environment Plan (2011) has been updated with an ongoing maintenance schedule and was supplemented with a list of projects and renovations that were recently completed. A total cost of ownership study has been completed. Several scenarios including closing some of the sites has been discussed within the committee, but will be brought to a wider audience.

The Comptroller has been proactive, independently working on identifying strategies to deal with the JEMCO decrement to have the college be financially sustainable. Without a complete Master plan and defined timeline, the integration of the Master plan to a long-range budget plan cannot be aligned.

Standard III.D requires there be sufficient financial resources to support student learning programs and services and to improve institutional effectiveness. Additional requirements of this standard are that resources support the development, maintenance and improvement of the College's programs and services; that resources are managed to ensure the College is financially stable on both the short term and long term basis; that the amount of financial resources provide a reasonable expectation of short and long-term financial stability. Standard III.D requires that financial resources be integrated with institutional planning with high priority objectives driving resource allocation decisions.

**Conclusion:** The college has partially implemented Recommendation 2. Plans have been developed in some cases but there is no overarching Educational Master Plan that integrates the individual plans into a comprehensive plan that supports all aspects of the College's operations.

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

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

#### **Observations and Evidence:**

The college has not yet developed a facilities master plan, a current strategic plan or an integrated educational master plan. The college has several components of the facilities plan in place but additional work is needed before the plan can be considered complete. During interviews with college personnel the team was frequently informed that the facilities master plan is in development and is being prepared; the total cost of ownership concepts being applied as the plan is formulated. The team was able to obtain the outlining format of the facilities master plan but supporting documentation was not provided to show how costs were calculated. There remains a need for additional supporting documentation and descriptive content to provide readers with an understanding of what is being proposed within the plan and justification for the items that are presented as priorities of the facilities master plan.

A Facilities and Campus Environment plan was finalized in February 2011. In August 2011, the President's Cabinet approved a Physical Resources Contingency fund policy and allocated \$500,000 from the fund balance and additional deposits of \$50,000 annually. A maintenance report showed renovations and improvements were completed, or started at all six sites. In March 2012, the college completed their comprehensive review of the college total cost of ownership plan.

The Facilities and Campus Environment plan has been updated to include a maintenance schedule with projected annual costs. Utility costs have been projected and budgeted for the 72 building facilities and 56 vehicles. Generators have been added as part of the annual budget due to the frequent power outages. A new solar project being built on the campus will yield supplemental power for the island. The project is being constructed and paid for by the Government of Japan and will serve as a training site in addition to being a provider of renewal energy for the College and the nation.

Funding to support development of facilities was not provided during the visit and it is not yet understood how effective the plan that is referred to by the College is since the Educational Master Plan that drives the need for facilities that support instruction has not been prepared. The College has developed several components of a Total Cost of Ownership plan including items such as scheduled maintenance or routine maintenance and repairs. The College has also set money aside from regular operating funds to ensure money is available to complete facility maintenance work that may be required during a budget year.

**Conclusion:**

The college has partially addressed Recommendation 6. More work has been completed on the assessment and creation and improvement of facilities of the College but until the Educational Mater Plan is developed, the College will not be able to prepare a Facilities Master Plan that informs readers of the size and scope of resources needed to support the instructional programs of the College. This Recommendation is partially implemented.

**Recommendation 8. Financial resources**

*To fully meet the 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)*

**Observations and Evidence:**



The lack of widespread involvement of stakeholders had previously been identified as a weakness that needed to be addressed as various plans are developed. It is the opinion of the team that the governance structure is adequate to ensure broad based participation of all constituency groups. The College has not completed the individual plans that will be added to the overall budget and thereby provide the comprehensive Educational Master Plan supported by other plans and integrated to show how the resources are allocated to achieve all of the plans objectives. At the time the team was visiting the College there were individual plans prepared in various stages but the required Educational Master Plan that brings all of the elements together did not exist.

**Conclusion:**

The College did not implement this recommendation.