

COLLEGE OF MICRONESIA – FSM BOARD OF REGENTS
Minutes of the 2-6 December, 2024
Early Childhood Education Center, Yap State

Zoom Link: <https://comfsm.zoom.us/j/3061339702?pwd=dnM3UmJKWW83V0JFdjhCNDNMbmVsUT09&omn=96166806719>
Meeting ID: 306 133 9702 | Passcode: 133187

Present: Regent Suzanne Gallen representing Pohnpei (Chair); Regent Jeffrey Arnold representing Chuuk (Vice- Chairperson, present via Zoom); Regent Lyndon Cornelius representing Kosrae, (Member); Regent Geraldine Mitagyow representing Yap (Secretary & Treasurer); Regent Lynn Sonden representing the FSM National Government; and ex officio member President Dr. Theresa Koroivulaono.

Absent:

Resources: Acting Vice-President of Administrative Services (VPAS) and Vice-President of Cooperative Research & Extension (VPCRE), Mr. Steven Young-Uhk, Vice-President of Instructional Affairs (VPIA), Ms. Delihna Ehmes; Vice-President of Enrollment, Management and Student Services (VPEMSS) Mr. Joey Oducado; Vice-President of Instructional Effectiveness and Quality Assurance (VPIEQQA), Ms. Jennifer H. Helieisar; Acting Dean of Chuuk Campus Ms. Genevy Samuel; Dean of Career and Technical Education Center Ms. Phyllis Silbanuz; Dean of Yap Campus and FSM-FMI Campus, Lourdes Roboman; and Comptroller Ms. Roselle Togonon.

Additional Resources: EO to the Office of the President, Mrs. Lisa N. Dereas; and IT Consultant Dhiraj Bhartu.

1. **Call to Order:** Chairwoman Gallen called the meeting to order. Meeting convened at 0839 on Tuesday, 3 December 2024.
2. **Prayer:** Prayer was led by Regent Cornelius.
3. **Reading of the Mission Statement:** Recited by all.
4. **Roll Call:** Secretary/Treasurer Mitagyow called roll. Quorum is met.
5. **Election of Officers:** The Board elected the following -
 - Chairperson: Suzanne L. Gallen (Pohnpei State)
 - Vice-Chairperson: Jeffrey Arnold (Chuuk State)
 - Secretary & Treasurer: Geraldine Mitagyow (Yap State)

6. Review of Agenda

Vice-Chair Arnold moved to adopt the agenda. Seconded by Regent Mitagyow. **CARRIED.**

7. Approval of Minutes (23-25 September 2024)

Regent Mitagyow moved to approve the minutes. V-Chair Arnold second it. **CARRIED.**

8. Communications

- a. 14 November 2024: Joint Congressional Hearing for Education & External Affairs; meeting with Dr. George Hui.

9. Regents Reports:

a. **Regent Cornelius**: Apologized again about the unfortunate issues with the power and water during the last Board meeting in Kosrae this past September. He wished to share some concerns from his home state. Although the piggery budget was discontinued it needs to be reinstated out of necessity. Regent Cornelius further urged the Board to consider putting in a new Dean at the campus and suggested to put in someone on a probationary period with a “close coaching of someone from the National Campus.”

b. **Chair Gallen**: Started out by addressing the Workforce Pell. Recommended that the SLT monitor and see how CTEC can tap into this. The Chair also provided an update on the governing body of the ACCT, saying that the Chair of the CMI Board, Mr. Charles Cepeda, was nominated to chair the Nomination Committee (ACCT). This will benefit the North Pacific in terms of funding. She also mentioned her attendance at the APAFS saying it was a timely opportunity for the Board to learn their fiduciary responsibilities. The Chair further stated that the Comptroller will give a full and detailed description of the conference; and that she is pleased to share that at APAFS the grand raffle prize went to the CEO of CPUC, Mr. Kasio “Kembo” Mida Jr, who donated his winnings to the COM-FSM Endowment Fund. Update on the Pacific Islands College Boards (PICB): Finalizing the bylaws (meant to be done by CMI). Next PICB might take place at the interim of the ACCT-GLI in Honolulu. It will be discussed further during the Executive Session. Challenging times with the Pohnpei State government which may become detrimental to the education sector. The Chair also provided an update over the Board’s meeting with Congressman Joseph J. Urusemal. At this meeting, the Congressman encouraged the College to send in its supplemental budget regardless of the budget situation; and he asked for an update on the FSM-FMI Campus land lease.

c. **Regent Sonden**: Informed the Board that the January 2025 is the next Congressional session. May 2025 is the next general session. She urged the College to take every opportunity to present our concerns to the Congress. Regent Sonden concluded by expressing her gratitude to the College for her confirmation as the new regent.

d. **Secretary/Treasurer Mitagyow**: Touched briefly upon the Groundbreaking Ceremony yesterday of the FSM-FMI classrooms donated by the Japanese Government through the JICS. The Youth Initiative Program (Yap Youth Civic Educational Project: UNDP & State Legislature).

Regent Geri report:

1. For the record, a ground-breaking ceremony for a new 2-story classroom building funded by JICS (Japan International Cooperation System) took place on Monday, Dec. 2, 2024 at 10AM. The official project is called Japan’s Grant Aid Project for Enhancing the Capacities of the FMI-FSM.
2. The Yap Youth Civic Education Program was officially launched last week with the participation of COM-FSM, Yap High School, Yap Catholic High School, and Faith Christian School. This project

is a joint effort and partnership between UNDP and Yap State Legislature, with \$35,000 in funding from UNDP and an equal amount from Yap State Legislature. Target age group is 14 to 19 years youths. The purpose is to give opportunities for youths to experience first-hand how government operates and will involve research, presentations, debates and opportunities to participate in moderated civic duties and government operations. Program runs through April 2025, with plans to involve Neighboring Islands Schools and Youths in subsequent years.

3. Senator John Masiwemai from District 2 in Yap has turned in his resignation from the Legislature due to health reasons. A special election will be held soon to fill this vacancy.
4. All the Director positions in the current administration have been filled, with the latest being the Director of Administrative Services. The new recently sworn-in Director is Thomas G. Tun.
5. The status of the Yap Campus Land Lease has not changed since the last Board Meeting in September 2024. There has been no further action and the lease remains in limbo. With all the cabinet seats being filled, which comprise most of the Land Lease Committee members, it is hoped that the committee can meet soon to move forward on approval of the original terms of the lease. This issue remains an accreditation issue for the college in its current state.

Vice-Chair Arnold: Apologized as his usual avenue of receiving updates from the Chuuk State Government was delayed. He expressed the need for a full-fledged Campus Dean in Chuuk and his full support of AI, claiming it is already proving to be something the students need. Vice-Chair said it is already here so as a higher learning institution, we may as well pioneer its use in this region. Vice-Chair closed out his report with the status of the land issue, saying that we can now start building. The access is now included in the 3rd phase of the Chuuk infrastructure phase so while this is happening, the College can start looking for funds to begin building.

10. President's Reports

a. ["Resetting Our Sails"](#)**

b. [Vice President for Administrative Services](#)**

i. Financial Report

- Acting VPAS: Kosrae Campus multi-purpose building is up for bidding. Groundbreaking slated for January 2025.
- CTEC Administration and Library buildings, and the Const. & Mechanic Shop are also up for bidding.
- National Campus Student Center will be completed at the end of this month.

ii. Investment Report (Raymond & James)

c. [Vice President for Cooperative Research & Extension](#)**

d. [Vice President for Enrollment, Management & Student Services](#)**

- Federal Work-study
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)
- The College will receive a total of \$174,311.00 Financial Aid award that will be disbursed by June 2025
- Another \$12,000 from the Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Institution (AANAPISI) Scholarship

- 2024-25 was a difficult year as the Financial Aid Office (FAO) tirelessly implemented the FAFSA Certification Act.
- Proactive measures
 - Provide dedicated computers for the federal programs only
 - Conduct more campaigns and outreach to the parents.

e. [Vice President for Instructional Affairs](#)

- Deans Reports
 - Chuuk Campus:** Chuuk State Teachers' Appreciation Day (11 October). This marks the first time for Chuuk Campus to observe and appreciate its Faculty/Instructors. Entrepreneurship Training was held on 14-25 October: *Basic Solar In-house Wiring* and *Entrepreneurship* (with the goal to empower women entrepreneurs). There were 19 participants, 16 women and 3 men from within the Lagoon.
 - Kosrae Campus:** Currently, the Campus is without a dean. The SLT endorsed a proposal from the VPIA to put the VPs on rotation where each one will spend a month until such time a dean is onboarded. In November, the Dean of Academic Programs, Kasiano Paul, has begun the cycle as "Acting Dean".
 - CTEC Campus:** CTEC Campus reported on the following activities such as: Placement for Telecommunication & Electronics VEE 250 which began on 1 October with a total of 11 interns; Blue Café opens for Practicum on 17 October; SBA and Students Organizations Induction & Welcome Ceremony on the same day Blue Café opened; the grand opening of the Multi-purpose building took place on 1 November which included the attendance of over 300 guests from the local community, the diplomatic corps, the government and NGOs; Upward Bound's 25th Silver Anniversary on 3 November with the attendance of UB alumni from all the 25 years of operation; courtesy visit on Governor Stevenson Joseph to promote the Law Enforcement Program; National Apprenticeship Week which began on 11 November; Training on Solar Installation in Chuuk on 4-15 November which brought in 30 participants (women included); and assisted students who have not completed their Financial Aid forms.
 - Yap Campus & FSM-FMI Campus:** Groundbreaking Ceremony on 2 December at the FSM-FMI Campus for the classrooms which are funded by the Government of Japan via Japan International Cooperation System (JICS). The Yap State Legislature (YSL) initiated a youth program, in collaboration with UNDP, to promote youth involvement/engagement in government services for better understanding. Student Services and Upward Bound staff continue to participate in counseling training with Patrick Ryan (Mental Health & Suicide Specialist Consultant based out of the National Campus). On 6 December, there will be a Student Award Day ceremony in the student lounge on the Yap Campus. Fall graduation will be on Tuesday, 17 December at 10am.
The JICA Project at the FSM-FMI Campus consist of Class 4 Master and Class 4 Engineering course outlines that were approved by the FSM TC&I. The Class 4 materials are now ready for instructors and cadets; Yumi Schultz, member of JICA, who is the Employment Support/ International Cadet Support Coordinator completed her contract with the project; TV Hokuto engines is fixed and ready, thanks to JICA for providing the engine parts which will enable TV Hokuto to be on the water. Final repairs and touches will begin once the vessel is on the water.

f. [Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Assurance**](#)

g. Student Body Association (SBA) Representative

- As the Board gradually works towards establishing a Student Regent to represent students at all the campuses, the College invited the President of the National Campus SBA, Marsden Yaliwelig,

from Woleai, an outer island of Yap State. SBA President emphasized the importance of the following:

- Student Activities: Clubs, sports and leadership roles. He and other students find these extracurricular activities as a way to help with “student burnouts” but it also helps them apply the skills learned in the classroom.

Day 1 adjourned at 5pm

-----**Day 2: Meeting reconvened at 0838 on Wednesday, 4 December 2024**-----

11. Old Business

- a. Review of **Chapter 1** (Board of Regents) Policies
 - i. **Board Policy No. 1330 – Board Self-Assessment Policy**
 - ii. **Board Policy No. 1360 – Professional Licensure**
 - iii. **Board Policy No. 1431 – Indemnification of Members**

Note: *These Board Policies were presented to the Board by VPEMSS Oducado with no proposed changes.*

- b. Review of **Chapter 5** (Fiscal) Policies
 - i. **Board Policy No. 5608 – Policy to Provide Incentive for Securing of Grant Funding**
 - ii. **Board Policy No. 5801 – Naming Opportunity of Facilities and Programs**

Note: *These board Policies were presented to the Board by VPEMSS Oducado. The said policies were tabled and will continue to be tabled until the next Board meeting in March 2025 as they were not endorsed by the steering committee because the relevant standing committee was unable to meet.*

- c. Review of **Chapter 6** (Human Recourses) Policies
 - i. **Board Policy No. 6017 – Performance Evaluation**

Note: *This policy was presented by VPEMSS Oducado. The policy, although reviewed by the standing committees, its impact on the financial status of the College is unknown and may be negatively affected. VPEMSS therefore proposed to the Board if it can be deferred until further notice, or when the College is in a better financial position.*

- d. Review of **Chapter 7** (Facilities & Maintenance) Policies
 - i. **Board Policy No. 7000 – Emergency Response Plan**
 - ii. **Board Policy No. 7001 – COM-FSM Vehicle Use Policy**
 - iii. **Board Policy No. 7005 – Physical Resources Contingencies Fund**

Note: *These Board Policies were presented by VPEMSS Oducado. The policies were not endorsed by the steering committee (EC) because the standing committees have yet to review it. VPEMSS proposed to the Board that these are tabled until the next meeting in March 2025*

- e. Board of Regents Updated Master Planning Calendar

Note: *The Board reviewed and approved the updated Board Master Planning Calendar based on the SLT's presentation, recommendations and comments.*

12. New Business:

- a. FY2026 Budget – approved
- b. FSM-FMI Budget – approved
- c. FY 2026 Board Budget – approved

FY2026 Auxiliary Enterprise Budget will be deferred to March 2025. Since this is an internal budget, it does not need to be proposed to Congress for approval. There will also be some proposals added to the budget which will be presented next year.

The continuous efforts of the SLT and the Board to raise employees' salaries, particularly for those in the lowest brackets (\$10,000 and below), by approximately 26% to help them better afford the rising cost of living, has resulted in the Board approving a budget proposal of \$16million instead of the proposed \$13million. This increase is dependent on the availability or approval of the proposed budget amount.

13. Executive Session (closed session) The Board agreed to skip item #13 saving the discussion for the Executive Session at the conclusion of the open Board meeting.

14. Next Meeting: The Chair proposed to have the next Board meeting in Pohnpei tentatively in March 2025. Dates will be decided at a later time. Depending on all the activities happening in March, it might occur at the latter part of the month. Another suggestion is to have it on the week of the College's Founding Day anniversary (1 April).

15. Adjournment: 2nd Day of the Board Meeting concluded at 10:15am.

****Action Items:**

a. The Board, through the President, directed the SLT (particularly the Comptroller) to work on increasing the FY2026 Budget from \$13million to \$16million – to be presented to the FSM National Government.

b. The Board directed the President to establish an "Investment Sub-Committee" to oversee the *Principles for Responsible Investment* (PRI) and to select relevant VPs, staff members, including the Comptroller and EO, as committee members.

c. The Board directed the Comptroller to deposit the BOR's remaining FY2024 budget of \$20,000 into the Endowment Fund.

d. The Board also directed the President to identify a new Professional Development trainer/consultant willing to travel to the FSM to conduct the training, in order to reduce costs associated with having Board members travel.

e. The Board directed the EO and the Comptroller to provide a more detailed and easy-to-follow spreadsheet considering all their travels, past and present.

f. The Board assigned the Comptroller to inquire with other sister colleges and/or other boards in the FSM regarding their practices concerning health insurance during official travel.

g. The Board directed the President to consult with the SLT on the viability of renewing the Chuuk Campus lease, given ongoing efforts to identify a new campus site for COM-FSM Chuuk.