

COM-FSM Board of Regents Meeting Minutes

10-12 June 2025

Kosrae State Campus

Tofol, Kosrae 96944

-----Day 1 commenced at 0913-----

Welcome: Chair Gallen

Prayer: VPIA Delihna Ehmes

Mission Statement: Recited by the Chuuk Campus SBA President, Tikikos Patricio Namelo II

Roll call: Called by Regent Mitagyow. Quorum was met.

Review of agenda: Agenda was adopted.

April 2025 Meeting Minutes: Meeting minutes was adopted.

I. REGENTS' REPORTS

Report by Regent Cornelius

Regent Cornelius began his report by expressing sincere gratitude and relief at the recent appointment of a Dean for the COM-FSM Kosrae Campus, following a two-year vacancy. He extended his full support to the new Dean and encouraged ongoing collaboration with the Board of Regents through the Office of the President, emphasizing that such coordination is vital to advancing the best interests of students.

He also highlighted the Kosrae State Department of Education's successful coordination of a Scholastic Field Day, commending the community's continued efforts to promote academic engagement and student development.

Representing both the Kosrae Port Authority and the COM-FSM Board of Regents, Regent Cornelius attended the FSM Fisheries and Maritime Institute (FSM-FMI) commencement ceremony, where nine students graduated as Class 5 Navigators. While acknowledging this achievement, he raised a concern regarding the apparent lack of a formal transition plan to support these graduates in pursuing further training toward Class 1 certification, the highest credential in maritime navigation.

In response, Regent Cornelius has been actively advocating with the Kosrae State Government to secure support for the continued education and training of Kosrae's aspiring navigators. He emphasized the significance of preserving and revitalizing traditional navigation skills within a modern framework, noting this as a strategic step toward promoting sustainable development and enhancing regional connectivity.

Additionally, Regent Cornelius referenced two proposed amendments for the Board's consideration: the inclusion of a Student Regent and the addition of a Business Member from the local Chamber of Commerce. He expressed hope that these proposals would receive serious consideration by Congress, as they would broaden representation and enrich the Board with diverse perspectives.

Report by Regent Sonden

Regent Lynn reported that Mr. Jeremy Mudong (replacing Quincy Lawrence, Pohnpei State) and Mr. Andy Choor (replacing Isaac Figir, Yap State) were officially sworn in as new members of the Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia. She extended her appreciation to the President and CEO for the outstanding performance of the COM-FSM Choir during the swearing-in ceremony, noting their contribution to the dignity and success of the event.

She further reported that Chairman Joseph J. Urusemal has retained his position as Chair of the Congressional Committee on Education. While acknowledging that advocacy efforts directed at Congress, particularly concerning the College's budget, are sometimes approached with caution, Regent Lynn encouraged the College to maintain its engagement with national leaders. She emphasized the importance of continued advocacy to ensure that COM-FSM's financial needs are clearly communicated and effectively supported.

Report by Regent Mitagyow

Yap High School successfully hosted its first-ever Job Fair on May 8, 2025, providing students with an opportunity to explore various career paths and begin planning for life after graduation.

A special election was held on May 15, 2025, to fill the vacant legislative seat for District 3. On May 28, 2025, Mr. John F. Taweryan was officially sworn in as the newly elected Senator of the 11th Yap State Legislature, representing the people of Woleai.

The College of Micronesia-FSM Yap Campus, in partnership with the FSM Department of Transportation, Communications & Infrastructure (TC&I) and the United Nations Office of Projects and Services (UNOPS), launched a community-based survey to identify End-of-Life Vehicles (ELVs) across Yap. This project ran from May 12 through June 1, 2025, and involved students conducting fieldwork in villages to locate non-operational vehicles that may pose environmental risks.

From May 15–16, 2025, the Department of Resources and Development, in collaboration with Yap State officials, conducted a two-day consultation at the Small Business Conference Room. The session reviewed the draft Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Framework for the FSM Strategic Development Plan and collected input for the country's upcoming Voluntary National Review (VNR) report.

On May 17, 2025, Vice President Aren B. Palik and the Second Lady of the FSM arrived in Yap to attend the graduation ceremonies of the College of Micronesia-FSM and the FSM Fisheries and Maritime Institute (FMI). The ceremonies were held at the Yap Sports Complex on May 20. Following their departure on May 20, President Wesley W. Simina and First Lady Simina arrived to attend additional graduation ceremonies in Yap's outer islands.

COM-FSM Yap Campus and the FSM Fisheries and Maritime Institute jointly held their commencement ceremony on May 20, 2025, at the Matson Yap Sports Complex. The ceremony, themed *"Investing in Today's Generation for a Better Tomorrow,"* celebrated the achievements of the Graduating Class of 2025 and emphasized the role of education in national development.

On May 21, 2025, Yap State officially received a new X-ray machine at Yap State Airport. The equipment was part of a broader support program facilitated by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the FSM Department of Resources and Development.

On May 27, 2025, Acting Governor Thomas G. Tun issued an official Proclamation in Honor and Remembrance of the late Governor Charles Sigfred Chieng.

Yap's delegation participated in the World Expo 2025 in Osaka, Japan, throughout the month of May. The Chuuk delegation is expected to take over the FSM booth in June to continue showcasing Micronesian culture and development

Looking ahead, the next Micronesia Expo is scheduled to be hosted in Yap from July 21 to 26, 2025.

Report by Chairwoman Gallen

Chairwoman Gallen reported that the submission of the Annual Institutional Priorities (AIP) for the Compact is forthcoming. She reminded the Regents of the need to prepare a report for the Joint Economic Management Committee (JEMCO), noting that this process may require coordinated efforts among the Board, the Compact Management Office, and other relevant stakeholders.

She informed the Board that a representative from the U.S. Department of Labor, specifically from the TVET division, may be invited to visit Pohnpei, with the possibility of touring the Career and Technical Education Center (CTEC). This initiative, supported by the Pacific Islands College Boards (PICB), aims to strengthen pathways to federal funding opportunities for the College.

Chairwoman Gallen also shared that shortly after the April meeting, the Lieutenant Governor of Pohnpei passed away. A special election to fill the vacancy is scheduled for the following month.

In her update from Chuuk, she reported that the court has ruled in favor of the Narruhn-William administration, with the selection of cabinet members currently pending. She also addressed the College's pending land issue in Chuuk, which remains unresolved due to Vice Chair Arnold being on medical leave. Updates are expected once he can resume his duties.

Lastly, Chairwoman Gallen informed the Board that the L5 Hotel is now on the market. The owners have reached out to the College to consider a potential purchase, presenting a possible opportunity for strategic investment.

Raymond & James provided their financial updates and recommendations on the College's portfolio. The recommendations are listed in the Actions & Directives section.

-----Day 1 concluded at 3pm. Day 2 will convene tomorrow, 11 June at 9am-----

II. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

a. Report by the President

The College of Micronesia-FSM (COM-FSM) continues to advance its mission of learner-centered higher education through initiatives focused on access, innovation, and resilience. In response to the challenges posed by climate change and threats to cultural heritage, the college has established an "Education Developer: Indigenous Ways of Knowing" position within the Education Division. This role will enhance the integration of Micronesian culture into early childhood and primary education curricula, supporting the transformation of the FSM education system in partnership with the National Department of Education (NDOE) and through the Global Partnership for Education's Systems Transformation Grant (STG).

The College's Cooperative Research and Extension (CRE) division is addressing six critical issues facing the FSM: local food production and food insecurity, sustainable aquaculture, youth and family challenges, climate change, food and waterborne illnesses, and childhood obesity. Efforts are underway to blend indigenous knowledge with modern strategies to promote food security, climate-smart communities, and improved public health.

A comprehensive survey of teacher credentials across FSM elementary and high schools is being launched in collaboration with NDOE and State Departments of Education. The goal is to inform future training pathways, improve classroom management, and enhance support for special needs students by identifying the proportion of teachers with education degrees.

The College presented a \$1 million proposal to the FSM Association of Chief State School Officers (FACSSO) in April 2025, focusing on strengthening the Teacher Corps program to address the impending shortage of over 200 educators expected to retire in the next five to six years. This initiative aims to build a sustainable pipeline of qualified local teachers who are culturally attuned to FSM's educational needs.

The Career & Technical Education Bridging Program, including the School-To-Work (STW) and Registered Apprenticeship Program, is expanding to provide high school students and current workers with career awareness, technical skills, and on-the-job training in fields such as carpentry, construction, and technology. These programs are being implemented in collaboration with government agencies and supported by the U.S. Department of Labor.

Leadership development for elementary and high school principals is also a priority, with new short-term training modules scheduled across all states. These modules emphasize leadership styles, communication, conflict management, and the integration of Micronesian cultural values.

The College is also focused on strengthening its personnel evaluation and management systems. Recent peer review recommendations have prompted the development of a new Performance Development and Review (PDR) program, which will align employee performance goals with the college's strategic plan and provide a framework for professional growth, rewards, and accountability.

Finally, COM-FSM is preparing for upcoming accreditation activities, including board and college-wide training on new standards and governance practices, as well as ongoing improvements in human resources and institutional effectiveness.

In summary, the President's Office report underscores the college's commitment to educational excellence, cultural preservation, workforce development, and institutional improvement, positioning COM-FSM as a leader in higher education for the Federated States of Micronesia.

b. Report by Vice-President for Enrollment, Management & Student Services (VPEMSS)

The VPEMSS presented the key highlights for his department. They are as follows:

- **Enrollment Trends**

The report detailed current enrollment figures, noting a stable or slightly increased student headcount compared to the previous year. Particular attention was given to shifts in undergraduate and graduate populations, with targeted growth in high-demand academic programs.

- **Student Success Initiatives**

EMSS outlined ongoing and new initiatives aimed at improving retention and graduation rates. These included expanded academic advising, enhanced first-year experience programs, and additional support services for at-risk student populations.

- **Diversity and Inclusion**

The division emphasized progress in recruiting and supporting a diverse student body. Recent efforts have led to incremental gains in underrepresented student enrollment and the development of new campus resources focused on equity and inclusion.

- **Strategic Priorities**

Looking forward, EMSS will focus on:

- Strengthening recruitment pipelines, particularly in underserved regions.
- Leveraging data analytics to inform decision-making and improve student outcomes.
- Expanding partnerships with K-12 and community organizations to support college readiness.

- **Challenges and Opportunities**

The presentation acknowledged ongoing challenges such as demographic shifts, increased competition for students, and changing student expectations. EMSS identified opportunities for innovation in digital engagement and personalized student support.

The EMSS division remains committed to supporting institutional goals through data-driven strategies that promote student success, diversity, and sustainable enrollment growth. The Board was invited to provide feedback and guidance on proposed initiatives for the 2025–2026 academic year.

c.1 Report by the Vice-President for Innovation & Sustainability (VPIS)

The office continues to monitor utility purchases, with particular attention to cashpower consumption across all campuses, while maintaining close oversight of overall College expenditures. Routine operational responsibilities also include managing the College's vehicle fleet.

Facility-related efforts focus on ongoing maintenance and management of the five huts at the National Campus, as well as supervision of classroom buildings at the Career and Technical Education Center (CTEC) and the FSM Fisheries and Maritime Institute (FSM-FMI, Class 4). The VPIS encouraged Deans Phyllis and Lourdes to ensure these buildings are fully utilized once construction is completed.

Construction progress has faced significant challenges. The multipurpose building at CTEC remains incomplete due to frequent discoveries of unexploded ordnance (UXOs) at the site, causing delays. At the Kosrae Campus, the multipurpose building project has been delayed due to issues on the FSM Project Management Unit (PMU) side, despite contract approval. Additionally, the Construction & Maintenance funding program, administered by the FSM Department of Transportation, Communications & Infrastructure (TC&I), remains a critical resource for implementing preventive maintenance across College facilities.

Infrastructure support at the National Campus remains a high priority, with water tanks and generators requiring major maintenance due to recurring power supply issues in Pohnpei. The office remains committed to continuous improvements across all campuses.

c.2 Cooperative Research & Extension (CRE) Report:

For the first time, an Annual Impact Report has been produced, following standard Land Grant practices. CRE continues to promote local food processing and consumption by engaging youth in schools and collaborating with local farmers and community groups. A new partnership with UNICEF, through the Center for Entrepreneurship (CFE), focuses on food safety initiatives.

The swine program primarily addresses treatment methods, including invasive procedures such as injections. In the vegetable production program, a common government inquiry is: “What foods should we be eating and what foods should we be planting?” Current guidance emphasizes staple crops such as taro, coconuts, and sweet potatoes over vegetables.

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) faces challenges with participant numbers; however, Vice-President Young-Uhk is actively working to improve engagement.

Chair’s Inquiry: When asked whether the Summer Enrollment increases were due to open enrollment, the Vice-President for Enrollment Management and Student Services (VPEMSS) clarified that enrollment growth will become more apparent with the start of the regular Fall and Spring enrollment periods.

Report by Mr. Tikikos Patricio Namelo II, SBA President, Chuuk Campus

Mr. Tikikos Patricio Namelo II, who prefers to be called “Two,” delivered his report on behalf of the Student Body Association (SBA) at Chuuk Campus.

During the session, the Chair proposed the idea of transitioning from the current “Student Body Association” model to a “Student Council” structure. The rationale behind this suggestion stems from the observed best practices at other colleges and universities, where student councils are often the preferred model.

The Chair highlighted key distinctions that support the shift toward student councils:

- **Improved Communication and Leadership:** Student councils tend to facilitate more direct and efficient communication between students and administration, enhancing transparency and leadership development.
- **Streamlined Governance:** Councils generally involve a smaller, elected leadership team, making them easier to manage than the broader, more bureaucratic structure typical of SBAs.
- **Focus on Civic Engagement:** Student councils emphasize civic responsibility, democratic participation, and leadership training—key elements that align with the College’s educational mission.

In summary, the Chair suggested that student councils offer a more agile, efficient, and governance-centered approach, which could strengthen student representation and engagement moving forward.

Note: The meeting agenda was amended by the Chair to move the IEQA report ahead of Institutional Advancement (IA), due to the larger scope and anticipated time needed for the IA presentation.

d. Institute of Effectiveness & Quality Assurance (IEQA) Report

Presented by IT Consultant, Mr. Dhiraj Bhartu

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Quality Assurance (IEQA) reported continued progress in key areas aligned with COM-FSM's 2025–2030 Strategic Plan.

A major highlight was the successful replacement of a 13-year-old gateway server at the Career and Technical Education Center (CTEC), along with the integration of Starlink internet. This upgrade makes CTEC the first campus to operate under an active-active dual internet provider system (Starlink and FSMTC), significantly improving connectivity reliability and potentially reducing costs by up to 50% as infrastructure enhancements continue.

IEQA is also leading innovation through technology and AI adoption. Pilot programs have been launched to test Google Gemini for Workspace and AI-powered tools for meeting transcription and minute-taking. A comprehensive AI policy is currently in development and will be submitted to the Board for approval, along with a review of existing IT-related policies.

From **7-16 May** IEQA conducted its first college-wide *Staff Needs Assessment Survey*, with participation from 79 employees (23%). The survey identified professional development needs including Moodle training, AI integration, curriculum design, data analysis, leadership, and communication. Challenges noted included technical stability (Moodle and Zoom), internet connectivity, workload distribution, and departmental silos. Staff called for improved reporting structures and avenues for anonymous feedback.

In response, IEQA is developing a training calendar for FY 2025–2026, revising onboarding processes, and enhancing internal communication strategies. Data reporting has also improved significantly with the deployment of Power BI dashboards, which now provide real-time insights and streamline processes such as IPEDS reporting, reducing turnaround times from hours or days to just minutes.

IEQA remains compliant with accreditation requirements, having submitted the ACCJC Annual Fiscal Report and continuing preparations for the Midterm Report due in Fall 2025. IPEDS submissions are also on schedule.

Branding and outreach efforts are being strengthened through the monthly “*Kamorale Sharks*” newsletter and consistent media presence via Kaselehlle Press. Looking ahead to the third quarter (July–September 2025), IEQA plans to:

- Finalize the AI policy framework and deliver campus-wide training.
- Launch micro-credential programs.
- Complete the summer IPEDS submission.
- Expand Starlink deployment to additional campuses.
- Implement the FY 2025–2026 training calendar.
- Continue enhancements to onboarding and communications.
- Leverage Power BI insights to support department-level planning and decision-making.

These strategic initiatives are designed to reinforce institutional resilience, promote innovation, and sustain growth in alignment with the College's mission.

Note: The Chair recommended a college-wide survey asking employees, “What additional incentives could the College offer, given the delay in salary increases?”

e. Report by the Vice-President for Instructional Affairs (VPiA)

The VPiA highlighted the progress and activities across all campuses. At Chuuk Campus, academic programs were promoted at a local college fair and staff achievements included graduates in Micronesian Studies and a doctorate in Organizational Leadership for Adaptation and Change. Kosrae Campus focused on faculty and staff development through Moodle training, appointed Dr. Frehiwot Teshome as Public Health Programs Coordinator, completed maintenance projects, collaborated with education officials, and hosted a Junior Close-Up event. CTEC prepared for the Open Admission Initiative, celebrated National Apprentice Day, launched a Summer Bridge Program for Upward Bound seniors with an upcoming Guam trip, expanded dual enrollment, improved student evaluation processes, and held a farewell luncheon for Professor Debra W. Perman.

FMI and Yap Campus teams conducted recruitment trips to Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae, hosted an eight-week NORMA Observers Training on maritime skills, and held joint commencement exercises where 13 cadets graduated in maritime disciplines. Yap Campus students completed degrees in Elementary Education, Liberal Arts & Pre-Teacher Preparation, and certificates in Agriculture & Food Technology and Nursing Assistant. At the National Campus, ongoing Moodle training for faculty was provided, program modifications for the CIS program were endorsed, 54 courses (69 sections) were scheduled for Summer 2025, and the IQBE program advanced with blended learning pilots in Yap and Pohnpei. All campuses collaborated to support incoming freshmen under the Open Admission Initiative.

Instructional Affairs strengthened partnerships with stakeholders to enhance educational opportunities, trained 30 government employees through the Accounting Technician Program, participated in the UNOPS End-of-Life Vehicle (ELV) Project using GIS mapping to identify illegal dumping sites, and developed an inclusive Early Childhood Education teacher training program in partnership with the FSM National Department of Education and UNICEF. A preceptor training mentorship program for nurses was also hosted in collaboration with AHEC and COM-FSM.

The Learning Resource Center ensured adequate resources and efficient library services across campuses, supported faculty and students with reference materials and technology, and hosted visitors including education officials and local school students. Faculty and staff development were evident through ongoing Moodle training sessions and high employee engagement in commencement exercises and professional development activities. The report demonstrates significant progress in faculty development, student support, stakeholder collaboration, and academic program delivery, reflecting the division's commitment to continuous improvement and innovation in support of student success and institutional goals.

Note: On the note of “faculty and staff professional development, the Board of Regents issued a directive for the drafting of a resolution formally recognizing and highlighting the professional development and achievements of the College’s faculty and staff. This initiative aims to acknowledge the ongoing commitment of faculty and staff to excellence and continuous improvement, and to celebrate their significant contributions to the institution’s success.

III. REVIEW OF BOARD POLICIES

The Board of Regents hereby approved the following **Chapter 1 (Board of Regents) Policies:**

i. Board Policy No. 1450 - Endowment Fund Policy (deferred)

- ii. **Board Policy No. 1221 - Board Committees Policy**
- iii. **Board Policy No. 1211 – Appointment of the President Policy**
- iv. **Board Policy No. 1212 – Policy on Assessing the President Policy**
- v. **Board Policy No. 1300 – Board Bylaws Policy**
- vi. **Board Policy No. 1301 – Board Ethics Policy**

The Board of Regents hereby approved the following **Chapter 3 (Instructional Affairs) Policies**:

- i. **Board Policy No. 3110 - Special Awards Policy**
- ii. **Board Policy No. 3111 - Attendance Policy**
- iii. **Board Policy No. 3302 - Maintaining Contact Hours Policy**

The Board of Regents hereby approved the following **Chapter 4 (Student Services) Policies**:

- i. **Board Policy No. 4205 - Admission to the Third-Year Certificate of Achievement in Public Health Policy**
- ii. **Board Policy No. 4207 - Admission to Second Degree Policy**

The Board of Regents hereby approved the following **Chapter 5 (Fiscal Affairs) Policies**:

- i. **Board Policy No. 5608 - Incentive Policy**
- ii. **Board Policy No. 5304 - Corporate Credit Card Policy**

The Board of Regents hereby approved the following **Chapter 6 (Human Resources) Policies**:

- i. **Board Policy No. 6003 - Governance Policy**
- ii. **Board Policy No. 6007 - Employment Policy**
- iii. **Board Policy No. 6015 - Professional Development Policy**
- iv. **Board Policy No. 6016 - Incentive Program Policy**
- v. **Board Policy No. 6017- Performance Evaluation Policy**
- vi. **Board Policy No. 6025 - Classification Policy**
- vii. **Board Policy No. 6026 - Faculty Workload Policy**
- viii. **Board Policy No. 6027 - Tuition Waiver Policy**
- ix. **Board Policy No. 6029 - Code of Ethics Policy**
- x. **Board Policy No. 6031 - Human Resources Records Policy**
- xi. **Board Policy No. 6032 - Controlled Substance Policy**

The Board of Regents hereby approved the following **Chapter 8 (Information Technology) Policies**:

- i. **Board Policy No. 8100 - Computer Software Policy**
- ii. **Board Policy No. 8200 - Computer Resources Policy**
- iii. **Board Policy No. 8300 - Administrative Data Policy**
- iv. **Board Policy No. 8500 - Violations of Responsibilities Policy**
- v. **Board Policy No. 8600 - Computer Hardware Procurement Policy (deferred)**
- vi. **Board Policy No. 8930 - Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (GLBA) Policy**

IV. MISCELLANEOUS

Item 11.a (Public Health Program) under “New Business” was deferred to the August Board meeting. The VPIA will ensure the item is reviewed and endorsed by the relevant committee(s) prior to presentation.

V. NEXT BOARD MEETING

The Board informed everyone in attendance that the next Board meeting will be in Chuuk tentatively slated for the week of the **25th of August**.

VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Convened at 12:08pm with the inclusion of VPEMSS, VPIS and the Comptroller to discuss the Updated Master Planning Calendar and the College's financial portfolio as presented by Raymond & James, respectively.