

COM-FSM

Charting the Course for the Next Generation



President Joseph M. Daisy, Ed.D.

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Our Legacy and Our Future

For a quarter century the College of Micronesia-FSM has been committed to developing the Federated States of Micronesia into a stronger, more economically independent nation, one recognized as a leader in the Western Pacific region and across the globe. Today the College of Micronesia-FSM proudly serves as a learner-centered institution of higher education that is committed to the success of the Federated States of Micronesia by providing academic and career & technical educational programs characterized by continuous improvement and best practices.

As COM-FSM approaches its 25th anniversary the condition of our College is sound – arguably more sound than it has ever been. We have sustained the energy displayed in overcoming years of accreditation hurdles and channeled it into an organization-wide transformation. When seen through the lens of 1) a well-defined institutional agenda, 2) sound fiscal stewardship, 3) an outcome-based, student-focused academic program, 4) an expanding organizational culture of participatory governance, and 5) an emergent emphasis on strengthening external relations, today’s College has an embedded culture of continuous quality improvement and a sense of unity, success, and pride across all six (6) campuses of the COM-FSM system.

So many have contributed to the transformation of this institution. We have been fortunate to have national and state leaders who understand and support the essential role of COM-FSM in educating for the future. We have been privileged to have a Board of Regents who is well informed, extraordinarily supportive and masterful in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. As a college, as a community, and as a nation we have come together in ways that assured this college would continue its vital work for students of an entire generation.

All this is not to suggest that no unresolved issues remain nor that new challenges are not already on the horizon. Indeed, if we are to preserve the legacy of COM-FSM’s “first generation,” we need to be every bit as diligent, focused, and hard-working as we prepare to “confront our challenges and create our future.” In these remarks it is my intent to provide the community with a pathway for the College to achieve the goals to which we aspire for the next generation. Any good map needs clear markers. In this presidential white paper I am setting forth those markers to guide us along our way.

Our Journey and Our Destination

The positive position and image of the college in the FSM offers a unique opportunity to bring us to the next level. This “presidential white paper” sets forth a roadmap of our work for the balance of this calendar year and more broadly for years to come.

We need to be continually vigilant to protect the long term sustainability of the college. Among these concerns is to successfully *support student success* in an era of declining college-aged enrollment compounded by outmigration; to *meet workforce needs and enhance employment opportunities* for graduates; to *build capacity* by attracting, nurturing, and retaining qualified personnel; and to *maintain accreditation* status in an atmosphere of increased regulation by the United States Department of Education (USDE).

We re-dedicate ourselves to reaching these goals through the following steps:

1. Enhancing academic quality and program offerings to ensure student success for the next generation.

- Becoming a bachelor’s degree granting institution -- establishing the FSM’s first bachelor’s degree – a B.S. in Elementary Education as a significant step in meeting important national and state needs.
- Continuing to expand *vocational and technical programs* which meet workforce needs.
- Expanding upon recent progress on *college access, student success, and enrollment management*.
- Developing an *emphasis on college completion* by decreasing the time to completion and increasing student satisfaction, persistence, retention, and graduation rates by innovating academic quality and enhancing student support services.

2. Building facilities for the next quarter century by funding and implementing the [\$68.84 M] Facilities Master Plan

- Prioritizing Phase I of the National Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP)
 - Construction of a Chuuk campus, capitalizing on the \$3 million provided by Chuuk State leadership which should assist in facilitating the development and implementation of the campus facility plan.
 - Building a Student Center on the national campus.
 - Creating a Pohnpei Career & Technical Center.

3. Building endowment to the \$10 million goal to support future programs & operations.

- *Expanding institutional advancement efforts* by building upon growing institutional fund-raising, grant-writing, and endowment-building capacity, capitalizing on the College’s 25th anniversary celebration, expanding alumni outreach and extending the reach of the Friends of COM-FSM Foundation.

4. *Investing in the College's people to build capacity*

- Focusing on the continuing need to attract and retain qualified personnel through professional development, cultural awareness, and salary equity.
- Continuing to prioritize participatory governance.
- Continuing to emphasize and foster high engagement of stakeholders in the planning and assessment process.

5. *Strengthening resources to meet current and future needs*

- Prioritizing balanced budgets, diversifying revenue, reducing operating costs, aggressively conserving energy, and following fiscal best practices which strengthen fiscal integrity.
- Building bridges to government funding sources at all levels.
Monitoring the rapidly changing enterprise risk management environment of higher education.
- Monitoring COM-FSM's comprehensive, integrated master plan that systematically links financial resources with the long term educational goals of the college.
- Mobilizing the strategic planning process to develop contingency plans, collaboration with the national government, and outreach to the U.S. Departments of State and Interior in anticipation of Compact 2023 expiration.

Our Future in Our Hands

On February 6th, 2012 we joined together for the first time. We reaffirmed our commitment to teaching and learning, our commitment to research and scholarship, our commitment to the mission, and our commitment to our core values. Now we mark the 25th anniversary of our College's founding with celebrations – not that we have survived, but that we have thrived.

The positive position and image of the College in the FSM offers a unique opportunity to take us to the next level. A door has opened wide which invites efforts to build an even stronger relationship between the college and the communities it serves. A recent study found that the annual economic impact COM-FSM to the FSM economy is more than \$46.5 million. Nearly half of that impact is due to the Pell Grants and other student assistance programs. In the past 5 years, the impact of new COM-FSM graduates on the FSM economy exceeds \$18 million. A strategic and tactical approach with state and national leadership, will ensure the communities' needs are articulated and appropriately met. Let us continue this journey with dedication and focus to confront our challenges and create a future ensuring quality, sustainability and success for COM-FSM, the students we educate and the nation we serve.

This we will do, and in this we will succeed. To succeed, we must all work to ensure that we are upholding the mission of the college and working toward the collective vision that we set for the institution. We must assess and continuously improve our institution's quality and work to achieve greater success of our students. We will undertake this work together. We must all participate. We must communicate well. This is the job that has been entrusted to us

by our community and our nation on behalf of the next generation of students and their families.