

President's Retreat 2009
College of Micronesia – FSM
May 12 – 14, 2008
FSM China Friendship Sports Center

Opening Remarks by President Spensin James

Acknowledgement of Dignitaries

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the College of Micronesia – FSM President's Retreat for 2009. I am pleased to see the variety of different groups represented here today. This retreat will be reviewing relevant data and evidence regarding major challenges facing the college. That review and discussion will help form recommendations for developing a structure of the college for will allow us to be continuously improving, student centered and assisting in the development of the FSM.

This Retreat is designed to be highly interactive and the more voices and viewpoints that are presented the better we can understand how well we are meeting the college's mission and assisting development of our nation and states.

This is an important time for the college. We are seeing trends that show a reduction in overall enrollment at the college. Our retention and graduation rates are still not at the level we need. Recent interpretations by our accreditation commission regarding the 2 year rule means we can not just make progress on recommendations made by visiting teams, but must correct any deficiencies that prevent us from meeting accreditation standards within a two year period.

During this Retreat we will be facing information and data that may be uncomfortable and somewhat threatening, but can provide us the basis for setting goals and achieving them. A great deal of information will be provided and made available to you during this retreat. I would encourage you to closely review the information presented to assist in making evidence driven decisions. It is also important to determine areas where we are lacking adequate data and information and take steps to collect and disseminate that information.

We are starting the process of developing our self study that is due in 2010 that will support continuation of the college's accreditation. Accreditation is based on self assessment and continuous improvement of programs and services. During a recent visit by the President of the ACCJC, we were reminded that there are not two standards for rich and poor colleges or college with major challenges. To maintain our accreditation we must meet or exceed the accreditation standards at all of our campuses and in all of our programs and services.

This Retreat will provide important information on where we are and what must be done to ensure that we are providing quality programs and services.

As accreditation is based on self assessment, we are asking the same process be applied to the discussions and dialogue in this Retreat.

To assist the self assessment process, let us keep some critical questions in mind and ask ourselves the questions several times each day during the Retreat.

The first question to ask is - What possibilities for action exists? Improvement is driven by identifying and prioritizing areas where improvement is needed. But improvement does not occur by itself. We must identify strategies and actions that will improve our instructional delivery, assessment activities, communications, student and administrative services and implement them with quality. We must also document and have clear evidence that we are meeting standards and are continually improving.

The second question to ask is - What can I do? What can we do as individuals **and as a group**, in collaboration with our colleagues and with our stakeholders to drive continuous improvement at the college?

The future of the college is in our hands. Working together in harmony we can provide the higher education our citizens need and desire.

Let us all take the advantages of activities and sessions that had been scheduled for this retreat and actively participate in them. I know I am looking forward to sessions I planned to attend. I wish I could go to all of them.

Lastly, do not forget to have a little fun relaxing and enjoy each other during the breaks. My office is ready to assist in anyway to make this retreat a successful one.

Thank again and I am now officially opening the President Retreat 2009.

Thank you and welcome to the President's Retreat 2009.