RECOMMENDATION #6: CREATE CONTINUITY

The college needs to standardize instruction, student services, learning environments, and quality of instruction across the college's six sites, Specific areas that require greater continuity at this time are:

- *A written policy manual for the Board of Regents (Standards IVB.1b, IVB.1d, and IVB.1e),*
- *The delivery of comprehensive and consistent student services' at each of the college's sites (Standards IIB.I and IIB.3a), and*
- *The provision of adequate facilities for instruction at all sites; at this time, the college must immediately provide an adequate facility for student learning at the Chuuk site (Standards IIIB.I and IIIB.1b).*
- *All issues related to continuity at the college's sites are to be regularly evaluated to establish a cycle of improvement.*
- *A written policy manual for the Board of Regents (Standards IVB.1b, IVB.1d, and IVB.1e),*
- *IVB1b. The governing board establishes policies consistent with the mission statement to ensure quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and services and the resources necessary to support them.*

Resolution

The mission statement is read at the beginning of each board meeting to ensure policies that are adopted are in line with the college's mission statement.

Minutes of board meetings reflect the board's concern for the quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and services. Actions taken by the board include approval of new programs, modifications for improvement of existing programs, adoption of policies that affect student learning, concern for adequate student financial assistance, and requests for program evaluation in the areas of student services and educational programs, among others.

Analysis

Board members were asked this question on the interview: "What mechanism does the board have in place to ensure that the policies it establishes are consistent with the mission ensure quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning and services?"
One member responded by saying that the college administration ensures that the policies are consistent with the mission. Another stated that consistency is established through dialog with the college management. A third member indicated he did not know because he was new to the board. However, a fourth member gave a more specific answer citing policies the board has established to require instructors to have a minimum of a master's degree, to require instructional programs to conduct program evaluation and assessment, to make sure that textbook procurement is on schedule, and to ensure quality and equity of facilities across campuses.

- *IVB1d. The institution or the governing board publishes the board bylaws and policies specifying the board's size, duties, responsibilities, structure, and operating procedures.*

Resolution

The Board of Regents Policy Manual sets forth the authority and strategic framework by which the board acts, as well as the organizational backdrop and operational procedures by which the

board officially functions. The manual serves as an orientation tool for new board members and a working tool and central resource throughout the term of a regent's tenure.
Board bylaws are included as Appendix 7 of the manual. The bylaws are comprised of the following articles: (I) Board of Regents Meetings; (II) Officers of the Board and the President; (III) Records and Reports; (IV) Committees of the Board; (V) Statement of Ethical Conduct; and (VI) Amendment to By-laws. Chapter 7 of Title 40 of the FSM Code, which pertains to the college, is included in the policy manual as Appendix 1. This legislation spells out the board's size, duties, and responsibilities in detail.

Analysis

Members of the Board of Regents unanimously agreed with Item 1.1 (The role of individual board members is clearly defined.) and Item 1.2 (The role of the board's officers is clearly defined.) on the Board Self Evaluation Questionnaire in 2005, 2006, and 2008.

- *IVB1e. The governing board acts in a manner consistent with its policies and bylaws. The board regularly evaluates its policies and practices and revises them as necessary.*

Resolution

A review of board meeting agendas and minutes shows that the board acts in a manner consistent with its policies and bylaws. Although the board conducts an annual self-evaluation, it is not clear from the minutes whether it regularly evaluates its policies and practices.

Analysis

Board members unanimously agreed with Item 1.4, "The board follows its ethical conduct policy and members are committed to carrying out their duties and responsibilities according to the standards set by the policy" on the Board Self Evaluation Questionnaire in 2005, 2006, and 2008. In response to an interview question posed to Board members in spring 2009, two of the four regents interviewed indicated that the board regularly reviews and evaluates the board's bylaws and policies. However, the newest regent was hesitant to answer the question based on his brief tenure on the board and the fourth regent interviewed indicated that the Board does not regularly review its bylaws and policies and should make it a point to undertake such a review.

- *The delivery of comprehensive and consistent student services' at each of the college's sites (Standards IIB.I and IIB.3a)*

Resolution

The institution recruits and admits diverse students who are able to benefit from its programs, consistent with its mission.   Student support services address the identified needs of students and enhance a supportive learning environment. The entire student pathway through the institutional experience is characterized by a concern for student access, progress, learning, and success. The

institution systematically assesses student support services using student learning outcomes, faculty and staff input, and other appropriate measures in order to improve the effectiveness of these services.

All student services programs are assessed in the same manner as instructional programs through the IAP process. Each student services program (at all sites) develops annual improvement and assessment plans and assessment reports. Processes and procedures for student services assessment are detailed in the Administrative and Student Services section of the IAP handbook. In this regard, administrative and student services programs are treated the same as instructional programs in requiring improvement and assessment plans and reports and a formal process for review and approval of such plans and reports. In the case of student services the student services committee endorses assessment plans and reports to the assessment committee with final approval of such plans and reports by the President of the college. Student services improvement and assessment plans and reports can be found on the IRPO web site.

As with the instructional programs, common measures (graduation rate and program completers, retention (including progression and persistence, student and faculty/staff satisfaction, etc.) are being used for evaluation of quality and success of student services programs. Additionally student services programs rubrics have been developed to assist with both determination of program status and provide direction and input on areas to concentrate improvement activities.

The college provides a comprehensive set of student services including financial aid, recreation and sports, academic advising, counseling, tutoring, health services and peer counseling services across all sites of the college to all students. Overview and details of programs and services are found in the college catalog and student handbook. Improvements of these services are covered under strategic goals of the college: provide institutional support to foster student success and satisfaction, create an adequate, healthy and functional learning and working environment and foster effective communications. Details of the ongoing and improvement efforts are found in the college's quarterly reports.

Student service programs are designed to promote access to services in a number of ways. Counseling and tutoring services access is based on referral and student initiated requests. Orientation programs are provided at all sites for fall and spring semesters that introduce students to the programs and services available. Dispensaries are open to all students, faculty and staff.

Programs use both proactive approaches to students such as counseling programs providing workshops on time management, study skills, transfer, resume and other workshops both connected with improving student progression, persistence, and retention and graduation rates. Financial Aid provides workshops on financial schooling and completing necessary forms. The student services programs are making use of the college semester schedules that block out time each week for students and faculty participation in various trainings, committee meetings and workshop.

The college has also prioritized development of an SIS that improves handling of student records and in phase 2 of the project (ongoing) will allow student direct web based access to their grade

records, online transcript and degree plan. The SIS also has features including establishment in the SIS of unique cohorts

All students have college email addresses (assigned during registration) to improve communications among and between students, between students and faculty and support services. A forum based on the college web site allows students to address concerns with services and suggest improvements.

The college's Student Satisfaction Survey is administered in October each year and provides student satisfaction levels with programs and services at the college. A companion Faculty/Staff Satisfaction Survey is also administered in conjunction with the student survey to provide a faculty/staff perspective on programs and services.

Analysis

Student services improvement and assessment plans have been reviewed by the assessment committee and generally have seen to need improvement in the areas of specific criteria for measuring success. To remedy this area, training has been provided to all campuses on writing SMARTer (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, realistic, Timebound, Extending (challenging) and Reviewed) outcomes, objectives and strategies for the improvement and assessment plans and guiding the information and analysis in the programs' assessment reports. A SMARTer review checklist has been provided to assist with the writing of SMARTer outcomes/objectives. The same improvement plan is also used in the college's performance budgeting process.

The college is implementing in fall 2009 a performance budget scheme based on the improvement plans from the IAP process. The performance budget is based on linking all activities, programs and services of the college to high level results. For example, instead of having an outcome/objective to provide tutoring an improved outcome objective would be "75% (actual % would be based on course completion rates for the particular college site) of MS 100 students who participated in a minimum of four (4) tutoring sessions using a self passed computer assistance program will receive an A, B or C in the course.

The implement of the college's SIS is providing real time data regarding student success, progression, persistence and allows tracking of cohorts (students who receive tutoring, counseling assistance, training in time management, etc.) that to support improvement and assessment plans and assessment reports.

The processes and procedures currently in place for ensuring quality, continuity and consistency of student services programs have resulted in a focus on quantified evidence that determine both status and future needs for program improvement.

Quarterly reporting is used to track broadly the access to students for services at the college. For example the following is information regarding counseling contacts and levels for student work study from the college's 3rd Quarter Report for 2009:

Table R6.1 April-June 2009 # of Counseling Contacts

	CC	FMI	KC	PC	NC	YC

M	34	17	182	108	157	225
F	70		289	110	150	353
T	104	17	471	218	307	578

Table R6.2 SEG /CWS Summer 2009 (#/Amount)

	CC	FMI	KC	PC	NC	YC
M	11	4	7	36	58	13
	1,162.50	378.75	535	2,021.25	3,211.50	1,335.25
F	19		8	23	102	17
	2,077.50		492.50	1,092.50	5,485	1,582.50
T	30	4	15	59	160	30
	3,240	378.75	1,027.50	3,113.75	8,696.50	2,917.75

It has to be noted however, that consistency in reporting of student access and contact information across all sites needs to be improved. An additional need is to increase the level of reporting

The closer view of access and equity are found in the programs improvement and assessment plans and reports where greater detail is provided including closing the loop (use of results).

There is a strong perception that the scheduled block time each week has been very productive in allowing services to be provided to students. However, no formal review has been conducted to date.

Phase I of the SIS has resulted in more timely and improved tracking of student success as evidence by preparation and timely dissemination of OAR enrollment lists, midterm deficiency listings, grades and certification of students meeting graduation requirements, and IRPO institutional reporting. Demonstrations of Phase II has have conducted in fall 2009 for student and faculty access. Full role out is expected in spring 2009. Students will be able to see their grades and transcripts and other critical information

- *The provision of adequate facilities for instruction at all sites; at this time, the college must immediately provide an adequate facility for student learning at the Chuuk site (Standards IIIB.I and IIIB.1b).*

Resolution

The institution adopted the American Institute of Architects standards, Uniform Building Codes, National Electric Code, International Plumbing Code and Fire Safety Codes to ensure that facilities and equipment and built within the safety perimeters. These standards are used in remodeling and upgrading of facilities, fixtures and equipment changing. Ref. can be found in the project preplanning documents.

Safety inspection is conducted regularly to ensure firefighting equipment and other facility safety features are functional. Dormitory safety inspections and fire drills are conducted every semester to ensure that residents and emergency responders are prepared. Evidences can be found in security reports.

The college has developed the Enrollment Management Indicator for assisting in monitoring student enrollment against availability of facilities. Class schedules are also used to determine the needs for classrooms. In 2005 and 2007 facilities inventory was conducted to determine the sufficiency and conditions of the facilities prioritizing and scheduling the projects and budgets for the projects. Collectively the information and data acquired are used to formulate the capital improvement project plans. The FY2010 capital improvement project budget plan reflects the results of the information collected by sources aforementioned.

The college utilizes the ADA standards, AIA standards and building codes to ensure that new and renovated buildings are in compliance with these standards to provide easy access. Additionally, improvements are made as budgets become available. As an example, the National Campus Learning Resource Center was equipped with a wheel chair lift in 2007. (SG3C)

Security is provided at each campus according to the size of the campus and the need for security coverage. Each campus is required to conform to the USDOE campus crime and security reporting act. (Jean Clery Act.) Evidence can be found in the security reports. (SG3C)

Dormitory fire drill and safety inspection is conducted at least once a semester. Inspection of firefighting equipment in each building is performed on a monthly basis to ensure that they are functional. Security reports can be referenced. (SG3C)

Periodic visits are done to monitor and assist campuses in addressing access, safety, security and providing for a healthy learning environment. Each campus has its own janitorial services, grounds maintenance and solid waste disposal services. (Trip report date June 10 2009 and email exchanges with campus directors can be reference here.)

The institution was recently reorganized creating Vice President for Administrative Services (VPAS) position that oversees the national and state campus administrative support services and its physical resources. Within this frame work, the State Campus Directors and the Director of Facilities and Security reports to the VPAS. This venue along with the Facilities and Campus Environment Committee deliberates on major facilities concerns, needs, quality issues and standards. (The minutes of the committee meeting can be referenced here.)

The Chief of security is a member of the student services committee that ensures that quality of life and safety matters relating to students are addressed.

Analysis

There has not been any known injury relating to unsafe facilities or equipment at any campus as evidenced by the security monthly and incident reports.

Reports of unsafe conditions are addressed and are resolved accordingly. In 2004 a faculty office occupant reported that the central air condition ducting system distributes faulty and contaminated air throughout the building and contributing to her respiratory illness. The system

was replaced with split air conditioning system for cleaner and more efficient and effective system. These air condition units can be seen at the building.

As indicated in the capital improvement project plan, Yap, Kosrae and Pohnpei sites demonstrate having high priority in resolving the need to accommodate safety and sufficiency of facilities, as well as providing for an adequate learning environment.

There exists a need for training of staff throughout the campuses in areas of facilities and equipment safety, security, facilities inventory, standards and reporting on the enrollment management information.

Commission's Recommendation #6 relating to continuity of facilities and adequate facilities at all site, commissioner Floyd Takeuchi reported that the college has met this recommendation in his April and May 2009 report.

Preplanning documents for new construction projects are required to use ADA standards. Existing building and access are being improved to accommodate the physically challenged. In 2007 a wheel chair lift was installed the National Campus LRC to access to the second floor.

The college involves the respective departments and office heads in the facilities planning process to ensure that their needs for programs and services are met; in fact the most recent occurrence is during the pre-planning process of the Pohnpei Campus Vocational Building as evidenced in the email message dated October 10, 2009 from the division chairperson for Technology and trades.

Campus incident and crime reporting is consistent at the National Campus but yet to be improved at the state campuses. These reports allow the office of security to analyze and make recommendation to appropriate offices. For instance increasing alcohol cases are reported to the student service department and student service committee for deliberation. Reference can be found in the student services committee meeting minutes during its first meeting of fall 2009 on September 8, 2009.

- *A full-time and part-time faculty and staff hiring procedures, assignments appropriate to qualifications, and performance evaluations (Standards IIIA.1, IIIA.1a, IIIA.1b, IIIA3, and IIIA.3a)*

Resolution

Training will be provided to all personnel whom by virtue of their positions are directly involved in the recruitment process to ensure this standard is maintained. Office heads in consultation with human resources office assess the current skills and talents on board when developing job descriptions for new and vacant positions. Minimum qualifications are based on the field of work assignments and duties to perform. The College faithfully complies with the Public Law No.7-79 to ensure "equal opportunity" and non-discrimination in the hiring process.

The college advertises vacancies on its website, and also: HigherEd.Jobs.com ,Chronicle for Higher Education, and various subject-related sites such as Dave's ESL Café, at each college campus, and mails them to various local agencies such as the personnel offices of relevant government and private offices. A list of these advertising sites can be found in the human resources office [IIIA (1)]. When appropriate, announcements are forwarded to other pacific island institutions, local newspaper and radio stations.

Vacancy announcements contain the specific criteria and qualifications for each position including the requirement for foreign credentials to be equated to meet U.S. standards. The development of job duties is initiated by the immediate superior with consultation with the human resources office [IIIA (1)]. Institutional goals, organizational chart, and mission are consulted in the development of job duties. Policy 002 of the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual which was revised in 2008 contains the job descriptions for teaching faculty and is also available online. Section VIII of the Personnel Policies and Procedures contains the qualifications and compensation criteria while Appendix A and B contains the salary scales. Faculty members are involved in the hiring of faculty within their own division and campus. Generally, the division chair and at least four faculty members, professionally competent, make up the selection committee. The committee looks at qualifications by appropriate education and experience of candidates, stated accomplishments in the areas of work including management, teamwork, honesty, professional development plans, and institutional assessment and learning outcomes. For faculty an essential criterion is the knowledge and skills in development student learning outcomes and assessment which is included in the vacancy announcement. This committee reviews the applications, interviews candidates, and makes a recommendation to the college president.

The human resources office then ensures that the selected candidate is qualified by: verification of relevance of degree held and sufficient teaching or work experience experience, reference checks, accreditation check on schools attended; if a selected candidate holds a degree from a foreign institution, equation of their credentials by ACCRO and other U.S. DOE recognized agency is required[IIIA (1)].

All full-time employees of the college are evaluated annually and at stated intervals for which guidelines are provided in Section XIII.4 of the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual. Section XV of the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual provides a structure that supports timely of evaluations through disciplinary actions for incompliance.

There are three evaluation tools used currently for the four classifications of employees: Appendix K for management, Appendix N for instructional faculty and Appendix J for classified and professional staff. The criteria in each evaluation tool are designed to measure effectiveness of individuals in each position and are linked to institutional effectiveness. Each evaluation is required to be completed in collaboration of the supervisor and supervisee. Likewise, objectives and plans for improvement are mapped out with timetables for accomplishments and monitoring process. HR provides annual reminders to supervisors through department heads while the evaluation tools themselves are available online and in the personnel policies and procedures given to individual employees. HR has provided training to supervisors on selected challenging

polices dealing with supervisors' legal and administrative responsibilities to Chuuk Campus, National, Pohnpei and Kosare Campus during 2008-2009 academic year.

The job performance of the employee is evaluated annually; newly recruited staff is evaluated after six months and then again at the end of the year. This determines the outcome of probation. The appropriate evaluation form is completed by the supervisor and discussed with the employee. Supervisors and supervisees are expected to come up with an improvement plan whenever an unsatisfactory rating is made. Based on the plan, a review may take place after six months or at the next regular annual review. Supervisors are evaluated on their ability to carry out this part of their responsibility efficiently by their own supervisors.

Personnel policy development is the responsibility of the personnel committee whose membership is renewed each academic year. The committee operates within its terms of reference and ultimately reports to the president. Personnel policies are available on the college's website and are provided to all employees upon recruitment and upon approval of new or revised sections.

From the committee, policy recommendations are shared and discussed within the college community, using email and meetings at the other campuses, prior to transmittal to cabinet for endorsement. Recommendations for policy development is received by administers and other committees when a need is identified following the structure in the governance policy. HRO through its research and oversight over the personnel policies recommends to Personnel Committee policy needs.

HR representatives at each campus provide orientation to newly recruited staff and a copy of the most updated personnel policy manual. In coordinator with the information technology division, updated and new policies are posted on the website following implementation. Trainings and information on polices are provided by HR through organized meetings at each site.

Analysis

The hiring guidelines provided in Section VI of the Personnel Policies and Procedures do assure that positions are filled with qualified personnel. Candidates with foreign credentials are offered jobs only if their credentials are equated by a recognized U.S. Department of Education evaluation agency certifies the equivalence in the required field of assignment. Years of relevant work experience are certified by the HRO or immediate supervisor from previous work locations. Screening committees are now equipped with guidelines for the tasks along with open dialogue with the human resources office and for guidance throughout the process. With the annual site visits to state campuses, recruitment polices are explained and training is given to those on site and administrative offices are in direct communications with HR during the process.

However, the timing of advertisements and length of time it takes for campus to fill positions varied. Employees due to urgent personal reasons resign in the middle of the semester or at the beginning of a semester which makes it difficult to fill the vacancies on time. Administrative offices or units sometimes delayed hiring due to other factors such as lack of space, insufficient

funds and poor planning. In these instances, current employees are delegated responsibilities of vacated positions until filled or short-term personnel are hired to carry out the responsibilities. The hiring of short-term personnel still follows the procedures for hiring full-time.

The college meets this sub-standard by employing the Section VI, VIII, and Policy 002 of the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual in its hiring selection process. The on-going revisions of current policies and development of needed others ensure the college continues to hire qualified personnel to provide quality services and programs. Other guiding factors included the establishment and implementation of the Governance Policy which assure communication and representation of all levels of employees in the governance structure, Communication Policy, and the Policy on Continuous Improvement Cycle; all of which support the college's drives to promote quality communication and improvement in all its programs and services.

Section XIII.4 of the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual plus the appendixes listed above provides clear instructions on responsibilities of parties involve in the process. The guiding principles value the improvement of the individual as a facilitator of student learning in his capacity at the college.

The challenge remains in the area of meeting timelines of evaluation and closely monitoring the development plans to ensure they lead to improvement on job performance. Additionally, the part-time employees including teaching faculty are not consistently evaluated. The lack of timely evaluations and monitoring of improvement plans are realized in certain units and campuses while others are carried out well. The root of the challenge is the supervising personnel who sometimes allow an immediate supervisor to fail in this regard but provides no immediate and direct response. This resulted in later processing of relevant personnel paperwork and necessary actions.

The college through the human resources office and personnel committee assures the awareness of personnel and provides opportunities for participation and contribution in policy development. The structures provided in the Governance and the Communication Policies ensure awareness and knowledge. The research, consultation with other entities, and administration of current policies, the college continues to develop policies and procedures that are regularly reviewed and equitable. Through communications with administrators from campus sites and sites visits, the college becomes aware and response with necessary trainings to inconsistencies of applications. Section XV of the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual provides the structures to address negligence and deliberate deviation.
Though the policies and procedures are made clear, the supervising personnel sometimes fail to administer proper actions for corrective measures in a timely manner.

The college uses Section VI of the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual and abides by Public Law No7-79 to ensure fairness in all employment procedures and activities [IIIA(3)] [IIIA (1)]. This is evidence in the job descriptions provided in clearly stated requirements in advertisements and in the 14 diverse ethnic groups represented in the college personnel.
The college meets this substandard as evidence by the 14 diverse ethnic groups represented in its personnel. Human resources office reports on this sub-standard quarterly. The college's ability in this regard is made possible by the wide employment announcement practices utilized,

compliance with Section VI of the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual and the Public Law No7-79, as well as the job focused approach use in screening of applications. Training will be provided to all personnel whom by virtue of their positions are directly involved in the recruitment process to ensure this standard is maintained.