

Proposal for Distance Learning at COM-FSM



Submitted by the Distance Learning Working Group

COM-FSM

October 27, 2020

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Proposal Summary

The College of Micronesia-FSM is proposing to seek accreditation approval to offer the programs listed in Appendix A through distance learning. Following is information describing the background and planning for distance learning, the proposed structure for distance learning at the college, support and resources for distance learning, and a three-year financial projection.

Background of Distance Education at COM-FSM

The college commissioned the white paper titled “[Evaluation of Manageable Barriers to More Effective Delivery of Distance Education at the College of Micronesia-FSM](#)”, published December 12, 2006, to determine feasibility of distance education ([DE-1](#)). This paper outlined a number of barriers but also provided recommendations to achieve implementation of distance education. Barriers were in five areas—learners, instructors, technology, content and politics. Recommendations to overcome barriers included a well written mission statement for distance education, hire a distance education coordinator, develop well designed course materials, determine delivery mode, develop sufficient access to technology, provide training for learners, and hire qualified faculty. A second [report](#) was written in 2012 stating the results of work to implement distance education between 2007 and 2012 ([DE-2](#)). A distance education coordinator was hired on special contract to provide initial faculty training through distance education and the Pacific Open Learning Health Net in 2007-2008. Approximately ten faculty members participated in this training. In the end, distance education was put on hold partly due to the technology barrier especially with access in Kosrae, Yap and Chuuk.

The [2012-2017 Integrated Education Master Plan](#) identifies distance education as part of the college plan, “AP1. Assure quality and consistency of credit and no-credit courses and programs across sites. 1.14 Develop courses using distance learning methods to increase student access to required courses and electives to complete programs ([DE-3](#)).” The college again looked into the possibility of implementing distance education but nothing was made formal. The focus in the [2018-2023 IEMP](#) was to simplify the number of strategies so the college could concentrate on a few very important goals and achieve those goals rather than trying to accomplish many initiatives ([DE-4](#)). As a result, distance education was removed from the 2018-2023 IEMP, which focuses on student success. The [2019 Summit and mini-summit report](#) SWOC analysis supports re-considering distance education: [Opportunities](#) at National, "evening courses"; in Kosrae, "Develop online courses" and "evening classes", Yap "specialized campus programs", and Chuuk, "Rotating programs around the island states". Equally, all the State campuses noted "Not enough courses and programs at States" as weaknesses ([DE-47](#)).

The college is charting the course by:

- *Enhancing academic quality and program offerings to ensure student success for the next generation.*
- *Building facilities for the next quarter century by funding and implementing the (\$68.84 M) Facilities Master Plan.*

- *Building endowment to the \$10 million goal to support future programs & operations.*
- *Investing in the College's people to build capacity.*
- *Strengthening resources to meet current and future needs.*

However, in 2018, faculty members began piloting [Schoology](#) learning management system as a way to provide additional resources for students and to keep track of grades electronically ([DE-5](#)). Significant technological advances have occurred recently: each campus is outfitted with direct fiber optic link up from the National campus ISP, replacing ADSL, and the submarine fiber optic cable now connects to Chuuk and Yap allowing for faster bandwidths and has improved access across FSM.

Finally, Spring 2020 brought abrupt changes due to COVID-19 and National Public Health Emergency Declarations. The college was closed for in person delivery March 2020 and quickly made adaptations to distance education by June 2020. The college was allowed to offer online courses due to the U.S. Department of Education waiving the requirement that such offerings follow the regular substantive change process. Adaptations included three separate faculty trainings on Schoology and online course design, reconfiguring the student information system, adapting student support services such as counseling and access to the library, and developing “help” videos for both students and faculty.

A steering committee composed of the vice president for instructional affairs, director of information technology, head counselor, director of learning resources, dean of academic programs and two faculty members was established fall 2020 to provide direction for the development of a COM-FSM distance education program. The two faculty members had expressed an interest and were appointed to write the substantive change proposal for the establishment of distance education. Data has been gathered from surveys conducted after the first online courses were delivered summer 2020 and from enrollment records.

Alignment with college's mission.

The proposed distance education program supports the college's mission statement by “committing to the success of the Federated States of Micronesia by providing academic and career & technical educational programs characterized by continuous improvement and best practices.” Distance education will provide access for potential students who are not able to attend in-person courses due to jobs and family obligations.

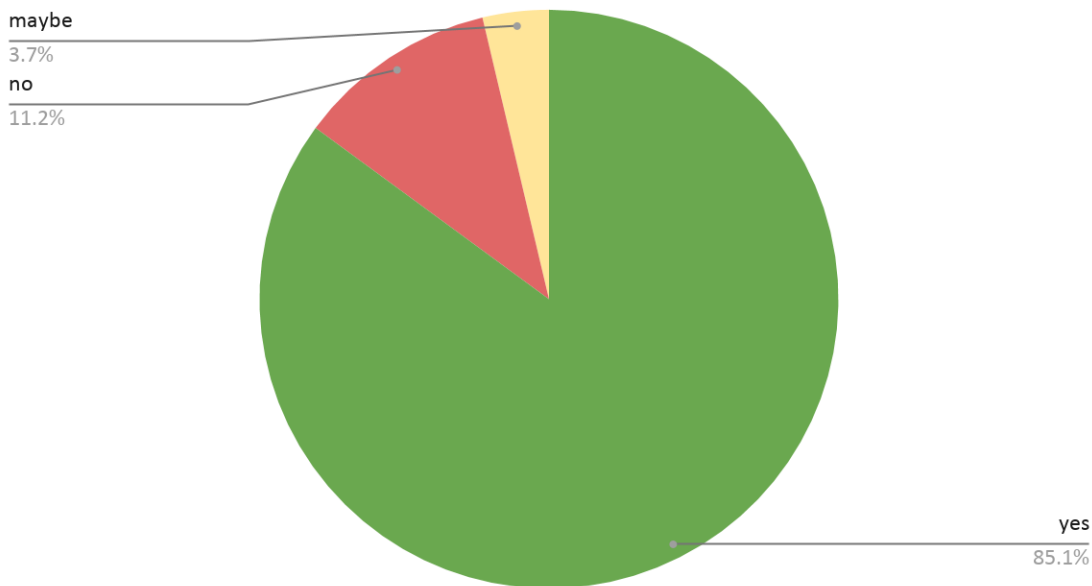
At its September 2017 meeting the Board of Regents adopted the college's Strategic Plan 2018-2023 with two strategic directions, one of which is to “innovate academic quality to ensure student success and the second is to strengthen resources to meet current and future needs.” Distance education has been in college plans for over 10 years and was removed in 2018 to allow the college to focus on a reduced number of student success strategies. The pandemic event allowing the college to offer distance education proved that the college can be more innovative, and can do so with positive student support. Increasing enrollment and reducing costs are part of the key measures for strategic direction II. At its [September 24, 2020](#) meeting the Board supported the implementation of a distance education program at COM-FSM ([DE-6](#)).

Potential enrollment and support for the program.

The primary targeted population for distance education is FSM citizens as stated in our mission statement, "...committed to the success of the Federated States of Micronesia..." It is not anticipated to increase enrollment a great deal, but to provide an opportunity for those working or with other responsibilities to attend online classes. Admissions requirements for students in distance education are the same as for in-person classes. Many students have families or work and prefer not to leave their island to attend National campus. A [survey](#) was given to students during summer 2020 and one question asked, "If the college were to continue with online classes in fall 2020, would you continue to take online classes, why or why not(DE-7)?" Students responded with comments such as "Gives me more time to work, schooling and taking care of my kids at one time;" "yes, I need the flexibility to fit in both school and work;" "Online classes is [sic] very convenient for me and for my family;" and "Yes, I work and on-line is good for me." While summer 2020 enrollment was down from summer 2019, there was a 70% increase in returning students ([June 30, 2020 EMSS board report](#)), (DE-8). The same goes for fall 2020 enrollment. There was a slight decline in continuing student registration but a 36% increase in new students and 36% increase in returning students ([Sept. 24, 2020 EMSS board report,](#))(DE-9). On the same survey questions, with 650 students reporting, 85.1% said yes to continue to take online classes, 11.2% said no and 3.7% said maybe (DE-10).

Chart 1. Students Interested in Continuing Distance Education

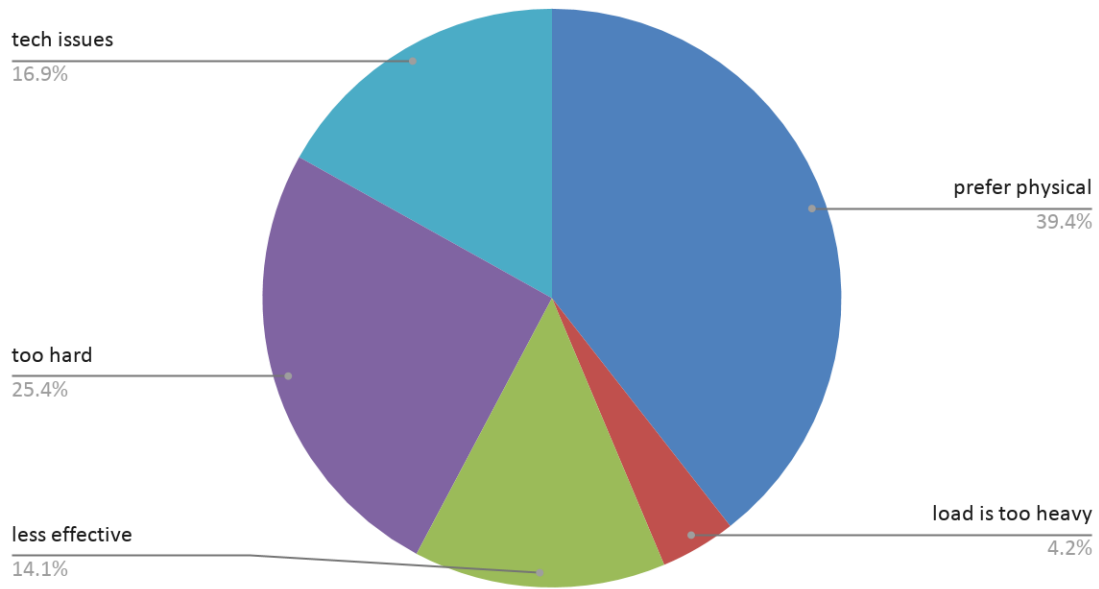
If online, will you continue in the fall?



Reasons for not returning were the student prefers physical interactions, the load is too heavy, online classes are less effective, it's too hard, and technical issues.

Chart 2. Reasons for not Returning to Online Classes

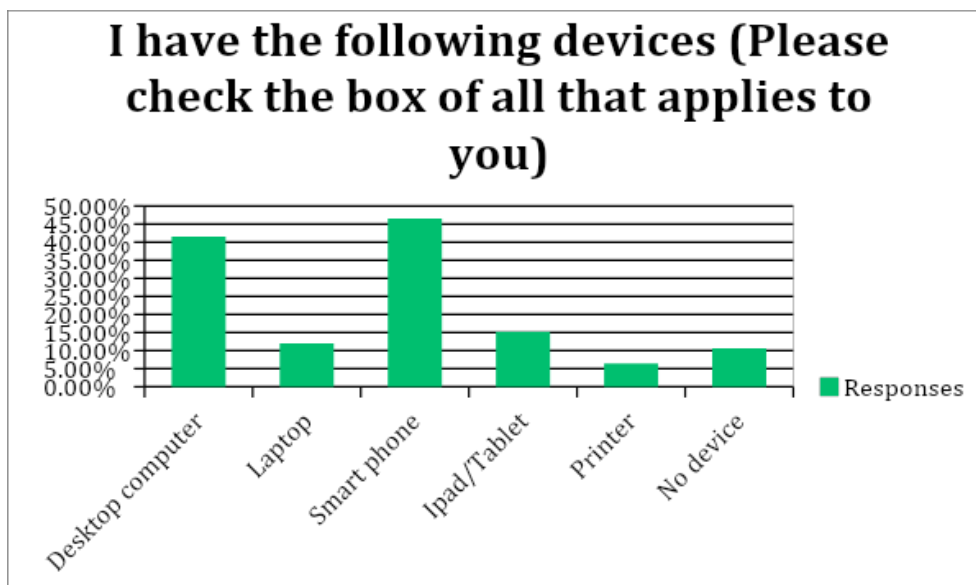
Reasons for not returning to online classes in the fall



The student population has families outside FSM. When students were sent home due to school closure, several went to homes in the U.S. and registered for the online classes. These students went home to Colorado, Hawaii and Guam.

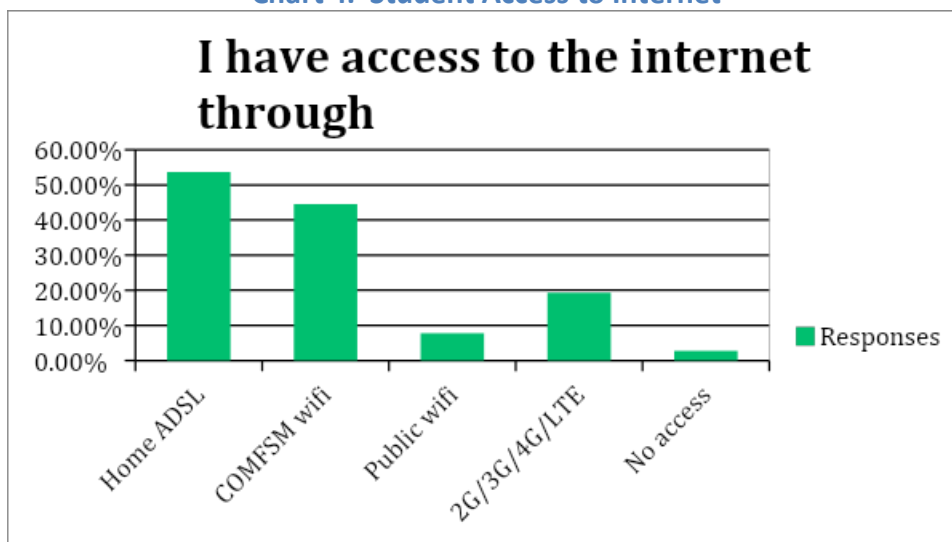
A [survey](#) was given to students taking online classes summer 2020 to determine their access to internet and their device usage. 217 students responded to the question on access to a device ([DE-11](#)). 10.6% had no device at all.

Chart 3. Student Access to a Device



Students reported that 53.7% have access to internet at home, 44.5% access internet at a college campus, 7.8% use public wifi, 19.2% use 2G/3G/4G/LTE, and only 2.7% report no access to internet.

Chart 4. Student Access to Internet



With implementation of a well designed distance education program along with continued offering of in-person programs, there is a potential to reduce repeated courses across the campuses. Preliminary data comparing [course fill rates](#) from fall 2019 (face-to-face classes) and fall 2020 (online classes) shows average class size of 14.7 for fall 2019 and average class

size of 16.1 for fall 2020 ([DE-12](#)). In fall 2020, 70% of the sections filled to maximum enrollment while only 65.4% of the sections filled to maximum enrollment in fall 2019. Classes were limited to the same maximum enrollment for both semesters. Implementation of distance education may help to address improvements for accreditation standards II.A.6. “..schedules courses in a manner that allows students to complete certificate and degree programs within a period of time consistent with established expectations in higher education.” and standard II.A.7., “The institution effectively uses delivery modes, teaching methodologies and learning support services that reflect the diverse and changing needs of its students, in support of equity in success for all students.”

Involvement of faculty, students support services staff and information technology staff system wide.

A working group consisting of the following members was convened to prepare this proposal:

Name	Department/Office
Chelsea Rion, Student Life Coordinator	Student Services
Penselynn E. Sam, Head Counselor	Student Services
Delihna Ehmes, Faculty (F/S Senate)	Instructional Affairs
Kasiano Paul, Faculty (CC Chair)	Instructional Affairs
Nelchor Permitez, Faculty	Instructional Affairs
Daniel Helman, Faculty	Instructional Affairs
Maria Dison, Dean of Academic Programs	Instructional Affairs
Shaun Suliol, Director of IT	Institutional Effectiveness
Jennifer Helieisar, Director of LRC	Instructional Affairs
Roselle Togonon, Comptroller	Administrative Services

The working group met on [October. 6, 2020](#), and [October. 22, 2020](#), to prepare the proposal. The proposal was then sent to the Curriculum Committee (Nov. 4, 2020), Finance Committee, Recruitment, Admissions and Retention Committee, Faculty Senate (Nov. 16, 2020), Information, Communications and Technology committee (Nov. 10, 2020), Student Success Committee (Nov. 10, 2020), and Cabinet (Nov. 5, 2020) for [endorsement](#) to the Executive Committee ([DE-13](#), [DE-14](#), [DE-48](#)). The Executive Committee will provide final review of the proposal for endorsement to the Board of Regents at its December 2020 meeting.

Cabinet and Board of Regents support.

The cabinet voted to endorse submitting a distance education substantive change proposal at its September 3, 2020, meeting. The Board of Regents endorsed the submission of a substantive change proposal at its [September 24, 2020](#), meeting ([DE-6](#)).

External scan of distance learning programs of regional institutions.

The distance education working group researched programs at the [University of Hawaii system](#), [College of the Marshall Islands](#), [University of Guam](#) and advice from Regional Education Laboratory Pacific's *Designing Distance Learning for Pacific Island Education Systems Training* series of workshops. Each program reviewed had the following major components: 1) office or center designated as the distance education office that provides training and support for faculty; 2) identified student support services available in person and online; and 3) technology support for students and faculty ([DE-15](#), [DE-16](#), [DE-17](#)). Each college differs in organization of these services with the larger universities being more complex. Each college or university most commonly has the same workload for faculty teaching online and in-person. The faculty members' workload is negotiated by the local unions (Hawaii and Guam). Faculty members are also paid the same for online teaching and in-person teaching. The primary difference is whether faculty members are compensated for developing the online course or not.

COM-FSM Cost analysis study.

Distance education at COM-FSM [three-year cost analysis](#) is based on offering 10% of courses online each semester with section fill rates of 10, 15 and 20 students ([DE-18](#)). Faculty salary was based on the amount paid for an overload (3 credits) with a percentage of faculty in three different salary ranges - beginning, mid-level and ceiling. Scenarios also include an estimated reduction in enrollment over three years of 6% each year based on a steady decline in enrollment data. The college realizes a net income in each scenario.

Table 1. Three-Year Projected Budget

3 YEAR PROJECTION FOR 20 STUDENTS PER CLASS							
		FALL 2021	SPRING 2022	FALL 2022	SPRING 2023	FALL 2023	SPRING 2024
Revenues							
	Tuition and Fees	US\$ 899,100.00	US\$ 845,154.00	US\$ 794,444.76	US\$ 746,778.07	US\$ 701,971.39	US\$ 659,853.11
Total Revenues	Total	US\$ 899,100.00	US\$ 845,154.00	US\$ 794,444.76	US\$ 746,778.07	US\$ 701,971.39	US\$ 659,853.11
Expenses							
	Salaries and Fringe benefits	US\$ 233,220.53	US\$ 217,485.93	US\$ 203,999.13	US\$ 192,504.71	US\$ 186,246.66	US\$ 177,223.74
	Supplies and Equipment	US\$ 20,446.26	US\$ 20,446.26	US\$ 20,446.26	US\$ 20,446.26	US\$ 20,446.26	US\$ 20,446.26
	Subscriptions (one year for Help Desk, Lock Browser, Turn It In, and Schoology)	US\$ 125,000.00	US\$ 125,000.00	US\$ 125,000.00	US\$ 125,000.00	US\$ 125,000.00	US\$ 125,000.00
Total Expenses		US\$ 378,666.79	US\$ 362,932.19	US\$ 349,445.39	US\$ 337,950.97	US\$ 331,692.92	US\$ 322,670.00
Net Income		US\$ 520,433.21	US\$ 482,221.81	US\$ 444,999.37	US\$ 408,827.11	US\$ 370,278.47	US\$ 337,183.11

3 YEAR PROJECTION FOR 15 STUDENTS PER CLASS							
		FALL 2021	SPRING 2022	FALL 2022	SPRING 2023	FALL 2023	SPRING 2024
Revenues							
	Tuition and Fees	US\$ 674,325.00	US\$ 633,865.50	US\$ 595,833.57	US\$ 560,083.56	US\$ 526,478.54	US\$ 494,889.83
Total Revenues	Total	US\$ 674,325.00	US\$ 633,865.50	US\$ 595,833.57	US\$ 560,083.56	US\$ 526,478.54	US\$ 494,889.83
Expenses							
	Salaries and Fringe benefits	US\$ 233,220.53	US\$ 217,485.93	US\$ 203,999.13	US\$ 192,504.71	US\$ 186,246.66	US\$ 177,223.74
	Supplies and Equipment	US\$ 20,446.26	US\$ 20,446.26	US\$ 20,446.26	US\$ 20,446.26	US\$ 20,446.26	US\$ 20,446.26
	Subscriptions (one year for Help Desk, Lock Browser, Turn It In, and Schoology)	US\$ 125,000.00	US\$ 125,000.00	US\$ 125,000.00	US\$ 125,000.00	US\$ 125,000.00	US\$ 125,000.00
Total Expenses		US\$ 378,666.79	US\$ 362,932.19	US\$ 349,445.39	US\$ 337,950.97	US\$ 331,692.92	US\$ 322,670.00
Net Income		US\$ 295,658.21	US\$ 270,933.31	US\$ 246,388.18	US\$ 222,132.59	US\$ 194,785.62	US\$ 172,219.83

3 YEAR PROJECTION FOR 12 STUDENTS PER CLASS							
		FALL 2021	SPRING 2022	FALL 2022	SPRING 2023	FALL 2023	SPRING 2024
Revenues							
	Tuition and Fees	US\$ 539,460.00	US\$ 507,092.40	US\$ 476,666.86	US\$ 448,066.84	US\$ 421,182.83	US\$ 395,911.86
Total Revenues	Total	US\$ 539,460.00	US\$ 507,092.40	US\$ 476,666.86	US\$ 448,066.84	US\$ 421,182.83	US\$ 395,911.86
Expenses							
	Salaries and Fringe benefits	US\$ 233,220.53	US\$ 217,485.93	US\$ 203,999.13	US\$ 192,504.71	US\$ 186,246.66	US\$ 177,223.74
	Supplies and Equipment	US\$ 20,446.26	US\$ 20,446.26	US\$ 20,446.26	US\$ 20,446.26	US\$ 20,446.26	US\$ 20,446.26
	Subscriptions (one year for Help Desk, Lock Browser, Turn It In, and Schoology)	US\$ 125,000.00	US\$ 125,000.00	US\$ 125,000.00	US\$ 125,000.00	US\$ 125,000.00	US\$ 125,000.00
Total Expenses		US\$ 378,666.79	US\$ 362,932.19	US\$ 349,445.39	US\$ 337,950.97	US\$ 331,692.92	US\$ 322,670.00
Net Income		US\$ 160,793.21	US\$ 144,160.21	US\$ 127,221.47	US\$ 110,115.88	US\$ 89,489.92	US\$ 73,241.87

Considerations and principles in development of the program.

Mission Statement:

The mission of COM-FSM distance education is to promote academic quality and access to students choosing the delivery mode of distance education for part or all of their academic pursuits and to ensure student success.

Goal I

- Promote success through curriculum and instruction that address student learning needs through distance education.

Measurable Outcomes:

- Maintain an academic course inventory delivered via distance education that provides a solid foundation of general education and major courses.
- Develop and maintain career and technical certificate and degree programs offered online, that are relevant to student interests and labor market demands.
- Ensure quality instruction in distance education through effective course design and assessment.

Goal II

- Provide student support services and programs that complement distance education and address student needs.

Measurable Outcomes:

- Support library with resources that enhance distance education for students.
- Offer advising/counseling activities that provide a foundation for student success in distance education.
- Provide a learning environment for student success and retention in distance learning that is equivalent to traditional learning.

Goal III

- Provide distance education learning support services to faculty, staff, and administrators.

Measurable Outcomes:

- Provide opportunities for professional development.
- Provide appropriate technologies and facilities to meet the needs of instructional services.

*([DE-19](#): This section adapted from Lamar State College)

The distance education program is organized under the direction of the Director of the Institute for Student Learning and Excellence in Teaching (ISLET). At least one staff from counseling, IT and LRC will provide support to this office as needed.

Guidelines for Online Learning

1. Definition:

“Distance education” is instruction delivered synchronously or asynchronously using one or more technologies that support **regular and substantive interaction between an instructor and students** who are separated from the instructor.

Distance education can incorporate technologies such as the internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMS, in conjunction with any of the other technologies, and other media. (ACCJC)

“Hybrid courses” are courses that replace a portion (at least 50%) of the face-to-face “seat time” with online instruction. Face-to-face instruction is reduced, but not eliminated. In compliance with the US Department of Education credit hour definition and the College of Micronesia-FSM credit hour policy ([BP 3119](#)), the combined face-to-face and online instructional time remains equivalent to a traditional face-to-face course. The syllabus must indicate both in-class and online requirements including:

- a. The number of hours that are face-to-face vs. online, meeting dates/times
- b. The activities that will be held face-to-face vs. online.

Student attendance/participation for the face-to-face hours is mandatory

Recommendation: At least one in-person in-class assessment should be assigned each semester. ([DE-20](#))

Regular and Substantive Interaction for Distance Education

A faculty member assigned to teach a distance education course must initiate regular and substantive interaction. Regular interaction is defined as scheduled interaction with students at least two times per week for fall and spring semesters and three times per week for the summer session. Substantive interaction is defined as interactions connected to the subject of the course and contribute to the students’ progress toward course, program and institutional student learning outcomes. A

faculty member must utilize at least two different types of interaction per course per semester. Examples of substantive interactions include but are not limited to:

- Correspondence between the instructor and students via email, messaging or another electronic modality that helps to clarify content knowledge, improve skills and serves as a model of professional networking.
- Effective feedback to students – written comments, audio or video notes, individual conferences (these ought to be more than ‘good work’, ‘needs improvement’ or assigning a grade);
- Online discussions and chats – model professional discourse; pose guiding questions related to academic subject; propose counterpoints or alternative points of view that students may not be considering; establish connections among students’ ideas; encourage curiosity; and provide encouragement for students who may be struggling;
- Regularly scheduled online review sessions, tutorials, office hours, or individual appointments (usually synchronous for review sessions);
- Course materials (ex. Recorded webinars, videos, and reading materials) which facilitate synchronous or asynchronous interactions AND require the student to contact the instructor or participate in an online discussion moderated by the instructor.
- Instructor announcements to the class regarding course content and upcoming assignments or events.
- Modification of the course content or course materials in response to emergent student needs, e.g. an instructor adds extra videos in a topic after they see students are interested in that area; or posts a compilation of exemplary student work.

Regular and substantive interaction will be monitored through review of course syllabi and the learning management system; the instructional coordinators and dean of academic programs have administrative access to Schoology where interactions can be evaluated.

2. **Equivalence of distance education compared to classroom-based instruction: The same standards for academic rigor used for onsite venues of instruction (classrooms, labs, etc.) apply to courses taught by asynchronous and synchronous delivery modes. Expectations for course learning outcomes and policies, modes of communication between instructor and student, assignment schedule, means of grading and evaluation, course policies, and support for student learning such as tutoring and technical help should be clearly articulated in the course syllabus. Students enrolled in distance education courses are eligible for campus resources such as disability services, counseling, library, advising, financial aid, and other elements of student support. Some student support services may only be available on campus.**
3. **Cost to Student:**
The college’s ongoing goal shall be to offer distance education in FSM at a cost to the student similar to charges for regular on-campus instruction. Students in distance education programs are recognized as members of the student body of the offering

campus including having access to co-curricular and fee-based services. However, distance education students who have no opportunity to benefit from certain on-campus fees may have those fees waived or maybe charged substitute fees that support the unique requirements of distance learners.

4. Responsibility for Distance Education:
 - A. A fundamental requirement for distance education is that the quality and standards of such courses and programs be comparable in rigor and breadth to similar on-campus instructional programs of the college, and focus on student learning outcomes. It is the responsibility of the faculty to establish or approve standards that apply to all instructional programs of the college, and to apply those standards to distance education programs in the process of program review.
 - B. It is the responsibility of the college administration to ensure that distance education programs are consistent with the college's institutional role and mission; that there is a planning and evaluation process, and academic oversight; that the technology infrastructure and services and associated faculty support are adequate to enable instructional quality; and that there are appropriate processes for verification of student identity. In addition, distance learners have comparable access to campus services, including but not limited to admissions, orientation, financial aid, registration, advisement, tutoring, and library services. If a distance education program is a joint effort among campuses, it is the responsibility of the supporting sites to provide for the legitimate needs of the students physically on their campus, even if the degree or certificate the student is pursuing will be conferred by a different campus. Responsibility for supporting students may be shared among campuses i.e. campuses where students may participate in synchronous interactive sessions and/or receive assistance and support.
5. Technology
When deploying technologies to support distance education, the college strives to select and invest in technologies that have broad applicability to support campus-based learners and to general collaboration within academic communities as well.
6. Instructional Affairs:
 - A. Has primary responsibility for delivery of programs & courses and the implementation of appropriate instructional materials and methods. The director of ISLET coordinates distance education. The Curriculum Committee oversees processes for assuring quality and integrity of all distance education curricula and meeting all applicable accreditation requirements. The director of ISLET will assist each faculty member in development of online courses and provide final recommendation to CC for implementation of the course.
 - B. Commits to all necessary support for a period sufficient to enable current students to complete their degree/certificates.
 - C. Commits to providing accurate and complete information about courses and programs, including entering all course and program data into all applicable college information systems.

- D. Collaborates with campuses regarding program plans, support needs and requirements.
- E. Regularly assesses community needs and communicates the results of those assessments throughout the college.
- F. Oversees course student learning assessment and student course evaluations. The faculty will develop and implement effective methods of assessing student learning outcomes in distance education courses that are equivalent to the methods used to assess learning outcomes and competency skills in face-to-face classes. Assessment of course content and learning outcomes is required for program review and accreditation.

Student course evaluations are important in improving course quality. It is the institution's responsibility to provide an evaluation mechanism that is appropriate for distance education courses and provides data that is comparable to what is gathered for onsite classes. The college has adapted previous in-person course evaluations to create appropriate instruments to address specific issues with online learning.

- 7. Institutional Support for faculty
The institution provides distance education faculty with effective support in course design, library support, delivery systems, technical support and training (including workshops and individual consultation), and guidelines regarding copyright, ADA, multimedia, and other resources, as well as online venues for faculty group interaction and peer-mediated troubleshooting.
- 8. Institutional support for students
The institution provides a variety of orientations and tutorials for students taking distance education courses and a [Helpdesk](#) for distance learning students to submit questions and requests ([DE-21](#)). The college plans to establish an online learning readiness check and webpage for students.
- 9. Student integrity and authentication
Students in distance education courses are held to the same academic standards as students enrolled in onsite instructional formats and are subject to the [Student Academic Honesty Policy](#) ([DE-22](#)). This policy is discussed with students during orientation, at faculty training and included in the course syllabus and reviewed at the beginning of each semester. Administrative procedures for this policy are found at [AP 3116](#) ([DE-23](#)).
The college authenticates the identity of all distance education students by issuing each student with a COM-FSM ID number. Students register their personal usernames and passwords. Like all other students enrolled at COM-FSM, distance education students are required to use their username and password to access their distance education course materials and online resources. It is a breach of the [Violations of Responsibility Policy](#) to share usernames and passwords ([DE-24](#)). The Violations of Responsibility Policy applies to all virtual and physical locations of COM-FSM. Violations that occur in distance education courses are subject to the same procedural actions as violations occurring in onsite classroom settings. This includes policies regarding cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and other acts of academic dishonesty.

10. Distance Education Program Planning Group:

The distance education program planning group will be composed of the director for ISLET, instructional coordinators and the dean of academic programs. The distance education program planning group plans and coordinates distance and online programs to meet needs within FSM and accreditation standards. The group advises programs, recommends allocations of college resources, and coordinates the master listing of distance and online programs. These members will meet with the VP for instructional affairs and the VP for institutional effectiveness and quality assurance to formulate a college-wide distance education action plan as part of the Integrated Educational Master Plan.

11. Faculty compensation for online teaching/class size:

Faculty will be compensated for the same contact hours as in face-to-face courses. Course distribution will remain the same: contact hours and faculty load is 15 contact hours and 4 preparations for a regular semester, 6 contact hours and 1-2 preparations for summer.

Class size minimum for distance education is 15 and maximum size is 30 per section for regular lecture type courses. Internships, practicums and field placements will continue with 5 students per section. If a faculty member teaches 60 students online in one 3 contact hour course, that will count as two sections and 6 contact hours.

[\(DE-25, DE-26\)](#): *This section adapted from UH System and UH Hilo Distance Education Policy*

Resources available to implement the program.

Human Resources

Implementation of distance education will not require additional positions at the college but several current positions will have revised or additional job duties.

- Director of the Institute for Student Learning and Excellence in Teaching. This is a current (vacant) position at the college but specified duties did not include supporting faculty for distance education. The job duties were revised to focus on distance education and providing support for faculty.

Director, Institute for Student Learning and Excellence in Teaching (ISLET)

As the director of the Institute for Student Learning and Excellence in Teaching, this individual will provide leadership and oversight of distance education, faculty development opportunities, resources for teaching, and student success initiatives. ISLET will be a place where faculty, staff, and students work together to focus on student success and develop a learning culture guided by learning leaders. The center director will help faculty create culturally valuable, engaged learning and teaching experiences by providing a distance education certification program, distance education course design workshops and support, programming, resources and support for quality teaching and advising, and leadership for student success initiatives.

The director reports to the vice president for instructional affairs.

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Write the mission and goals of the center.
- Coordinate distance education;
- Develop and/or manage educational technology resources and training;
- Provide instructional design support for distance education and classroom instructors;
- Coordinate student success initiatives such as first year experience programs, improvement of developmental education programs, and offerings with compressed schedules;
- Collaborate with COM-FSM faculty to organize and deliver institute programs and activities, including faculty-learning communities, workshops and seminars that meet the specific teaching needs of the academic divisions in support of student success;
- Collaborate with other campus entities involved with faculty development activities that support student success;
- Develop and implement a new faculty/part-time faculty mentor program;
- Support action research in the classroom that improves student success and helps build a sense of community among COM-FSM faculty as reflective educators;
- Promote and support faculty implementation of innovative ideas in support of student success;
- Establish and meet regularly with an advisory board once per semester, student success committee and other committees that support student success and faculty/staff senate to discuss activities;
- Establish and maintain/update content on center website;
- Prepare monthly reports on activities, participation, and assessment outcomes.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

MA, MS or MEd in education leadership, curriculum development or related field.

EXPERIENCE

- Minimum 5 years experience in a teaching and learning center, preferably in a leadership role, including designing and delivering faculty development programs and services.
- Must have experience designing and/or teaching distance education courses.
- Accomplished teaching in higher education.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills.
- Record of fostering collaboration and lasting partnerships.

Deep knowledge of the following:

- Current higher education best practices to achieve student success.
- Theories of learning and curricular design, and innovative teaching approaches (e.g., collaborative learning, service learning, problem-based learning, writing across the curriculum).
- Strategies for organizational development, program consultation, group and team building, and the influence of environmental factors on teaching and learning.
- Learning and program assessment strategies.
- Knowledge of use, implementation and best practices for instructional technologies for both in person and distance education.
- Demonstrated appreciation and advocacy for diversity.
- Record of excellence supervising professional staff and promoting their professional development.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

PhD. or EdD.
 Successful grant writing experience

REQUIREMENTS

Travel to COM-FSM state campuses.

Student Support Services Staff

Name	Title	Campus
Chelsea Rion	Student Life Coordinator	CTEC
Penselyn Sam	Lead Counselor	National
Cindy Edwin	Counselor	CTEC
Arthur Jonas	Student Services Coord.	Kosrae
Wilson Bisalen	Student Services Specialist	Chuuk
Cecilia Dibay	Student Services Coord.	Yap
Faustino Yarofaisug	Director Financial Aid	National
Doman Daoas	Registrar	National

Staff listed in the table above will ensure the services described in student support services section below are delivered at each campus or online.

IT support specialist

Name	Title	Campus
Shaun Suliol	Director of IT	National
Molence Kephass	System Specialist II	National
John Dungawin	Information System Sp.	Chuuk
Pius Mirey	Information System Sp.	Yap
Renton Isaac	System Specialist III	Kosrae
Winter George	Information System Sp.	CTEC

Qualified faculty

Qualified faculty members are those faculty members that have completed the certification course/training in distance education delivery provided by the director of ISLET.

Learning Resources

The Learning Resources Center (LRC) supports the college's mission by providing informational resources and services that support and enhance the curricula of the college and meet the educational needs and interests of the college community. The LRC includes general, reference and audio-video collections; the Pacific archives; and the government depository. Informational resources include the print and non-print materials in the library collections and electronic resources. Services include circulation, reference, computers, and library instruction. The LRC is made of all the campus libraries at the National campus and in each of the state campuses in Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk and Yap. The library houses 104,342 volumes across the college libraries.

Online resources to support instruction are available through the library webpage. The library subscribes to individual electronic databases that include [Academic OneFile](#), [JSTOR](#), [Pacific Affairs](#), and the [Pacific Digital Library](#) (DE-27, DE-28, DE-29). The [Pacific Digital Library](#) (PDL) is an ongoing digital project that provides digitized local materials authored by citizens of the Pacific affiliated Islands (DE-30).

Additionally, the library subscribes to the following [EBSCO](#) databases:: [Academic Search Premier](#), [Education FullText](#), [ERIC](#), and [Patient Education Reference Center \(PERC\)](#) (DE-31).

Online library guides were developed and shared with campus librarians and posted on the library webpage to assist students with using Schoology and with citing sources online. Links to library orientation were provided to admissions for use in the virtual orientation for Fall 2020. The orientation includes a session on how to access the COM-FSM library online database. Students may also visit a campus in any state to visit a library in person. Students may also access the [inter-library loan](#) by contacting one of the libraries (DE-32).

Students will also find the following tutorials available on the learning resources webpage.

[Assisting students with Schoology \(DE-33\)](#)

[Citing Sources Online \(DE-34\)](#)

[Virtual Orientation Fall 2020, 9. Learning Resources Center \(DE-35\)](#)

Student Support Services

The college strives to ensure equitable access to all of its students by providing appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable student support services to students available at each campus location. These services include: admissions, registration and records, financial aid, work-study, and scholarships, guidance and peer counseling including tutoring services, health services, sports and recreation, residence halls, and student activities, clubs and organizations. The residence halls are at the national campus, and provide additional opportunities for program completion.

Student services has made the following changes to accommodate and ensure equity for students taking distance education courses.

- Computers purchased for private/virtual counseling and tutoring services
- Subscription to DropOut Detective that helps student services via Schoology to monitor in real time students who are falling behind and need intervention
- Helpdesk provides students the ability to privately schedule appointments with campus nurse and other student services
- Student information system (SIS) enhanced to support shift to distance education. These enhancements include, but are not limited to online registration and registration changes, e.g., online withdrawal; mobile-friendly myShark; and advisors access to mid-term deficiency report of their advisees in the myShark.
- Online [tutorial videos](#) and [virtual orientation](#) developed for new students ([DE-36](#), [DE-35](#)).
- Financial aid office (FAO) offers financial aid counseling, assistance with all aspects of the financial aid process, work-study and scholarship assistance in-person, and virtually either by phone or Zoom. Students may request phone or Zoom appointments either via email, by phone or submitting the request through the college's [Helpdesk \(DE-21\)](#).
- Student services has transitioned all student in-person, on-and off-campus, co-, extra- and socio recreational activities to the virtual setting.
 - Student services webpage, has an ongoing list of [tutorials](#) to support the online learning experience ([DE-36](#)). A [virtual orientation](#) was developed by all relevant departments and shared with new students via the college's media platforms ([DE-35](#)).
 - The Student Body Association (SBA) had its first virtual declaration, application, and voting in Fall 2020. The SBA officers are now meeting on a bi-weekly basis to discuss the needs and plans for the students at their respective campuses and how we can continue to connect each campus together via technology. The SBA has representatives on four of the College's standing committees: Finance Committee, Information & Communication Technology, Facilities & Campus Environment, and the Student Success Committee.

- The Peer Coaches, typically an initiative only able to be implemented at campuses in Pohnpei, is now a college-wide student mentorship program open to all continuing students that meet the eligibility requirements. These students serve as the mentors to all students with a special focus on new and returning students.
- The Forum Lecture series presented to the college is taking on five major focal points: business, education, environment, government, and health. Specialists and professionals alike from these fields will share their expertise with our community in the virtual setting for students to view at any time.

IT Resources

Continuing on several years of systematic improvements to address Recommendation 2 found on page 6 of the college's [External Evaluation Report](#) of March 2016, the Information Technology Office (ITO) has sought to provide secure, reliable, and performance technology services to the college community ([DE-37](#)).

Building on previous years of upgrades and installations the college has already positioned itself technologically to be able to step towards providing distance education. The COVID-19 pandemic offered a testing ground of these capabilities to further refine the delivery of these services, allowing for firsthand experience of the quality and effectiveness of the technological environment of the college.

Internet

Recent changes to the laws governing internet in the country has allowed the college to realize better internet rates and utilize other internet services providers (ISP). As of this writing the college has recently signed a new contract with its primary ISP, as well as installed secondary connectivity through satellite dishes from a new ISP.

FSM Telecommunications Corporation (FSMTC) serves as the college's primary ISP, providing direct fiber connections from its locations in each state to our campuses. The addition of submarine fiber optic cables to the states of Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Yap has allowed consistent speeds to the world wide web (WWW) and the equitable access to online resources provided by the college based at the National campus or through third parties.

Kacific Broadband Satellites serves as the college's secondary ISP, providing an affordable option and equitable redundancy to internet services at our campuses. In Kosrae it serves as the college's primary connection where submarine fiber optic cable is not available. Satellite service is not available in Yap as of this writing.

Campus	FSMTC	Kacific
National	1000mbps fiber	70mbps
CTEC	100mbps fiber	70mbps
Chuuk	100mbps fiber	70mbps
Kosrae	5mbps fiber	100mbps
Yap	100mbps fiber (primary), 5mbps ADSL	Not available

Hardware

In AY2020-21 the college upgraded three computer labs at its Yap campus, and one at its CTEC campus. It is now moving to upgrade three labs at its Chuuk campus, and continuously thereafter to other campuses where aged computers for student use is either old or do not support online learning such as webcams and headsets capabilities. Using it's [Asset Inventory List](#), ITO tracks aging computers that are deployed for both student and operational uses ([DE-38](#)). Student computers used in the computer labs are turned over every three to five years, or as required by the instructional requirements.

Software

- G Suite
 - Gmail
 - Google Docs for online learning
 - Google Drive
- Office 365 (paid)
 - For faculty and students
 - Free for students both online and offline as long as they have @comfsm.fm
- Helpdesk
- Seeking live chat app for realtime support to students
- Schoology add ons
 - DropOut Detective
 - TurnItin
 - Lockdown Browser

Financial Resources

The college continues to remain fiscally responsible in managing its budget. As part of the president and CEO's report, quarterly financial statements are submitted to the [Board of Regents](#) (DE-39). The college's [audit reports](#) show the unmodified opinion that the college is in compliance, and the college has received an unmodified opinion of its audit reports since 1993 (DE-40). The college provides oversight to its finances by regularly reviewing financial information and reports at different levels including the [Cabinet](#), [Board of Regents](#), [Finance Committee](#), and budget managers' meetings (DE-41, DE-39, DE-42).

FSM Government Support

The college continually requests support from the FSM National Government to provide financial assistance necessary to ensure quality education for the nation. The FSM government extends the usual support every year to the operation of the college and to the direct scholarship program given to constituents. The FSM government was also able to allocate funding for infrastructure projects of the college starting FY2017.

Based on FY 2020 budget ([Public Law 21-171, Section 5.](#)) for FSM National Government, the college receives \$3,800,000.00 subsidy and additional subsidy of \$250,000 as support in administering the Dentists and Doctors for Tomorrow program (DE-43).

Table 2. FSM Government Subsidy: FY 2016-2020

Fund Source	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
FSM Government Subsidy (Compact Fund-ESG)	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
FSM Government Subsidy (Local Fund)	2,800,000	2,800,000	2,800,000	3,050,000	3,050,000
Total	3,800,000	3,800,000	3,800,000	4,050,000	4,050,000

Institutional Advancement

To strengthen external relationships and promote institutional advancement, the Board of Regents approved on [August 8, 2014](#), the establishment of an *Institutional Advancement Office* (IAO) (DE-44). The office engages in activities that enhance the college's visibility and reputation locally, regionally, and internationally. The office manages the college's operational fundraising program, alumni relations, communications and marketing, and foundation relations to support the College of Micronesia - FSM goals and mission. Since its establishment, the Institutional Advancement Office has raised \$850,786.68.

U.S. Federal Grant Funding

COM-FSM has sustained a history of substantial grant funding from the U.S. Government. These grants directly support the instructional and student support services of the college, as well as its infrastructure and ongoing operations. Table 3.4 summarizes the recent history of this support and a [Federal Grants](#) Excel document offers a complete and detailed history (DE-45).

Table 3. COM-FSM U.S. Federal Grant Support Summary:

FY 2015-FY2018 (\$US)

Grant Source*	Funding Type	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
U.S. Department of Agriculture	Direct Grant	238,874	181,773	40,814	98,701	559,532
U.S. Department of Interior	Pass Through FSM Govt.	2,349,036	1,734,347	1,689,948	1,689,948	7,463,279
	Direct Grant		82,895	37,536	2,920	123,351
U.S. Department of Education	Direct Grant	11,023,658	12,349,477	11,415,443	9,031,502	43,820,080
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	Pass Through Univ. of Guam	197,652	122,222	64,597	83,449	467,920
	Pass Through FSM Govt.			57,073		57,073
U.S. National Science Foundation	Pass Through Univ. of Guam	66,109	70,912			137,021

	Pass Through Univ. of Hawaii	15,821	30,520	27,464	13,621	87,426
U.S. Agency for International Development	Direct Grant	4,218	114,316	122,004	140,349	380,887
Annual totals of Federal Grant Support		13,656,732	14,686,462	13,454,879	11,060,490	

*Includes multiple grant programs within these grant sources.

In May 2020, the college applied for and received \$1.8m HEERF-Institutional Portion under CARES Act funding and an additional \$14,438 for Minority Serving Institutions to convert systems and provide the necessary hardware and software to implement distance education along with support services. As reported in the [Board of Regent September 24, 2020](#) minutes, the college has used this funding for the following ([DE-6](#)):

- Implement changes in the Student Information System (SIS) allowing for posting of online courses and other features to support distance learning;
- Purchasing Helpdesk software
- Zoom licenses
- Improve internet access at Kosrae campus
- Laptops for faculty
- Instructional tools for faculty
- Hardware such as digital writing tablets, cameras, tripods, webcams, etc.
- Software including Lockdown Browser, DropOut Detective for monitoring student progress, and Turnitin plagiarism checking software.

The official quarterly reports for CARES Act funding are located on the college website under Public Transparency & Accountability, [CARES Act Reports \(DE-46\)](#).

Impact on other programs of the COM-FSM campuses.

Potential impact on programs at COM-FSM are:

- Increase in number of returning students. They will not have to leave their home islands to enroll in the many programs offered online.
- More broadly, the proposal has potential to lessen climate change impacts by lowering carbon emissions from transportation related to student relocation to the National campus. Emissions both from travel by ship and airplane are high. It may also save some trees and other raw resources in the global economy because instead of using printed materials, texts for online instruction can be accessed via an e-repository, storage, or the cloud, as online textbooks are a reasonable expectation of online instruction.
- The online mode is also beneficial to the college in terms of operational and physical resource savings. These are predicted to result from gains in efficiency in course

offerings as some sections that would have been separate in face-to-face instruction can be combined in an online modality. Class sizes for online instruction, while capped at 25 or 20 students typically, will be higher than in face-to-face offerings at each state campus. This will be offset by higher costs in some areas, as fewer students, for example, using the dormitory and related services at the National campus will mean a reduction in fees collected to cover the costs of these services.

- Campuses may need to make computer labs available for those students who don't have access to their own device or Internet. Wifi at all campuses is sufficient to allow students with their own devices access to the Internet.

Appendix A

Programs to be Offered Through Distance Learning

Bachelor of Science in:

- Elementary Education

Associate of Arts in:

- Liberal Arts
- Liberal Arts/Health Career Opportunity Program
- Micronesian Studies
- Pre-Teacher Preparation

Associate of Science in:

- Business Administration
- Computer Information Systems
- Marine Science
- Public Health
- Agriculture and Natural Resources Management
- Hospitality and Tourism Management

Associate of Applied Science in:

- Electronic Technology
- Telecommunications

3rd Year Certificate in:

- Teacher Preparation-Elementary
- General Business
- Public Health

Certificate of Achievement in:

- Trial Counselor
- Bookkeeping
- Secretarial Science
- Public Health
- Electronic Engineering Technology
- Agriculture and Food Technology

Other courses:

General Education; developmental reading, writing and math

Appendix B

Evidence/Works Cited

DE-1	Kelly, Doug. <i>Evaluation of Manageable Barriers to More Effective Delivery of Distance Education at the College of Micronesia-FSM</i> . Dec. 12, 2006. https://www.dropbox.com/s/gog99xjzperd1vy/Evaluation%20Manageable%20Barriers%20Distance%20Education.pdf?dl=0
DE-2	Hogan, Robert, PhD. <i>2012 Distance-Learning Final Report: Hybrid Learning</i> . June 15, 2012. https://www.dropbox.com/s/8p3hz8xpxaobsa0/2012%20Final%20Report.docx?dl=0
DE-3	2012-2017 Integrated Educational Master Plan. http://www.comfsm.fm/vpia/misc/IEMPSheet.pdf
DE-4	2018-2023 Integrated Educational Master Plan, Narrative. http://www.comfsm.fm/?q=Integrated-Educational-Master-Plan
DE-5	Board of Regents Meeting. <i>Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Assurance Report</i> . May 24, 2018. http://www.comfsm.fm/bor/notebook/05-2018/Institutional-Effectiveness&Quality-Assurance.pdf
DE-6	September 24, 2020 Board of Regents Meeting. http://www.comfsm.fm/?q=agenda-09-24-20
DE-7	Summer 2020 Survey. https://www.dropbox.com/sh/il8f41syg4l9ixl/AAB72PLaXNg22Khe_pfwTAnZa?dl=0
DE-8	June 30, 2020. VPEMSS Report to the Board of Regents. http://www.comfsm.fm/bor/notebook/06-2020/8.e.Enrollment-Management-and-Student-Services.pdf
DE-9	September 24, 2020. VPEMSS Report to the Board of Regents. http://www.comfsm.fm/bor/notebook/09-2020/8.e.Enrollment-Management-and-Student-Services.pdf
DE-10	Lee Ling, Dana. Survey Summary. https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LX6HRPLTqZENRxsVhXTgGGdJ5ZYf_fcKZVTThdKQIGQ4/edit?usp=sharing
DE-11	Online Access Survey. https://www.dropbox.com/s/z4d00a5fmxjzqg9/College%20of%20Micronesia-FSMStudent%20Online%20Class%20Access%20Survey_20200925.xlsx?dl=0
DE-12	Course Fill Rates. https://www.dropbox.com/s/elpteop0zoe60c7/Program%20Section%20Ratio%20fall%202019-fall%202020.xlsx?dl=0
DE-13	October 6, 2020. Recording of Distance Ed. Working Group. https://www.dropbox.com/s/axm1abp4hqlbejl/GMT20201021-230530_Distance-E_1920x918.mp4?dl=0

DE-14	October 22, 2020. Recording of Distance Ed. Working Group. https://www.dropbox.com/s/intn22w9zt4mte9/GMT20201021-230530_Distance-E_1920x918.mp4?dl=0
DE-15	UH Systemwide Policies and Procedures Information System. Executive Policy 5.204 Distance and Online Learning. http://www0.hawaii.edu/policy/index.php?action=viewPolicy&policySection=ep&policyChapter=5&policyNumber=204&menuView=closed
DE-16	September 28, 2020 email from College of the Marshall Islands. https://www.dropbox.com/s/3mddakffrkd8c8/CMI%20Response%20to%20Questions%20about%20distance%20education.txt?dl=0
DE-17	University of Guam IT Team https://www.uog.edu/it/team#collapsed10e406-4
DE-18	Three-year Budget Analysis. https://www.dropbox.com/s/0znh9itpfka7pg3/DISTANCE%20LEARNING%20COSTS%20AND%20REVENUES%20PROJECTIONS%20OCT%2014%20VERSION.xlsx?dl=0
DE-19	Lamar State College -Orange. 410 Front Street, Orange, Texas. Distance Education Mission. http://www.lSCO.edu/distanceded/mission.asp
DE-20	Hawaii Community College Definitions and Guidelines for Online and Hybrid Courses. http://hawaii.hawaii.edu/sites/default/files/assets/faculty-staff/teaching-resources/definitions-for-online-and-hybrid-courses.pdf .
DE-21	Helpdesk. http://www.comfsm.fm/helpdesk/
DE-22	Board Policy 3116-Academic Honesty Policy. http://www.comfsm.fm/Policy/Board-Policy/Chapter-3/COM-FSM_BP3116.pdf
DE-23	Administrative Procedures 3116-Academic Honesty. http://www.comfsm.fm/Policy/Administrative-Procedure/Chapter-3/COM-FSM_AP3116
DE-24	Board Policy 8500-Violations of Responsibility http://www.comfsm.fm/Policy/Board-Policy/Chapter-8/COMFSM_BP8500.pdf
DE-25	UH Systemwide Policies and Procedures Information System. Board of Regents Policy 5.210 Distance Education and Offsite Instruction. http://www0.hawaii.edu/policy/index.php?action=viewPolicy&policySection=rp&policyChapter=5&policyNumber=210&menuView=closed
DE-26	University of Hawaii at Hilo Distance Education Policy https://hilo.hawaii.edu/policies/distance-learning.php
DE-27	Academic OneFile. https://www.gale.com/c/academic-onefile
DE-28	JSTOR https://www.jstor.org/
DE-29	Pacific Affairs. https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/paaf/paaf
DE-30	Pacific Digital Library. http://pacificdigitallibrary.org

DE-31	EBSCO Databases. https://web.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/search/selectdb?vid=0&sid=f3f4a189-c7eb-46ea-9e92-cb3f167e25d6%40pdc-v-sessmgr04
DE-32	Learning Resources Inter-Library Loan. http://www.comfsm.fm/?q=lrc-services
DE-33	Tutorial-Assisting Students with Schoology. http://comfsm.fm/library/Assisting-Students-with-Schoology.pdf
DE-34	Tutorial-Citing Sources. http://comfsm.fm/library/Citing-Sources-Online-Citation-Machine.pdf
DE-35	Virtual Orientation-Learning to Use the Library. http://www.comfsm.fm/?q=virtual-orientation-F2020
DE-36	Tutorials by Admission Office. http://www.comfsm.fm/?q=admissions
DE-37	External Evaluation Report, March 2016. http://www.comfsm.fm/accreditation/2016/Self_Evaluation/COMFSM_External_Eval_Report_2016.pdf
DE-38	Asset Inventory List. https://www.dropbox.com/sh/0cpuy9oyqt7klct/AAAKURXKnrQG9XaAlJSjOkyDa?dl=0
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DE-46	CARES Act Reports. http://www.comfsm.fm/?q=care-act-reports
DE-47	2019 Summit and mini-summit Report. http://www.comfsm.fm/irpo/visioning-summit/2019/2019-Final-Summit-report.pdf
DE-48	Endorsements from CC, ICT, Cabinet, SSC. https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3bp3ybr7882mq77/AABCfMz4ZbnzMvYQeWjPcLbFa?dl=0