

College of Micronesia -FSM

Follow-Up Report



Submitted by:

College of Micronesia - FSM
P.O. Box 159, Pohnpei FM 96941

To:

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

March 15, 2012

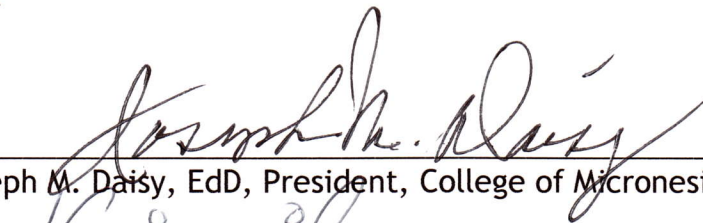
Follow-Up Report - Certification Page

Date: MARCH 7, 2012

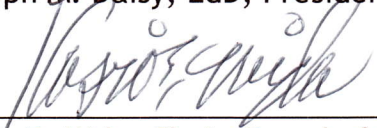
This Follow-Up Report is submitted to the ACCJC for the purpose of assisting in the determination of the institution's accreditation status.

We certify that there was broad participation by the campus community and believe that this report accurately reflects that nature and substance of this institution.

Signed



Joseph M. Daisy, EdD, President, College of Micronesia-FSM



Kasio E. Mida, Chair, Board of Regents



Frankie L. Harriss, Accreditation Liaison Officer



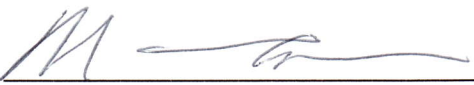
Resida Keller, President, Faculty/Staff Senate



Ringlen Ringlen, Vice President for Student Services



Joseph Habuchmai, Vice President for Administrative Services



Mariana Ben Dereas, Vice President for Instructional Affairs



W. James Currie, Vice President for Cooperative Research and Extension

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Statement of Report Preparation

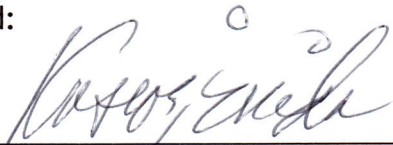
With sincere gratitude, the College of Micronesia - FSM (COM-FSM) thanks the Commission for the opportunity to submit this Follow-Up Report, produced under the guidance of Joseph M. Daisy, COM-FSM President, Interim-President Ringlen Ringlen, assisted by Frankie L. Harriss, Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO), and with solicited input from the entire COM - FSM college community.

The Commission action letter of June 30, 2011, was communicated to the COM-FSM college community by means of the college website, and announced to the President's Cabinet consisting of the interim-president, vice presidents for administrative services, instructional affairs, student services, and cooperative research and extension, campus directors, the Faculty/Staff Senate President, Student Body Association representative, ALO, the director of Institutional Research and Planning, and the director of development and community relations.

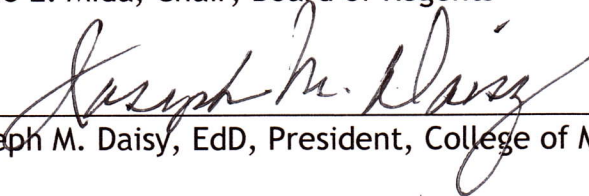
On July 26, 2011, the Interim-president, Ringlen Ringlen, appointed members to the Accreditation Committee, chaired by the recently appointed ALO, for addressing recommendations. The Accreditation Committee assessed all aspects of college operations, in particular the recently reconstituted standing committees, to determine how better to incorporate ACCJC Standards into COM-FSM processes and procedures.

This report was presented to the Board of Regents for review on **March 7, 2012**. With this statement we certify to the best of our knowledge this report was prepared according to the specifications outlined in the action letter.

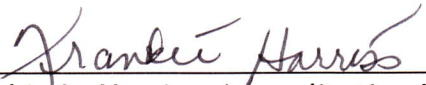
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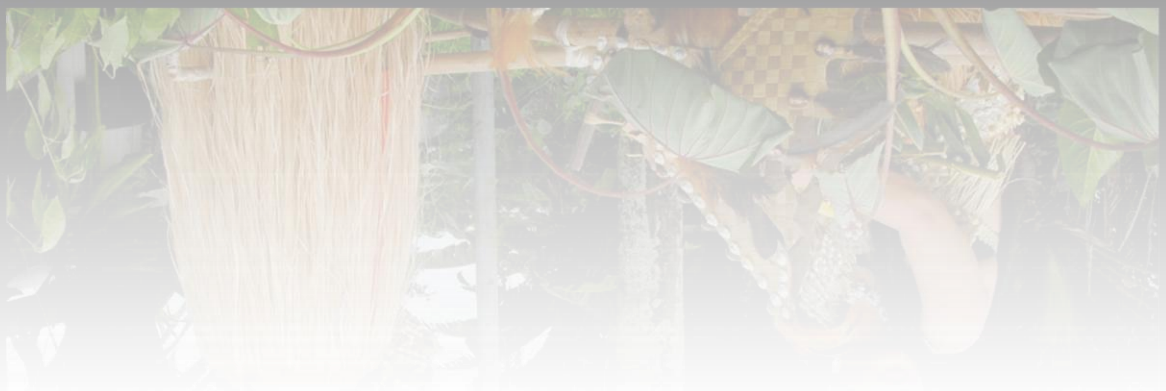
Kasio E. Mida, Chair, Board of Regents



Joseph M. Daisy, EdD, President, College of Micronesia - FSM



Frankie L. Harriss, Accreditation Liaison Officer



College of Micronesia - Federated States of Micronesia (COM - FSM) Follow-Up Report
March 15, 2012

Introduction

On April 10 - 13, 2011 a three-member accreditation team visited the College of Micronesia-FSM (COM-FSM) to evaluate the March 15, 2011, Follow-Up Report. The three member team assessed COM-FSM's progress towards correcting deficiencies, as indicated in the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACCJC or the Commission) action letter dated June 30, 2010, placing COM-FSM on **Warning** with six recommendations.

During its June 8 - 10, 2011, meeting the Commission acted to place COM-FSM on **probation**, made four recommendations, and directed COM-FSM to correct deficiencies.

Recommendation 1. Improving Institutional Effectiveness and Leadership and Governance
To fully meet this standard, the team recommends the college evolve its communication efforts to ensure broad-based participation and encourage purposeful dialogue in which all stakeholders participate in the exchange of different points of view and reflections that lead to genuine communication and participatory governance (I.B.4, IV.A.3).

Recommendation 2. Improving Institutional Effectiveness
To fully meet this standard, the team recommends that the various plans of the college be integrated into the development of a comprehensive long-range educational master plan that is linked to and includes a long-range budget plan (I.B.4, III.D).

Recommendation 6. Physical Resources
To fully meet this standard, the college must develop a facilities master plan that reflects the institution's long term educational goals and plans and is linked to an identified, reliable, and ongoing funding source that supports the total cost of facilities ownership (IIIB.2.a).

Recommendation 8. Financial Resources
To fully meet this standard, the team recommends that the college systematically integrate financial resources planning with the various college plans into a comprehensive master plan that is directly linked to the budget planning and allocation process (III.D.1.a).

Via narrative analysis and direct evidence, this Follow-Up Report addresses each of the four recommendations offering resolutions for associated deficiencies. Sections of standards cited in each Commission recommendation serve as the criteria for discussion.



Recommendation 1. *Improving Institutional Effectiveness and Leadership and Governance*

To fully meet this standard, the team recommends the college evolve its communication efforts to ensure broad-based participation and encourage purposeful dialogue in which all stakeholders participate in the exchange of different points of view and reflections that lead to genuine communication and participatory governance (I.B.4, IV.A.3).

April 2011 Visiting Team Comments**“The college has partially addressed Recommendation 1”**

- 1) “The team is concerned that some actions taken by the college was in response to specific team findings associated with the Standards, rather than to address the broader intent of the recommendations to improve broad-based stakeholder participation in the processes of decision-making by engaging in purposeful dialogue and effectively communicating plans and actions that enhance institutional effectiveness”
- 2) “The team...specifically notes the importance of posting committee minutes on the college website, providing monthly summaries of committee actions to stakeholders, providing on-going training in how to conduct effective meetings, and conducting quarterly face-to-face departmental/unit meetings, held to bring colleagues from their respective state campuses together. These actions represent fundamental contribution to the principles of participation (I.B.4).”
- 3) “...the fiber [optic] or satellite connectivity is not under the control of COM-FSM and therefore the college must take corrective action within its means to improve broad-based participation and effective communication.”
- 4) “Minutes and notes of the President’s Cabinet and the Board of Regents meetings are not posted to the college website.”
- 5) “College surveys reflect a sense that communication is top down one way information sharing rather than dialog enhancing...only 30% of faculty characterize communication as good or very good. A follow-up survey referenced in the Governance Policy Evaluation reflects a continuing sense of mediocre progress with respect to governance issues. How deeply these sentiments are held is not possible to ascertain when the number of respondents is no higher than 43 out of some 370 faculty/staff...a response rate below 12%. The team recommends that the college take steps to assure that surveys produce a reliable return rate to determine whether there is a lack of opportunity or a lack of interest to participate in the governance process.”

-
- 6) “**Conclusion...**The college has implemented several changes in order to improve broad-based participation in decision-making processes, as well as to encourage purposeful dialogue. Essential to identifying new improvements and informing college decisions is the evaluation of the effectiveness of processes, policies and organization achieved through an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation. The Communication Plan dated February 2010 is past due for its one-year evaluation of effectiveness. The team recommends that the Communication Plan be evaluated and used to inform college decisions leading to further improvements and an updated plan of action.”
-

Adopting an Accreditation Culture

The College of Micronesia-FSM has begun a process of embedding accreditation into all areas of college operations such that meeting and exceeding standards is second nature. We do this not merely for the benefit of maintaining accreditation, but because we truly want to offer quality education and services to our students at all times - we do this with pride in our institution. The college is committed to identifying and resolving concerns proactively, rather than waiting for Commission sanctions to drive action. We have accomplished the following:

Committee Structure and Shared Governance Changes

On July 26, 2011, the committee structure of the college was reevaluated in the President’s Cabinet. The Cabinet approved a major revision of the committee structure on August 2, 2011 ([Doc 1.](#); [Doc. 2](#)). The *Governance Policy Evaluation* (2011, January) was used to aid decision-making ([Doc. 26](#)). The review found there were over 18 standing committees with numerous ad hoc, task force, and advisory committees. Indeed, it was difficult to ascertain with accuracy, the actual number of committees, and who was responsible for documenting committee recommendations. With so many committees reporting directly to the president, it became evident why responses to committee recommendations were slow and frequently lost. Many committee members and special committee (ad hoc, task force, advisory) members complained of long hours spent conducting research, presenting findings, and forming recommendations, only to receive no feedback or see recommendations adopted. The lesson learned was: do not bother with committee service ([Doc. 26](#)).

Of further concern was how smaller campus sites, with relatively few personnel, could genuinely participate on so many college wide standing committees, in addition to local state campus committees. Several committees were nothing more than divisions and departments within the college that were tasked with meeting, even if the results of their deliberations did not need presidential level review. Further, it was clear

these divisions/departments were not being empowered to make some of their own decisions, with all decision-making authority vested in the college president.

In order to facilitate genuine participation of all campus sites and to improve information management, a recommendation was passed to reduce the number of standing committees from eighteen to nine ([Doc. 1](#); [Doc. 2](#); [Doc. 13](#); [Doc. 16](#), [Doc. 26](#)). The nine committees are:

- President’s Cabinet
- Financial Aid Committee
- Curriculum and Assessment Committee
- Human Resources Committee
- Finance Committee
- Facilities and Campus Environment Committee
- Information and Communications Technology Committee
- Planning and Resources Committee
- Recruitment, Admissions, and Retention Committee

This reduction of standing committees also addressed recommendations made by the Committee Review Working Group in the *Governance Policy Evaluation* ([Doc. 26](#)).

To ensure committees do not grow beyond manageable control again, another recommendation was passed, in the President’s Cabinet, requiring the existing committee structure be utilized for decision making. It was clear the college had to stop forming ad hoc and sub-committees, which in practice usually resulted in decisions being delayed or never acted upon ([Doc. 1](#); [Doc. 2](#); [Doc. 13](#); [Doc. 16](#)).

All college committees were chaired by campus administrators, giving many the impression committees did not truly offer faculty and staff authentic shared governance opportunities ([Doc. 3](#); [Doc. 26](#)). Because of a lack of buy-in, many committees struggled to make quorum, as one state campus faculty member explained, “...we make a point not to participate, specifically ensuring quorum is not reached.”

The faculty handbook states, all faculty, “serves and participates on at least one standing committee” ([Doc. 4](#); [Doc. 13](#)). However, under the previous structure committees only allowed a small number of faculty representatives/members. This made it difficult, if not impossible, to meet one’s contractual duties and responsibilities. In reality, the majority of faculty were not allowed to participate in standing committee membership ([Doc. 6](#)). Further, processes for being appointed to a committee were time consuming,

and often those who wanted to serve, particularly new faculty, simply gave up trying.

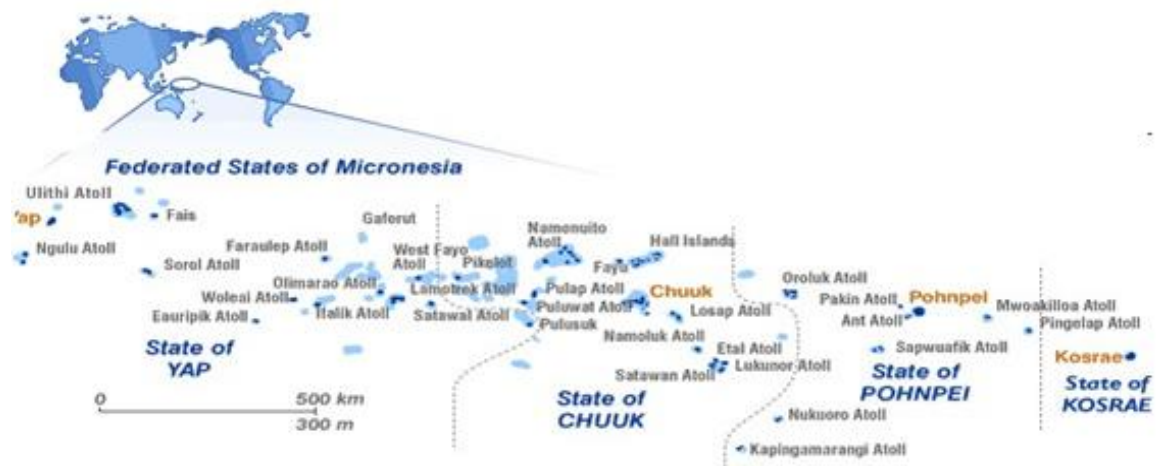
When only a handful of administrators are involved in the running of the college, much is likely to suffer; the task is too large, and the views too narrow. When diverse, talented faculty and staff are not more heavily engaged in the institution, both faculty and institutional success are hindered. Consequently, a recommendation for all committee officers, including committee chairs, to be a member of the faculty or the staff, was approved ([Doc. 1](#); [Doc. 2](#); [Doc. 3](#); [Doc. 5](#); [Doc. 16](#)). Administrators were removed as committee officers and as voting committee members, though they remain responsible for directing work through committee chairs and can serve as ex officio members. Administrators are to use their associated committees for purposes of broad-based participation and genuine shared governance ([Doc. 7](#)).

Communication Logistics

Due to the logistics associated with connecting all sites via technology, committees have only elected Pohnpei based committee officers for this academic year. However, leadership opportunities should not be limited to those faculty/staff residing in Pohnpei. Committees will evaluate this practice and recommend changes for increased opportunity for the upcoming academic year.

The college has six sites with 1,550 miles between the two most distant states of Yap and Kosrae (see Figure 1). Unlike the Hawaiian islands, there are no frequent or relatively inexpensive interisland flights; for example, a ticket between Pohnpei and Yap averages \$1,300, and all routes are served by one airline. Telecommunication capacity has improved, but still has limitations. Despite these challenges, the college has begun implementing practices resulting in increased participation in the committee structure by representatives from all six sites. Each site has a quiet, comfortable meeting space with necessary supporting technology, as per the *Governance Policy Evaluation* major recommendations ([Doc. 26](#)).

Figure 1. Map of the Federated States of Micronesia.



Uniting six locations for a common meeting time has, in the past, been problematic. Because all six sites of the college operate on a different time schedule, schedules were already established for the entire academic year, and no common free hour between all sites existed, a choice was made to assign a specific day and time for each standing committee to meet ([Doc. 8](#)). This is additionally important for sites having only one meeting room, and one phone line, as no two meetings can run concurrently without generating conflicts. The college recognizes the potential value of a common meeting time across all sites, and has asked the Curriculum and Assessment Committee to evaluate the options, and offer a recommendation to the Director of Academic Programs and the Vice President for Instructional Affairs.

All faculty were asked to select a committee upon which they could serve, without conflict to their class schedule ([Doc. 7](#); [Doc. 8](#); [Doc. 9](#)). At least one staff representative, for each committee, from each site, was selected for committee service by campus directors or by the staff senate ([Doc. 7](#); [Doc. 8](#); [Doc. 9](#)). All Student Body Association (SBA) chapters were extended an invitation to participate on all committees ([Doc. 10](#); [Doc. 11](#); [Doc. 12](#)).

The only two committees retaining administrative chairmanship and select members are the President's Cabinet and the Financial Aid Committee ([Doc. 1](#); [Doc. 2](#); [Doc. 5](#)). All other standing committees were tasked to revise their Terms of Reference for adoption into the revised Governance Plan. The administration is still responsible for setting policy, but committee recommendations are to be weighed heavily in decision-making.

Council of Chairs (defined below) decided, when necessary, committee recommendations would pass from the committee to the most logical administrator for action (the most relevant director or vice president, dependent upon necessary level of authority), and would only move up the chain of command, as necessary, for approval purposes. The protocol for this process is defined in each committee's Terms of Reference located in the revised Governance Policy (Doc. 5). It was also determined, in Council of Chairs, to facilitate timely dissemination of information, committees would approve their own minutes, without the necessity of the college president's approval.

To facilitate communications between the committees and the president, a recommendation was passed for a once monthly meeting between committee chairs and the president - a Council of Chairs ([Doc. 1](#); [Doc. 2](#); [Doc. 13](#); [Doc. 14](#); [Doc. 15](#); [Doc. 16](#)). Direct communication ensures recommendations made by committees are not lost to what was frequently referred to as "the black hole" of the administrative offices. Council of Chairs also ensures another important, face-to-face forum where faculty/staff have access to the college president via their committee chairs ([Doc. 17](#)). As new committee roles and administrative links are being finalized, the committee chairs are also meeting with the president and higher administration to achieve greater continuity with new processes.

Recognizing no form of technology can replace the value of face-to-face meetings (Jay, 1999), a recommendation was passed requiring campus directors at each state campus, and the president of the college, situated at the National campus, to hold an All Campus Meeting once monthly, where everyone in the college community is brought together (administration/faculty/staff/students) for purposes of information sharing and two-way dialogue ([Doc. 1](#); [Doc. 2](#); [Doc. 13](#); [Doc. 15](#); [Doc. 16](#)).

Committee chairs and officers received training on utilization of "Elluminate Live!" technology for committee meetings, primarily for purposes of document sharing (Doc. 24; [Blackboard Inc., 2012](#)). Early on, state sites found their internet capacity too minimal to make this form of technology useful. Committee chairs were also instructed on the use of a Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) system, but once again, enough packets of data were lost between sites, garbling voices, and rendering this technology ineffective. These technologies were a continuing experiment, as per the *Governance Policy* major recommendations, yet despite improvements to internet service, they offered little value to committee communications outside Pohnpei-based campuses. During the first two months of the Fall 2011 semester, standing committees struggled unsuccessfully to connect all sites in coherent, synchronous dialogue. All committees suggested alternate means of communication were necessary.

September 2011, College of Micronesia/Land Grant made a donation to COM-FSM of \$25,000 towards accreditation. A decision was made to utilize these funds towards system-wide telephone conferences. Though the cost of teleconferencing is high, it is presently the best, simplest solution towards uniting all sites in one synchronous meeting forum. The only technical issue faced by teleconferencing is when a power outage occurs, especially through the host site at the National campus. However, the National campus has added generators to reduce outage related issues.

Until a better system could be designed and agreed upon, committee chairs were asked to circulate approved committee minutes to the college community via email, for purposes of information sharing, during the Fall 2011 semester. To facilitate asynchronous dialogue, that does not require use of email, and to improve access to information, the college established a wiki through the college home page ([Doc. 7](#)). Committee chairs and faculty received training on how to access and utilize the wiki ([Doc. 25](#)). These actions also addressed *Communication Plan* outcome CP2.1, strategies CP1.2.3 and CP3.3.2 in addition to major recommendations of the *Governance Policy Evaluation* ([Doc. 14](#); [Doc. 22](#); [Doc. 26](#)).

Presently, standing committees, programs, and some classes are using the wiki ([Doc. 7](#); [Doc. 55](#); [Doc. 56](#)). All members of the college community can access committee minutes now stored on the wiki. While the college community adjusts to the wiki, committee chairs were also asked to continue the practice of circulating approved minutes via college email. The President's Cabinet minutes are current and available through the administrative link on the college website ([Doc. 23](#)).

Increasing Engagement of Stakeholders

For purposes of engaging stakeholders, the Board of Regents agreed to hold a "town hall" style meeting as part of each quarterly Board of Regents meeting, to update stakeholders (internal/external) on college events, answer stakeholder questions (internal/external), and gather external stakeholder data ([Doc. 14](#); [Doc. 15](#); [Doc. 18](#); [Doc. 19](#); [Doc. 20](#); [Doc. 51](#); [Doc. 53](#); [Doc. 54](#)). Meetings were held on September 9, 2011, in the state of Pohnpei, January 9, 2011, in the state of Kosrae, and March 8, 2012 in the state of Yap. To better inform stakeholders, quarterly Board of Regents minutes, and minutes of special sessions, are made available through the administrative link on the college website ([Doc. 21](#)).

On August 24 - 26, 2011, the annual President's retreat was held ([Doc. 29](#)). The retreat is a larger forum allowing opportunity for representatives from all college sites to come together and review college issues. In addition, external stakeholders are invited to attend. There were over 140 participants and

agenda topics included: the college mission, accreditation, program prioritization, new budgeting procedures, and USA Compact fund decrements for the college. Department-level break-out sessions allowed personnel from across the college to work together, in a face-to-face forum.

The ALO visited all college sites to update the college community on current accreditation status, committee participation, improvements necessary to meet standards, the need to promote changes in college culture, and to solicit campus feedback ([Doc. 10](#); [Doc. 11](#); [Doc. 25](#); [Doc. 29](#); [Doc. 46](#); [Doc. 47](#); [Doc. 48](#)).

- National campus faculty: August 4, 2011, and November 7, 2011
- National All Campus meeting: August 19, 2011, October 7, 2011, and December 9, 2011.
- National and Pohnpei campus faculty: January 3, 2012.
- Pohnpei campus August 3, 2011, and November 9, 2011.
- All student services personnel, meeting on Pohnpei campus August 23, 2011.
- Kosrae campus September 27 - 30, 2011 and January 9, 2012
- Yap campus October 26 - 28, 2011 and March 7 - 9, 2012
- FMI campus October 27, 2011
- Chuuk campus October 31 - November 1, 2011
- Broad college community at President's Retreat August 29 - 31, 2011

A new college president, Joseph M. Daisy, EdD, was invested on February 6, 2012 ([Doc. 31](#); [Doc. 40](#)). The college invited external stakeholders, in addition to all internal stakeholders present on Pohnpei, for the ceremony. President Daisy's investiture speech was placed on the college website ([Doc. 37](#)) along with his message for the college community ([Doc. 35](#)). The investiture speech was also widely disseminated throughout the region ([Doc. 44](#); [Doc. 45](#)). During the period from his appointment on December 5, 2011 and his arrival in the Federated States of Micronesia on February 4, 2012, Dr. Daisy spent a great deal of time in email and telephone contact with the Chairman of the Board of Regents, Mr. Kasio Mida, Interim-President, Ringlen Ringlen, and COM-FSM accreditation consultant, Mr. Floyd Takeuchi, regarding the college and progress towards meeting accreditation standards. On his way to Pohnpei, Dr. Daisy first stopped in Honolulu for a 2-day meeting with Mr. Takeuchi (February 1 - 2, 2012) which included in-depth discussions on the college's accreditation status and the Micronesia region, and meetings between Chancellor of Honolulu Community College (UH) and Chairman of ACCJC, Mr. Michael Rota, and Deputy Director of the Pacific Islands Development Program at the East-West Center (UH), Dr. Gerard Finin.

During his first two weeks at COM-FSM, President Daisy generated and adhered to a comprehensive meeting schedule with both internal and external

stakeholders as well as campus tours of both National and Pohnpei campuses ([Doc. 31](#) ; [Doc. 38](#)). In March - April, President Daisy will be traveling to all other campus sites, completing campus tours, and conducting continued meetings with all internal and key external stakeholders ([Doc. 57](#);).

President Daisy, in his investiture speech and in his subsequent talks to the larger college community, has clearly stated accreditation must be an integral part of what we do at the college - via deliberate practice this becomes informed intuition. That message is being further communicated by his on-going review of operations at all levels of the college, in particular COM-FSM's facilities maintenance practices and expected levels of accountability of the institution's leadership.

COM-FSM Branding and Website Overhaul

In effort to strengthen and develop other avenues of improved communications, the college has initiated a restructuring of its website to promote easier and broader two-way communication with all stakeholders. Part of this initiative is a reconsideration of the COM-FSM brand including brand mark (college logo), brand promise/values (college mission), and brand and brand mark elements. The Development and Community Relations, IT, and Institutional Research and Planning offices are participating in the branding review ([Doc. 33](#); [Doc. 34](#)). Additionally, a college news contributor scheme was devised for purposes of expanded news coverage throughout the college. A four-paragraph template for news stories was developed, and English instructors at all college campuses were recruited to assign news stories to their students as part of their normal coursework ([Doc. 32](#); [Doc. 36](#)). Training is scheduled for photographic submissions, focusing on image and subject appropriateness, and on guidelines and procedures for submitting, publishing, and posting of stories and documents to the college website ([Doc. 32](#)).

The college currently maintains a news feed syndicate (<http://www.comfsm.fm/myShark/feed>) displaying news items on the college website, the student portal (myShark), and on the information panels where installed. Contributions to news feeds are made possible through the college's Student Information System (SIS).

To make it easier and quicker to update the COM-FSM website, the college IT office identified a content management system (CMS) that will allow faculty and staff without training in HTML software to add and edit content on the site. The CMS will also allow users from remote locations to add and edit content, not just at the National campus as is now the case. The IT office is actively completing the final testing phase.

Deployment of the CMS is under investigation via a testing server (<http://www.comfsm.fm/drupal/>) established by the IT System Administrator and Webmaster. The primary function of the testing server is to assess the functionality of the college's webmail and wiki. Additionally, Drupal (<http://10.209.12.98/drupal>) is installed to configure back-end and support modules (Drupal, 2012).

Drupal (7.12) requires the latest version of PHP (5.2), and was selected based upon user reviews citing a better platform than its predecessors. Currently, the college is running an older version, PHP (5.1), on the web server with a CentOS (5) operating system. Only recently has the latest version of PHP been made available for CentOS (5). Consequently, one must first ensure the widely used webmail and wiki can operate with the new version.

The IT System Administrator is focused on Drupal (7.12) modules allowing users the capacity to contribute over a broad spectrum. The college's ability to manage the website and a user's contributions to the pages are the overriding focus. The college is examining and testing different third-party User/Permission modules available and has selected one for deployment. The Webmaster is creating custom themes for improved alignment of the Drupal (7.12) installation with the college's branding specifications, strategic goals, and marketing goals. The anticipated date for a working Drupal (7.12) site with COM-FSM branding and content is March 25, 2012.

Additional efforts toward college branding will include videos of our students, articulating their aspirations, and COM-FSM's role towards meeting individual student goals ([Doc. 50](#)). This is an effort to further communicate with our internal and external communities. An initial video is presently available on our website (Retrieved from <http://www.comfsm.fm/>, March 14, 2012) and was produced to show at the March 2012 JEMCO meeting. This and future videos will be used for recruiting, community meetings, and towards informing our constituents and partners. The college wishes to change its image in the community as one of student success and to work towards clarification of its mission, vision, and values. These are merely initial efforts and a more detailed strategic marketing and recruitment plan will need to be developed in the coming months.

Addressing the "need to assure the confidentiality of electronic student personal information and provide extensive training for the advising and support staff who will utilize student records in their routine daily work" (ACCJC Visiting Team Report, March 2010) the college has detailed levels of security in place with the Student Information System (SIS) and database system. Further, all staff utilizing the SIS have received training ([Doc. 52](#)).

Individuals have been specifically trained by their respective supervisor, dependent upon their role for the SIS in a given office. Security is assigned by IT based on supervisor recommendations formulated through level of training completed and assessment of the individual's demonstrated competence.

IT reports evidence of misuse and/or damaging entries by individuals to supervisors. Supervisors are responsible for recommending removal of security rights, and may require additional training of individuals demonstrating evidence of misuse and/or damaging entries. Professional training for SIS users can be scheduled during staff development events; however, training users with high levels of access based on their job responsibilities are better done on an individual and ongoing basis.

Communication Plan Evaluation

Though the college has made many important changes towards improved communications and broad-based participation, this recommendation is especially focused on the capacity to complete cycles of evaluation towards continuous quality improvement. These changes need to be adequately assessed to further inform decision-making.

The Communication Plan Evaluation (2012) is an admittedly flawed document ([Doc. 41](#)). Both the student satisfaction survey and faculty/staff satisfaction survey were administered through SurveyMonkey, and the links to each survey were placed on the college website. Unfortunately, there was no security in place for accessing the surveys. Anyone could have selected either survey, and anyone could have taken either survey an unlimited number of times, rendering all data collected invalid ([Doc. 42](#); [Doc. 43](#)).

Assuming data had been valid, quantitative data in the form of percentages obtained, from the relatively few items addressing communications, yield little useful decision-making data ([Doc. 42](#); [Doc. 43](#)). The percentages do not inform administration on actions/strategies one might take to improve communications and participation, because one cannot ascertain why respondents aren't satisfied and how they might be satisfied. Specific strategies for improvement become speculative, and thus success would be brought about only by chance.

When the visiting team arrives, the college will evidence a revised, secure, mixed-methods communications survey ([Doc. 49](#)). Data will have been analyzed against the Communications Plan, and provided to college-wide committees for review and recommendations towards updating and improving the existing Communications Plan.

Evidence for Recommendation 1

- Doc. 1 President's Cabinet. (2011, July 26). *Minutes of meeting*. Retrieved from <http://www.comfsm.fm/cabinet/pdf/2011/110726.pdf>
- Doc. 2 President's Cabinet. (2011, August 2). *Minutes of meeting*. Retrieved from <http://www.comfsm.fm/cabinet/pdf/2011/cabaug022011.pdf>
- Doc. 3 National Campus Staff/Faculty Senate. (2010, October 20). *Minutes of meeting*. Retrieved from <http://wiki.comfsm.fm/@api/deki/files/367/=Senate-Minutes-2010-Oct-20.pdf>
- Doc. 4 Faculty Handbook (2010). Retrieved from <http://www.comfsm.fm/vpia/handbook/Faculty-handbook.pdf>
- Doc. 5 Governance Policy. (2012). *Revised governance policy*.
- Doc. 6 Governance Policy. (2006). Retrieved from <http://www.comfsm.fm/accreditation/files/1.b.%20Governance%20Policy.pdf>
- Doc. 7 Standing Committee wiki. (2012). Retrieved from http://wiki.comfsm.fm/Committee_Minutes
- Doc. 8 Standing Committee Schedule. (2011). Retrieved from http://wiki.comfsm.fm/Committees/Standing_Committee_Meeting_Times
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Recommendation 2. Improving Institutional Effectiveness

To fully meet this standard, the team recommends that the various plans of the college be integrated into the development of a comprehensive long-range educational master plan that is linked to and includes a long-range budget plan (I.B.4, III.D).

April 2011 Visiting Team Comments

“The college has partially addressed Recommendation 2 and Standard I.B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness.”

- 1) “The college is in the process of developing and using plans, data collection, and evaluation.”
- 2) “The team found that the college is not yet operating at the proficiency level of implementation of the Commission Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness - Part II: Planning. The missing characteristics of institutional effectiveness in planning include:
 - A fully developed comprehensive educational master plan that fully integrates all components of the resources planning and long-term budgeting to achieve broad educational purposes.
 - A fully developed use of ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning to refine institutional key processes and improve student learning.
 - A fully developed culture of reflective dialogue about institutional effectiveness that is ongoing, robust, and pervasive.
 - A fully developed continuous review and adaptation of evaluation and planning and budgeting processes.”

The college recognized the existing plans had not been developed in an ideal manner. It is clear, when reading the existing college plans, they were authored in silos, and consequently, alignment is difficult to ascertain. Plans were developed in a rushed manner, without ideal supporting data, and for purposes of meeting standards rather than developing truly useful products. Additionally, the college has since faced Joint Economic Management Committee (JEMCO) resolutions calling for a decrement in current US Compact funding support ([Doc. 9](#)). The college must adjust to reductions of at least \$700,000 annually, over the next four years, until current funding of \$3.8 million is reduced to \$1 million dollars per annum ([Doc. 9](#); [Doc. 19](#); [Doc. 20](#)). Because plans were flawed, disconnected products, and because the college would need new strategies towards offering quality programs and services with a significantly reduced operating budget, it was deemed prudent to first

conduct a program prioritization process and utilize program reviews towards developing an integrated educational master plan.

Program Assessment and Reviews

The ALO worked with faculty across the college, explaining the importance of completing program assessments and program reviews towards continuous quality improvement, and submitting reports by deadlines -- accountability ([Doc. 8](#); [Doc. 51](#); [Doc. 52](#)). At a January 3, 2012, faculty workshop for all Pohnpei-based faculty (69 out of 99 total faculty, and 17 out of 17 total program coordinators), faculty worked with their respective program coordinators to discuss their current program assessment plans ([Doc. 8](#); [Doc. 30](#)). Some programs are proficient with cycles of assessment; whereas others need continued support towards this endeavor. The Director of Academic Programs and the ALO moved around the workshop room answering questions and assisting groups as needed.

Groups had productive discussions on improving their assessment process, increasing dialogue with colleagues across the college, and defining roles for the program coordinator and supporting faculty. Issues as simple as identifying one's program coordinator, program colleagues across the college, where to find assessment plan forms, and how to complete assessment plan forms were discussed, along with more complex issues such as levels of responsibility for data collection, usefulness of both qualitative and quantitative data, data analyses, and how to improve meaningful dialogue ([Doc. 15](#)).

Previously, many program assessments had been completed solely by the program coordinator, or the assessment coordinator, thus missing the most important component of program assessment - meaningful dialogue. As faculty engaged in discussions, the importance of the dialoguing process became self-evident. Faculty also expressed awareness of the need to begin dialoguing across departments, "grouping could have been mixed instead of homogeneous...so it gives opportunity to learn from other divisions". Many faculty stated the dialoguing session was the most enjoyed activity of the workshop, "I enjoyed private discussions with folks in my program where we hammered out and nailed down what we were going to do in the future" ([Doc. 31](#)).

Faculty within a program were to ensure all course outlines have been modified and approved in the new format, which includes measurable student learning outcomes accompanied by specific assessment strategies ([Doc. 17](#); [Doc. 32](#)). All learning outcomes for a course are also tied into program learning outcomes ([Doc. 17](#); [Doc. 32](#)). Faculty were asked to generate a program matrix, ensuring students are scheduled to master all program learning outcomes before graduating ([Doc. 18](#)).

In addition to specific program discussions, other general discussions around program assessment emerged. Potential uses for the college wiki were discussed, especially as communications by email are cumbersome and difficult to manage over longer periods of time ([Doc. 1](#)). Important issues were identified, such as why some program coordinators have been given an official title supported by release time, while others were named as program coordinators with no official contracts, nor release time offered. The college reviewed program coordinator appointments on a case-by-case basis, where some faculty independently negotiated release time while others did not.

Program coordinator duties and responsibilities have not been previously defined, though assumptions have been made regarding assessment responsibilities. The Human Resources Committee, Curriculum and Assessment Committee, and Faculty Senate were all asked to make recommendations on the duties and responsibilities of a program coordinator and release time to ensure college-wide consistency of practice ([Doc. 29](#); [Doc.33](#)). Those recommendations will be submitted to the Director of Academic Programs, Vice President for Instructional Affairs, and Human Resources Director for consideration and adoption. Both the college and the faculty benefit from efficient program assessment cycles when one is aware of responsibilities towards the process.

Currently, program assessments are completed each year while program reviews are conducted every three years. Program reviews were due May, 2011, but deadlines were extended until late August, 2011, as necessary program health indicator data were not made available until mid-August. The college must take specific action to ensure all longitudinal data, which include program health indicators as listed in “Appendix T” of the Curriculum Handbook, are updated each semester, and in a timely manner ([Doc. 6](#); [Doc. 14](#);).

Fall 2011, the Curriculum and Assessment Committee first finished its task of reviewing/approving 240 outlines converted to the new format, aided by a rubric and facilitated by reader teams ([Doc. 25](#); [Doc. 34](#); [Doc. 35](#); [Doc. 36](#); [Doc. 37](#); [Doc. 57](#)). The process is currently under evaluation for improvement. Spring 2012, the Curriculum and Assessment Committee developed a consistent process for evaluating program reviews, by using a program review feedback form ([Doc. 4](#); [Doc. 5](#); [Doc. 57](#)). The form is designed to offer specific, constructive feedback, without being too negatively critical.

Dialogue with those who received previous feedback indicated feedback was overly critical, discouraging, and debased the spirit of the initial efforts, or was simply never provided. Both offered the lesson: why bother? For this reason, program coordinators were encouraged to submit reviews without heavy focus

on perfection and fear of negative judgment—assessment isn't perfect. By completing program assessments and reviews, coordinators learn how to improve upon assessment efforts and the feedback indicates areas of continuous improvement ([Doc. 7](#)). Assessment processes should encourage continuous improvement, not only for courses and programs, but also for our processes.

The Curriculum and Assessment Committee identified general trends as all program reviews were analyzed ([Doc. 6](#)). All program feedback forms and these general trends were given to the Director of Academic Programs and the Vice President for Instructional Affairs to be incorporated into both the program prioritization process and the integrated educational master plan ([Doc. 6](#); [Doc. 7](#)).

Program Prioritization Process


On August 5, 2011, during a National campus faculty workshop, 40 participants (40 out of 99 total faculty) viewed a webinar, "Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services" ([Doc. 12](#)). During the President's Retreat, August 24, 2011, the Director of Institutional Research and Planning gave a presentation on program prioritization ([Doc. 21](#); [Doc. 22](#)). The attendees were then asked to complete a worksheet ranking ten criteria from Dickeson (2010, p. 66) in order of most to least important, and submitted the results for collation (see Table 1; [Doc. 21](#); [Doc. 24](#)). Only the top five criteria were reported (see Table 1).

On October 3, 2011, the Director of Institutional Research and Planning and the Director of Academic Programs gave a presentation to the Curriculum and Assessment Committee on program prioritization ([Doc. 23](#)). The Curriculum and Assessment Committee then worked with the Director of Academic Programs and the Director of Research and Planning to develop and approve a process for prioritizing academic programs using Dickeson (2010) as the framework ([Doc. 2](#); [Doc. 3](#); [Doc. 39](#); [Doc. 56](#)). The Curriculum and Assessment Committee was asked to rank Dickeson's (2010) ten criteria in order of importance (see Table 1), identify potential data sources, offer a system to rate criteria selected, and define classification of programs once ranked ([Doc. 2](#); [Doc. 3](#); [Doc. 11](#); [Doc. 56](#)).

Though a broad-based constituency was present at the President's Retreat (2011) and took part in ranking the ten criteria, discussions in the Curriculum and Assessment Committee revealed a concern for levels of confusion that occurred following the prioritization presentation at the retreat. Some retreat attendees had seemed confused as to what they were doing, why they were doing it, and how to complete the ranking form, which required a paired comparison analysis. Further, CAC preferred to use all ten criteria, and not merely the top five reported from the President's Retreat ([Doc. 3](#)). For that

reason, the Curriculum and Assessment Committee ranking was given higher priority over that obtained via the President’s Retreat (2011).

Table 1. Dickeson’s (2010) ten criteria for program prioritization ranked, in order, from most to least important by the larger college community at the President’s Retreat and by the Curriculum and Assessment Committee. Only the top five criteria were reported from the President’s Retreat (2011).

Dickeson’s (2010) Ten Criteria for Program Prioritization		
	President’s Retreat Ranking	Curriculum and Assessment Committee Ranking
	Quality of outcomes	Quality of outcomes
	Impact, justification, and overall essentiality of the program	Impact, justification, and overall essentiality of the program
	Revenue and other resources generated by the program	Size, scope, and productivity of the program
	External demand for the program	External demand for the program
	Quality of program inputs and processes	Internal demand for the program
		Revenue and other resources generated by the program
		Costs and other expenses associated with the program
		History, development, and expectations of the program
		Quality of program inputs and processes
	Opportunity analysis of the program	

Data sources, identified for use by the Curriculum and Assessment Committee, were compiled by the Director of Academic Programs, the Director of Career and Technical Education, and the Director of Institutional Research and Planning. The process of data collection revealed issues associated with the Student Information System (SIS) data that will need to be addressed. The Student Information System does not indicate a student has graduated until a graduation fee is marked as paid, and there is difficulty tracking students who have transferred to a different major. Also, data presented to the program prioritization working group (defined below) involved numerous EXCEL spreadsheets creating much additional, unnecessary work for the group. For future endeavors, the data must be organized in a manner consistent with the ranking process.

During the February 2012, FSM State National Leadership Conference, presentations on the program prioritization process were made, and comments were solicited from external stakeholders regarding programs at the college ([Doc. 44](#)). The Vice President for Instructional Affairs has scheduled meetings

with the Department of Education (DOE) to discuss services the college can provide for teachers and students. An initial meeting was held in Pohnpei on February 23, with additional meetings held March 9, with Yap DOE, March 13, with Chuuk DOE, and scheduled meetings March 16 with FSM DOE in Pohnpei and Kosrae DOE tentatively for mid-April.

Program Prioritization Training

The acting Vice President of Instructional Affairs, on November 25, 2011, requested permission from the Interim President to form an initial working group for the program prioritization process ([Doc. 13](#)). The working group was composed of all division chairs, instructional coordinators, Director of Admissions, Records, and Retention, Director of Financial Aid, Director of Career and Technical Education, Director of Information and Communication Technology, and the business office manager. The working group gathered at the national campus on February 6 - 7, 2012, to undergo training on the ranking process. The group collectively worked on the Liberal Arts degree program, making decisions, with this template, on the process to be consistently applied for the ranking of all remaining programs ([Doc. 10](#)).

On February 6, 2012, training consisted of defining the purpose of program prioritization, the prioritization process, why each one of the working group members was selected, and reviewing the ten criteria used for ranking each program and data sources for each criterion. The working group revised the rubric so each criterion was rated on a 3-point scale (5, 3, or 1) and each rating multiplied by a number reflecting the importance of each criterion. Criteria were ranked and listed in order of importance. Criterion 1 is multiplied by 10, criterion 2 is multiplied by 9, criterion 3 is multiplied by 8, etc., following this sequence until ultimately criterion 10 is multiplied by one.

The Director of Institutional Research and Planning presented data available and provided background information on errors within these data, primarily derived from the Student Information System (SIS) ([Doc. 27](#)). The Student Information System (SIS) was developed several years ago, and prior data was imported to SIS without necessary corrections/adjustments. Data from the 1990's tends to be less accurate compared to current data (2007 to the present). The group was tasked with establishing benchmarks for the program prioritization process and data analysis.

On February 7, 2012, the program prioritization working group rated the Liberal Arts program generating a template with justifications ([Doc. 10](#)). A formula for determining the cost of a program was devised, facilitating program comparisons.

Number of credits in the major courses × cost per credit × 10 = _____ program cost.
 (the number of students to run a course)

If other unusual expenses are associated with the program, such as the \$100 lab fee for SCUBA, extensive lab supplies because the program has several required labs, special equipment, such as simulation patients for the nursing program, such costs were added to the aforementioned formula total.

Credits generated by major were based upon 2010 and 2011 data because in 2009, the college still had a General Studies certificate, and many students who didn't place into a degree program selected General Studies. In 2010, Achieving College Excellence (ACE) was implemented, replacing General Studies. ACE students declare a degree major, consequently, data differs in 2010 and 2011 compared to previous years.

Program Prioritization Product

Working group members continued the rating process individually and via a designated wiki for asynchronous discussions ([Doc. 38](#)). The group held a teleconference on February 16, 2012 to discuss and compare individual ratings, but few members had completed the ranking process. The deadline was extended to February 20, and an all day teleconference was held February 21, 2012 to finalize the rankings and generate recommendations ([Doc. 11](#); [Doc. 40](#); [Doc. 41](#); [Doc. 42](#); [Doc. 43](#)).

The program prioritization process, data, rankings, and recommendations were presented to the Planning and Resources Committee for review and comments ([Doc. 28](#)). The committee has formed a list of recommendations and considerations for this and future program prioritization processes and submitted the list to the Director of Academic Programs, Vice President for Instructional Affairs, and the President’s Cabinet for considered resolution and adoption ([Doc.53](#)). All prioritization results and recommendations were provided to the working group on master plan integration.

Integrated Educational Master Plan

With completion of program review evaluations and the program prioritization process, the college is now developing the integrated educational master plan. To initiate committee discussions, involvement, and work in the planning process, the comptroller held a meeting with the Planning and Resources Committee ([Doc. 55](#)). Administrative meetings began February 27, 2012, with all vice presidents, directors, and campus directors ([Doc. 45](#); [Doc. 47](#)). During

the first meeting, integration of plans was discussed and a schematic illustrating linkages, adopted from San Diego Miramar College, was generated ([Doc. 45](#); [Doc. 48](#); [Doc. 50](#)).

On February 28, 2012, the working group reviewed the college's existing strategic plan ([Doc. 46](#)). In light of JEMCO resolutions, the college must take major decisions on operations and programs towards long-term financial stability. Developing a new strategic plan to face these challenges will take time. Consequently, the working group determined it was best to utilize the existing strategic plan as the focal point towards developing the integrated educational master plan, with the understanding financial constraints will force adjustments. The group modified a schematic from the existing strategic plan to reflect the integrated planning, evaluation, and resource allocation process ([Doc. 49](#); [Doc. 54](#)). A tentative general timeline for completing and implementing the integrated educational master plan was generated ([Doc. 47](#)).

The new president has shown strong support for the process of planning and recognizes this is a learning experience for the institution. Additional expertise is being sought to assist in the planning process and to aid capacity building for the college. The college is presently exploring a contract with a consulting group that has experience in the region. Deliverables and a timeline for this work are currently being negotiated with the expectation of sharing with you the principals, their deliverables, and a timeline for this work by March 27, 2012.

The college acknowledges this recommendation requires development, implementation, and evaluation of our integrated educational master plan - closing the loop. We do not evidence, in this report, an integrated educational master plan, and one will have just been generated by the time the Commission visiting team arrives. However, the college is fully committed to adhering to the underlying principles of the accreditation process whereby shared governance and evidence-based decision making drive our planning process. The college will conduct an evaluation of the integrated educational master plan December 2012, as part of the college's on-going review cycle.

Evidence for Recommendation 2

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Recommendation 6. *Physical Resources*

To fully meet this standard, the college must develop a facilities master plan that reflects the institution's long term educational goals and plans and is linked to an identified, reliable, and ongoing funding source that supports the total cost of facilities ownership (III.B.2.a).

April 2011 Visiting Team Comments

“The college has partially addressed Recommendation 6 and Standard III.B. Physical Resources.”

- 1) “The Facilities and Campus Environment Plan was finalized in February 2011. The plan will be monitored and evaluated by the Facilities and Campus Environment Committee. The membership of this committee continues to be underrepresented by faculty, classified staff and students. Furthermore, meeting attendance remains poor, even though a proxy representative may attend. However, until the issues related to geography of FSM are resolved, meeting attendance will remain poor. Nonetheless, the plan is a good beginning to ongoing development.”
- 2) “The Plan will benefit from evaluation and on-going improvements to the prioritization of capital projects, scheduled maintenance and long-term funding and budgeting. The greatest impediment to the implementation of the plan is linking it to an identified, reliable and ongoing funding source that supports new capital construction and scheduled maintenance of new and existing facilities, grounds, infrastructure, furniture, fixtures, and equipment (III.B.a - b).

Facilities and Campus Environment Committee

The Facilities and Campus Environment Committee is now led by faculty and staff, and works in coordination with the Director of Maintenance and the Vice President for Administrative Services ([Doc. 5](#)). Participation from sites other than national campus was lower in the fall, but is improving ([Doc. 5](#)). Participation from all sites has steadily improved over the last few months for all committees, as more faculty and staff understand they have a voice and are capable of affecting change ([Doc. 9](#)). Students Body Association officers and proxies, across the college, have been invited to attend all committee meetings, but student participation is still low. The Facilities and Environment Committee has begun investigating strategies for soliciting student input, such as taking questions out to the students over expecting students to join committees. For example, going to the cafeteria or student dorms to gain insight/data from student focus groups.

Physical Resources Contingencies Fund

On August 16, 2011, the President's Cabinet approved a Physical Resources Contingency Fund policy presented by the Vice President for Administrative

Services. The policy called for an initial allocation of \$500,000 from the fund balance and additional deposits of \$50,000 annually. The purpose of the policy is to ensure immediate access to a reliable and ongoing funding source to support facilities issues not funded through the annual operations budget. The policy was presented to, and approved by the Board of Regents on September 9, 2011 ([Doc. 1](#); [Doc 2](#)).

Planning

In order to ensure facilities across the college exceed standards at all times, a detailed preventative maintenance plan is under development by the Director of Maintenance and review by the Facilities and Campus Environment Committee ([Doc. 3](#); [Doc. 6](#); [Doc. 21](#); [Doc. 22](#)). This plan further informs the college on realistic costs associated with total cost of ownership. The plan will be completed by April 10, 2012, and evidenced to the Commission visiting team. Facilities across the college have undergone necessary renovations to ensure safe, clean, conducive learning and living environments for our students. The processes identified by the preventative maintenance plan and funds identified through the integrated planning process should assist the college towards exceeding standards indefinitely.

A comprehensive review of the college's total cost of ownership for all facilities is nearing completion and will be incorporated into the facilities plan and integrated educational master plan ([Doc. 7](#); [Doc. 8](#); [Doc.16](#); [Doc. 17](#); [Doc. 18](#); [Doc. 19](#); [Doc. 20](#)). As discussed previously, the college administration is currently developing an integrated educational master plan, which will include direct linkages to the physical resources necessary for supporting and offering integrity to student learning and services at all locations ([Doc. 10](#); [Doc. 11](#); [Doc. 12](#); [Doc. 13](#); [Doc 14](#); [Doc. 23](#)). This plan will be evidenced to the Commission visiting team in April.

The college has begun to investigate alternative options for future sustainability, as JEMCO resolutions and decrements necessitate adjustments ([Doc. 24](#); [Doc. 25](#)). The college has been communicating frequently with the FSM National government through public hearings and courtesy meetings since the September 2011 resolutions were passed. On March 9, 2012, the college participated in an FSM Executive Budget Review Committee (EBRC) meeting. Unofficially, the college has been informed a request would be sent, from this committee, to the FSM Congress to appropriate \$700,000 in their upcoming session, to be sourced from local revenue, to the college. The college cannot yet rely on such a decision, and this would be only for FY2013, should the appropriation be awarded.

The college is working to inform possible options for sustainability, with supporting data, to be presented to the Board of Regents during the May 21 - 23, 2012, meeting in Pohnpei. Though JEMCO resolutions have reduced general

college access to US Compact funds, the college was informed thoughtfully designed proposals for quality programs supporting the national mission, such as teacher preparation, marine and environmental sciences, and health care training, for example, may be considered for possible US funding.

Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Plan

Additionally the college is working to update and revise emergency and disaster preparedness plans ([Doc. 4](#); [Doc. 15](#)). Updated plans will be in place by April, with college-wide training taking place on staff development day, April 3, 2012.

Evidence for Recommendation 6

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Recommendation 8. Financial Resources

To fully meet this standard, the team recommends that the college systematically integrate financial resources planning with the various college plans into a comprehensive master plan that is directly linked to the budget planning and allocation process (III.D.1.a).

April 2011 Visiting Team Comments

“The college has partially addressed Recommendation 8 and Standard III.D. Financial Resources.”

- 1) “Through the Planning and Resources Committee (PRC), with membership representing each of the college-wide subcommittees, is [sic] the central hub for the merging of institutional planning and budgeting in that this committee reviews resources, data related to programs and outcomes, input from the President’s Retreat, and demographic and environmental data in order to prioritize budget requests and to make recommendations to the President’s Cabinet.”
- 2) “The various college plans are developed and the college included financial resources planning into the comprehensive institutional Master Plan. It is the Institutional Master Plan that will be linked to the budget planning and allocation process in the next budget cycle.”
- 3) “The FY2012 budget planning cycle commenced several months prior to the introduction of the various college plans. As a result, financial planning is not fully integrated with all college planning at this time.”
- 4) “The college currently has financial resources sufficient to support student learning programs and services and to improve institutional effectiveness. The distribution of resources supports the development, maintenance, and enhancement of programs and services. The institution plans and manages its financial affairs with integrity and in a manner that ensures financial stability. The level of financial resources provides a reasonable expectation of short-term financial solvency. Due to the dependence on the FSM and U.S. Compact agreement, which includes an annual step down in funding, the college needs to devise action plans in conjunction with its Long-Term Financial Plan to assure long-term financial solvency (III.D.a-b).”

FY2013 Budget Process

Previously discussed were the JEMCO resolutions significantly reducing COM-FSM’s access to US Compact funds over the next four years and the subsequent necessity to evaluate academic programs for long-term sustainability ([Doc. 5](#)). The college is in the process of generating an integrated educational master plan with direct links to physical resources, technology resources, and the necessary supporting financial resources ([Doc. 6](#); [Doc. 7](#); [Doc. 8](#); [Doc. 9](#); [Doc. 10](#); [Doc. 11](#)).

The comptroller conducted two budget-training sessions where department heads, committee chairs, division chairs, Planning and Resources Committee members, and Finance Committee members were invited ([Doc. 2](#)). The comptroller then led the FY2013 budget cycle in conjunction with those stakeholders. The process was understandably limited, but it was the first time in recent memory COM-FSM has attempted an integrated planning process. There were notable shortcomings: the process was done under extreme deadline pressure, as the college was required to meet the FSM National Government's budget deadline of January 15, 2012. Also, given the timing, the college was unable to adjust its budgeting planning process to incorporate the projected impact of the JEMCO resolutions of September 2011. However, as noted elsewhere, the college is preparing an integrated plan detailing not only the impact of the JEMCO reduction, but also how it plans to respond in a manner consistent with its educational master plan.

The integrated planning process used to complete the FY2013 budget cycle included shared governance. As a result of this albeit compressed integrated planning cycle, the administration and committees learned shared governance processes take much longer than top-down approaches. The process also identified areas within the budgeting cycle in need of strengthening, in particular the problem some units within the college were having meeting budget process deadlines.

For the FY2014 budget process, work will need to begin several months earlier to allow ample time for committee review and input. The Planning and Resources Committee expressed concerns in the FY2013 budget process, but because of the winter holiday break, and a necessity to meet a governmental deadline, the committee was unable to ensure concerns received more attention and potential action/resolution ([Doc. 1](#); [Doc. 3](#)).

The President's Cabinet approved the budget without first obtaining recommendations from the Planning and Resources Committee ([Doc. 3](#)). After the holiday break, the Planning and Resources Committee held a meeting to review the budget, post-President's Cabinet approval. However, this committee review seemed superficial, and subsequent meetings between committee chairs and administration has led to an agreement shared governance efforts must be genuine.

Planning

The college is no longer simply facing the end of US Compact funding, but as already discussed, must make more rapid adjustments towards JEMCO resolution decrements, and has begun to do so for FY2013. However, a long-term financial plan must be developed with clear action plans for long-term sustainability. This process has begun with program prioritization and will

continue throughout the integrated planning process currently underway. The college will present future options towards increasing revenue and decreasing operational expenses to the Board of Regents during the May 2012 meeting. The college will evidence a long-term financial plan in June 2012.

Evidence for Recommendation 8

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Conclusion

College of Micronesia-FSM has over the past year begun implementing a wide range of significant, systemic changes to processes and procedures. These changes, of course, are designed to ensure the college meets the spirit and letter of the Accreditation Commission for Community and Junior Colleges Standards of Accreditation. Standards are central to the college's commitment to develop a structured, system-wide culture of critical self-assessment, based on data and active cross-system communications, resulting in on-going improvements at COM-FSM.

We recognize the college has been slow in reaching this point. As a result of acknowledging weaknesses, detailed by the Accrediting Commission and by our own self-assessment, the college has embarked on a broad range of reforms we believe will result in a better, stronger College of Micronesia-FSM. We are not yet there, but as detailed in this report, the instituted changes are moving us toward that goal in a purposeful manner.

They include: hiring a new President-CEO who has significant senior higher education administration and accreditation experience in the United States; appointing a new Accrediting Liaison Officer, empowering her to drive systemic changes across the COM-FSM system; completely revamping the college's governance structure by restructuring committees, streamlining decision making, and explicitly empowering faculty and staff to take a major role in policy formation and implementation; rethinking how we communication on individual campuses, and across our six-campus system, which stretches nearly 1,550 miles, by changing how and when we hold committee meetings, fully overhauling the college web site making it the hub of a multi-tier communications system within COM-FSM, and with our stakeholders in the

Federated States of Micronesia and beyond; reaching into the four state communities, in a program led by the President, to better understand how the college can meet community needs and expectations; and, with the assistance of experts with proven experience in the Pacific, overhauling how we gather data and develop planning products, and how we maintain our facilities, two areas historically among our greatest weaknesses.

Even as we turn to experts to help us move forward more quickly, the college has gained a greater understanding of documenting and collecting data towards improving processes. Program reviews were evaluated this year and trends were identified and transmitted to the administration for incorporation into the planning process, and for improving the program review process itself. Additionally, the process for evaluating program reviews was assessed for improvements to be implemented during the next cycle. A program prioritization process was completed to aid the college in making informed decisions on how to respond to a looming cutback in U.S. federal financial assistance. Recommendations for improving the prioritization process for the next cycle were also generated.

The planning process has been revised to ensure meaningful plans are generated. The budget process is being improved to ensure integration and support of the educational master plan. And, the college is taking steps to ensure long-term financial stability in light of JEMCO decrements and the eventual end to U.S. Compact of Free Association financial assistance. All plans are being informed with data and input from both internal and external stakeholders. The college is taking steps towards continued improvements in the integrated planning process and capacity building for this and future plan development.

Much has been done, and we know much remains to be done. It is our belief

the details of what has been accomplished, and what must still be completed, as noted in this Follow-Up Report, makes clear the College of Micronesia-FSM's commitment to change, and its ability to achieve its goals.