

College of the Marshall Islands
Friday, October 27th, 2023: 11:10 AM – 12:00 PM
Faculty Senate: Minutes of Discussion

Chair: Alvin Page – FS President

Deputy Chair: Viviana Uriona – FS Vice President

Minute Taker: Alexander Velasquez – FS Secretary and Treasurer

Quorum: 26 required, 29 in attendance.

1. Quorum was reached, and the meeting was made official at 11:24 AM.
2. The College Mission Statement was read at 11:25 AM.
3. Review of the Minutes from October 13th, 2023.
 - i. The minutes were approved and seconded with no abstentions.
4. Special/Urgent Business
 - i. The following link was shared from IEC with the Faculty Senate: Student Engagement Report.
 1. It has to do with students and their desire to be academically challenged.
5. New Business
 - i. Faculty Discussion on 8-Week Courses
 1. There is confusion regarding the 75% number:
 - a. This move toward 8-week classes: Is it 75% of all classes from each department or is it 75% of the entire College?
 - b. There is also discussion of 100% of classes being moved to an 8-week format that only added to the 75% number confusion.
 2. President Alvin clarified that the original idea was to have 75% of all courses offered at the College as 8-week courses.
 - a. But then another idea came forth to have 75% of each department offer 8-week courses and use that as the means by which 75% of all courses at the college would be offered in the 8-week format.
 - i. But this was only a suggestion and not an official decision.
 1. However, there is pushback to this suggestion given that many courses would not be compatible with an 8-week format.
 - a. For example, 8-week courses would work well for language or mathematics courses but not for science courses.
 - i. Hence, this is the main reason for why there would be pushback in mandating that 75% of a department be offered in the 8-week format.
 2. President Alvin has also heard that there may be discussion to have *all* courses run in the 8-week format.
 - a. Hence, faculty need to discuss the 8-week format so as to contribute to participatory governance and not have the decision made for faculty.
 - i. President Alvin will send out a Google Doc to get a list of courses that lend themselves to the 8-week format vs courses that are more suited to the 16-week format so as to get an approximate percentage of courses *per department* that could be converted into the 8-week format.

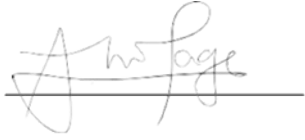
3. A survey went out to students that measured the effectiveness of 8-week courses for them.
 - a. But only 10% of the student body was surveyed.
 - i. However, one faculty member ran their own survey and found that most students did *not* want 8-week courses.
 1. Another point made was that the results of the survey will also depend on the students surveyed (e.g. AP students vs. Developmental Education students).
4. Faculty Concerns with a Move to 8-Week Courses:
 - a. There is concern that when faculty move from 48 credits to 45 credits, they will only have fifteen weeks instead of sixteen. Hence, faculty will not get the full eight weeks but rather 7.5 weeks.
 - b. Another concern is that academic calendars must also be built around 8-week courses because if the College is scheduling faculty symposiums and in-services on Mondays or Tuesdays, then faculty will lose valuable time in the classrooms.
 - c. Frequent power outages in the outer islands will also affect those students who are doing their work there because they could be missing valuable class time, and faculty will have to ensure that the student receives the course material either via Moodle or some other means.
5. The Developmental Education and Liberal Arts Departments have trialed the 8-week course format, and they had some success. Hence, other departments were encouraged to trial it as well.
 - a. But the main issue faculty members brought up was the fact that during the summer, the 8-week system works well because there are breaks between the start of the summer semester and the end of the summer semester until the beginning of the fall semester. But in a fall or spring semester, the end of one 8-week session does not permit a break after finals.
 - i. Essentially, faculty give one midterm and one final in one 8-week session, followed by an immediate start to the next 8-week session with another midterm and another final soon to follow.
 1. This contributes to faculty burnout, and when faculty doing multiple 8-week courses in one semester, this only contributes further to burnout.
 - a. However, there is the possibility that we could have a break in-between the 8-week courses so as to give both faculty and students a break in-between session. But a Fall break would come at the expense of having a shorter Christmas break and a Spring break would come at the expense of having a shorter summer.
 - i. Most faculty were opposed to this idea.
 - b. However, one of the advantages to having 8-week courses is the fact that the main problem with 16-week courses is the number of students who stop coming to class after the midterm.
 - i. If students stop coming to class after completing eight weeks in an 8-week course, then they have the advantage of having finished an entire course.
 1. There is also the case that if a student cannot keep up with an intensive 8-week course, then they could transfer into a 16-

week course that is going at a normal pace and continue from there.

- a. (This is the way the Developmental Education department is running their 8-week courses.)

6. Adjournment

- i. Meeting Adjourned at 12:00 PM.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Alvin Page", written over a horizontal line.

Alvin Page
Faculty Senate President

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Alexander Velasquez", written over a horizontal line.

Alexander Velasquez
Faculty Senate Secretary/Treasurer