

College of the Marshall Islands
Friday, August 9th, 2024: 11:10 AM – 12:00 PM
Faculty Senate: Minutes of Discussion

Chair: Alvin Page – FS President [Replaced by Viviana Uriona via Nomination and Election]

Deputy Chair: Viviana Uriona – FS Vice President [Replaced by David Sinkey via Nomination and Election]

Minute Taker: Alexander Velasquez – FS Secretary and Treasurer

Quorum: 26 required, 33 in attendance.

1. Quorum was reached, and the meeting was made official at 11:25 AM.
2. Review of the Minutes from April 12th, 2024.
 - i. The minutes were approved and seconded with no abstentions.
3. Special/Urgent Business
 - i. Faculty Senate Officer Elections for the 2024-2025 School Year
 1. The following officer positions were filled by the faculty members below. Each member was either voted in or accepted nomination by being seconded without abstention by the faculty body:
 - a. **Officers:**
 - i. **Faculty Senate President:** Viviana Uriona
 - ii. **Faculty Senate Vice President:** David Sinkey
 - iii. **Faculty Senate Secretary:** Alexander Velasquez
 - b. **Representatives:**
 - i. Due to time constraints, the elections for Faculty Senate Representatives were tabled until the next meeting on August 23rd.
 - ii. Termination Letter Given to Member of Faculty
 1. A termination letter was sent to one of our colleagues before she came back to Majuro from overseas due to a supposed breach of policies. Our colleague refuses to accept the allegations that have been put forth against her. The details are as follows:
 - a. Before our colleague went overseas for the summer, she had already applied for leave, both verbally and written, to her dean and supervisor.
 - i. This leave was due to having exceptional circumstances surrounding her family during the summer, specifically due to her being a single parent and her child needing her support back in her home country.
 - b. She had applied for leave back in February and gave all types of information regarding her leave: the nature of leave, duration of leave, the day of leave, and so on.
 - i. Our colleague was given assurance that the leave would be approved and that there would be no negative consequences surrounding the leave.
 1. Our colleague was assured verbally that everything would work out and also has some written evidence regarding this assurance.
 - c. Since our colleague is running one of the programs at the college on her own, some of the students need to take her courses to graduate with the program's degree. Hence, she wanted to run some classes over the summer so that the students could finish their degrees on time.
 - i. However, our colleague was then told by her supervisor to apply for leave without pay for her overseas travel.

1. Our colleague then entered the courses on SONIS so that students could enroll for her courses during the summer session.
 - a. But what was kept from her was the fact that she would *not* be paid for teaching these summer courses. She also said that her supervisor failed to notify the higher-ups what exactly her exceptional circumstances were back home and why she needed to go overseas for the summer.
 - i. She was then not given the chance to explain her case before the disciplinary committee.
 - d. According to her termination letter, this is considered a prior misconduct because in the summer of 2022, our colleague had a similar situation happen where she went overseas and gave a verbal description of the nature of leave, duration of leave, the day of leave, and so on.
 - i. However, when HR had given her leave, her salary for the summer had been deducted (i.e. she was not given a salary for that summer).
 1. Nevertheless, our colleague was not given any type of warning letter from HR to inform her that this was a type of prior misconduct; she was only recently informed that this was considered a prior misconduct.
 - e. Our colleague is now challenging all the claims being brought against her supposed breach of policies in front of a grievance committee:
 - i. She has one chance to present her case in front of the committee, but according to the HR policy, she must have one representative from faculty to represent her case in front of the grievance committee.
 1. Kelly Sinkey volunteered to work with the Faculty Senate President Viviana Uriona as well as Mellesia Crawford to represent our colleague's case.
4. Institutional Effectiveness Committee
 - i. President Viviana will be sharing documents with the Faculty Senate regarding IEC, specifically:
 1. May 2024 Report on Potential ISLO Revisions
 2. IEC-EC RSA
 - a. We will also try to form a working group during the Faculty Symposium to address the changes on the documents because they have a deadline to present these documents around August 18th.
 - i. Jennifer Seru is the representative for IEC and is the best person to speak to regarding these documents.
 - ii. The last changes made to these documents was around 2013-2014 and is important for CMI to maintain their accreditation.
5. Discussion Surrounding Contract and Payment Periods
 - i. One faculty member expressed her concern that our overtime contracts come with serious clauses that must be honored by faculty, and that we as faculty must be paid half of the overtime halfway through the semester and the other half at the end of the semester. But if faculty ever have a breach of contract, then CMI will come down on us, especially given the testimony of our colleague from earlier.
 1. On top of late contracts, when faculty are paid one late overtime payment, there is a hefty tax that is taken out which results in another inconvenience.

- a. But who is held accountable when our contracts are late, especially given the fact that, legally, we should not be stepping into the classroom without *first* signing our contracts?
 - i. The only vehicle faculty have to contest this is the grievance process.
 - 1. However, technically, it is the supervisor who should be informed first and then upwards to the Dean of Academic Affairs before any grievance process takes place.
 - a. The problem is that the Dean of Academic Affairs doesn't always get her way in making these requests for timely contracts.

6. Meeting Adjourned at 12:11 PM.



Viviana Uriona
Faculty Senate President



Alexander Velasquez
Faculty Senate Secretary