

**College of the Marshall Islands**  
**Friday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025: 11:10 AM – 12:00 PM**  
**Faculty Senate: Minutes of Discussion**

**Chair:** Viviana Uriona – FS President

**Deputy Chair:** David Sinkey – FS Vice President

**Minute Taker:** Alexander Velasquez – FS Secretary and Treasurer


**Quorum:** 26 required, 34 in attendance.

1. Quorum was reached, and the meeting was made official at 11:20 AM.
  - i. CMI's Mission Statement was then read by the Faculty Senate Secretary.
2. Faculty members Oscar Ragus and Jessio Latrick introduced themselves to Faculty.
3. Former Dean of Academic Affairs Va Savu was welcomed to the Faculty Senate.
4. Review of the Minutes from November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024.
  - i. The minutes were approved and seconded with two abstentions.
5. New Business
  - i. Last week's meeting with Dr. David Newnham was cancelled.
    1. Given that President Newnham has now had six months to settle in and has a better understanding of the College, the next meeting with the College President will discuss the faculty's list of challenges, including the need to update faculty salary levels for those who have completed higher levels of study, such as a PhD, and are still not being compensated for it on the salary ladder.
      - a. If there is no action on behalf of President Newnham and no resolution in a peaceful manner, then once faculty member suggested faculty to take a step in making an official grievance against the College, especially when it is reported in Nitijela that faculty have no grievance (other than the one brought up by Dr. Ekta) and that faculty are very happy at the College.
  - ii. The task force working on updating the contracts has found some language that need to be updated and changed on behalf of faculty.
    1. It is now going through the review process where it will eventually go forward to the Executive Council.
      - a. Once the updates are confirmed, faculty will be informed as to what those changes are.
  - iii. Any faculty who did not receive their overload payments from the previous semester should let Faculty Senate President Viviana or Vice President David Sinkey know.
  - iv. Faculty Senate President Viviana and Vice President David will be having weekly meetings with Edward Alfonso: Dean of Academic Affairs.
  - v. Independent Studies Courses and Whether They Should Be Counted Toward a 15-Credit Load
    1. Currently, there are no credits or extra payment given for independent studies courses.
      - a. Some of these students need the credits to graduate, hence why faculty members teach independent studies courses in many cases.
        - i. However, there was discussion that if a faculty member is underloaded and is doing an independent studies course, then that course should count towards a faculty member's base 15-credit load.
          1. Dr. Elizabeth was open to this possibility, but no official policy has been put to paper as of yet.
          2. CMI is also collecting course fees for students taking independent studies courses even though faculty are not compensated for it.

2. Motion: For a subcommittee was formed to create a resolution (i.e. formulate a paper on behalf of the Faculty Senate) for independent studies courses to count toward a faculty's 15-credit load in the case that a faculty member is underloaded (i.e. is teaching less than 15 credits).
  - a. The motion was approved and seconded without abstention.
    - i. Subcommittee Members: Sa'a Finiasi and Karalaini Osborne
      1. Once the paper is formulated, a Google Doc will be circulated for faculty members to add their comments.
- vi. Course Catalog 2025-2026
  1. The catalog needs to be updated for the incoming students, especially for high school students graduating soon.
    - a. The accounting specialization, for example, is under Liberal Arts in the course catalog even though it should be under Business.
    - b. The general education requirements need to be updated as well.
      - i. For example, ANAT 110 is on the list of classes that fulfill the science with lab requirement. But BIO 101, another course that fulfills the science with lab requirement, is a prerequisite, and therefore there is no point in taking ANAT 110 to fulfill the requirement if BIO 101 accomplishes the same objective.
    - c. Faculty could also look into adding more courses into general education.
  2. The catalog is the prerogative of the VPASA and is already finished going into next year. **(Later Amendment: The catalog is vetted by the VPASA and is already approved through the process going into the next year.)**
    - a. But what faculty can do is go on the cmi.edu website and see what needs to be updated and update it accordingly. **(Later Amendment: Department chairs (not faculty) can go on the cmi.edu website and can update accordingly.)**
    - b. Another possibility is to make an amendment to the catalog. **(Later Amendment: This has to go through the process of approval through the Dean' of AA's office, VPASA, EMC, EC, before it can be included as an amendment.)**
      - i. This can be taken up to the Dean of Academic Affairs to be eventually taken up to the Vice President.
- vii. Course Prerequisites
  1. Many prerequisites programmed into SONIS do not match what is on the catalog.
    - a. This needs to be fixed to prevent confusion and the need for extra paperwork, especially when faculty are required to make pathways.
- viii. 8-Week vs. 16-Week Course Modules
  1. One faculty member expressed their belief that 8-week courses, especially when students are not capable of learning material in only eight weeks, downgrade the quality of the course.
    - a. The justification for 8-week courses was based on a sample study survey.
      - i. However, one faculty brought up the fact that the survey was conducted with AP students (i.e. students already working at the AP level).
        1. Hence, the courses were designed for students who were already capable of handling 8-week learning.
          - a. However, according to Dr. Elizabeth, there is a move by ACCJC to go with the 8-week model for all courses.


- b. There is also the financial aspect for the push to have an 8-week module; accelerating completion is more profitable for the college, which means trying to go back to a 16-week module may be an uphill battle.
- 2. One faculty member brought up the issue that many 8-week classes conflict with the 16-week class schedules resulting in less students enrolling in 16-week classes.
- 3. President Viviana is also waiting on feedback from all departments on which courses can and cannot work for both 8 and 16-week modules.
- 4. According to Dr. Elizabeth, all ENG courses should be on the 8-week module.
  - a. However, one English faculty member believes that there should be *at least one* regular 16-week ENG course for other types of learners who may not be suited to learn in an 8-week course.
  - b. Another Dev Ed instructor believes non-native English speakers should have more time, such as 16 weeks instead of 8, to absorb and practice the material in the lower level English courses.
- 5. Another faculty member brought up the idea to have an SLT member teach an 8-week course to gauge the reality of what it means to teach an entire course in eight weeks.
- 6. Another faculty member mentioned that, from the student perspective, many would probably favor the 8-week modules given that they are able to get through classes much faster and finish more quickly.
- 7. Former FS President Alvin Page will share a Google Doc for faculty to specify which courses they would prefer to teach in eight weeks and which courses they would prefer to teach in sixteen weeks and providing the reasons for doing so.
- 8. One faculty member mentioned that the 8-week module was supposed to be piloted to see if it worked, but the result was that the 8-week module became normality.
- 9. One faculty member stated that we should do our own research or create a unified faculty survey amongst our students on 8-week courses because the research done by the Office of the VPASA shows that students prefer the 8-week module and is the main study used to justify the push for the 8-week modules.
  - a. This is especially important given that the VPASA is all about backing up argument and information with data; likewise, faculty too must back up their argument and information with data.
  - b. There was a suggestion to use our own data as faculty, that is, our passing rates before and after the 8-week modules were implemented. For example, faculty could use data that shows that passing rates have plummeted since the 8-week module was implemented to support the faculty data gathered from the above-mentioned survey.
    - i. Result: There will be one survey created to be disseminated to each department for the purpose of collecting data on their students. Hence, there will be a subcommittee composed to create this survey.
      - 1. Va Savu volunteered and suggested that Desmond Doulatram will help her.
        - a. The suggestion was to use the same questions from the survey two years ago from IR/VPASA survey and was shared that same day.
        - i. Deadline: The survey should be finalized in two weeks (or by the next Faculty Senate meeting taking place in three weeks on February 14<sup>th</sup>).
- ix. Faculty Senate Budget Subcommittee Initiatives
  - 1. The subcommittee came up with three proposals:

- a. Faculty Recognition Awards Program
  - b. Faculty Retreat 2025
  - c. Faculty Lounge for Life Success
    - i. Motion: For all three proposals to be approved by the Faculty Senate.
      - 1. The motion was approved and seconded with one abstention.
  - x. Institutional Effectiveness Committee
    - 1. Two papers were shared with faculty:
      - a. Integrated Planning Manual
        - i. This was revised, and because there were no comments on it—and it has been over a month—the manual is now going forward to EC.
      - b. Peer Mentor Program
        - i. Faculty should contribute to this proposal which been shared to faculty for a first reading.
  - xi. AI Subcommittee
    - 1. Bernardus Vroom and Curtis Vila have volunteered for this subcommittee.
  - xii. Deadline for No-Show Students
    - 1. Faculty are required to send a list of no-shows to Monica at the end of the first week, but many students show up on week two with excuses as to why they didn't show up on the first week and end up being reinstated in the class.
      - a. Hence, EMC reps were asked to request an institution-wide deadline for all no-shows so that there is a definite time by which, if a student does not show up, then they will no longer be admitted into the class.
6. Meeting Adjourned at 12:14 PM.



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Viviana Uriona  
Faculty Senate President



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Alexander Velasquez  
Faculty Senate Secretary