



CMI

College of the Marshall Islands

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The College of the Marshall Islands Faculty Senate

Regular Meeting November 14, 2025

Supposed Meeting Start: 11:10 AM
Face-to-Face Meeting Location: RH 119 CMI Uluga Campus
Zoom Meeting ID: 237 313 9684 Zoom Passcode: 874523
Polycom-Rooms @ Arrak Campus & CMI D.E. Centers
Simple Minority Quorum

MINUTES

Present During the Meeting: 26 (10 via Zoom)
Not Present/Unexcused During the Meeting: 18
On Leave & Excused, Others: 6
Time Meeting Started: 11:15 AM

Executive Summary:

The Faculty Senate meeting commenced with the approval of the previous meeting minutes (October 24, 2025) and the introduction and welcome of a new presence in the Senate meeting room such as Hon. Randon Kaneko. Key discussions centered on ongoing administrative and academic issues. The Faculty Housing Situation addressed the need for affected individuals to contact HR, noting that HR handling contracts with landlords is a positive, though not immediate. Faculty were receiving messages regarding new housing agreements and rate changes. The Senate also discussed Payment and Contract Issues, seeking clarity on earlier payments due to broken overload contracts, with expected fund availability around December 23rd.

Furthermore, the Senate successfully conducted a face-to-face vote to ratify the Faculty Senate Bylaws revisions following a review of the simple minority quorum, with the revisions approved with two abstentions.

Major debates focused on two critical areas: The Summer Session Duration and the Amended Labor Law 2025. Regarding the summer schedule, the debate highlighted the push for a two-session model to improve student learning and flexibility versus concerns about feasibility and course content integrity in the short term; the debate concluded with a motion recommending the 2025-2028 academic calendar remain unchanged.

The most pressing issue was the Amended Labor Law 2025, which mandates repatriation after five years, creating significant job security concerns due to the unclear key terms and the potential re-imposition of a three-year ban on re-issuing work permits. Following extensive discussion on the Labor Office's absolute authority over renewal applications, the Senate passed a motion to formally request a legal explanation of the new law from the Labor Office or the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)'s legal counsel.

I. Introductions:

- a. **Faculty Senate President: Dr. Viviana Uriona** welcomed the Senate members and informed the body that meeting is now in session and recording via Zoom will commence.
- b. The **FS Secretary** read the College's Mission statement.



Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- **FS President** requested a final review of the minutes and asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting.
- **Faculty Senate Secretary:** The proposed minutes of the meeting was shown on the big screen.
- **Faculty 1** made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by **Faculty 2**
- The minutes from October 24, 2025 FS Regular Meeting were officially approved without abstention.

Recognition/Acknowledgements

- **FS President:** Acknowledged the presence of Hon. Faculty Senate member Randon Kaneko.
- Mr. Kaneko then introduced himself to the Senate.
- Senate members welcomed him.
- The FS President invited him to attend again after two weeks.

II. Deliberations/Actionable Items

Faculty Housing Situation Update

Discussion took place about the housing situation and the need to send an email to HR by those affected individuals. The idea of HR handling contracts with landlords is seen as a positive step, although not the immediate solution.

- **Faculty 3 and Faculty 4:** Shared that they have been receiving messages from HR about new housing agreements and rate changes.
- **FS President** emphasizes the importance of reporting any issues with landlords to HR and will continue to seek updates from HR about a formal resolution from the Board about increased housing.

Payment and Contract Issues

- **FS President:** Discussed the payment process and the potential for earlier payment due to broken overload contracts.
- An existing request was sent for vouchers to be received around December 19, with funds possibly expected in bank accounts by December 23.

Face-to-Face Voting for Faculty Senate Bylaws

- **FS President:** Introduced the topic of face-to-face voting for the revision of the faculty senate bylaws, as some members did not vote online.
- Faculty members started recollecting previous discussions and motions regarding the bylaws.
- A review of the simple minority quorum was needed before the vote. The meeting minutes on April 11, 2025, (with 32 faculty present) agreed to adopt a minority quorum. The document was projected on the screens.
- **FS Secretary:** Shared a synopsis of the revisions to be voted upon as the Bylaws were again shown on the screen.



- **Faculty 5:** Motioned to approve the proposed FS Senate Bylaws as presented.
- **FS President:** Conducted the voting process
- The faculty senate bylaws revisions were approved with two abstentions.

Committee Reports and Summer Session Proposals

- **FS President** invited committee representatives to give reports, mentioning the search for a new HR director.
- Committee Members report: nil

Debate on Summer Session Duration

The debate on the Summer Session Duration centered on the challenges of running short summer terms and a proposal to shift to two summer sessions to prioritize student learning and increase contact hours. Faculty 5 and 6 raised concerns about course content integrity in short sessions, while Faculty 7 championed the two-session model, which included a later start date for late-joining students, though feasibility concerns were also noted. Ultimately, the FS President guided the discussion toward a decision on the new calendar, but Faculty 6 moved to recommend that the current academic calendar remain unchanged, with all potential scheduling changes deferred for discussion until the next academic year.

Below were the discussions:

- **Faculty 6 and Faculty 7** shared the challenges of running short summer sessions and the impact on course content.
- **Faculty 8** emphasizes the need to prioritize student learning and the potential benefits of two summer sessions.
- The discussion included the number of contact hours and the flexibility for faculty and students.
- The discussion shifted to the possibility of running two summer sessions, with different start dates to accommodate students.
- **FS President** suggested a motion to decide if the faculty wants to move to the new summer session schedule.
- **Faculty 8** explains the academic office's proposal for two summer sessions, with the second session for late-joining students.

Concerns are raised about the feasibility of running two sessions and the impact on student learning.

Final Remarks and Next Steps

- **Faculty 8:** Emphasized the importance of student priorities and the need for a flexible schedule.
- **FS President:** Acknowledged the need for further discussion and a decision on the summer session calendar.
- **Faculty 8:** Requested that Faculty comments during such a meeting be typed on a shared Google Doc besides the Calendar previously shared with the Senate body.
- **FS President:** The minutes of the Faculty Senate meeting will be recorded and shared with the relevant bodies for further action instead of a new Google Document.



- **FS President:** Asked the faculty for any motion regarding the topic.
- **Faculty 7 Motion:** I move that we recommend that the current academic calendar remain as is, without Major scheduling changes to spring, fall, or summer of 2028, and that changes can be put on the table and discussed for the next academic year."
- The motion was approved without abstention or against.

Amended Labor Law 2025 and It's Impact to Faculty

Summary

The discussion focused on the unclear implications of the Amended Labor Law 2025 regarding the job security of foreign faculty, particularly the new mandate that workers "must be repatriated after five years." Faculty raised concerns over whether the law included the previous three-year ban on re-issuing a work permit after repatriation and, crucially, when the five-year countdown begins (first start date, current contract, or law's effective date). While some faculty noted that "repatriation" doesn't always require physically leaving the island, citing practices where workers receive flight money in lieu of travel, others stressed the lack of clarity and the risk that the Labor Office holds the absolute authority to reject a renewal application, even if CMI processes the paperwork before the five-year limit expires. Due to the high number of expats and various interpretations, the faculty ultimately moved to formally request a legal explanation from the Labor Office, either at the upcoming retreat or through the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)'s legal counsel, to resolve the uncertainty surrounding the law's impact on contracts and job stability.

Faculty 9: Okay, so originally, there was a law that says once a foreign worker is repatriated, the director of labor cannot issue a work permit within the three years that you are repatriated. That was the original law. And then this year it was amended, but it wasn't clear whether that provision was in this amendment; they said that we must be repatriated after five years. Now it's not clear when the countdown for the five years would begin. Is it when you first started working in CMI? Is it when your current contract started, or is it when the law takes effect, but it says we must be repatriated after five years? So that means we need to go back home. The issue would be, you know, whose shoulders, of course, HR policies would have to be amended, together with our contracts. But again, the main concern is our job security, because, again, we need to go out after five years, and there's no guarantee that the work permit will be issued, because it's not clear whether the director of Labor will issue a work permit within the three years.

Faculty 6: So a local private school usually does two-year contracts, right, and then they repatriate their teachers after every two years, okay? So basically, when your contract ends, then you're supposed to be. Now I know CMI doesn't really do that. They don't mean, like, send you home. So the way the local private school does it is either they send someone off island, and if it's, you know, in the past, because they were a problem, but if it's a US citizen, and then hire them again, they can get them in your contract, right? If they're not going off the Island, then you get a certain amount of money instead.

A repatriation doesn't necessarily mean you have to fly out. Repatriation means that either you do fly out, in which case this all applies, because you won't come back for three years, or if you do a renewal of contract, you get the pay the money for the flight ticket that would have flown you out, which serves as a bond that you can use to fly you out in a later period.



FS President: Having our retreat on Tuesday, this would be a very good topic to invite someone from the Labor Office to come and talk to us, because we have a large number of expats. We will invite a rep from the Labor office to come and talk to us and explain that we need somebody from the office.

Faculty 9: Raised concern about unofficial interpretations and retroactivity at the will of powerful officers.

Faculty 10: Okay, can I share something in regards to that, because I've been working with (*local church unit*) missionaries, the pioneers coming from many countries, coming to Marshall Islands, to go for two years, four years, five years. I think the language there is very clear, the Legal Lines. They're very clear. But in terms of the word repatriation, that the arrangement from HR and with the faculty. So we've been doing that. We don't have to send the people back, but we have to make the paper work. The paperwork here before, like two weeks before the visa expires.

Faculty 9: However, there is still a possibility that somebody can always change the definition depending on who's sitting in power.

FS President: It's not clear enough. I agree, for example, the part that they say that the repatriation has to be go back to your original country. And this is a problem, because a lot of us, maybe they move to the next country to work, and but at the same time, if you want to stay here and two weeks before the visa expires, no way they will be finished in two weeks.

Faculty 10: I personally agree with (Faculty 6), but partially because the absolute authority is still not with CMI, even though the renewal was already started. So here's the case. After five years, you are still a good employee of CMI. You intend to renew at CMI. Then CMI attempts to renew your contract before it nears the end of your five-year contract. CMI, in two weeks, tries to process your extension, but the absolute authority remains with the labor office, so the application of CMI, can be rejected while you're outside the country, or while you are being repatriated or while you are still here in the island. Even so when the CMI is processing your papers here and you're back in your country, the absolute authority is still with the labor office, not CMI.

FS President: We have a lot of interpretations, and this is why we had the motion to present the idea that we get answers as soon as possible; if it's not possible, we will get answers as soon as possible. A meeting with the whole employees to understand this new law may be possible. We will seek answers from SLT.

Faculty 10: I move that the Faculty Senate request a legal explanation from the Labor Office at the retreat on Tuesday or from the SLT through its legal counsel.

III. Closing:

FS President: Gave thanks to the Honorable Members of the Faculty Senate for their high participation and attendance and expressed words of encouragement for FS representatives.

The November 14, 2025, Faculty Senate regular meeting was adjourned at 12:20 PM



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Submitted By:

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SY 2025-2026

Concurred By:

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SY 2025-2026

Approval Date:
