



CMI

BOARD OF REGENTS

College of the Marshall Islands

Accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges

P.O. Box 1258
Uliga Campus

Tel: (692) 625-3394/3291/4931

Fax: (692) 625-7203

Email: bor.regents@cmi.edu

Special Board of Regents Minutes - Approved July 14, 2023

Members Present

Chairperson Kathryn Relang
Regent Stiffney Paul
Regent Salome Andrike

Vice-Chair Harden Lelet
Regent Marie Maddison

Regent Julius Lucky
Student Regent Kabua Kabua
(BJ) - Proxy

Member Absent/Excused

Regent Yolanda Lodge-Ned

Regent Kino Kabua

CMI employees in attendance:

Dr. Irene Taafaki, CMI President

William Reiher, Executive Vice President

Stevenson Kotton, Vice President for Administrative and Business Affairs

Dr. Elizabeth Switaj, Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs

Kelly Sebastian, Executive Officer/Executive Secretary for the CMI Board of Regents (ESBOR)

The meeting was called to order @ 9:21 AM

Agenda Items

1. Opening prayer & Roll call and call to order
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Report
 - 3.1. Board membership
 - 3.2. ACCT Presentation
 - 3.3. Raffle
 - 3.4. Gender Gaps
4. Recommendations/Approvals/Action
 - 4.1. Budget projection
 - 4.2. Board Member
5. Matters for information
6. BOR request for future items and information



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Minutes

1. OPENING PRAYER, ROLL CALL, AND CALL TO ORDER

Chair Relang called for a moment of silence to open the BOR meeting, then the meeting was called to order at 9:21 AM.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Regent Maddison moved to approve the CMI Board of Regents Agenda as presented. Regent Lucky seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. REPORT

3.1. Board membership

3.1.1. The Cabinet has made several decisions regarding the college's Board of Regents.:

3.1.1.1. Regent Relang and Regent Maddison have been granted a one-year extension until March 31, 2024.

3.1.1.2. Additionally, Regent Kabua, Regent Lelet, Regent Lucky, and Regent Paul have been appointed for a second term of three years until March 31, 2026.

3.1.1.3. A new Regent, Regent Nakamura, has been appointed for a three-year term and the CMI BOR to appoint one more Regent of which represents the private school sector.

3.1.2. Regent deBrum has been replaced by Regent Nakamura who is a representative from Jaluit.

3.1.2.1. We wanted to consider our distance education centers and to include one representative from each center on a rotational basis.

3.1.2.2. This will require a review and potential amendment to the CMI ACT and the Board's Bylaws to accommodate this consideration.

3.2. ACCT Presentation

3.2.1. Several months ago, we submitted a presentation request for the upcoming ACCT (Association of Community College Trustees) conference scheduled for October. ACCT approved the request, making it the first-ever presentation from RMI at the conference.

3.2.2. Chair Relang and President Taafaki have been considering the presentation and proposed a co-presentation with COM-FSM, which has been accepted.

3.2.3. The title of the presentation is "Ensuring equitable access to Higher Education in Oceania," and it falls under the track of equity and inclusion

3.2.4. Chair Relang shared the below presentation description with the Regents:

3.2.4.1. Presents how two US-affiliated island nations, the Republics of the Marshall Islands (RMI) and Federated States of Micronesia (COM), which are two of the world's smallest, isolated, and most vulnerable island nations, have expanded equity of access to tertiary education.

3.2.4.2. Situated in the western pacific with a combined population of less than 150,000, their atolls and islands are spread over 3.75M sq. miles of ocean.



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- 3.2.4.3. Both institutions are US accredited: The College of the Marshall Islands (CMI) serves 1,300 students, 98% of whom are Marshallese, in 7 locations. In contrast, the College of Micronesia-FSM serves 1,861 students on campuses in each of the nation's states and diverse ethnicities – Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei and Yap.
- 3.2.5. The anticipated outcomes of the presentation include:
 - 3.2.5.1. Increased awareness of the strengths and challenges of remote Pacific Island institutions;
 - 3.2.5.2. Expanded understanding of the innovative technologies available to remote college campuses and centers
 - 3.2.5.3. Awareness of the partnerships and collaboration among members of the Pacific Post-Secondary Education Council.
 - 3.2.5.4. Introduction to the Association of Micronesian College Boards
- 3.2.6. The List of Presenters are:
 - 3.2.6.1. Kathryn Relang – Chair CMI Board of Regents
 - 3.2.6.2. Suzanne Gallen – Chair COM-FSM Board of Regents
 - 3.2.6.3. Dr. Theresa Koroivulaono – President COM-FSM
 - 3.2.6.4. Dr. Irene J. Taafaki – President CMI
- 3.2.7. The ACCT conference is scheduled for October 9 - 12 in Las Vegas. There is an opportunity for another Board member to attend the conference and participate in the presentation alongside current presenters.
- 3.2.8. It's important that we take part and showcase ourselves, so that people have a greater understanding of who we are and what we are, our capabilities, but also our challenges and build and strengthen our networks with other colleges.
- 3.2.9. Hopefully, the content of the presentation will be presented in the next Board Meeting for review and approval.
- 3.3. [Raffle](#)
 - 3.3.1. Chair Relang presented the Board Endowment Raffle, with the raffle date remaining unchanged, but the prizes being rearranged.
 - 3.3.2. The prizes are as follows:
 - 3.3.2.1. Grand Prize: Mitsubishi L200 Double Cab 2WD Pickup (shipping not included).
 - 3.3.2.2. 1st Prize: 2 Round-Trip Tickets to or from Kwajalein/Majuro to Honolulu.
 - 3.3.2.3. 2nd Prize: 2 Round-Trip Tickets to a Neighboring Island of the winner's choice.
 - 3.3.2.4. 3rd Prize: Island Camp Getaway.
 - 3.3.2.5. 4th Prize: \$500.
 - 3.3.2.6. 5th Prize: \$500.
 - 3.3.2.7. 6th Prize: \$500.
 - 3.3.3. Chair Relang proposed the idea of creating a flyer with detailed information about the prizes to accompany the raffle tickets.



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- 3.3.4. Some of the island's campsites have agreed to participate and offer discounted prices for the Island Camp Getaway prize, though none have agreed to provide it completely free of charge.
- 3.3.5. To obtain the round-trip tickets, we'll send a solicitation letter to United, Air Nauru, and AMI.
 - 3.3.5.1. Regent Andrike has volunteered to work with the airlines on this matter.
- 3.3.6. The goal for the raffle is to raise \$100,000.
- 3.3.7. VPBAA Kotton & the FABS team will take charge and manage the ticket number tracking and collections, including online payments via cash app.

Regent Maddison moved to approve the raffle ticket and information. Regent Andrike seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

3.4. Gender Gaps

- 3.4.1. During the presentation, VPASA Switaj discussed the Gender Gaps research, which was also presented in the last August Board meeting.
- 3.4.2. The research aimed to identify factors contributing to the first-year retention gap. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used, including surveys and focus groups, to gather data.
- 3.4.3. The key findings are as follows:
 - 3.4.3.1. Major obstacles: need to work, family issues, child-rearing, health, and out-migration.
 - 3.4.3.2. Family support matters but this does not necessarily mean parental support.
 - 3.4.3.3. 75% of non-continuing students said menstrual issues affected their academic performance.
 - 3.4.3.4. Different definition of persistence: female CMI students see it as finishing at any point not necessarily quickly or without gaps.
 - 3.4.3.5. Non-continuing students reported better experiences with CMI (liking CMI, feeling safe, relationships with employees and other students), which suggests the importance of outside factors and of specifically targeted interventions that address these factors.
 - Restroom issues: A notable concern was the lack of waste bins in restrooms.
- 3.4.4. Some of the intervention is a "bwebwenato" session, where female students have a session with a weaver to discuss specific issues they are facing.
- 3.4.5. Chair Relang suggested sharing this research with the SGA officers and with students regularly to continuously improve their college experiences.
 - 3.4.5.1. President Taafaki has a monthly meeting with the SGA Officers and last meeting the Director of Institutional Research shared the CCEES report and in the upcoming meeting Jimmy Jamos will share his learning from the recent Financial Aid conference he attended.
- 3.4.6. Regent Andrike proposed the idea of having a suggestion box and the SGA can review it monthly.



3.4.6.1. SGA can share the issues and challenges, along with potential solutions.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS/APPROVALS/ACTION

4.1. Budget projection

- 4.1.1. President Taafaki reported that a meeting was held with Fred deBrum and that the budget committee has not received any guidance, and there is significant uncertainty surrounding the national budget, with no clarity on incoming revenue. As a result, a budget circular has not been prepared.
- 4.1.2. We were advised to submit a budget that mirrors last year's budget and with that we will have minor modifications.
- 4.1.3. President Taafaki asked VPBAA Kotton to present the budget projection (2023-2024) and the only change is the colleges internal revenue stream:
 - 4.1.3.1. Under the Restricted there is an increase from \$752 thousand (2023) to \$894 thousand (2024) due to the increase in fees that was approved.
 - 4.1.3.2. Under the Unrestricted there is an increase from 4.5M (2023) to 4.8M (2024) and so was the Auxiliary Services due to some strategies that we've implemented and we're projecting additional revenue and low dividend.
- 4.1.4. We are uncertain how much we'll be getting for 2023-2024 from the Government.
- 4.1.5. The new grants coming to CMI are: BARLO and UNF (Bay Shore).
 - 4.1.5.1. Out of the UNF we get a lump sum of \$80,000 (this is the indirect cost) which we're supposed to be using for renovation this year.
- 4.1.6. Most of the Federal programs will not be affected by changes in the compact for Higher Education - Pell, all title IV, grants, work study and FAUOG. There are definitely going to be changes to SEG (DE Centers and ABE (\$288 thousand)) but we don't know what those changes are yet.
 - 4.1.6.1. VPBAA Kotton reported that its only 17% of the total budget that is funded directly from the compact.
 - 4.1.6.2. Now that the compact is coming to an end all the money that was consolidated into the SEG will expand and go back to the way they were during the first compact: workforce investment, head start, professional development, Workstudy and FAUOG.
 - We've got the assurance that we can apply for the work study and FAUOG.
 - 4.1.6.3. In the GAO report these will be automatically reinstated but we don't know how.
- 4.1.7. We have not heard anything regarding the Sin tax - it was suggested to the 2 Ministers to phase it rather than completely taking the entire amount.
- 4.1.8. The college's endowment is approximately 2.3/2.4 million, the contingency fund is around 2 million, and the maintenance budget is approximately 1.9 million.
- 4.1.9. To sustain our college, tuition would have to rise.



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- 4.1.9.1. Chair Relang mentioned that this kind of information is good to take back to the SGA - the realization of how all this works when it comes to the students and their tuition changes, they don't know what and how it all came down to that.
- 4.1.9.2. The compact impacts the institution and if anything it'll impact the students tuition.
- 4.1.9.3. It's so important that we understand the compact.
 - VPASA Switaj mentioned that she can suggest this for the next CMI 101 - Compact Awareness.
- 4.1.10. VPBAA Kotton and HR Director visited Arkansas and helped the Marshallese Community with their FAFSA (they don't know that they are eligible for Pell).
 - 4.1.10.1. 15 of the Marshallese got admitted to college and now they are continuing and helping those that want to go to college.
 - 4.1.10.2. This was reported to Minister Wilbur and Minister want to President Taafaki and VPBAA Kotton to go and visit the Marshallese community at Arkansas as well as the colleges and universities to explain the benefit these students are entitled to.
 - Chair Relang suggested including this into the ACCT Presentation.
 - VPASA Switaj suggested to also connect it to the issue that a lot of colleges could not tell you what percentage of their students are pacific islanders let alone specifically Marshallese.
- 4.1.11. Regarding the budget for FY 2024, the total is projected to be \$14.2 million. VPBAA Kotton will present the budget scenario once the confirmation number from the government is received, a special meeting may be requested to review and approve the final budget.
- 4.2. Board Member
 - 4.2.1. During the meeting, it was decided that one more Regent needs to be appointed from the Private School representative. The consideration for this appointment includes individuals from private schools who are either Board Members, principals, or senior management officials.
 - 4.2.2. A nomination was put forward: Benjamin Wakefield (COOP Board President).
 - 4.2.3. To give the Regents more time to think about their nominations, it was agreed to conduct the nomination process via email. Chair Relang suggested setting a timeframe to end the nominations and then establishing a deadline for voting from the list of nominations.
 - 4.2.3.1. The agreed timeframe for ending the nominations is Wednesday, July 19, and the deadline for voting is Friday, July 21, at noon.

Regent Lucky moved to approve the suggestion. Regent Lelet seconded the motion. The motion was approved.



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5. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

- 5.1. President Taafaki reported that VPLG Lorennij has been appointed as the executive director for Land Grant and we received his letter of resignation on the 3rd of July.
 - 5.1.1. Both President Taafaki and VPLG Lorennij will be attending the Land Grant Board Meeting in August, which will take place in Palau.
- 5.2. President Taafaki reported that the 3rd quarter meeting of the Pacific Post-Secondary Education Council (PPEC) is scheduled to be held in Majuro on September 3rd and 4th.
 - 5.2.1. Chair Relang reported that the Micronesian College Boards are planning to piggyback on the PPEC Meeting by holding a day session either before or during the PPEC Meetings. In this session, they aim to finalize their bylaws and articles of incorporation.
- 5.3. Audit 2021 - Update
 - 5.3.1. VPBAA Kotton reported that the 2021 Financial audit is completed, and they are currently working on the compliance aspect. The 2022 audit will begin after the 2021 audit is finished.
 - 5.3.2. The college has a plan in place to ensure both audits are completed promptly so that they are closed off before the 2023 audit commences.
 - 5.3.3. Chair Relang reported that in the 2021 audit there is one finding that has already come up and it's in relation to our assets registry and how we write off the assets - improper write-offs that results in a total of 5 or 6 million.
 - 5.3.3.1. In the 2022 audit it will be resolved.
 - 5.3.4. The liquidity ratio for 2020 was at 1.3 or 1.4, but after finalizing the numbers with the auditors for 2021, the liquidity ratio increased to 1.9, indicating that the college's cash flow is strong. The benchmark for the liquidity ratio is set at \$2.
 - 5.3.5. In terms of compliance, auditors review whether the college follows its guidelines, policies, as well as national government and Federal grant regulations.
 - 5.3.6. It was noted that some assets were written off but not auctioned or sold, and the college is still using them. An assessment has confirmed this situation.

6. BOR REQUESTS FOR FUTURE ITEMS AND INFORMATION

Next Meeting - August 14, 2023 @ 9 AM (Date might change due to United flight and Regent from Jaluit).

Meeting adjourned @ 11:17 AM

Scribe

Kelly Luce Sebastian,
Recording Secretary

Reviewed & Approved by

Harden Lelet,
Vice-Chair, Board of Regents

Date Approved

August 16, 2023