



CMI

BOARD OF REGENTS

College of the Marshall Islands

Accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges

P.O. Box 1258
Uluga Campus

Tel: (692) 625-3394/3291/4931
Fax: (692) 625-7203
Email: bor.regents@cmi.edu

Special Board of Regents Minutes - Approved September 18, 2024

Members Present

Chairperson Kathryn Relang
Regent Salome Andrike
Regent Marie Maddison

Vice Chair Julius Lucky
Regent Joe Lomae
Regent Kino Kabua

Regent Benjamin Wakefield
Regent Jelton Anjain
Student Regent Wilmer Joel

Member Absent/Excused

Regent Melet Jatios

Regent Nimata Nakamura

CMI employees in attendance:

Dr. Elizabeth Switaj, Interim President
Stevenson Kotton, Vice President for Administrative and Business Affairs
Dr. Adedayo Ogunmokun, Vice President for Land Grant
David Strauss, CMI's Legal Counsel
Kelly Sebastian, Executive Officer/Executive Secretary for the CMI Board of Regents (ESBOR)

The meeting was called to order @ 9:07 AM

Agenda Items

1. Opening prayer & Roll call and call to order
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Executive Session
4. Report and Recommendations/Approvals/Action
 - 4.1. CMI Amendment 2024 Proposal
 - 4.2. FY2025 Budget Portfolio
 - 4.3. Inauguration of Dr. David Newnham
5. BOR request for future items and information

Minutes

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

Chair Relang commenced the Board of Regents (BOR) meeting with a moment of silence and officially called the meeting to order at 9:07 AM.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA



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Regent Maddison made a motion to approve the amended Board's Agenda. Regent Andrike and Regent Lomae seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. EXECUTIVE SESSION

4. REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS/APPROVALS

4.1. CMI Amendment 2024 Proposal

4.1.1. David Strauss shared the following key points:

- 4.1.1.1. Requested a Word document of the proposal for editing and review by all.
- 4.1.1.2. Recommended using Times New Roman, 12-point font, as required by the courts, without letterhead for submission to Nitijela legal counsel Divine.
- 4.1.1.3. Discussed Section 209: Board of Regents' terms of office, highlighting staggered terms and the need to maintain institutional knowledge.
- 4.1.1.4. Suggested appointing the CMI student body president to the board instead of a generic student.
- 4.1.1.5. Expressed concern about new administrations replacing all board members, emphasizing the importance of preserving institutional knowledge.
- 4.1.1.6. Noted the two-consecutive-term limit to encourage turnover of new ideas.
- 4.1.1.7. Proposed referencing the Ethics in Government Act for conflict of interest matters, ensuring its application to all CMI employees.
- 4.1.1.8. Committed to completing his review and edits by the end of the week.

4.1.2. Chair Relang commented that one of the key aspects to be clarified in the amendments is the staggering of membership, highlighting its importance for continuity.

- 4.1.2.1. Stressed the need to clearly word the amendments to prevent Cabinet from replacing board members mid-term, only allowing replacements when terms expire.
- 4.1.2.2. Mentioned that the Word document will be sent to David Strauss for closer review and further edits.

4.1.3. Regent Lomae shared that the proposal is in the formulation stage, with input from others on legal considerations.

- 4.1.3.1. They will copy and paste applicable provisions and make track changes for now.
- 4.1.3.2. The finalized document will be sent to Cabinet with a Cabinet paper, initiating further review.
- 4.1.3.3. Emphasized the importance of Board review to ensure necessary changes are included.
- 4.1.3.4. Highlighted the opportunity to modernize the law, which was last amended in 2006.



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- 4.1.3.5. Expressed thanks to Chairperson Wakefield and Regent Kabua for their contributions.
- 4.1.4. Chair Relang emphasized the need for the CMI community to review the proposal and provide feedback through participatory governance before finalizing it for the Minister.
 - 4.1.4.1. Suggested engaging the Student Regent to facilitate student involvement and ensure a community-wide review.
 - 4.1.4.2. Requested members to share any suggested amendments with their respective chairs and relevant departments for input.
 - 4.1.4.3. Aimed to have the revised proposal ready for the Board by December, with input from the new President.
 - 4.1.4.4. Encouraged members to review the act independently and raise any questions or amendments regarding unaddressed sections.
 - 4.1.4.5. Highlighted provision 215, which allows the Board to advise the Cabinet on the removal of a member before their term expires.
 - 4.1.4.6. Mentioned the upcoming meeting with the Minister of Education, noting attendance issues from some Regents.
 - 4.1.4.7. Regent Anjain was tasked to check on participation from the other Regent in Ebeye and the Regent from Jaluit, who is busy with high school responsibilities but did not indicate a resignation.
 - 4.1.4.8. Discussed the importance of rotating board membership to reflect representation from outer islands, proposing a rotation schedule that includes Jaluit, Wotje, and Santo.
 - 4.1.4.9. Recommended that the proposal undergo the participatory governance process at the college and requested a report back at the next regular meeting.
 - Emphasized the importance of providing justifications for comments or suggested amendments to give background on why those comments were made.
- 4.1.5. Regent Lucky inquired if the Act specifies that meetings are open to the public or if changes should be made to clarify, suggesting that the minutes be made publicly available.
 - 4.1.5.1. Regent Lomae confirmed that the current law states the meetings are public, but decisions on meeting access are at the Board's discretion, especially for sensitive matters.
 - He also noted that closing meetings might draw attention from Parliament, as educational institutions are generally expected to be transparent.
 - 4.1.5.2. Chair Relang commented that while not all government boards have open meetings, U.S. colleges typically do, as members are often elected.
 - Considering the cultural context in the RMI, the responsibility to share information falls on public representatives.



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- Chair Relang also expressed concern that discussions during meetings could be misconstrued by the public, emphasizing the need to balance transparency and discretion.
- 4.1.5.3. Chair Relang also suggested revising the wording on the appointment of the Student Regent to match the Cabinet's letter, indicating the Board has discretion in the assignment.
 - She raised concerns about proxies, recommending that proxies should be identified at the first meeting to ensure they are prepared to engage in discussions.
- 4.1.5.4. Student Regent Joel reported that he oriented his proxy before the last meeting to prepare them for participation.
- 4.1.5.5. Interim President Switaj shared that other PPEC schools allow public attendance at meetings, but require pre-registration.
- 4.1.5.6. Regent Kabua pointed out that the Board includes two public members, who serve as points of contact for public inquiries.

Chair Relang suggested deferring the CMI Amendment 2024 Proposal to allow the CMI community to review it and provide feedback.

- **The proposal will be reviewed at the next regular meeting in early December.**
- **This suggestion was unanimously approved.**

4.2. FY2025 Budget Portfolio

4.2.1. VPBAA Kotton presented the FY2025 budget portfolio.

- 4.2.1.1. The total budget for the college is \$14.7 million, with \$5.2 million allocated as restricted funds and \$9.5 million from the general fund.

4.2.2. VPBAA Kotton reported that any leftover funds for maintenance are diverted to the maintenance investment fund.

- 4.2.2.1. Due to aging buildings, the full maintenance budget has been used for repairs over the last two years, as older structures have higher upkeep costs.

- 4.2.2.2. In previous years, unused maintenance funds were transferred to the maintenance fund.

4.2.3. Chair Relang inquired about the deposits made into the maintenance and contingency funds, specifically requesting a breakdown of how much is deposited annually into each and the source of the deposits.

- 4.2.3.1. VPBAA Kotton agreed to provide a report with the breakdown of the deposits into these funds.

4.2.4. VPBAA Kotton reported that the college has been requesting actual sin tax collection data since 2012 but has not received any. CMI receives funds from the general fund, but it is unclear whether these are from the sin tax or other government sources.

- 4.2.4.1. In FY2023, a mistake in the finance department resulted in the entire Youth Corps Program being cut from the budget, and CMI has since absorbed the program's cost.



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- 4.2.4.2. Originally funded at \$300K, it was reduced to \$150K, and eventually removed entirely.
 - Chair Relang asked for clarification on the Youth Corps program's activities and suggested better communication through posts and newsletters.
 - Interim President Switaj explained that some activities are funded by NTC, noting that various trainings are categorized under the Youth Corps, and mentioned the existence of a Facebook page for the program.
 - Student Regent Joel recommended summarizing information in Facebook posts and providing links for more detailed content.
- 4.2.4.3. CMI decided to continue the program by reallocating funds from other programs, reducing flexibility in the budget.
- 4.2.4.4. VPBAA Kotton emphasized that Minister Bejang will bring this issue up to the Cabinet.
- 4.2.5. Regent Kabua shared that during JEMFAC discussions, there was a misinterpretation regarding the contribution to the IMF. The contribution was 5% of \$51 million, requiring an additional \$2.5 million, but only \$750K was budgeted. There were discussions about using unspent funds from FY24 to make up the \$1.7 million shortfall, with contributions from both the general fund and the Compact fund.
- 4.2.6. Regent Lucky commented that he does not see ESSP and NTC contributions on the pie chart, despite signing the contribution and noting that the boot camp was already budgeted.
 - 4.2.6.1. VPBAA Kotton reported that ESSP and NTC were not awarded yet. Additional funds from NTC and federal grants are received mid-fiscal year.
 - 4.2.6.2. Confirmed new funding sources include the Federal Work-Study Program and FSEOG.
- 4.2.7. Student Regent Joel questioned the requirement of 6 credits for the Federal Work Study program and whether it had been updated.
 - 4.2.7.1. VPBAA Kotton confirmed that students must have 6 credits to apply for the general fund work study but cannot qualify for both Federal Work Study and FSEOG.
 - 4.2.7.2. Interim President Switaj explained that the 6-credit requirement is mandated by Title IV regulations.
- 4.2.8. Regent Kabua asked if the training budget was increased to address audit findings.
 - 4.2.8.1. VPBAA Kotton explained that a staff development budget exists, and external training focused on audit issues is being planned with EY, marking the first time CMI will pay for outside trainers.
 - 4.2.8.2. EY suggested involving relevant government staff, and Kotton plans to coordinate with Regent Kabua once details are confirmed.



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- 4.2.9. Chair Relang requested a breakdown of deposits into the maintenance and contingency funds and asked Interim President Switaj to ensure that Frank, the investment manager, attends the next meeting to provide a report on the endowment fund.
 - 4.2.9.1. Regent Kabua commented on the endowment fund, noting that \$82,770 from the RMI subsidy was budgeted, and expressed surprise that the government dictates how much CMI should contribute to the endowment fund.
 - 4.2.9.2. VPBAA Kotton reported that the endowment contribution is specified in the ProAct. Historically, the contribution was under \$100,000, but when there are budget cuts, this amount is also reduced.
 - The \$82,770 comes from the government, and it's calculated after an 8% tax.
 - He mentioned that CMI supplements this with other funds, projecting an additional \$85,000 based on Pell Grant collection.
- 4.3. Inauguration of Dr. David Newnham
 - 4.3.1. Interim President Switaj presented the Inauguration Program to the Board:
 - 4.3.1.1. Event Date: October 1, 2024
 - 4.3.1.2. Venue: SSG. Solomon Sam Basketball Court
 - 4.3.1.3. Time: 2 PM
 - 4.3.1.4. Regent Kabua suggested pushing the time to 4 PM.
 - 4.3.1.5. Chair Relang commented that the 4 PM time is good as it allows time to meet up after the inauguration without rushing back to work.
 - 4.3.2. Chair Relang shared the planned speakers for the event:
 - 4.3.2.1. Welcoming Remarks: Chair Relang
 - 4.3.2.2. Government Remarks: Minister Bejang
 - 4.3.2.3. Keynote Speaker: Dr. David Newnham
 - 4.3.2.4. Additional components include the CMI Song, a performance, and the closing.
 - 4.3.2.5. VPBAA Kotton reported that the CMI Media Team can sing and play the CMI Song.
 - 4.3.3. Student Regent Joel requested confirmation on whether Jilel is appropriate before the turnover of the Jined Kibed.
 - 4.3.4. The VIP list includes partners, cabinet members, ambassadors, the Nitijela speaker, and PAC chairman, with the board given until Friday to suggest additional invitees.

5. BOR REQUESTS FOR FUTURE ITEMS AND INFORMATION

- 5.1. Interim President Switaj discussed the need to refine the grievance process in the policy handbook, which was tested during a recent employee termination.
 - 5.1.1. Chair Relang suggested David Strauss review HR policies first, followed by further review through a committee, noting the importance of addressing personnel-related legal issues.



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- 5.2. Student Regent Joel presented a plan for a documentary to help future SGA Presidents understand their roles, suggesting that the upcoming regular meeting be used to capture B-roll footage.
 - 5.2.1. He also requested that the Board be allowed to review the content before it is released.
- 5.3. Chair Relang reported that she and Interim President Switaj have scheduled the following meetings, which are open for any Board members who wish to join:
 - 5.3.1. On 9/18 at 2 PM: A meeting with Auditor-General Jaston Anjain at CMI, for an update.
 - 5.3.2. On 9/20, Chair Relang and Interim President Switaj will meet with Minister Bejang to address attendance issues among board members, provide updates on the review of the Act, and discuss Dr. David Newnham's inauguration.

Meeting adjourned @ 11:21 AM

Scribe

Kelly Luce Sebastian,
Recording Secretary

Reviewed & Approved by

Julius Lucky,
Acting Chair, Board of Regents

December 2, 2024

Date Approved