



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 March 19, 2025

Members Present

Acting Chair Julius Lucky
Regent Katt Chonggum
Regent Dr. Yukiko Muller
Regent Morean Watak

Regent Meitaka Kendall-Lekka
Regent Kino Kabua
Regent Roanna Zackhras

Regent Thomas Kijiner Jr.
Regent Timothy Owens
Student Regent Wilmer Joel

Member Absent/Excused

Regent Jelton Anjain

CMI employees in attendance:

Dr. David A. Newnham, President

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

The meeting was called to order @ 9:59 AM

Agenda Items

1. Opening prayer & Roll call and call to order
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Board Officer Selection
 - 3.1. Board Chair
 - 3.2. Board Vice Chair
4. Standing Committee Appointment/Representative
5. President's Welcoming Remarks & Onboarding
 - 5.1. CMI Board of Regents Bylaws
 - 5.2. CMI Act
 - 5.3. ACCJC Governing Board Responsibilities
 - 5.4. ACCT Connect
 - 5.5. ACCJC Letter
 - 5.6. Other Information
 - 5.6.1. College Retreat - April 8 (MIR Poolside)
 - 5.6.2. Foundation Day
6. Matters for information
 - 6.1. Board Training - March 21 & 24, 2025
 - 6.2. Next Board Meeting - Proposed May 19, 2025
 - 6.2.1. CMI Graduation - May 22, 2025
7. BOR requests for future items and information



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

Minutes

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

Acting Chair Lucky commenced the BOR meeting at 9:59 AM.

Regent Watak led the opening prayer.

Acting Chair Lucky conducted a roll call with self-introductions from Regents, expressed welcome and appreciation, and reaffirmed commitment to supporting the college's ongoing excellence.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Regent Kijiner made a motion to adopt the Board's Agenda. Regent Owens and Regent Watak seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. BOARD OFFICER SELECTION

3.1. Board Chair - Regent Meitaka Kendall-Lekka

3.1.1. Regent Kijiner nominated Regent Meitaka Kendall-Lekka for Board Chair, noting her prior experience as a CMI employee and emphasizing the importance of increased female leadership. Regent Watak seconded the nomination. The Board unanimously approved the nomination.

3.2. Board Vice Chair - Regent Thomas Kijiner Jr.

3.2.1. Regent Watak nominated Regent Thomas Kijiner Jr. as Board Vice Chair to provide balanced leadership. Chair Kendall-Lekka and Regent Muller seconded the nomination. The nomination was unanimously approved by the Board.

Chair Kendall-Lekka expressed gratitude to Regent Kijiner for the nomination, acknowledged the importance and challenge of the role, and thanked everyone for their confidence and trust, emphasizing readiness to work collaboratively.

Vice Chair Kijiner echoed Chair Kendall-Lekka's sentiments, expressed his commitment to closely support the Chair, and thanked the Board for their trust.

Acting Chair Lucky formally handed the meeting responsibilities over to Chair Kendall-Lekka.

4. STANDING COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT/REPRESENTATIVE

President Newnham shared that the Standing Committee meetings will occur before the May meeting, followed by committee member reports.

- Regents may participate in any standing committee meeting to broaden input and learning opportunities.
- Regents are encouraged to rotate among committees to foster collaboration and comprehensive understanding.



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

4.1. Strategic Planning Committee - Members:

- 4.1.1. Regent Kabua
- 4.1.2. Regent Owens
- 4.1.3. Regent Zackhras
- 4.1.4. VPLG Ogunmokun
- 4.1.5. President Newnham

This committee reviews the College's Strategic Plans: Meto (10-year), Wapepes (5-year), and Annual plans. It also oversees revisions to the College's mission, values, and related items.

4.2. Finance/Risk Assessment/ Audit Committee - Members:

- 4.2.1. Regent Lucky
- 4.2.2. Regent Kijiner
- 4.2.3. Regent Owens
- 4.2.4. Regent Anjain
- 4.2.5. Regent Kendall-Lekka
- 4.2.6. Regent Chong-Gum
- 4.2.7. VPBAA Kotton

This committee focuses on business and administrative services, regularly reviewing financial reports, strategies, and balance sheets in coordination with VPBAA Kotton.

4.3. Academic & Student Affairs Committee - Members:

- 4.3.1. Regent Chong-Gum
- 4.3.2. Regent Muller
- 4.3.3. Regent Watak
- 4.3.4. Regent Owens
- 4.3.5. Regent Kendall-Lekka
- 4.3.6. Student Regent Joel
- 4.3.7. VPASA Dr. Switaj

This committee addresses areas related to instruction, library services, student services, enrollment, and academic support, working closely with VPASA Dr. Switaj.

5. PRESIDENT'S WELCOMING REMARKS & ONBOARDING

President Newnham expressed appreciation for serving as President and acknowledged progress in learning Marshallese.

- Highlighted upcoming board development sessions with Dr. Bruce Leslie from ACCT to strengthen board cohesion and understanding of roles.
- Emphasized the importance of aligning board actions with the College's mission, values, and philosophy—the "North Star."

Board Development and Orientation:

- Noted that regents learn at different paces and encouraged mutual support and consultation with former board members.



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

- Stressed the importance of understanding individual and collective roles, institutional culture, strategic planning, and board operations.
- Reinforced the proper flow of information through the Board Chair to the President and vice versa.

5.2. CMI Board of Regents Bylaws & CMI Act 1992::

5.2.1. Governance Framework:

- 5.2.1.1. Overview of the CMI Act of 1992 and Board Bylaws, including 11 articles outlining board structure, responsibilities, and conduct.
- 5.2.1.2. Emphasis on the Board's autonomy and insulation from political influence.
- 5.2.1.3. Responsibilities include: clarifying the Mission, ensuring financial oversight, appointing/evaluating the President, and self-assessment.

5.2.2. Code of Conduct and Civility:

- 5.2.2.1. Regents must act with respect, cooperation, and civility, avoiding divisive behavior.
- 5.2.2.2. Board members were reminded to express consensus publicly even when personally dissenting.
- 5.2.2.3. Conflict of Interest declarations will be distributed and must be completed.

5.2.3. President's Role and Fiduciary Duties:

- 5.2.3.1. The President executes operations under board policy direction and reports through the Chair.
- 5.2.3.2. Regents were reminded they have no legal authority individually; decisions are made collectively.
- 5.2.3.3. Fiduciary responsibilities include acting in the best interest of the institution with ethical and legal care, guided by the "prudent person standard."

5.2.4. Cultural Commitment and Respect:

- 5.2.4.1. The President shared personal motivations for serving at CMI, rooted in respect for culture and diversity.
- 5.2.4.2. Highlighted volunteerism and the importance of board members as community representatives.

5.2.5. Meeting Procedure – Robert's Rules:

- 5.2.5.1. Meetings follow Robert's Rules of Order for structure and orderliness.
- 5.2.5.2. The President and staff do not vote but serve to inform and support the Board.
- 5.2.5.3. Reinforced structured agendas, one-person-one-vote process, and clarity in voting roles.

5.3. ACCJC Governing Board Responsibilities

- 5.3.1. President Newnham provided an overview of ACCJC Governing Board Responsibilities:



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

- 5.3.1.1. Explained that CMI was previously accredited by WASC but is currently accredited by ACCJC.
 - 5.3.1.2. Clarified ACCJC accreditation enables institutions to access Title IV funds, including Pell Grants, upon compliance with stipulated guidelines and requirements.
 - 5.3.1.3. Highlighted ACCJC's expectation that the governing board focuses primarily on student and institutional outcomes, policy governance, and institutional oversight.
 - 5.3.1.4. Encouraged Regents to familiarize themselves with the ACCJC Governing Board Responsibilities documentation.
 - 5.3.1.5. Confirmed upcoming discussions with Bruce regarding reaffirmation of board roles aligned with accreditation standards.
 - 5.3.1.6. Addressed recent concerns regarding potential accreditation jeopardy, clarifying that ACCJC's priority is institutional stability and student welfare.
 - 5.3.1.7. Detailed the accreditation warning system, comprising warning, probation, and show-cause stages, emphasizing that immediate loss of accreditation is not standard procedure.
 - 5.3.1.8. Noted recent submission of the institutional midterm report, with the next comprehensive accreditation site visit scheduled in three years.
 - 5.3.1.9. Appreciated Regents' volunteer time and highlighted the importance of their roles and responsibilities in supporting institutional compliance and excellence.
- 5.4. ACCT Connect - Onboarding and ACCT Support:
- 5.4.1. Regents will be connected to ACCT resources and encouraged to attend the October ACCT Leadership Congress in New Orleans.
 - 5.4.2. ACCT resources provide training and a national context to enhance governance knowledge.
 - 5.4.3. The President emphasized his visit to Washington aimed at advocating for the College of the Marshall Islands and the College of Micronesia FSM to qualify for Carl Perkins funding.
 - 5.4.3.1. Carl Perkins funding directly supports workforce development, but has not been accessible to CMI under current compact arrangements, despite Palau's eligibility.
 - 5.4.3.2. Shared positive discussions with Ambassador Charles, who committed to further advocacy in Washington, DC.
 - 5.4.3.3. Noted collaborative efforts with Northern Marianas College representatives and discussions with Congresswoman Kim, who expressed willingness to advocate for Carl Perkins funding eligibility.
 - 5.4.3.4. Highlighted the significance of securing Carl Perkins funding, potentially amounting to millions over the next 20 years, crucial for enhancing workforce development at CMI.
 - 5.4.3.5. President Newnham provided an overview of Carl Perkins funding:



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

- Carl Perkins legislation was passed by the U.S. Congress approximately 60 years ago and is subject to reapportionment every 2 to 4 years.
- Certificates of completion at CMI are now Pell Grant eligible.
- While Perkins funding can currently be applied for through grants, full participation in Carl Perkins would allow for apportioned annual funding without reapplying, pending eligibility requirements.
- Perkins funding supports supplemental resources for workforce development and cannot be used to supplant existing program funds.
- Eligible expenses under Perkins include equipment, consultants, and curriculum support to enhance workforce development initiatives.
- Alignment with Carl Perkins would be consistent with CMI's Mission and RMI government priorities.
- A requirement of Carl Perkins participation includes the formation of advisory committees composed of subject matter experts who collaborate with faculty and staff on curriculum development and program planning.
- Long-term, this could provide millions of dollars in supplemental funding over 20 years for workforce development programs at CMI.

5.5. ACCJC Letter

5.5.1. President Newnham provided updates regarding interactions with ACCJC:

- 5.5.1.1. ACCJC expressed concerns regarding the institution following reports in the journal and PAC.
- 5.5.1.2. CMI provided detailed evidence addressing ACCJC's concerns related to compliance with the four accreditation standards and subsections.
- 5.5.1.3. ACCJC confirmed compliance on most standards but questioned the eligibility requirement number 5 related to ongoing institutional audits.
- 5.5.1.4. The President reported progress on the 2022 audit, stating most information has been uploaded to EY, with completion of a few remaining items pending.
- 5.5.1.5. Confirmed that upon successful upload of the 2023 trial balance to EY, the Ministry of Finance has agreed to release necessary operational funding for the current academic year.
- 5.5.1.6. Clarified that EY audit completion is not mandatory; however, the trial balance upload is required.
- 5.5.1.7. Informed the board that ACCJC is monitoring the ongoing investigation by the Auditor General's office and awaiting outcomes.
- 5.5.1.8. Attorney David Strauss indicated a draft of the Auditor General's investigation findings is nearing completion, and results will be communicated to ACCJC upon release.

5.6. Other Information

5.6.1. College Retreat - April 8 (MIR Poolside)



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

- 5.6.1.1. President Newnham announced that CMI will hold a College Retreat on April 8th at MIR and extended an invitation to the Board Chair to deliver opening remarks.
- 5.6.1.2. Emphasized the importance of Board visibility and engagement with the campus community.
- 5.6.1.3. Regents will continue to receive event notifications and are encouraged to attend, with recognition given during events to highlight active Board participation.

5.6.2. Foundation Day

- 5.6.2.1. President Newnham shared that CMI is targeting the third week of April for the Foundation Day or Week.
- 5.6.2.2. Stated that Regents, Ministers, and members of the Nitijela will be invited to campus for tours and Q&A sessions, highlighting the importance of promoting greater awareness and understanding of the College's mission and activities.
- 5.6.2.3. President Newnham shared that Foundation Day celebrates the official founding of CMI and is observed annually.
 - Emphasize that "CMI is your institution."

6. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

6.1. Board Training - March 21 & 24, 2025

- 6.1.1. President Newnham shared that Board Training is scheduled for Friday, the 21st, and Monday, the 24th, led by Bruce Leslie via in-person or on Zoom.
- 6.1.2. Training will cover roles and responsibilities, with sessions running from 9:00 AM to 4:30/5:00 PM, starting with breakfast and including dinner on Friday.
- 6.1.3. The training will focus on board roles and responsibilities, promoting cohesiveness and understanding between the Board and the President.
- 6.1.4. The President added that during Board meetings, SLT members will be present to provide reports or clarification when needed.
- 6.1.5. Regent Kabua announced a government-wide board training with Dr. Bruce Leslie on March 24–25 at ICC, covering topics like high-performing boards, strategic planning, and lessons from former board chairs.
 - 6.1.5.1. CMI Regents are welcome to attend, with refreshments provided.
- 6.1.6. Chair Kendall-Lekka inquired about Regents' availability to join the training online, noting several will be off-island.
 - 6.1.6.1. Noted Vice Chair Kijiner will join online.
 - 6.1.6.2. Regent Chong-Gum stated she will be off-island and likely without access.
 - 6.1.6.3. Regent Owens confirmed he will participate online.

6.2. Next Board Meeting - Proposed May 19, 2025

- 6.2.1. CMI Graduation - May 22, 2025



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

President Newnham proposed May 19 or 20, 2025, for the next Board meeting, ahead of the CMI Graduation on May 22, 2025.

- Noted that the Board must meet to certify graduates, including ABE program graduates, as required by policy.

7. BOR REQUESTS FOR FUTURE ITEMS AND INFORMATION

President Newnham thanked the Board for their service, encouraged questions to be directed through the Chair, and emphasized working together—like a canoe powered by students, faculty, and staff—for student success.

Regent Kabua inquired whether the Board Chair could call a Board meeting upon receipt of the Auditor General's report, once it is completed and submitted to the College.

Student Regent Joel requested a pre-graduation report for Board awareness.

- President Newnham noted a potential record of up to 300 graduates, highlighting efforts to remove barriers to student success and the impact on Pell-based funding.

Chair Kendall-Lekka expressed appreciation for the Board's confidence and shared that she looks forward to working with everyone through inclusive collaboration.

President Newnham shared that, per recent RMI government guidelines, CMI's current practice aligns with the policy: \$200 sitting fee for regular Board meetings and \$100 for special sessions.

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Meeting adjourned @ 11:24 AM

Scribe

Kelly Luce Sebastian,
Recording Secretary

Reviewed & Approved by

Meitaka Kendall-Lekka,
Chair, Board of Regents

May 19, 2025

Date Approved