



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 April 14, 2025

Members Present

Chair Meitaka Kendall-Lekka
Regent Kino Kabua
Regent Roanna Zackhras

Vice Chair Thomas Kijiner Jr.
Regent Jelton Anjain
Student Regent Wilmer Joel

Regent Julius Lucky
Regent Timothy Owens

Member Absent/Excused

Regent Dr. Yukiko Muller

Regent Morean S. Watak

Regent Katt Chonggum

CMI employees & others in attendance:

Dr. David A. Newnham, President

David Strauss, Legal Counsel

Jaston Anjain, Chief Investigator (Auditor-General)

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

The meeting was called to order @ 10:01 AM

Agenda Items

1. Opening prayer & Roll call and call to order
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Working Session
 - 3.1. Auditor General (AG) Update
 - 3.2. BOR Workshop follow-up and President's Action Plan
 - 3.3. Survey on the Grievance Procedure
 - 3.4. Proposed Meeting Schedules
4. BOR requests for future items and information

Minutes

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

Chair Kendall-Lekka commenced the BOR meeting at 10:01 AM.

Regent Owens led the opening prayer.



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2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

3. WORKING SESSION

3.1. Auditor General (AG) Update

The Board of Regents entered a closed session to discuss the AG update matters.

3.2. BOR Workshop follow-up and President's Action Plan

- 3.2.1. Chair Kendall-Lekka shared that the follow-up from the BOR workshop included an action plan for President Newnham, highlighting CMI's mission, values, and philosophy. Key areas included:
 - 3.2.1.1. Emphasizing CMI as the Nation's Community College.
 - 3.2.1.2. Reviewing the mission statement for clarity and conciseness.
 - 3.2.1.3. Combining and refining the college's values for simplicity.
- 3.2.2. President Newnham recommended that the Board prioritize reviewing the mission, vision, and values as part of the strategic plan revision, aiming to complete it by summer or early fall.
 - 3.2.2.1. Emphasized that the strategic plan would guide all other planning documents and his evaluation.
 - 3.2.2.2. Proposed training on "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People and Organizations," inspired by Dr. Leslie's recommendations, to enhance system processes and collaboration among faculty and staff.
- 3.2.3. Chair Kendall-Lekka agreed with the summary and noted that the list of tasks came from both the PAC report and the workshop, suggesting they be categorized into "President's Charges" and "Board Activities."
- 3.2.4. Regent Kabua proposed reorganizing the list for clarity, separating the President's charges from collaborative activities.
 - 3.2.4.1. President Newnham reported efforts with VPASA Switaj and the IR Director to use visual data (graphs instead of tables) for easier interpretation and decision-making.
 - 3.2.4.2. Chair Kendall-Lekka suggested revisiting the list for better clarity.
- 3.2.5. Chair Kendall-Lekka inquired about the status of audit schedules.
- 3.2.6. President Newnham reported that 2022 and 2023 trial balances have been uploaded to EY, with two auditors starting May 1.
 - 3.2.6.1. 2024 trial balances are nearly complete, with all audits expected to be up to date in five months.
 - 3.2.6.2. An agreement with Minister Paul will release \$1.5 million upon successful upload of 2023 trial balances.
- 3.2.7. Financial Update:
 - 3.2.7.1. CMI is experiencing cash flow challenges, with critical payments due, including \$123,000 to Fiji University and \$70,000 monthly for electricity.



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- 3.2.7.2. Efforts to move to electronic banking are stalled due to the Bank of Marshall Islands' limitations.
- 3.2.7.3. A 20% budget cut is implemented to stabilize finances.
- 3.2.8. Chair Kendall-Lekka emphasized ensuring FY 22 and FY 23 audits are completed within five months.
- 3.2.9. President Newnham proposed better financial reporting to track expenditure and budget status.
- 3.2.10. Regent Lucky inquired about item #18, questioning when there would be clarity on the allowable (consider removing the requirement for a high school diploma to take a degree program).
 - 3.2.10.1. Chair Kendall-Lekka clarified that item #18 involved exploring the removal of the high school diploma requirement for degree programs, as modeled by PCC.
 - 3.2.10.2. President Newnham stated that faculty are exploring models where students can take transfer-level courses with additional support instead of going through developmental education first.
 - Noted, this model has been successful in California.
 - 3.2.10.3. Student Regent Joel expressed concerns about fairness, considering the effort students put into earning diplomas.
- 3.2.11. Chair Kendall-Lekka emphasized that as a community college, CMI should consider accessibility for the entire community, especially outer islands and suggested further discussion on this.
 - 3.2.11.1. President Newnham supported exploring Adult Basic Education (ABE) pathways for students.
 - 3.2.11.2. Chair Kendall-Lekka concluded that further exploration and discussion are needed as the Board moves forward.

3.3. Survey on the Grievance Procedure

- 3.3.1. Chair Kendall-Lekka shared that President Newnham had circulated a draft of the Grievance Survey for review and asked for comments.
- 3.3.2. President Newnham reported that the survey was developed to assess participation and safety perceptions in the grievance process, following PAC Committee complaints.
 - 3.3.2.1. VPASA Switaj and the HR Director worked to create the survey, which received support from both the Academic Senate and Classified Senate.
 - 3.3.2.2. The survey will be released to the community in both English and Marshallese, targeting faculty and staff.
 - 3.3.2.3. It will be anonymous unless individuals choose to include their names.
 - 3.3.2.4. Data collection is expected to be completed and reported back to the Board by May 19th.
 - 3.3.2.5. This will help determine if the current policy is effective or if it needs to be revisited and retooled for better representation.
- 3.3.3. Chair Kendall-Lekka suggested adding a classification section to identify if respondents are faculty, staff, or students.



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- 3.3.4. President Newnham clarified that student grievance processes would be handled separately from this survey.

3.4. Proposed Meeting Schedules

- 3.4.1. Chair Kendall-Lekka introduced the proposed meeting schedules, highlighting the importance of establishing a timeline for meetings and working sessions.
 - 3.4.1.1. These working sessions are intended to cut costs and provide deeper discussions on critical issues like budget reviews.
- 3.4.2. President Newnham proposed formalizing a year-long meeting schedule to allow better planning and more effective working sessions for budget discussions and board approvals.
 - 3.4.2.1. Suggested preparing the 2026 calendar by August to streamline future planning.
 - 3.4.2.2. Working sessions would focus on in-depth discussions, allowing regular board meetings to be shorter and more focused on decisions and celebrations.
- 3.4.3. Regent Kabua agreed to trial the proposed schedule.
- 3.4.4. President Newnham added that the May 19th meeting would be primarily for approving the graduation list and suggested preparing the agenda two weeks in advance to improve readiness.

4. BOR REQUESTS FOR FUTURE ITEMS AND INFORMATION

- 4.1. Regent Kabua shared the need to continue discussions on updating the CMI Act, aiming for progress by August, and suggested revisiting the investment plan for CMI's endowment fund.
 - 4.1.1. President Newnham reported that Dan Ronald is ready to present the investment plan in May or during a working session.
 - 4.1.2. The Foundation Day Opening Ceremony is on April 28 at Arrak Campus, and expressed a desire to have board representation at all events.
- 4.2. President Newnham shared that the Mormon Church requested to rent Arrak Campus for a Young Single Adult Convention in July, and sought the Board's guidance regarding renting facilities to religious organizations and acknowledging the need for a rental policy and proposed developing one alongside a building naming policy.
 - 4.2.1. Vice Chair Kijiner suggested including a waiver for liability if the rental is approved.
 - 4.2.2. Regent Kabua noted that ICC is not open to religious organizations, but exceptions have been made with a Cabinet paper, citing the 2025 International Women's World Day of Prayer as an example.
- 4.3. President Newnham announced the annual departmental survey would be released this spring to gather feedback on business operations and informed the Board of Zoom training sessions for those who missed Dr. Leslie's session.



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- 4.4. Regent Kabua inquired about discussions with the National Security Office on police basic training.
 - 4.4.1. President Newnham reported meeting with Ambassador Paul about establishing a Safety Center at Arrak for police and fire training, potentially funded by the Australian Government.
 - 4.4.1.1. Noted that discussions on curriculum and consultants would continue, with the goal of integrating Short Pell opportunities.
- 4.5. Regent Lucky inquired about the Maritime model and its Pell Grant usage.
 - 4.5.1. President Newnham replied that it is currently funded by grants and not Pell Grants.
- 4.6. Chair Kendall-Lekka emphasized the need for transparency and more frequent public updates regarding Board activities and PAC report progress.
 - 4.6.1. President Newnham proposed weekly press releases of meeting minutes for transparency and suggested a PAC Report focus for the May 19th meeting.
 - 4.6.1.1. Acknowledged the importance of addressing the grievance process as a priority.
 - 4.6.2. Student Regent Joel requested that press releases be made available in both English and Marshallese and distributed to the press and on the college's social media.
- 4.7. Chair Kendall-Lekka noted President Newnham's upcoming travel to Pohnpei for a Land Grant meeting, and Vice Chair Kijiner questioned the categorization of the trip as Administration Leave rather than Official Duty.

5. EXECUTIVE SESSION

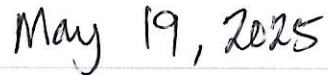
Meeting adjourned @ 12:15 PM


Scribe

Kelly Luce Sebastian,
Recording Secretary


Reviewed & Approved by

Meitaka Kendall-Lekka,
Chair, Board of Regents


Date Approved