



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

Regular Board of Regents Minutes - Approved March 3, 2025

Members Present

Chairperson Kathryn Relang

Regent Salome Andrike

Regent Marie Maddison

Vice-Chair Julius Lucky

Regent Kino Kabua

Student Regent Wilmer Joel

Regent Jelton Anjain

Regent Joe Lomae

Member Absent/Excused

Regent Melet Jatios

Regent Nimata Nakamura

Regent Benjamin Wakefield

CMI employees in attendance:

Dr. David A. Newnham, President

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

Stevenson Kotton, Vice President for Administrative and Business Affairs

Dr. Adedayo Ogunmokun, Vice President for Land Grant

Junior Benjamin, CMI Student

Line Elio, CMI Student

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

The meeting was called to order @ 2:15 PM

Agenda Items

1. Opening prayer & Roll call and call to order
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Reviewed of the last BOR meeting minutes - via online
 - 3.1. 241202 BOR Minutes
 - 3.2. 241227 BOR Minutes
 - 3.3. 250120 BOR Minutes
4. Board Chair Report
 - 4.1. 2025 National Legislative Summit
5. Student Story
6. President's Report & Accreditation Update
 - 6.1. Response to ACCJC
7. Standing Committee Reports
8. Report and Recommendations/Approvals/Action
 - 8.1. Midterm Report and Resolution to Endorse
 - 8.2. Certificate of Completion in Information Technology Support Level 1: Program Document, Budget, and Resolution to Approve (plus course outlines for information)



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- 8.3. Policy 333: Access, Retention, and Destruction of Student Records and Resolution to Approve
- 8.4. Revised Integrated Planning Manual and Resolution
- 8.5. Revised Chart of KPIs, ISS, and Stretch Goals
- 8.6. Concept Paper 2 Optional Supplemental Life Insurance for Parents and Parents-In-Law Life Insurance (PAPILLI) and Resolution
- 8.7. Policy 400 - 10.13 - Support for Employees Experiencing Domestic Violence and Resolution
- 8.8. Board Response to PAC
9. Matters for information
 - 9.1. Auditor General's Investigation
 - 9.2. Former President's House Renovation
 - 9.3. Board Training
 - 9.4. Outcomes of the President's Meeting with the Minister of MoFBPS
 - 9.5. Upcoming PICB and GLI convenings
 - 9.6. Upcoming 2025 ACCT Leadership Congress
10. BOR request for future items and information
11. Executive Session

Minutes

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

Chair Relang commenced the BOR meeting and officially called the meeting to order at 2:15 PM.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Regent Maddison made a motion to approve the Board's Agenda. Student Regent Joel seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. REVIEW OF THE LAST BOR MEETING MINUTES

- 3.1. The minutes for the BOR meetings held on December 05, 2023, and December 22, 2023, were [approved](#) via email.

4. BOARD CHAIR REPORT

- 4.1. Chair Relang updated on the 2025 National Legislative Summit (NLS):
 - 4.1.1. Significant uncertainty due to U.S. political and financial volatility.
 - 4.1.2. Difficulty advocating for higher education funding.
 - 4.1.3. Post-NLS "Dear Colleague" letter raised concerns over funding risks linked to DEI programs.
 - 4.1.4. Colleges encouraged to reassess DEI programs to avoid funding loss.
 - 4.1.5. Discussed grants and met with delegates and ambassadors.
- 4.2. President Newnham reported:
 - 4.2.1. Explained Perkins Funding, which supports workforce development programs at community colleges.



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- 4.2.2. Currently, CMI and COM-FSM are not eligible for Perkins Funding under recent compact terms.
- 4.2.3. Ambassador Charles and Congresswoman Kim for the Northern Mariana Islands are working to clarify and advocate for eligibility.
- 4.2.4. Efforts underway with Dr. Kelly and Hawaii representatives to secure Perkins Funding for CMI.
- 4.2.5. Clarified that the "Dear Colleague" letter primarily addresses equity concerns in college admissions.
- 4.3. Chair Relang also highlighted:
 - 4.3.1. Upcoming board training with a focus on advocacy.
 - 4.3.2. Encouraged trustees to use the ACCT Connect platform for training courses and resources.
 - 4.3.3. Emphasized the importance of workforce development and student tracking post-graduation.
 - 4.3.4. Suggested leveraging support from CNMI delegate and Ambassador Charles for advocacy efforts.
 - 4.3.5. Reminded board members to complete the survey from Colleen regarding training preferences by today's deadline and to contact Chair Relang if the email was not received.

5. STUDENT STORY

- 5.1. Student Regent Joel expressed gratitude to the Board Chair and acknowledged students Line Elio and Junior Benjamin:
 - 5.1.1. Line Elio shared her residence life experience, highlighting dorm security and proximity to classes but raised concerns about limited space, inadequate bathroom facilities, and water shortages.
 - 5.1.2. Junior Benjamin discussed dorm life at Uliga, praising the strong community, proximity to academic resources, and opportunities for independence and personal growth. However, he emphasized challenges such as excessive noise and limited living space, requesting board intervention to address these issues.
- 5.2. Regent Lucky, thanked students and inquired about the sufficiency of meal plans.
 - 5.2.1. Junior Benjamin (Student) shared that Uliga students have meal plans charged at the bookstore, split between Taste of Asia and Lucky Star. Allocation (\$300-350 per semester) typically runs out within two weeks.
 - 5.2.1.1. Noted Arrak students have breakfast and dinner provided, with meal plan usage primarily for lunch.
 - 5.2.2. VPBAA Kotton explained that there are four meal plan types, designed according to Pell grant availability.
 - 5.2.2.1. Suggested students use additional financial aid resources (FSEOG, work-study, RMI scholarships).
 - 5.2.2.2. Recommended financial literacy sessions due to students quickly exhausting meal funds.
 - 5.2.2.3. FSM students have separate government-backed funding; Ebeye students have specific scholarships available.



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- 5.3. Chair Relang requested dedicated scholarship information sessions for Ebeye students before arriving in Majuro.
 - 5.3.1. Asked about student awareness of scholarship opportunities and communication effectiveness.
- 5.4. Student Regent Joel noted scholarship announcements are typically via email, suggesting the need for clearer sessions on scholarships.
- 5.5. Regent Anjain emphasized the need for structured advisory sessions on scholarship applications.
 - 5.5.1. Questioned residence management regarding noise levels and availability of Resident Assistants (RAs).
- 5.6. VPASA Switaj confirmed that residence halls have coordinators and student RAs, with structured quiet hours and complaint channels.
- 5.7. Chair Relang highlighted persistent noise concerns despite designated quiet hours, questioning the coordinator's effectiveness.
- 5.8. Line Elio (Student) indicated noise originates both inside and outside the dorm rooms.
- 5.9. Junior Benjamin (Student) explained that RAs manage responsibilities but can become overwhelmed.
- 5.10. Regent Maddison suggested mentoring programs for freshmen to aid in adjustment and awareness of available resources.
- 5.11. Regent Lomae shared personal experience regarding meal funding and financial management challenges, supporting structured financial literacy initiatives.
- 5.12. Student Regent Joel proposed integrating grievance processes clearly into new student orientations.
- 5.13. Chair Relang concluded by thanking students and encouraged continuous dialogue through Student Regent Joel.

6. PRESIDENT'S REPORT & ACCREDITATION UPDATE

- 6.1. President Newnham presented and respectfully referred Regents to the detailed report in the folder for the meeting and happy to entertain questions: [PRESIDENT & SLT Qtr 1 Presentation](#)
- 6.2. President Newnham clarified that staff separation was due to contract expiry, with a grievance noted; mentioned further investigation
 - 6.2.1. Explained the distinction between complaints and grievances, emphasizing a safe and informed environment for faculty, staff, and students.
 - 6.2.2. Explained the difference between complaints and grievances, emphasizing a safe environment.
 - 6.2.3. Assured accreditation stability but stressed compliance and transparency regarding complaints.
 - 6.2.4. Noted hiring alternative auditing firms as an option, mentioning recommendations for external auditor training for RMI agencies using compact funding.
- 6.3. VPBAA Kotton discussed significant changes in audit requirements, highlighting challenges due to EY's procedures versus Deloitte's previous methods.
 - 6.3.1. Outlined the new reporting standards requiring additional staff training.



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- 6.3.2. Explained current auditing challenges and detailed plans for expediting audits by splitting work between in-house staff and consultants for fiscal years 2023 and 2024.
- 6.3.3. Identified EY's staffing shortages and emphasized the necessity of using globally recognized auditing firms for accreditation purposes.
- 6.4. VPASA Switaj confirmed that disciplinary committees involve faculty representation for grievance cases.
 - 6.4.1. Provided details on recent ACCJC interactions and responses to PAC report concerns, particularly the issue of delayed annual audits.
 - 6.4.2. Highlighted significant growth expected in BAEE program graduates, attributing success to effective departmental strategies.
- 6.5. Chair Relang suggested articulating corrective actions regarding audit delays to ACCJC.
 - 6.5.1. Recommended Land Grant presentations at major community events for increased visibility.
 - 6.5.2. VPLG Ogunmokun agreed to increase community outreach and detailed plans for researching edible seaweeds.
 - 6.5.3. Regent Lucky shared ongoing research on edible seaweeds at Laura, suggesting collaboration with Land Grant.
- 6.6. Chair Relang noted the delay in government funding (received only 2.5M of the approved 9.3M) contingent upon submitting the 2023 Trial Balance.
- 6.7. President Newnham outlined the strategy for completing audits (2022, 2023, and 2024) with offshore consultants and in-house staff.
 - 6.7.1. Shared possibility of simultaneous audits (2023 & 2024), pending confirmation from the Auditor General and EY.
- 6.8. Regent Andrike raised concerns from Chris regarding auditing process inefficiencies, suggesting potential benefits of hiring another auditing firm.
- 6.9. President Newnham & VPBAA Kotton acknowledged the current auditing challenges due to EY's different operational methods compared to Deloitte.
 - 6.9.1. Explained shifts in auditing requirements, causing delays, and highlighted training needs for staff.
- 6.10. VPBAA Kotton reported improvements in internal controls within the data system to prevent enrollment overrides and reporting mismatches between student services, financial aid, and the business office, along with staff training.
 - 6.10.1.
- 6.11. President Newnham deferred the report on the 1.5 million replenishment until audit completion for accuracy.

7. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

- 7.1. Finance/Risk Assessment/Audit Committee
 - 7.1.1. Chair Relang provided updates from the Finance/Risk Assessment/Audit Standing Committee Meeting:
 - 7.1.1.1. Reviewed recent Finance Committee discussions focused on the current budget status.



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- 7.1.1.2. Highlighted discrepancy between the approved budget and actual funds received.
- 7.1.1.3. Emphasized the need to closely monitor compact funding, noting full funding for quarter one has not yet been received, pending conditions from the Minister of Finance.
- 7.1.1.4. Explained ongoing efforts to implement a 20% budget reduction across departments due to lower Pell grant income from decreased enrollment.
- 7.1.1.5. Noted delays in receiving funds from restricted grants, particularly IQBE, Compact Maintenance, and Upward Bound.
- 7.1.1.6. Announced the drafting and upcoming review of the Investment Policy Strategy (IPS) document, which outlines the process for managing and selecting investment advisors.
- 7.1.1.7. Mentioned plans to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for investment advisory services, noting current services by Frank Armstrong under Wealth Enhancement Group.
- 7.1.1.8. Informed of the drafting of a concept paper to reestablish the 501(c)(3) organization to attract more global donations, allowing for tax-deductible contributions.
- 7.1.1.9. Reported current local investments at approximately \$2.2 million at the Bank of Marshall Islands, including contingency and maintenance funds.
- 7.1.1.10. Offshore investments reported by VPBAA Kotton currently stand at about \$2.7 million.
- 7.1.1.11. Confirmed expected completion of raffle collection by the end of the week.
- 7.1.2. VPASA Switaj provided an update on IQBE funding, noting approximately \$100K ready to be cleared and \$200K still requiring expenditure.
- 7.2. Academic & Student Affairs Committee
 - 7.2.1. Regent Maddison reported on the Academic/Student Affairs (ASA) committee meeting.
 - 7.2.1.1. Key discussion points included the Certificate of Completion in Information Technology Support Level 1, aiming to formalize existing practices documented and for board approval.
 - 7.2.1.2. Reviewed policy concerning the Access, Retention, and Destruction of Student Records.
 - 7.2.1.3. Highlighted continued challenges and opportunities within teacher education, especially in mathematics, noting improvements in English.
 - 7.2.1.4. Emphasized the importance of parental and community engagement for program success.
 - 7.2.2. VPASA Switaj detailed the mathematics education approach, including dedicated math labs combining digital and physical learning environments.
 - 7.2.2.1. Mentioned preliminary findings indicating positive impacts from CMI's associate and bachelor's degrees in teacher education based on a PSS study.



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- 7.2.2.2. Shared data from early indicators shows improved performance among students participating in math transition programs compared to previous years.
- 7.2.2.3. Explained findings from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, noting strengths in engagement and areas for improvement, particularly around academic challenge and higher-order thinking skills.
- 7.2.3. Regent Anjain shared an anecdotal experience from a STEM project demonstrating practical learning impacts on middle school students.
 - 7.2.3.1. Expressed openness to transferring committee responsibilities.
- 7.2.4. VPASA Switaj recalled previous successful STEM camp activities at CMI, emphasizing hands-on, project-based learning experiences.
- 7.2.5. Chair Relang clarified that board members may serve on multiple committees if desired, offering flexibility to members.
 - 7.2.5.1. Indicated that two items from the ASA committee require Board approval.
- 7.3. Strategic Planning Committee
 - 7.3.1. President Newnham shared that strategic planning is pending completion of Wapepe number 4 (institutional), expected to be ready by the next Board meeting.

8. REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS/APPROVALS

- 8.1. Midterm Report and Resolution to Endorse
 - 8.1.1. VPASA Switaj shared that the midterm report deadline is March 15.
 - 8.1.1.1. Expressed intention to upload the report at least one week before the deadline to address any potential issues.
 - 8.1.2. Chair Relang requested that the Board complete a review by the end of the week.
 - 8.1.2.1. Proposed to conduct an online approval endorsement thereafter.
- 8.2. Certificate of Completion in Information Technology Support Level 1: Program Document, Budget, and Resolution to Approve (plus course outlines for information)
 - 8.2.1. VPASA Switaj introduced the Certificate of Completion in Information Technology Support Level 1, including the program documents and conservative budget projections based on 15 full-time students.
 - 8.2.1.1. Anticipates enrollment numbers may exceed initial projections due to expressed student interest.
 - 8.2.1.2. Program development involved approximately one year with consultant support.
 - 8.2.1.3. Additional levels of certificates and degrees in this area are planned for future development.
 - 8.2.1.4. The Level 1 certificate is Pell Grant eligible.
 - 8.2.1.5. Also noted upcoming programs, including an Associate Degree in Marshall Studies and STEM focusing on climate change.



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- 8.2.1.6. A one-year Certificate in Accounting Clerkship, effectively addressing bookkeeping, is currently available as a program offering.

Regent Maddison moved to approve the Certificate of Completion in Information Technology Support Level 1 Resolution. Regent Lucky and Regent Kabua seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

- 8.3. Policy 333: Access, Retention, and Destruction of Student Records and Resolution to Approve
 - 8.3.1. VPASA Switaj introduced Policy 333: Access, Retention, and Destruction of Student Records, emphasizing its extensive review through participatory governance.
 - 8.3.1.1. The policy addresses recommendations from the last comprehensive review, including the digitization of student records.
 - 8.3.1.2. Establishes specific retention timelines: admissions records (2 years if not enrolled, 5 years post-graduation if enrolled), permanent retention for transcripts, 5 years for most academic records, and 7 years for financial records.

Regent Maddison moved to approve Policy 333: Access, Retention, and Destruction of Student Records Resolution. Student Regent Joel seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

- 8.4. Revised Integrated Planning Manual and Resolution

Regent Maddison moved to approve the Revised Policy 112: Policy on Policies Resolution. Regent Anjain seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

- 8.5. Revised Chart of KPIs, ISS, and Stretch Goals

The suggestion to defer the discussion on the Revised Chart of KPIs, ISS, and Stretch Goal to a separate special meeting was unanimously approved.

- 8.6. Concept Paper 2 Optional Supplemental Life Insurance for Parents and Parents-In-Law Life Insurance (PAPILLI) and Resolution

The suggestion to defer the discussion on Concept Paper 2 Optional Supplemental Life Insurance for Parents and Parents-In-Law Life Insurance (PAPILLI), and Resolution to a separate special meeting was unanimously approved.



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8.7. Policy 400 - 10.13 - Support for Employees Experiencing Domestic Violence and Resolution

The suggestion to defer the discussion on Policy 400 - 10.13 - Support for Employees Experiencing Domestic Violence and Resolution to a separate special meeting was unanimously approved.

8.8. Board Response to PAC

- 8.8.1. Chair Relang requested updates regarding the President's house renovation and related financial documentation.
- 8.8.2. President Newnham reported ongoing difficulties in clarifying renovation expenditures, totaling approximately \$144,000, due to invoices involving multiple entries and departments.
- 8.8.3. VPBAA Kotton explained reconciliation challenges arising from checks with multiple invoices, emphasizing discrepancies between checks and actual renovation costs.
- 8.8.4. Regent Andrike questioned the accounting procedures used for assigning expenses directly to specific accounts.
- 8.8.5. Discussion arose regarding delays in student refunds due to system changes and incomplete Pell applications. VPBAA Kotton and VPASA Switaj clarified steps being taken to address these issues proactively.
- 8.8.6. Regent Kabua requested clarification on unannounced increases in dormitory and utility fees and raised concerns regarding allegations of micromanagement and a toxic work environment.
- 8.8.7. President Newnham noted a low proportion of complaints relative to total employees, emphasizing efforts to address valid concerns constructively.
- 8.8.8. Chair Relang suggested that responses to allegations align closely with established policy and procedures, ensuring clarity in operational vs. governance roles.
- 8.8.9. VPBAA Kotton shared that staff leadership had approached management to clarify misunderstandings related to alleged workplace toxicity.
- 8.8.10. Regent Lomae emphasized that the complaints received by PAC might not reflect the unanimous sentiment among faculty and staff.
- 8.8.11. Chair Relang requested President Newnham to share an email from the Academic Senate, notifying the President that Senate Leadership would suspend their weekly meetings pending the RMI Nitijela's response to the PAC report.
 - 8.8.11.1. President Newnham shared his reply email urging the Senate to reconsider and maintain regular meetings to support student success.
 - Following the discussion, Chair Relang expressed concern and instructed President Newnham to continue engaging with the Academic Senate to address faculty concerns.
- 8.8.12. President Newnham sought Board guidance regarding the internal political dynamics affecting the response strategy.



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- 8.8.13. Regent Kabua and Chair Relang supported drafting a detailed and structured response to the PAC report, incorporating proactive steps taken by management.
- 8.8.14. Chair Relang indicated plans to recommend replacements for certain Board members, emphasizing a need for greater financial expertise.

9. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

- 9.1. Auditor General's Investigation
- 9.2. Former President's House Renovation
- 9.3. Board Training
- 9.4. Outcomes of the President's Meeting with the Minister of MoFBPS
- 9.5. Upcoming PICB and GLI convenings
- 9.6. Upcoming 2025 ACCT Leadership Congress

10. BOR REQUESTS FOR FUTURE ITEMS AND INFORMATION

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Meeting adjourned @ 6:04 PM

Signed by:

C1B15922CD0248A...

Scribe

Kelly Luce Sebastian,
Recording Secretary

Signed by:

7670BDE23BE74DC...

August 25, 2025

Reviewed & Approved by

Meitaka Kendall-Lekka,
Chair, Board of Regents

Date Approved