



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 October 15, 2025

Members Present

Interim Chair Thomas Kijiner Jr.
Regent Roanna Zackhras
Student Regent Willy J. Lebeau

Regent Jelton Anjain
Regent Dr. Yukiko Muller

Regent Julius Lucky
Regent Timothy Owens

Member Absent/Excused

Regent Morean S. Watak

Regent Katt Chonggum

Regent Kino Kabua

CMI employees and others in attendance:

Meitaka Kendall-Lekka, Interim President

Stevenson Kotton, Vice President for Administrative and Business Affairs

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

The meeting was called to order @ 10:04 AM

Agenda Items

1. Opening prayer & Roll call, and call to order
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Matters for information
 - 3.1. Staff Senate Questions for the Board of Regents
4. Matters for Discussions
 - 4.1. Housing
 - 4.2. RFP
 - 4.3. Hiring Committee
 - 4.4. Resolutions
5. Other Matters

Minutes

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

Interim Chair Kijiner commenced the BOR meeting and officially called the meeting to order at 10:04 AM.

Regent Owens led the opening prayer.



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2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Regent Lucky made a motion to approve the Board's Agenda. Regent Owens seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

- Staff Senate Questions for the Board of Regents
 - Interim Chair Kijiner and Regent Kabua met with the Staff Senate, who had requested clarification following President Newnham's resignation.
 - Since there's no precedent for direct Board-staff meetings, a small group of Regents represented the Board instead.
 - Staff raised eight questions, now under legal counsel review.
 - Interim Chair Kijiner explained that the Board was formed due to earlier concerns—not just the President's exit—including accreditation warning status and serious audit findings.
 - The meeting was constructive, and a follow-up may occur after the Board reviews and approves the legal counsel's responses.
 - Interim Chair Kijiner highlighted ongoing cash flow issues, noting that CMI's first-quarter drawdown of \$1.2 million is pending, despite efforts to expedite it with the Minister of PSS.
 - Regent Lucky requested clarity on recent cash flow concerns and asked if Interim President Kendall-Lekka could access and print P&L statements.
 - Interim President Kendall-Lekka explained that while CMI uses Microix and MIP, meaningful reports depend on data being fully entered and posted, and that she is still working to secure system access.
 - Interim Chair Kijiner emphasized the need for better financial visibility and proposed calling in the VP for Business Affairs for clarification.

4. MATTERS FOR DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Housing

- 4.1.1. Interim President Kendall-Lekka reported concerns from faculty facing rent hikes due to a new PSC law raising standard rates from \$850 to \$1,200.
 - 4.1.1.1. Many leases have expired, giving landlords the right to demand increases, with faculty/staff seeking assistance from CMI, and she requested updated housing contract data from HR.
 - 4.1.1.2. Regent Lucky noted that contracts should protect tenants.
- 4.1.2. Interim Chair Kijiner emphasized the urgency of supporting affected faculty/staff and proposed increasing CMI's housing ceiling to match the new PSC rate.
- 4.1.3. Regent Owens suggested CMI exit housing management entirely and instead provide a salary-based housing allowance, as done by other institutions.

The Board unanimously approved raising the housing allowance ceiling to \$1,200 effective October 1st, 2025, with further discussion on implementation mechanics and policy revision to follow.



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4.2. RFP

4.2.1. Interim Chair Kijiner stated the current RFP document for the presidential search is standard and previously used.

4.2.1.1. Suggested it be reviewed further by the Presidential Search Committee.

4.2.1.2. No major concerns were raised by the Board, but members may provide input when the committee meets.

4.3. Hiring Committee

4.3.1. Interim Chair Kijiner confirmed the agreed composition of the Presidential Search Committee, which includes:

4.3.1.1. Interim President Kendall-Lekka

4.3.1.2. VPLG Ogunmokun

4.3.1.3. Student Regent/SGA President Lebeau

4.3.1.4. Faculty VP Sinkey

4.3.1.5. Staff Senate President Maun

4.3.1.6. Regent Kabua or Regent Lucky

4.3.1.7. Interim Chair Kijiner

4.3.1.8. Community Rep. Jack Niedenthal

4.3.1.9. Community Rep. Hirobo Obeketang

4.3.2. A formal letter will notify members of the Presidential Search Committee's first meeting on Friday at 10 AM.

4.3.3. The committee will review RFPs and aim to complete the hiring process by January or February.

4.3.4. The Interim President remains in place per board resolution until a new president is appointed.

4.4. Resolutions

4.4.1. Interim President Kendall-Lekka reported that the resolution regarding her appointment has received a majority of signatures and needs to be posted on the CMI website and shared with the Minister.

4.4.1.1. Interim Chair Kijiner clarified that the appointment resolution has majority signatures; only Regent Kabua's is pending.

○ Interim Chair Kijiner and Interim President Kendall-Lekka won't sign due to legal counsel's advice on conflicts of interest.

4.4.1.2. Interim President Kendall-Lekka stressed the need to finalize the resolution so formal appointment letters can be issued to partners like PPEC, Land Grant, and ACCJC, as advised by legal counsel.

○ Interim Chair Kijiner confirmed the resolution is valid with majority signatures and instructed her to work with legal counsel to prepare and send the letters.

4.4.2. Interim President Kendall-Lekka noted there was another resolution needed regarding an MOU/MOA currently being circulated; VPBAA Kotton will clarify.

5. OTHER MATTERS



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- 5.1. The Board discussed the college's financial concerns in light of a recent memo from the VP for Business.
 - 5.1.1. As a result, all CMI-funded travel was suspended until further notice.
 - 5.1.2. The Interim President acknowledged the seriousness of the situation and committed to returning to the Board with recommended next steps.
 - 5.1.3. Additional matters related to accountability and internal operations were raised and acknowledged as part of the discussion.
- 5.2. Interim President Kendall-Lekka reported that the Faculty Senate had also requested to meet with the Board—originally before the Staff Senate—but the meeting had not yet occurred.
 - 5.2.1. Interim Chair Kijiner proposed that he and Regent Kabua meet with the Faculty Senate, just as they did with the Staff Senate, and report back to the Board.
 - 5.2.2. The meeting is scheduled for next Tuesday at 11 AM.
- 5.3. Interim Chair Kijiner shared that VPBAA Kotton had joined the meeting and noted that the Board was particularly interested in discussing two key matters: (1) The financial memo that had been circulated; and (2) Gaining a clear understanding from VPBAA Kotton of the college's overall financial status—specifically, what is affecting cash flow and what the bottom-line situation is for the institution.
 - 5.3.1. VPBAA Kotton briefed the Board on CMI's current financial situation, citing typical delays in cash flow at the start of the fiscal year and external factors like the U.S. government shutdown impacting grant drawdowns. While a \$300K Pell Grant draw is expected soon and a \$1.8M government subsidy is pending, CMI is currently relying on emergency funds. Payroll will be met, but Social Security payments are delayed, and overload pay for faculty is being addressed.
 - 5.3.2. Interim Chair Kijiner shared that the Board unanimously agreed to suspend all CMI-funded travel until finances stabilize, allowing only externally funded, mission-critical travel to proceed.
 - 5.3.3. Regent Owens questioned the delay in communicating CMI's financial issues, emphasizing student priorities and the need for earlier warnings.
 - 5.3.3.1. VPBAA Kotton reported that CMI has about \$3 million in savings and \$400,000 in current cash, with payroll covered for now.
 - A \$1.2 million government subsidy is pending, and \$300K in MISSA payments is overdue.
 - The situation was worsened by the U.S. government shutdown, which delayed grant funds.
 - The memo was issued to maintain transparency as competing financial demands emerged during the fiscal year transition.
 - 5.3.4. VPBAA Kotton reported that the College's cash flow buffer remains intact despite external impacts, maintaining a \$250,000 minimum and \$400,000 overall balance, with \$600,000 expected from the Government to support the next quarter.



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- 5.3.5. Also discussed using maintenance savings instead of the operating budget for facility and IT upgrades, noting the College's restricted savings with BOMI—\$800K in Contingency and about \$2.1M–\$2.2M in Maintenance—which require Board authorization for use.
- 5.4. VPBAA Kotton updated the Board on the Physical Plant generator, explaining delays in securing parts, reliance on manual backup generators, and the reassignment of Emil to assist due to his technical experience.
- 5.5. VPBAA Kotton requested Student Regent Lebeau to coordinate activity schedules with the Business Office for prioritization.

Meeting adjourned at 11:27 AM

Signed by:

C1B15922CD0248A...

Scribe

Kelly Luce Sebastian,
Recording Secretary

Signed by:

677F88DBF98E447...

Reviewed & Approved by

Thomas Kijiner, Jr.
Interim Chair, Board of Regents

May 18, 2026

Date Approved