



CMI

BOARD OF REGENTS

College of the Marshall Islands

Accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC)

P.O. Box 1258

Uliga Campus

Tel: (692) 625-3394/3291/4931

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Email: bor.regents@cmi.edu

Regular Board of Regents Minutes - Approved August 25, 2025

Members Present

Chair Meitaka Kendall-Lekka
Regent Kino Kabua
Regent Roanna Zackhras
Regent Dr. Yukiko Muller

Vice Chair Thomas Kijiner Jr.
Regent Jelton Anjain
Student Regent Willy J. Lebeau

Regent Julius Lucky
Regent Timothy Owens
Regent Katt Chonggum

Member Absent/Excused

Regent Morean S. Watak

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

The meeting was called to order @ 9:21 AM

Agenda Items

1. Opening prayer & Roll call, and call to order
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Review of the last BOR meeting minutes - Online Approval
 - 3.1. July 11, 2025, July 21, 2025, & August 11, 2025
4. Board Chair Report
5. President's Report & Accreditation Update
6. Standing Committee Reports
 - 6.1. Strategic Planning Committee - Election of a Chairperson, Regent Kijiner
7. Report and Recommendations/Approvals/Action
 - 7.1. Budget Portfolio FY 2025-2026 and Resolution
 - 7.2. Revised Chart of KPIs, ISS, and Stretch Goals Resolution
 - 7.3. Policy 400 - 10.13 - Support for Employees Experiencing Domestic Violence and Resolution
 - 7.4. DRAFT Policy 379 Academic Standing and Resolution
 - 7.5. CC ICS L2 - Program Curriculum, Courses, Program Budget Projections, and Resolution
 - 7.6. Draft CMI Endowment Fund Investment Policy Statement (IPS) and Resolution
 - 7.7. Change in Student Fees (Textbook Fees) Resolution



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8. Matters for information
 - 8.1. ACCT - 2025 ACCT Leadership Congress: October 22 - 25, New Orleans
 - 8.2. Asia Pacific Association for Fiduciary Studies ("APAFS") - Nov 17 - 21, Manila
 - 8.3. September 15, 2025 - Working Session & October 13, 2025 - Working Session
 - 8.3.1. 2025 Integrated Planning Manual and Resolution
9. BOR request for future items and information
10. Executive Session (Closed Session)
 - 10.1. President's Contract

Minutes

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

Chair Kendall-Lekka commenced the BOR meeting and officially called the meeting to order at 9:21 AM.

Regent Owens led the opening prayer.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Vice Chair Kijiner made a motion to approve the Board's Agenda. Regent Owens 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 March 3, 2025, July 11, 2025, July 21, 2025, & August 11, 2025, were [approved](#) online.
- 3.2.

4. BOARD CHAIR REPORT

- 4.1. Chair Kendall-Lekka reported that while the Finance and Academic Committees met last Friday, the Strategic Committee did not due to the ongoing absence of a chair, its second missed meeting.
 - 4.1.1. Chair Kendall-Lekka emphasized the need to appoint a chair for the Strategic Committee during today's meeting.
- 4.2. Finance Committee Meeting:
 - 4.2.1. Chair Kendall-Lekka reported that the Finance Standing Committee met and completed its agenda.
 - 4.2.1.1. The main new matter discussed was the proposed IT Policy and Procedure Handbook, including cybersecurity, social media policy, and CCTV.
 - 4.2.1.2. These items do not require immediate approval.
 - 4.2.1.3. Three resolutions needing Board action include: (1) the CMI Endowment Fund Investment Policy Statement (IPS), (2) reduction of textbook fees to a flat \$200 rate, and (3) the FY25-26 Budget Portfolio.
 - 4.2.2. Vice Chair Kijiner added that the committee endorsed the IT Policy due to its urgency and raised a question on the IPS regarding who would serve as the independent financial expert and whether the role would be compensated.



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- 4.2.3. Chair Kendall-Lekka emphasized the need to approve the three listed resolutions and acknowledged that remaining agenda items were not discussed due to time limits.
- 4.2.4. VPBAA Kotton confirmed that the committee ran out of time but suggested holding a special meeting to revisit AP/AR updates and other financial matters, noting that AP/AR changes weekly and new reports would be provided.
 - 4.2.4.1. Chair Kendall-Lekka supported this suggestion and noted pending documentation and unresolved items from prior meetings.
 - 4.2.4.2. Finance Chair Chong-Gum expressed no objection to calling another meeting.
- 4.3. Academic & Student Affairs Committee
 - 4.3.1. Chair Kendall-Lekka reported that the Academic & Student Affairs Committee reviewed revised KPIs, IESS, and stretch goals, along with a new Level 2 Certificate in STEM for Information and Computer Science, set for fall 2026.
 - 4.3.1.1. The committee also noted a record enrollment of 1,125 students.
 - 4.3.1.2. Several items, including the Academic Standing Policy and certificate program, are not urgent and can be reviewed before the November meeting or during the September working session.
- 4.4. Strategic Planning Committee
 - 4.4.1. Chair Kendall-Lekka reported that the Strategic Planning Committee did not meet due to a lack of quorum.
 - 4.4.1.1. Chair Kendall-Lekka and Regent Zackhras were present, as Regent Owens had to step out.
 - 4.4.1.2. The meeting was rescheduled to the September 15th working session, pending agreement from the rest of the Board of Regents.
 - 4.4.1.3. Chair Kendall-Lekka noted that the Mission statement may be ready for review at that session.
 - 4.4.2. Chair Kendall-Lekka also asked the Board to consider whether the current 1–3 PM back-to-back standing committee meetings are working or should be moved to mornings or separate days.
 - 4.4.2.1. Regent Owens preferred afternoon meetings due to stateside work.
 - 4.4.3. Vice Chair Kijiner suggested addressing the chairmanship of the Strategic Planning Committee first, calling it a critical step.
 - 4.4.3.1. Chair Kendall-Lekka mentioned she is already serving on the Finance and Academic Committees, but would be willing to be a member of the Strategic Planning Committee.
 - 4.4.3.2. Asked for volunteers to chair the committee.
 - 4.4.3.3. Regent Kabua stated she is a member and will commit to attending, but asked if another member would be willing to step up as Chair.
 - 4.4.3.4. Vice Chair Kijiner offered to join the Strategic Planning Committee and serve as Chair, despite not previously being a member.
 - 4.4.3.5. Chair Kendall-Lekka confirmed that Vice Chair Kijiner will serve as the Chairperson of the Strategic Planning Committee.



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- 4.5. Chair Kendall-Lekka noted key follow-up items from the PAC hearing remain pending, including reports on the President's housing and SLT compensation.
 - 4.5.1. President Newnham noted that legal counsel responded to an email regarding the SLT compensation inquiry and confirmed it's up to the Board's discretion to disclose, though salary data is already public on the website (excluding private contracts).
 - 4.5.2. Vice Chair Kijiner added that PAC can subpoena information if needed.
 - 4.5.3. Chair Kendall-Lekka referred the matter to the Finance Committee and reminded members to review July 11, 21, and August 11 minutes for pending tasks.
- 4.6. Chair Kendall-Lekka attended the 5th SGA Induction Ceremony at MIR and congratulated the 18 inducted students on behalf of the Board of Regents.

5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT & ACCREDITATION UPDATE

- 5.1. President Newnham presented and respectfully referred the Regents to the detailed report in the meeting folder and was happy to entertain questions: [PRESIDENT & SLT Qtr 1 Presentation](#)
- 5.2. Regent Kabua supported the proposed student activity, noting it can help students explore career paths. She asked about the 2.5 GPA requirement.
 - 5.2.1. VPASA Switaj explained it was set slightly above the 2.0 graduation minimum to motivate students without excluding those who may be struggling.
- 5.3. Regent Lucky supported the initiative but raised concerns about cost and capacity at NTC, asking for details on student numbers, weekly hours, and iPad expenses.
 - 5.3.1. President Newnham explained that the goal is to support 300 freshmen with a \$230K commitment from CMI, hoping for NTC support.
 - 5.3.1.1. He emphasized that the investment is recoverable through improved retention and enrollment.
 - 5.3.2. VPBAA Kotton clarified that the internship and iPad programs are separately funded, with iPads costing \$500–\$525, already covered under the textbook replacement budget.
- 5.4. Chair Kendall-Lekka asked for clarification on the internship program's eligibility, noting that students completing 30 credits are only midway through their studies and recommended prioritizing students closer to graduation, as many struggle to find employment afterward.
 - 5.4.1. President Newnham agreed that internships for near-graduates are important, especially in partnership with NTC.
 - 5.4.1.1. Emphasized that the proposed CMI Promise internship targets early persistence and is a budget commitment of \$230,000, which could be sustainable if student retention improves.
 - 5.4.2. Chair Kendall-Lekka inquired whether this internship would fall under CMI or NTC, citing prior collaborations where NTC supported students with transportation during internships.
 - 5.4.3. President Newnham clarified the internship would be under CMI but expressed interest in NTC's support and collaboration, including possible funding and guidance.



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- 5.5. Regent Chong-Gum supported the workforce internship component of the CMI Promise for its long-term benefits but expressed hesitation about the iPad distribution.
 - 5.5.1. Questioned the low 2.5 GPA requirement and raised concerns about the initiative's sustainability and high costs, suggesting it may be a short-term solution with future replacement expenses.
- 5.6. Regent Lucky clarified that CMI could support the first part of the initiative with the \$230,000 budget and emphasized collaboration with the counselors' office for internship coordination.
 - 5.6.1. President Newnham confirmed the amount is feasible within the budget due to rising enrollment trends, noting the urgency of addressing student persistence through timely initiatives.
- 5.7. Chair Kendall-Lekka expressed strong support for the CMI Promise initiative but raised concerns about current intern capacity, resource strain on payroll, and the college's readiness to support up to 300 interns.
 - 5.7.1. Encouraged collaboration with NTC and emphasized the need to consider operational capacity.
- 5.8. President Newnham requested that regents send their suggestions to the Board Chair for consolidation and follow-up.
 - 5.8.1. Plans to discuss feedback with SLT and constituent groups and follow up with Regent Lucky.
- 5.9. VPBAA Kotton noted this can be further discussed in the special Finance Committee meeting and mentioned ongoing cost-saving measures like digital textbooks.
 - 5.9.1. The initiative is also seen as a "safety net" for at-risk students to support retention.
- 5.10. President Newnham emphasized that the program addresses both financial hardship and academic motivation.
- 5.11. VPBAA Kotton added that the average student refund is \$800 for full-time students.
- 5.12. VPASA Switaj shared that program completion rates have improved and now match Palau's, which is seen as a positive achievement.
- 5.13. Regent Lucky inquired light-heartedly about edible seaweed, referencing personal experiences in the water.
- 5.14. VPLG Ogunmokun reported that the Agriculture 10x10 backyard gardening initiative provides fencing, supplies, and five vegetable varieties per setup.
 - 5.14.1. Progress was delayed due to funding, but new support from UNICEF should allow expansion.
 - 5.14.2. Notably, one participant expanded their plot from 10x10 to 10x30, now growing 11 different crops.
 - 5.14.3. Regent Lucky asked about the total setup cost and suggested seeking support from the Laura Farmers Association or grants.
 - 5.14.4. VPLG Ogunmokun clarified the program targets household gardens, not large farms, but welcomed funding support.
- 5.15. VPLG Ogunmokun shared that Tilapia is used in the Aquaponics system.
 - 5.15.1. Regent Lucky cautioned about its invasive nature and the need to prevent it from entering the ocean.
 - 5.15.2. President Newnham acknowledged this, noting Tilapia's fast breeding makes them ideal for aquaponics, but emphasized not releasing them into the ocean.



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- 5.16. VPBAA Kotton explained that individuals must physically be in the U.S. to apply for a U.S. Social Security number, per discussions with the U.S. Embassy.
 - 5.16.1. Regent Lucky questioned this, noting that in the U.S., applications can be submitted online and offered to contact someone for clarification.
 - 5.16.2. Student Regent Lebeau shared his personal experience—he applied online but was eventually required to visit the office in person.
- 5.17. VPBAA Kotton reported that EY's email has been forwarded to the Business Office, and the team is currently working closely with the audit fieldwork team on-site for the FY2023 audit.
 - 5.17.1. President Newnham clarified that while discussions with EY regarding the FY2024 audit have occurred, no formal engagement letter or official correspondence has been received.
 - 5.17.1.1. EY indicated interest in initiating FY2024 audit work after the FY2023 audit is completed.
 - 5.17.2. Vice Chair Kijiner emphasized the need to clarify publicly that the FY2024 audit is not yet officially engaged.
- 5.18. VPBAA Kotton reported that the integration of MIP modules improved workflow, particularly for timesheet and leave management, which was previously problematic using EWS.
 - 5.18.1. Staff, especially custodians and security, received training to address concerns about timesheet edits.
 - 5.18.2. The new system is transparent, showing who made changes and when.
 - 5.18.3. Chair Kendall-Lekka emphasized that proper entry verification should be the responsibility of the controller to avoid future adjustments.
 - 5.18.4. VPBAA Kotton clarified that this role falls under the Business Office Director and the General Accountant.

6. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

- 6.1. Chair Kendall-Lekka noted that all Standing Committee Reports were already covered during the Chair's earlier report.

7. REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS/APPROVALS

- 7.1. Budget Portfolio FY 2025-2026 and Resolution
 - 7.1.1. Chair Kendall-Lekka raised concerns about the budget resolution, referencing an unattached Exhibit A, and suggested including the budget figures directly in the resolution for transparency and recommended noting possible future adjustments with board approval.
 - 7.1.1.1. VPBAA Kotton explained that past boards preferred it as an attachment.
 - 7.1.1.2. President Newnham agreed it's possible to include summary figures and noted that adjustments may be needed based on future enrollment trends.
 - 7.1.2. Regent Kabua asked for updates before approval and inquired about the \$82,770 endowment contribution.
 - 7.1.2.1. VPBAA Kotton clarified:
 - The endowment was originally \$100,000, but was reduced due to government-wide general fund cuts.



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- The \$1.5M is a separate subsidy for restricted programs like Endowment, Distance Education, and previously Youth Corp (which was mistakenly removed but is now covered by CMI).
- 7.1.3. Regent Kabua raised concerns about a statement from the Appropriations Chair suggesting CMI hadn't strongly objected to the possible removal of "sin tax" support.
 - 7.1.3.1. VPASA Switaj clarified that CMI emphasized maintaining funding levels, regardless of the source.
 - 7.1.3.2. President Newnham explained that CMI never received a clear accounting of how much sin tax contributed.s
 - 7.1.3.3. VPBAA Kotton confirmed CMI has not seen sin tax revenue reports and noted the original law allocated \$2 million, now reduced to \$1.5 million.
 - Also pointed out that CMI wasn't invited to the public hearing, and there's confusion around oversight and distribution of funds under the law.
- 7.1.4. Chair Kendall-Lekka requested a clear report on CMI's various funding accounts—such as contingency, endowment, and maintenance funds—as board members, especially new ones, are unclear on account purposes and balances.
 - 7.1.4.1. Noted current balances mentioned by VPBAA Kotton (contingency - \$800K - 1M, endowment - 2.8M, and maintenance funds - 1.2M) and emphasized the need for transparency on how funds like the \$82,770 are allocated.
- 7.1.5. Regent Kabua offered to get clarification from the Finance Secretary and suggested inviting them to a future meeting.
- 7.1.6. VPBAA Kotton and VPASA Switaj reaffirmed that CMI's main concern is preserving its total government allocation, regardless of whether it comes from the sin tax.
- 7.1.7. Chair Kendall-Lekka expressed concern that it's now too late to contest the division of sin tax funds, due to a possible miscommunication where CMI was perceived as not needing the funding.
 - 7.1.7.1. Regent Kabua noted that others claimed CMI didn't object.
 - 7.1.7.2. President Newnham clarified that while CMI was not initially invited to comment on the cabinet paper regarding the sin tax, they did provide input after being asked.
- 7.1.8. Chair Kendall-Lekka noted time constraints and proposed either extending the meeting or reviewing resolutions—including the budget portfolio—online with individual comments and votes.
 - 7.1.8.1. VPBAA Kotton offered to revise and resend the resolution with allocation details.
 - 7.1.8.2. Vice Chair Kijiner suggested reconvening on Friday (August 29) at 9 AM to finalize unresolved items.
 - 7.1.8.3. Chair Kendall-Lekka agreed, acknowledging the urgency of completing the agenda.

Regent Lucky moved to continue the meeting on Friday, August 29, at 9 AM, beginning with reports and recommendations. The motion was approved.



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8. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

8.1. ACCT - 2025 ACCT Leadership Congress: October 22 - 25, New Orleans

8.2. Asia Pacific Association for Fiduciary Studies ("APAFS") - Nov 17 - 21, Manila

8.3. September 15, 2025 - Working Session & October 13, 2025 - Working Session

8.3.1. 2025 Integrated Planning Manual and Resolution

9. BOR REQUESTS FOR FUTURE ITEMS AND INFORMATION

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION (CLOSED SESSION)

10.1. President's Contract

Meeting adjourned at 12:19 PM

Signed by:

C1B15922CD0248A...

Scribe

Kelly Luce Sebastian,
Recording Secretary

Signed by:

A3557F9F5D3B46E...

Reviewed & Approved by

Meitaka Kendall-Lekka,
Chair, Board of Regents

February 20, 2026

Date Approved