RESPONSES TO ACCJC RECOMMENDATIONS SINCE 2004

College of Micronesia – FSM

COMMISSION CONCERN #1: COMMUNICATION UPDATES
The college should update the Commission on all work done since the Focused Midterm Report to continue to improve communication, providing evidence of those efforts. The college should systematically evaluate the effectiveness of the measures taken in order to facilitate a cycle of continued improvement of communication.

RECOMMENDATION #1: IMPROVE COMMUNICATION
The college must develop and implement a collaborative process that:
- *Includes faculty, staff, students, and administrators at the college's six sites (Standards IV.4, IVA, IVA.1, IVA2.a, IVA.2b, IVA. and IVB.2b),*
- *Identifies the roles and scope of authority of the faculty, staff, students, and administrators in the decision-making processes (Standards IVA, IVA.1, IVA.2, IVA.2a, IVA.2b, and IVA.),*
- *Identifies the roles and scope of authority of college committees in the decision-making processes (Standards IVA, IVA.1, IVA.2, IVA.2a, IVA.2b, and IVA.), includes dialogue as a means to develop, document, implement, and evaluate assessment plans for student learning outcomes in both instruction and student services (Standards IB.a, IB.5, IIA.1c, II B.4, and ilC.2), and*
- *Includes formal pathways for effective communication links so that information and recommendations are distributed across the college's six sites (Standards IVA.1, IVA.2, IVA., and IVB.2e).*

Resolution

The Board approved the COM-FSM Governance Policy at its December 2006 meeting. This policy defines the responsibilities of the president's cabinet, standing committees, sub-committees, and ad hoc committees which are designed to meet institutional needs and provide a conduit for communication within the system. The committees advise the president on matters relating to each committee's responsibilities.

The membership of all standing committees represents all sites and constituencies of the college community. All members have the responsibility of ensuring that communication within the system is frequent, thorough, clear and timely. The Faculty/Staff Senate and the Student Body Association appoint faculty, staff, and student representatives to the standing committees and other decision-making bodies. Others are appointed to committees based on their positions as outlined in the Governance Policy. Terms of Reference for each standing committee, which prescribe direct participation by faculty, staff, administrators, and students, were approved by the President's Cabinet in January 2008.

Section 5.0 of the governance policy stipulates that each state campus is to institute a management council, curriculum committee, student services committee, and personnel committee. State campus committees appoint at least one representative to the college's main standing committees. Representatives on these committees have responsibility for bringing the state campus faculty, staff, and student interests and concerns to the attention of the main standing committees and for bringing the issues that are under consideration of the main standing committees to the attention of the state campus community.

The president established a working group in the spring of 2008 to oversee the implementation and evaluation process of the governance policy. Training sessions were provided at all sites.

A series of annual retreats has been held since the spring of 2007. Documents from these retreats show that faculty, staff, administrators, students, and community stakeholders from all six sites examined the progress made on various components of the college's strategic plan and brought

forward ideas for institutional improvement. Minutes show that the results of retreat discussions and presentations were summarized and considered by the Planning and Resources Committee.

Given the limitations of resources of the college and the great distances between and among the college's six sites, the college relies on the availability of communications technology to ensure exchange of information within, between, and among sites. The college installed a voice-over-IP (VOIP) phone system at all sites, purchased and installed Elluminate intercampus communication software at all sites, established an online forum which can be accessed from all sites, and established a student information system (SIS), a web-based tool designed to provide accurate and timely information on students, courses, grades, progression, persistence, retention, and graduation to provide a foundation for evidence-based decision making at the college. The SIS is accessible at all sites.

In response to the recommendation from the 2004 comprehensive visit regarding communication, a communications working group was established, a series of evaluations of the organizational chart were made, and the adoption of decision and communication grids was recommended to improve the flow of communication. In March 2006 the board adopted a communications policy in response to the finding of a communications survey conducted in 2005 and 2006. This policy contains specific communications pathways and calls for the development of a communications improvement plan.

Analysis

In the spring of 2009 a total of 26 faculty, 62 staff, 162 students, 52 government workers, 9 parents, 28 business persons, and 27 "others" completed the Standard IV Survey on which they offered their opinions on the college, college administration, and the Board of Regents. (Further details of this survey can be found under Standard IV.) Results of the survey indicated that faculty, staff, and students agree that opportunities for involvement in the college's governance are made available. Faculty and staff also indicated that they participate in the work of the college's committees. However, there remains a need to provide feedback when contributions are made, especially to the faculty. External stakeholders appear to have less understanding of the workings of the college's committee structure. On this same survey, only 42.% of the faculty respondents agreed that '[t]he college clearly communicates its policies on governance procedure", while 57.7% disagreed. Although staff expressed a 66.2% agreement with the same statement, written comments point to the need for improvement. Only 30.7% of faculty survey respondents agreed that "[t]he college has effective communication". Comments point to concern that there is minimal communication between the faculty and the administration. Comments on an October 2009 satisfaction survey pointed to a concern regarding communication between and among the college's divisions.

Although the March 2009 Follow-up Report cites an increase in volume of VOIP connections, many times the parties connected are unable to hear one another clearly enough to communicate effectively. There is hope that Internet connectivity will improve once the undersea fiber optic cable is laid and connected in early 2010.

Through informal interviews with staff involved in the communications working group, it was learned that the communications improvement plan has yet to be finalized, formally implemented, and evaluated.

Additional Plans
- The college will finalize, implement, and evaluate its communications improvement plan. Such plan will include mechanisms to enhance communication throughout the system between and among the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students as well as the constituencies served by the college in the community with particular emphasis on providing feedback on the college's decision making process as well as enhancing communication within the various divisions of the college. The Vice President for Administration will assume the primary responsibility in the finalization, implementation and evaluation of this plan which will be implemented by the end of January 2010. Such efforts will be evaluated no later than one year from the time of implementation.