



Report to the Board of Regents



Office of the President

ACCESS. INNOVATION. RESILIENCE.

AUGUST 25 - 28, 2025, CHUUK



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Bale Theresa Koroivulaono, PhD
President/CEO, College of Micronesia-FSM

TEAM-BUILDING & CAPACITY-DEVELOPMENT



SLT Retreat II

The Senior Leadership Team held its second retreat on July 22 & 23, 2025 at the FSM Development Bank Training Room, facilitated by President Koroivulaono. As experienced with the first SLT Retreat on 8th May, SLT members welcomed the time to reflect and share both the challenges and successes in the previous two months.

Topics covered during the Retreat included 'Leadership Styles, Building Successful Teams' and 'Realigning Leadership Roles'. SLT members were also required to engage with scenario-type activities where they identified and evaluated their leadership styles, created team-building activities based on achieving COM-FSM's strategic goals and devised strategies to inspire optimal team performance and promote collaborative engagement across departments.

A key feature of the Retreat was the Institutional Researcher, Malintha Perera's presentation of the new strategic plan online monitoring system in Power BI. Discussions centered on ensuring that the system was secure, easy to navigate and captured the levels of information required to monitor and evaluate the **COM-FSM Strategic Plan 2025-2030** as authentically as possible in alignment with Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and Institutional Set Standards (ISS). Levels of access were also interrogated to ensure that accountability would remain key to the process. Overall, the presentation was received with appreciation and great anticipation for implementing the monitoring system to test its efficiency.

Planning for the next SLT Retreat is underway and will include members of the Management Team.



Figure 1: Institutional Researcher, Mr. Malintha Perera presenting the strategic plan online monitoring system on Power BI to SLT members at the July SLT Retreat.

COLLEGE INITIATIVES

Workforce Needs Assessment

Following the recruitment of the Workforce Needs Assessment (WNA) consultant, Dr. Marisa Crowder on 29th July, a review is underway on the proposed workforce needs assessment project activities and timelines with the Acting Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness & Quality Assurance, Mr. Gee Bing.

Co-Owner of the San Diego-based company, ElevatEd LLC, Dr. Crowder has extensive experience working in partnership with K-12 and institutions of higher education in Hawai'i, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) to strengthen their systemwide capacity in developing and piloting education initiatives related to college and career readiness, social and emotional learning, and culturally relevant education.

COM-FSM EDUCATIONAL MISSION

The College of Micronesia-FSM is a learner-centered institution of higher education that is committed to the success of the Federated States of Micronesia by providing academic and career & technical educational programs characterized by continuous improvement and best practices.

The WNA comprises three stages and each stage will yield a report with the relevant findings:

- **Stage 1:** The goal of Stage 1 will be to obtain a general understanding of the labor market in the FSM, by assessing the national readiness for conducting a workforce needs assessment and the potential for sustainability in monitoring workforce needs; and to obtain an understanding of the economic, political, and social characteristics that impact the labor market at national and sub-national levels.
- **Stage 2:** gain a deeper understanding of labor market needs for each state in the FSM by identifying the potential for future business and employment opportunities at the sub-national levels and to understand the school-to-work transition for alumni of COM-FSM and its six affiliated campuses.

Following the Stage 2 report, ElevatEd will meet with the COM-FSM partnership team to engage in a sector selection process. The purpose of this process is to identify a short list of sectors (formal and informal) that could inform changes to COM-FSM curricula and programming. Information that may be considered for the selection process include economic characteristics (e. g. contribution to the overall GDP, innovation potential), labor market needs (e. g. share of overall employment, employment growth, potential for certain groups), and institutional criteria (e. g. COM-FSM priorities and strategic planning).



Figure 2: Dr. Marisa Crowder (back row behind the Yapepe student dancers, 4th from left) at the REL Pacific Board meeting at the COM-FSM National Campus in Pohnpei, October 2023. Educators from the Micronesia region, American Samoa and Hawai'i attended the meeting.

- **Stage 3:** identify the gaps between workforce knowledge and skills and labor market needs within the identified sectors by understanding the opportunities and barriers to development and employment among businesses within each sector; identify current gaps in knowledge and skills between skill demand and supply and understand anticipated, long-term skill needs within each sector.

Each stage of the WNA Project is scheduled to take six months each with a total of eighteen months until project completion.

Note: The information provided above about the WNA Project has been extracted and adapted in part from the WNA Project Proposal submitted by ElevatEd.

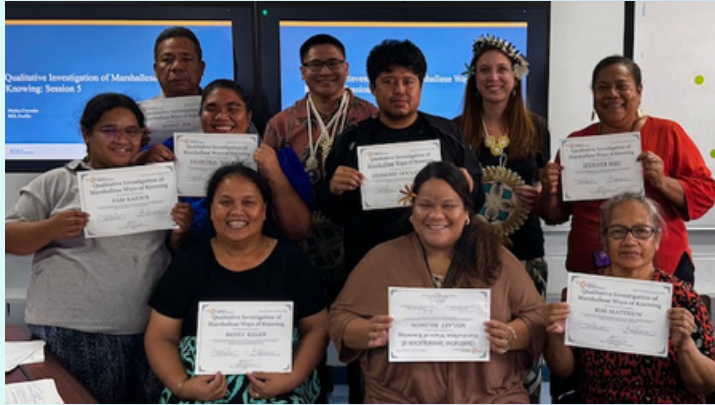


Figure 3: Dr. Marisa Crowder (back row: 2nd from right) with College of the Marshall Islands' instructors and Public School System staff who completed a research workshop in January 2025.

CURRICULUM REVIEW



Dr. Bradley Rentz, researcher and data scientist with comprehensive experience in managing and implementing research projects and teams in the Pacific region including the FSM, is the lead consultant for the Curriculum Review project at COMFSM. Dr. Rentz served as the Principal investigator for several large-scale federally-funded education research studies with K–12 and postsecondary partners including the following projects and initiatives:

- Led a portfolio of technical assistance projects with combined budgets over \$5 million (USD) across the Pacific region on a variety of topics including data use, Indigenous language education policy, Indigenous culture education, culturally sustaining instructional models, policy implementation, systemic change, quantitative research, principal professional learning, and college and career readiness.
- Principal investigator and lead analyst for impact and evaluation projects with education technology companies, K–12 education institutions, and other partners.
- Place lead for the Federated States of Micronesia for the U.S. Department of Education-funded Region 13 Comprehensive Center.
- Developed and led training initiatives to advance staff proficiency in research methodologies and programming.

As the FSM's only college of higher education, COM-FSM must ensure that the education delivered through its courses and programs meets workforce demands, fosters sustainable and climate-resilient economic practices, and sustains the nation's Indigenous linguistic and cultural practices. Consequently, the Curriculum Review project comprises four phases over a span of 24 months:

- **Phase 1:** Developing a logic model and theory of change.
- **Phase 2:** Reviewing current curriculum, classroom practices, and instructor professional learning.
- **Phase 3:** Planning for implementing a new curriculum.
- **Phase 4:** Piloting the new curriculum.



Figure 4: Dr. Bradley Rentz

In his project proposal Dr. Rentz stated unequivocally that, "Clear communication with COM–FSM stakeholders about the purposes and benefits of the project is critical to ensure its success. It is more likely that stakeholders will fully participate if they understand why this work is important".

Note: The information provided above about the Curriculum Review Project has been extracted and adapted in part from the Curriculum Review Project Proposal submitted by Dr. Rentz.

ACCREDITATION



The next Accreditation Report required by the Pacific Post-secondary Education Council (PPEC) is due for submission in December for the July–December 2025 period. The COM-FSM Mid-Term Report to ACCJC is due on March 15, 2027. The "next comprehensive review will begin with [the] Team ISER Review in the fall term of 2029 and conclude with a Focused Site Visit in the spring term of 2030". (Excerpt from the ACCJC Action Letter to the College of Micronesia-FSM following the Peer review Site Visit in March 2023).

As questions have arisen about accreditation standards in relation to college operations, email contact with our ACCJC Liaison, Ms. Melynne Schiel has provided clarity and direction. The most recent communication with Ms. Schiel took place on 13th August in an email from President Koroivulaono requesting the following clarification:

- Are we able to reinstate/reactivate a deleted program? If so, does it need to be reinstated as it was approved and does it need ACCJC approval? Can it be modified without ACCJC's approval?
- The Law Enforcement program was approved in 2003 and stopped appearing in the Catalog in 2013.

Ms. Schiel directed the college to the 'substantive change inquiry' form which Vice President for Instructional Affairs (VPIA) Delihna Ehmes filled out and submitted with the required documentation. The response from ACCJC two days later (on 15th August) confirmed that to reactivate the Law Enforcement program, a substantive change review was NOT required. Our communication and interactions with ACCJC through Ms. Schiel have been collegial, timely, instructional and productive.

Preparations for initiating the Mid-Term Report are scheduled to begin in November, 2025.

ACCREDITATION



(Updated August 18, 2025, for clarity).

###

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) is a federally recognized accrediting commission whose institutional accreditation is accepted as a reliable assurance of quality, allowing institutions of higher education access to federal financial aid. ACCJC is unique in its concentration on public and private two-year degree granting institutions, its geographic range, and its membership. Its current 138 public, non-profit, and for-profit member institutions span Arizona, California, Hawaii, New York, and the western Pacific and include the largest public higher education system in the US, serving 2 million students, and one of the nation's smallest colleges, with 28 students.

ACCJC supports its member institutions to advance educational quality and student learning and achievement. This collaboration fosters institutional excellence and continuous improvement through innovation, self-analysis, peer review, and application of standards.

Figure 5: Excerpt from an ACCJC press release on Student Achievement Dashboards and ROI Metric. Source: <https://accjc.org/announcement/student-achievement-dashboards-roi-metric/>

COM-FSM MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS AND SUICIDE PREVENTION



Figure 6: Mr. Pat Ryan

In July 2024, COM-FSM welcomed Specialist Mr. Pat Ryan for the first time in the area of Mental Health Awareness and Suicide Prevention. A seasoned clinical social worker trained in residential, school and outpatient settings, Mr. Ryan joins the college with extensive experience which includes individual and family therapy, behavioral management and effective intervention strategies and plans.

The primary objective for engaging a specialist in mental health awareness and suicide prevention is to 'enhance the capabilities of the college's counselors, faculty, and support staff in addressing mental health and suicide prevention, ensuring a comprehensive and effective response to mental health concerns.'

First steps

Initial research on the [history of suicide in the FSM](#) revealed a troubling past and a current crisis. Rates of suicide spiked at a rate of 30 per 100,000 in 1980, and 2019 World Health Organization (WHO) data showed the FSM with the 6th highest suicide rate in the world.

An assessment of mental health resources at COM-FSM and within the greater FSM community revealed a lack of a "safety-net" for those in emotional distress. At COM-FSM, the counseling team's primary role is academic advising and working with students with disciplinary citations. The counselors required training in mental health interventions. Resources in the greater FSM community also showed the need for improvement and enhancement; hospital emergency rooms do not admit patients struggling with suicidal ideation; there are limited psychiatrists (1) and therapists (0); and the state offices of behavioral health are focused on major mental illness. Basic mental health resources need to be strengthened before a suicide prevention program can be rolled out to the FSM and the COM-FSM communities.

Mr. Ryan conducted assessments in all six campuses including college and community resources for mental health and interviewed students, staff, and faculty at the National, CTEC, Yap, FMI, Chuuk, and Kosrae campuses. Engaging with students in the residence halls was particularly instructional in relation to their social and emotional needs when adjusting to college life and to Pohnpei for those from the other three States. The interviews also informed the types of training required for college counselors and other student services' staff.

This past year, work also focused on providing training to all COM-FSM counselors and outreach workers at the Pohnpei Office of Behavioral Health. Mr. Ryan also met with and secured an informal agreement with the offices of behavioral health in the four states to work together and to be a resource (backup) for COM-FSM counselors. Networking with Behavioral Health staff continues to strengthen collaborative partnerships that are critical to a collective and informed core of trained mental health and suicide prevention professionals.

[A suicide awareness and prevention training](#) developed by the University of Denver was adapted for COM-FSM and rolled out to the college counselors who were also trained in suicide assessment and working with students struggling with suicidal ideation. Procedures for resident hall and security staff assisting a student in emotional distress were developed. Once approved (through the college administrative processes), suicide prevention and awareness training will be rolled out to the residence hall and security staff.

Future goals

[Mental Health First Aid](#) (MHFA) is an evidence-based, accredited international six-hour training program with a curriculum tailored to the community. Many colleges in the U.S. require all faculty and staff to be MHFA certified. The college is collaborating with mental health leaders from the FSM, RMI, and Palau to establish a partnership to secure the necessary licenses for training individuals in MHFA across the three countries.

Advocacy work raising awareness of the suicide rate in the FSM with international aid organisations (WHO, UN, UNDP, UNICEF) led to interest in working to establish a national suicide crisis line (988 is the suicide hotline in the U.S. and Guam). Recognizing the immediate need for a suicide crisis line, the college is exploring an effective implementation model that can also be adapted for a future national crisis line.

COM-FSM MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS AND SUICIDE PREVENTION



Furthermore, the college is also exploring the possibility of offering certificate training at the college and to the community. Potential courses to formalize mental health training can be offered as certificates in:

- Suicide Awareness and Prevention;
- Assessing Suicidal Ideation and Working with Suicidal Ideation;
- Introduction to Counseling Strategies;
- Introduction to Mental Health Disorders;
- Collaboration to secure funding for Mental Health First Aid;
- Researching alcohol prevention and risk reduction; and
- Researching training for 988 suicide hotline operators.

Finally, work is starting on the plan for a mental health awareness conference to bring all stakeholders together including traditional, religious and community leaders with key government department leaders and specialists, Non-Government Organizations and interested parties. Initial interest is high as the college strengthens partnerships especially with mental health specialists within the FSM and across the Micronesian region.

Note: the information above has been adapted from a report submitted by Pat Ryan to the COMFSM Office of the President.

HUMAN RESOURCES

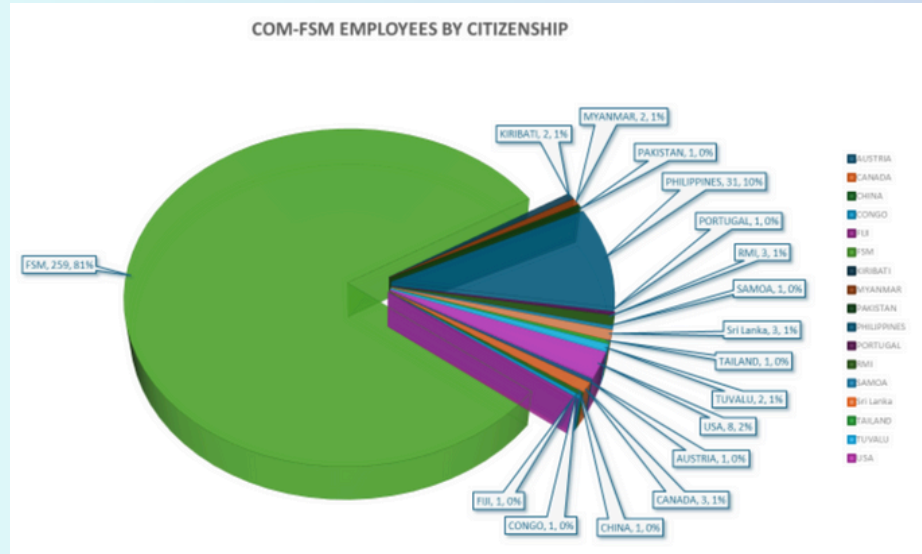


Figure 7: COM-FSM employees’ citizenship profile

Employees at the college continue to represent a wide diversity of countries across the world including colleagues from Africa, Asia, Europe, North America and the Pacific Islands’ region. Citizens of the FSM make up the largest number with 81% followed by the Philippines at 10% of all college employees. Although COM-FSM continues to experience challenges in employee retention, recent recruitment shows encouraging trends in expanding our diverse cultural base with researchers from Myanmar, Thailand and Pakistan. Faculty from as far away as the Congo, Austria, Portugal and China continue to make the FSM their home and to educate COM-FSM students and their communities in both the Arts and Science fields, and life-long learning alongside colleagues from the United States of America, Canada and the Pacific Islands region including the FSM.

Vacancies

One of COM-FSM’s biggest challenges in the last ten years has been the increasing number of vacancies. Since 2023 a slight decrease in the number of vacancies in the faculty is evident (Figure 6). Staff vacancies however showed a fluctuating trend with a reduction of approximately 29% between 2023 and 2024 and then a 10% increase in 2025 (Figure 8). The overall trend mirrors the fluctuating trend between 2023-2025 with an approximate 23% decrease in 2024 and then a slight 3% increase in 2025.

| Faculty | Chuuk | CTEC | National | Kosrae | Yap | FMI | Total |
|---------|-------|------|----------|--------|-----|-----|-------|
| FY2023 | 3 | 2 | 11 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 21 |
| FY2024 | 2 | 5 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 19 |
| FY2025 | 1 | 3 | 10 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 17 |

Figure 8: Faculty vacancies at each campus

| Staff | Management | Professional | Classified | Total |
|--------|------------|--------------|------------|-------|
| FY2023 | 8 | 26 | 21 | 55 |
| FY2024 | 4 | 15 | 20 | 39 |
| FY2025 | 6 | 22 | 15 | 43 |

Figure 9: Staff vacancies in the four position classifications

| Year | Faculty | Staff | TOTAL |
|--------|---------|-------|-------|
| FY2023 | 21 | 55 | 76 |
| FY2024 | 19 | 39 | 58 |
| FY2025 | 17 | 43 | 60 |

Figure 10: Total vacancies at COM-FSM , 2023-2025

Salaries and benefits that have not been reviewed and revised since 2010 are (anecdotally) attributed as a major contributing factor to employees leaving the college. (A dedicated study to identify talent retention and attrition would yield an informed, evidence-based report). The Personnel Audit in 2023 produced 14 recommendations including potential salary and benefits’ reviews. Without the required level of funding the Board endorsed the recommendations subject to funding availability.

Continuing with budget reprioritization activities started in September 2024, the SLT members are reviewing vacant positions and program activities in each department for relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and alignment with strategic goals to determine whether it should be and how it is funded. Additionally, salary levels are also being reviewed in direct relation to existing budgets and market demands to evaluate competitive salary placements. Working collaboratively across departments has also resulted in sharing resources (that otherwise would not be expended within a fiscal year) thereby maximizing fiscal prudence.

Performance development and review system

The revised performance development and review (PDR) system that was recommended as part of the Personnel Audit in 2023 was approved by the Board in April 2023. Delays in approval were largely attributed to the availability of funding to ensure that the revised increments and awards system would be sustainable.

Primarily the changes in the new PDR are designed to encourage and reward excellent performance and promote and ensure the sustainability of the college’s fiscal resources.

HUMAN RESOURCES



The biggest difference between the old and the new systems is that **rewards are awarded on the basis of sustained performance.**

Initial college-wide training by the Human Resources Office will start in September and is scheduled to end in mid-October, 2025. On-going training will also be scheduled.

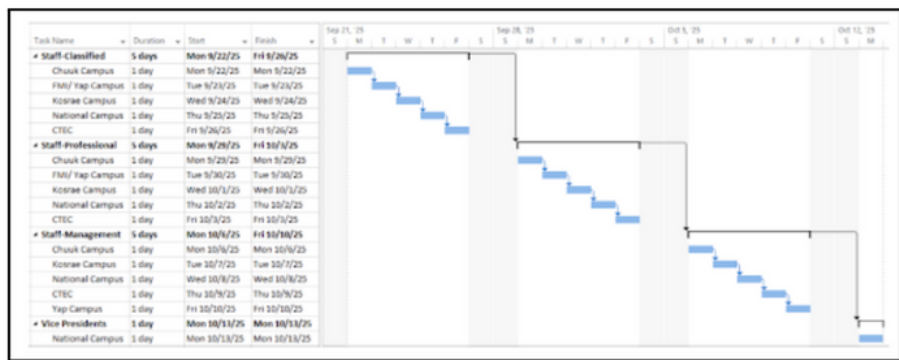


Figure 8: The PDR training schedule: September - October 2025.

INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT & EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (IAEA)

College of Micronesia-FSM
Alumni Network

ABOUT US NEWSROOM MEMBERS EVENTS GALLERY ENGAGE MOBILE APP

Welcome to
The Alumni Portal

Connect with your
Classmates, Share Memories,
Mentor Students and Seek Help
from your own & Powerful
Alumni Network

Register Now

Find & Share
Jobs & Internships

Locate
Alumni on Map

Alumni Business
Directory

Search Alumni
by Company

Figure 9: Web interface of the alumni network webpage.

Alumni Platform & Raffle Draw

- A key accomplishment has been the successful establishment of the Alumni Portal.

1. The Alumni Platform has been turned over to the IAEO, and Amy Santiago is currently updating the database. To promote the platform and encourage alumni participation, a special raffle draw has been scheduled for October 2025, with the following prizes:

- o Grand Prize: \$1,000
- o Second Prize: \$300
- o Third Prize: \$200

All alumni members who register and complete the registration form are eligible. Both new and updated information will be captured, verified, and integrated into the database

2. **Fundraising Campaign (Founding Day 2026)** A second raffle draw, along with other fundraising activities, is being planned to raise at least \$60,000 by April 1, 2026, in celebration of the College's Founding Day. We are seeking \$20,000 from the Board, of which, \$10,000 will be allocated to raffle prizes, (\$5,000 Grand, \$3,000 Second, \$2,000 Third) and seven consolation prizes will be provided by our loyal donors. The remaining \$10,000 will be deposited directly into the Endowment Fund as an additional Board contribution.



Figure 10 : Graphic layout of the COM-FSM Endowment Fund Raffle and Fun/Walk shirt.

3. Partnership with Medpharm & the Micronesia Computer Services (MCS) Medpharm has pledged to sponsor the next Fun Walk event by providing 200 t-shirts and bottled water for participants. MCS is unable to give sponsorship this year but donated \$1,000 in cash.

In preparation, both individualized and general solicitation letters, have been drafted. Guidance is also sought from the Board and Management on how best to re-energize and re-engage our donors, who have shown extraordinary generosity and patience—continuing their support for over 30 years, well beyond the original 20-year timeframe envisioned for celebrating the achievement of the \$20 million target.

Another year, another opportunity to rise.



"Celebrating the power of togetherness in our community."

Figure 11 : Team photo of the Endowment Fundraising Committee.

STUDENT FEATURE



Yap Student Choir at the FSM Expo

The 'Choir' class was offered for the first time at the Yap campus in summer 2025. Dr. Michael Muller, COM-FSM music instructor traveled to Yap from Pohnpei in June to teach 24 students. Over the next six weeks an exciting and inspiring transformation unfolded as the enthusiastic and engaged students demonstrated their diverse musical talents. Faced with six weeks of endless practice and voice training to become 'performance-ready' for the FSM Expo, the Choir class students showed an unparalleled commitment, dedication and excellence to learning under pressure. Many had never performed at an event like the FSM Expo.

Others had never sung as soloists as part of a choir ensemble. All of the students had never experienced the intensity of training required for a performance-ready choir who would sing the FSM National Anthem a capella, three original songs written and composed specifically for COM-FSM and two covers for encore performances as required. Memorizing the lyrics and achieving pitch-perfection required discipline and perseverance. In the week leading up to the Expo performance Musical Director, lyricist and composer, Dan Fox joined Dr. Muller and the Choir for the final rehearsals. To give the Choir members some 'performance practice' they offered Yap Campus two free concerts just days before the FSM Expo opening. The Student Lounge at Yap campus was filled with expectant students, staff and faculty eager to hear their 'new' choir perform. Video footage and photographs shared by those in attendance attest to the sheer joy, amazement and pride that the audience experienced as they applauded wholeheartedly after each song was performed.



Figure 12 : The Yap Student Choir at the FSM Expo (bottom left, top left & right). Dr. Michael Muller (with light-colored cap) and Musical Director, Mr. Dan Fox (with the beard) and two choir members (bottom right).

When the Yap Student Choir performed at the opening night of the FSM Expo, the impromptu monetary contributions led by the FSM Vice President, the Honorable Aren Palik resulting in the collection of almost \$500 paid fitting tribute to the exemplary performances of our students!

