

Board of Regents

Meeting Minutes

4 & 5 December 2025 | 8:30AM/1:00PM | Yap State

Zoom Link: <https://comfsm.zoom.us/j/3061339702?pwd=dnM3UmJKWW83V0JFdjhCNDNMbmVsUT09&omn=98242670202>

Meeting ID: 306 133 9702

Passcode: 133187

Members Present: Chair Suzanne L. Gallen (Pohnpei State); Vice-Chair Jeffrey Arnold (Chuuk State); Secretary & Treasurer Geraldine Mitagyow (Yap State); Regent Lynn Sonden (FSM National Government); and ex-officio member President & CEO Dr. Theresa Koroivulaono.

Additional Support/Invitees: Vice-President of Instructional Affairs Delihna Ehmes; Vice-President of Innovation & Sustainability Steven Young-Uhk; Vice-President of Enrolment, Management & Student Services Joey Oducado; Acting Vice-President of Institutional Effectiveness & Quality Assurance/HR Director Gee L. Bing; Dean of Yap and FSM-FMI Campuses Lourdes Robomon; Dean of CTEC Phyllis Silbanuz; Acting Dean of Chuuk Campus Genevy Samuel; Dean of Kosrae Campus Andrea Hadik; Comptroller Roselle B. Togonon; Executive Officer Lisa N. Dereas; SBA Representative Amayalyn Shoniber; and IT Consultant Dhiraj K. Bhartu.

1. Call to Order: 0900 the Chair opened the meeting asking for a moment of silence.
2. Opening Prayer: Delivered by the VPIA
3. Reading of the Mission Statement: Led by the SBA Rep
4. Roll Call; Declaration of Quorum: Called by Regent Geri. Four Regents are present with V-Chair joining virtually. Quorum was met.
5. Election of Officers: Moved to the Executive Session
6. Review of Agenda:
Note: Amend by adding Ch. 8 BP No. 8000
7. Approval of Minutes: Will be discussed at Executive Session on **Sunday, 7 December**.
 - a. 26- 29 August 2025, Board Meeting
8. Communications
 - i. **5 September:** COM-Land Grant Board of Regents Meeting
 - ii. **10 September:**
 - a. Meeting with Reitaku University Professor, Mr. Masaaki Matsushima
 - b. Courtesy call by Dr. Yimnang Golbuu (Dir. for Coral Resilience in the Micro-Poly Region)
 - iii. **23 September:** U.S. Ambassador and Sea Bees Team (VPIS was included in this meeting)
 - iii. **29 September – 4 October:** Screening of Dr. Nicole Yamase’s Film *Remathau*
 - iv. **8-9 October:** Board of Regents Retreat (facilitated by ACCT)
 - a. Pacific Post-secondary Education Council (PPEC)
 - v. **22-26 October:** ACCT Leadership Congress Conference
 - vi. **17-21 November:** 2025 Asia Pacific Fiduciary Studies (APAFS)

9. Regents' Reports

i. **Regent Sonden:** Touched briefly on how she is gradually settling into her role as a Regent, especially when it comes to talks of the College's budget. Thanked Dean Lourdes and the FSM-FMI cadets for the roles played during the repatriation of the late Sen. J. Urusemal - a long-time champion of education in the FSM. Informed the meeting that the College may be called in (by Congress) to justify why it needs two more members on the Board. Also mentioned the recent appointment of the Kosrae Regent, Mr. Steven George, who replaced the late Regent Lyndon Cornelius.

ii. **Regent Mitagyow:** Informed the meeting of the recent appointment of the Lt. Governor Francis Itimai as the new Governor of Yap State. Secretary Andrew Yatilman is now the new senator replacing the late Sen. Urusemal. Also directed our attention to the obvious movements of US military personnel due to the Chinese presence here in the region.

iii. **Chair Gallen:** Highlighted the recent COP30 - the importance of it for our country - reduction of the FSM's methane reduction roadmap - hopefully, this presentation can help with some funding for the country. The world's continuous attempt at reducing all the negative effects of climate change which the FSM is heavily involved in. The Chair also thanked the College for hosting Dr. Nicole Yamase's screening of her documentary "Remathau". An exemplary young scholar and individual for the youth of the FSM. She also introduced the Australian-sponsored UNICEF-led project called SPARK - allows schools, governments and other institutions to provide assisted technology to students with special needs. Chair Gallen highlighted the work of the Pohnpei Rotary Club for the capacity building efforts they continue to provide the community. The Chair also mentioned the SEEP - Governor visited Pearl City High School on O'ahu to filter their CTE activities.

Information purposes: 1) Challenge by Pohnpei State on the distribution of Compact shares; 2) new financial support by JICA; 3) Aviation school to be started in the FSM (initial talks have started - very early stage); and 4) use this opportunity to thank Yap State Campus for the warm welcome provided and everyone for the work contributed to the Board meeting.

10. President's (SLT) Report

a. President

The President's presentation "**Charting Transformational Journeys at COM-FSM**" highlights the College's mission, vision, and values, along with its six-campus system across the four FSM states. It provides national context by summarizing the FSM's economy and labor market, emphasizing the need for updated workforce data and stronger alignment between education and employment. Initial curriculum review findings show fluctuating enrollments, outdated resources, limited use of AI, and minimal incorporation of indigenous knowledge. The presentation contrasts the inherited Western education model with Micronesia's rich oral traditions and illustrates how indigenous ways of knowing, such as storytelling and traditional navigation can be meaningfully integrated into modern assessment and learning.

Technology and innovation are central themes, with COM-FSM expanding digital learning through interactive tools, VR/AR applications in nursing, and planned upgrades such as Moodle

AI, Moodle 5.0, H5P engagement tools, and the development of a Virtual Campus. Infrastructure modernization efforts include server upgrades, the creation of “SharkNet,” and enhanced visualization clusters to support simulations. The presentation concludes with the **Strategic Plan 2025–2030**, highlighting goals around access, innovation, and resilience, and positioning COM-FSM as a “College of the Future” grounded in culture while advancing into areas such as virtual learning, entrepreneurship, green economies, and ocean and land management.

b. Vice-President for Enrollment Management and Student Services

The VPEMSS report highlights the college’s key achievements and updates for Fall 2025 and early preparations for Spring 2026. COM-FSM will hold its joint 82nd Commencement Ceremony for Summer and Fall graduates, with 212 potential Fall completers and 56 Summer completers. Financial aid activity remains strong, with **\$2.67 million in Pell Grants awarded to 782 students**, alongside continued processing of awards. Over the past three years, the college has distributed more than **\$28 million in Pell funding**. Campus-based aid programs also remained active, with **158 students earning \$65,866 through Federal Work-Study** and 17 students receiving FSEOG support.

Enrollment for Fall 2025 totaled **1,704 students**, showing a slight decrease from Fall 2024, though some campuses—such as Kosrae and Chuuk—recorded notable growth. Early registration for Spring 2026 is progressing well, with **525 students already registered**, signaling stronger course-load planning.

Student services activities remain robust across campuses, including counseling, tutoring, mental health and wellness events, suicide prevention training, and career development activities. The National Campus health dispensary recorded **771 visits**, and campus-wide health screenings covered HIV/AIDS, leprosy, and Tuberculosis (TB).

Security and compliance efforts were also emphasized, with the college submitting its **2025 Campus Safety and Security Survey** well ahead of the deadline. Student Life showcased ongoing engagement through community service, cultural events, sports, and leadership activities, all contributing positively to student success and campus vibrancy.

i. Student Body Association Presentation (by SBA CTEC President, Amayalyn Shoniber)
The Student Body Association presented its comprehensive report, "Fostering Excellence and Equity for All Students," to the Board of Regents, highlighting student engagement activities across the National, CTEC, Kosrae, Yap, Chuuk, and FMI campuses, including community service, mental health awareness, and various campus events. The report noted significant improvements in the facilities for the Nursing and Trades and Technology programs. However, it also drew attention to specific challenges, such as the urgent need for new or improved facilities at the Chuuk Campus and the lack of a work-study program at the Fisheries and Maritime Institute.

c. Vice-President for Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Assurance

The VPIEQA reported significant progress in modernizing the College’s digital infrastructure, including major network and switch upgrades, Starlink deployment at multiple campuses, and

improved firewall and server systems. Academic technology was strengthened through continued Moodle 4.5 support, SIS upgrades, and the ongoing pilot of an AI system integrated with Moodle.

The IEQA expanded Power BI dashboards, including new graduation-rate reports, and launched a public-facing dashboard featuring enrollment, retention, and completion data. A college-wide data analysis training was also delivered in November.

The Workforce Development unit delivered mental health awareness and suicide-prevention trainings based on identified staff training needs.

The newly established Communications & Media Office has begun centralizing college communications, releasing the *Kamorale Sharks* newsletter, supporting coverage through Kaselehlie Press, managing promotions on the V6AH big screen, producing graphic materials, and expanding social media engagement across platforms.

d. Vice-President for Innovation & Sustainability

i. CRE Report

ii. Finance Report (presented by the Comptroller)

- At the recommendation of the Board, the Comptroller was directed to present the budget at \$16.6million to accommodate the financial needs of the College.
- Travel Policy Update: The Board has not decided on the Emergency Travel Change leaving it to the SLT to discuss and provide more details and justification. To be tabled until the next Board meeting.
- Salary Increase by 10% (presented by VPIS): to be in alignment with the SP25-30 KPI that “By 2030, COM-FSM will raise salaries by 30%.” Reasons for the adjustment are to retain employees, attract more employees, and improve living arrangements for employees, to name a few. This increment is for FY2026 with the forecast of another 5% in FY2027. The VPIS asked that the FY2026 increment be retroacted to 1 October 2025, if endorsed by the Board. The Chair expressed support, but with the condition that it does not have any negative impacts on student services. Chair’s question: “Can it be sustained?” Confirmed by the VPIS and the Comptroller that this adjustment can be sustained, the Board endorsed and approved the 10% increase in salaries for all employees within the Master Pay Scale. The increase will be retroacted to 1 October 2025.

iii. Raymond & James Financial Update by Jason Miyashita and Amanda Gima
3rd year on a double-digit growth. The US economy is still trending positive. Anticipating tariff adjustments with ongoing price adjustments taking into consideration the time of the year (holidays). The US government shutdown affected the markets (55% rate cuts); might have market movement of plus and minus 5%; cost of gas has gone down with oil being a saving grace.

Under performance seems to be the theme with most of the institute’s money managers with Lazard and Aristotle still on watch. R&J will provide recommendations for other options within the next quarter.

iv. PPMO Report

v. Facilities & Maintenance Report

- Preliminary L5 Property Assessment
- Preliminary NC Water Reservoirs (tanks) Assessment

vi. Resolution for Students' Unpaid Tuition

- The Board endorsed the proposed resolution and directed the VPIS to draft the background information on the resolution for future Board members and administrations.
- VPEMSS suggested to withhold the resolution until Fall 2026 providing relevant policies are amended and approved by the Board (at the next or later meeting). This will also provide the students or the College Community ample time.

e. Vice-President for Instructional Affairs

Based on VPIA's presentation to the Board of Regents in December 2025, the following is a summary of key updates for the College and wider community:

Significant progress has been made in academic development and student achievement. The "21st Century Curriculum Project" is currently underway, and the scheduling for the Spring 2026 semester has already been completed. Assessment results reveal strong performance across learning modalities, with a combined student success rate of 84% for Face-to-Face and Distance Learning students. Additionally, several programs achieved 100% outcomes. To further support student learning, the Learning Resource Center (LRC) has upgraded its facilities with new furniture and equipment to enhance daily operations and student comfort, while the library collection has expanded to over 112,500 volumes.

Faculty and staff have been actively engaged in professional development and international programs. Notable activities include participation in an Education Policy Seminar in China and an exchange program with Tokyo Metropolitan University (TMU) focused on STEM and safety training. Instructors also attended key conferences such as the Teaching Professor Conference on AI in Education to explore ethical AI applications, the Regional Language Arts Conference, and mental health awareness training to better support student well-being.

Community engagement and campus partnerships remain a strong priority across all campuses. Kosrae Campus hosted a "Kick-Off Field Day" with 90% student participation and conducted courtesy visits to local government and health agencies to bolster support for Dual Enrollment and the CNA program. At the CTEC Campus, 154 Pell awards were disbursed, and the Cooperative Research and Extension (CRE) department served over 353 clients in areas such as food security and health. Chuuk Campus engaged the community through a World Diabetic Day event, while new workforce collaborations are expanding, including nursing courses in Chuuk and a proposed extension of the CNA program to Kosrae.

Finally, the College honors the memory of two late colleagues who left a lasting impact on the community. Mrs. Crystal Jackson Joab is recognized for her dedication to student wellness and support, while Mrs. Dernita Iehsi Clark is remembered for her commitment to Upward Bound students, their parents, and the broader community.

Old Business

- a. Review of Chapter 6 (Human Resources) Policies
 - i. **Board Policy No. 6005 – Positions and Classes of Positions**
 - ii. **Board Policy No. 6006 – Kinds of Positions and Appointments**
These policies were presented as is with no changes. Endorsed by the Board. PASSED.

11. New Business

- a. FY2026 Operations Budget
 - i. Consolidated FY 2026 Operations Budget
The budget as presented by VPIS and the Comptroller was endorsed by the Board. PASSED.
 - ii. Auxiliary budget (Bookstore & Dining Hall)
 - a. Bookstore: \$131,491
 - b. Dining Hall: \$131,491*The decrease reflects future changes and is contingent on the number of students enrolled. The board endorsed the proposed budget. PASSED.*
- b. FY2027 FSM-FMI Budget
The budget (FY2026) was decreased to \$850,000. The College is asking the Board to approve the normal amount of \$934,999 for FY2027. The increase is for FT Faculty members, the implementation of Class 4 to accommodate trainees from other states - travel funds. The board endorsed the proposed budgets. PASSED.
- c. FY2027 Board of Regents Budget
To increase from \$120,000 to \$150,000. Will be needed in the event the two more future regents join the Board. Endorsed by the Board. PASSED.
- d. Review of Chapter 1 (Board Policies) Policies
 - i. **Board Policy No. 1310 – Board Meeting** (to be presented by VPEMSS)
 - ii. **Board Policy No. 1311 – Notice of Meetings and Agenda** (to be presented by VPEMSS)
The amendments are: format, language and title as the old policies were based on the old Board by-laws. The policies need to be consistent with Article 4 of the new Board by-laws approved earlier this year and the relevant FSM laws (7-79; 8-44). Policies endorsed by the Board. PASSED.
- e. Review of Chapter 3 (Instructional Affairs) Policies
 - i. **Board Policy No. 3114 – Repeats Policy**
 - ii. **Board Policy No. 3115 – Incompletes Policy**
 - iii. **Board Policy No. 3301 – Class Size Policy**
The Board endorsed the proposed amendments to the Chapter 3 policies. PASSED.
- f. Review of Chapter 4 (Student Services) Policies
 - i. **Board Policy No. 4903 – Student Complaint**
 - ii. **Board Policy No. 4904 – Chewing Betel Nut**
 - iii. **Board Policy No. 4905 – Alcohol**
 - iv. **Board Policy No. 4906 – Illicit Drugs**
The recommended changes are clarifications on terms and its definitions, as well as language updates. The board endorsed the recommendations. PASSED.

- g. Review of Chapter 6 (Human Resources) Policies
 - i. **Board Policy No. 6008 – Employment Contract**
 - ii. **Board Policy No. 6010 - Leave**
 - iii. **Board Policy No. 6011 – Optional Benefits**
 - iv. **Board Policy No. 6014 – Institutional Benefits**

BP Nos 6008, 6011 & 6014 are presented AS IS with no recommended changes.

*BP No. 6010: new language; delete approved hours to be carried over to 320hrs and it will remain at this each year the individual is employed with the College. The number of hours to be paid out is going to be 240hrs. No employees will take leave during their out-going period. The Board endorsed the recommendations. **PASSED.***

- h. Review of Chapter 7(Maintenance) Policies

- i. **Board Policy No. 7001 - Facilities Operation & Maintenance Fund**
- ii. **Board Policy No. 7007 - FSM China Friendship Sports Center**

The Board approved the VPIS taking back BP No. 7001 for further review by the relevant committees.

*The Board also approved the endorsement of BP No. 7007 - proposed language due to newly proposed fees for the use of College facilities. **PASSED.***

- i. Review of Chapter 8 (IT) Policies

- i. **Board Policy No. 8000 - Technology Fee**

*The Board endorsed the recommended changes. **PASSED.***

- j. Program Modification

- i. Associate of Arts in Micronesian Studies

*Delete the 5th program learning outcome because of the word “appreciate”. Instructors in the program, overtime, have found that it is very difficult to assess that word. The Board endorsed the proposed changes. **PASSED.***

12. Miscellaneous

- i. BP No. 1490 - Endowment Fund (consolidated EF policies)
- ii. There might be a Special Meeting (Congress) in January 2026.
- iii. Land Grant Meeting is the week of the 19th of January 2026

13. Executive Session

- a. Evaluation of the President/CEO
- b. Board Self-Assessment

Items a & b to be discussed on Sunday, 7 December in Guam

14. Next Meeting: April 2026 (TBC)

15. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 2:50pm on 5 December 2026.

****Action Item**