



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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

This report highlights selected initiatives and reports from the Office of the President in the following period: April 11 - May 29, 2026.

### BUDGET HEARINGS

#### Education Committee

The COM-FSM hearing by the Education Committee took place on May 14, 2026. The College team was led by Chair Sonden, accompanied by President Koroivulaono, VPIA Delihna Ehmes, Acting VPIEQA Gee Bing, Acting Comptroller Angelica Festijo and Administrative Assistant to the VPIS, Sinobu Lebehn.

The requested college budget for FY2027 was approved at the Board of Regents' meeting in April 2026. The submission of \$17,156,133 was presented as shown below in the table from FY2023-2027. The requested budgets over the 4-year period show an increase of 28% overall. However, the actual budgets show an increase of just 17% in the same time frame. As a result, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is challenged with and continues to interrogate ways to "do more with less".

Questions by the Education Committee focused on potential program improvements and expansions, efforts by the college to explore new sources of funding for the Endowment and encouragement to form more partnerships especially in relation to additional funding sources.

In answer to a question asked by a Committee member in relation to 'how can the Government help COM-FSM', President Koroivulaono suggested that the Government might consider matching salaries in the private sector for new college graduates. For example if a new college graduate is being offered \$2/hour, the Government could match this rate with \$2 bringing the total hourly rate to \$4/hour. This incentive will also contribute to encouraging graduates to stay and work in the FSM if they are seeking employment.

There were also questions about the Fisheries & Maritime Institute (FMI) expired lease and the change of lessee from the National Government through Transportation Communications & Infrastructure (TC&I) to COM-FSM. Discussions are ongoing as the current FMI lease arrears total \$120,000.

The overview of the college presentation is provided below:

- Budget Overview;
- Highlighted initiatives;
- Enrollment trends and student success highlights;
- Overview of COM-FSM's Strategic Plan 2025-2030: KPIs for the three strategic goals: Access, Innovation and Resilience.

The college has yet to be informed about any updates or progress in relation to the FY2027 budget submissions.

**Congressional Education Committee**  
Chair: Senator Merlynn Abello-Alfonso  
Members: Senator Yoslyn Sigrah;  
Senator Perpetua Konman; Senator Andrew Yatilman.

### 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.

SOURCE	FY2023		FY2024		FY2025		FY2026		FY2027	
	Budget Requested	Actual	Budget Requested	Actual	Budget Requested	Actual	Budget Requested	Actual	Budget Requested	Approved
COMPACT	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	4,018,539	4,018,539	5,018,539	7,018,539	
FSM govt.	4,000,000	3,000,000	6,704,276	2,000,000	7,058,451	-	4,539,912	-	1,500,000	
Tuition/Fees	7,384,226	8,081,331	8,837,172	8,481,564	8,529,276	8,529,276	8,529,276	8,529,276	8,637,594	
Cash Reserves	-	-	-	1,000,000	-	-	-	-	-	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,384,226</b>	<b>12,081,331</b>	<b>16,541,448</b>	<b>12,481,564</b>	<b>16,587,727</b>	<b>12,547,815</b>	<b>17,087,727</b>	<b>14,547,815</b>	<b>17,156,133</b>	

Table 1: FY2023-FY2027 requested and actual COM-FSM Budgets

### TRANSFORMING THE COLLEGE OF MICRONESIA-FSM

#### I. Navigating the Headwinds facing Higher Education

As part of continuing initiatives to transform education at COM-FSM Dr. Lee Ullmann from the American University in Washington D. C. met with college faculty, the National Department of Education and the Pohnpei Chamber of Commerce from May 12 - May 14, 2026. Ullmann's presentation to the faculty on May 12 focused on



Figure 1: Dr. Lee Ullmann

'Return on Investment' (ROI), Student as 'Customer' and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to underscore that rapid CHANGE is inevitable in 21<sup>st</sup> century education. Dr. Ullmann challenged faculty members with reconceptualizing students as "customers" who were now asking educators 'what do I get for the money that I pay to be educated?' The three main themes were presented as leitmotifs[1] in the following presentation slide.

[1] A leitmotif is a recurring musical, thematic, or narrative element that is consistently associated with a specific character, place idea or situation.

THREE THEMES FOR TODAY

Leitmotifs

Education & ROI

Is Higher Education still worth the investment?

Student as "Customer"

The shifting faculty-student dynamic

AI & Jobs

The next typhoon

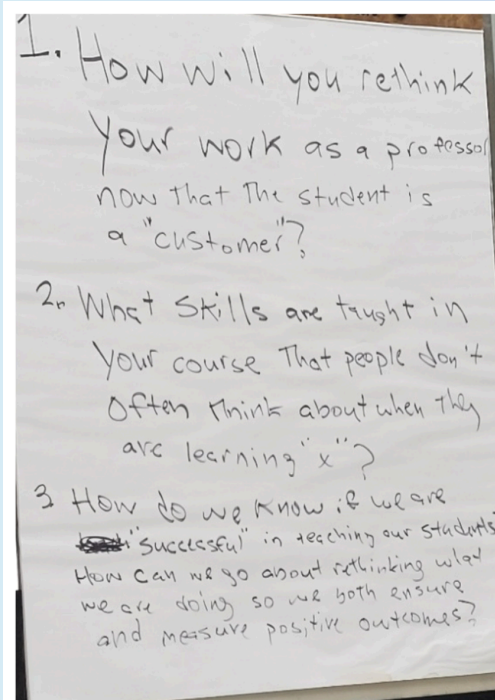
Figure 2: The Leitmotifs slide from Dr. Ullmann's presentation

[1] A leitmotif is a recurring musical, thematic, or narrative element that is consistently associated with a specific character, place idea or situation.

**CONTINUATION FROM PAGE 1**

Faculty members from the National and CTEC campuses gathered in the MITC conference space for a thought-provoking, engaging and instructional presentation followed by a workshop to unpack the challenges outlined in the presentation for 21<sup>st</sup> century educators. Faculty at the State campuses also attended through zoom. The three questions that formed the basis of discussion are provided as follows (and in the image in Figure 3).

- How will you rethink your work as a professor now that the student is a "customer"?
- What skills are taught in your course that people don't often think about when they are learning "x"?
- How do we know if we are "successful" in teaching our students? How can we go about "rethinking" what we are doing so we both ensure and measure positive outcomes?



**Figure 3: The Workshop questions**

Furthermore, instead of "learning outcomes" a more relevant approach to reflect the required changes in learning and teaching would be to use "learning skills outcomes".

On 13<sup>th</sup> May Dr. Ullmann and President Koroivulaono met with the National Department of Education represented by Honorable Secretary Gardenia Aisek, Assistant Secretaries Wayne Mendiola and Miyai Kellar and other members of the NDOE team. In the ensuing discussions Dr. Ullmann introduced the three themes shared with the COM-FSM faculty and focused particularly on the leadership roles that a national department of education could take in championing 'change' in the school system. Teacher training, expanded and broad-ranging partnerships with community leaders and entities, the private sector and other government departments were key areas for revision and reconfiguration. The discussions on Artificial Intelligence generated great interest with questions from the NDOE Team on the ethics surrounding the use of AI especially by students and the need to rethink classroom teaching and assessment. Managing the implementation of AI would also require initiating a policy and establishing a structural framework (system-wide) for teacher training, resource allocation and curriculum reviews.

The final meeting with Dr. Ullmann took place on 14<sup>th</sup> May with the Pohnpei State Chamber of Commerce (see the report below entitled, "Re-establishing connections and partnerships").

A summary of Dr. Ullmann's credentials as stated on the American University website reads as follows:

*He worked in higher education roles for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), EducationUSA a network of the U.S. State Department in Chile, served as a faculty member at Columbia University, and worked as a consultant in the e-learning sector to help build artificial intelligence software for pharmaceutical companies and databases for museums and schools.*

Currently, Dr. Ullmann serves as the Senior Director, Strategic Partnerships & Career Services at the American University."



**Figure 4: Faculty members in the workshop session at the MITC conference space, National Campus**



**Figure 5: Dr. Ullmann in discussions with the Pohnpei State Chamber of Commerce: L-R:Yuko Nakasone (INS Enterprises); Ron Pangelinan (A&P Enterprises Inc.); Christopher Alfonso (Genesis); Max Iriarte (Black Sand Corp); Richie Adams (ACE Hardware/Office Supplies); Dr. Lee Ullmann.**

## II. Re-establishing connections and partnerships

On May 14, 2026, President Koroivulaono met for the second time since January with the Pohnpei Chamber of Commerce. As COM-FSM moves decisively towards systematic improvements to enhance mission alignment with FSM's employment needs, partnering with the private sector is key to growing local and national economic opportunities.

Present at the meeting from the Chamber of Commerce Board were: Chairman Rich Adams (ACE Hardware/Office Supplies); and members, Max Iriarte (Black Sand Corp.); Christopher Alfonso (Genesis); Ron Pangelinan (A&P Enterprises, Inc.) and Yuko Nakasone (INS Enterprises).

From COM-FSM President Koroivulaono was accompanied by Dr. Lee Ullmann from the American University, Washington D. C.

CONTINUATION FROM PAGE 2

# Discussions



The main points at the breakfast meeting discussion are summarized below. Many questions were exchanged (as provided in the dot points below) which led to an engaging and engaged exchange of ideas and experiences which will continue to inform the curriculum review currently underway at the college. Other areas for improvement were also identified in determining which courses and programs are rated as 'high demand' by employers.

- **How do we teach our students to build a nation?**
  - It was acknowledged that the FSM workforce is employed mainly in the public sector with an approximate 80/20 percent distribution (20% in the private sector). It was also generally and unanimously agreed that economic growth rests primarily in the private sector. Consequently, direct private sector involvement with National and State governments and education providers is vital for growing the economy through employment-generation and incentivized initiatives. Inculcating the responsibility for nation-building through post-graduation employment or entrepreneurship in the FSM will continue to underscore the contextualization of courses and programs in the local milieu.
- **How can instructors teach students that going away to the U. S. is not necessarily a better option?** For example, earning \$30,000 in Honolulu is not necessarily better than earning \$15,000 in Pohnpei especially in relation to the daily costs of living expenses. Are these conversations part of a systematic dialog at COM-FSM that prepare students for making the best decisions when they exit the college?
- **Explore the Co-operative Education** model which enables internship/apprenticeship experience for students while they are studying.
  - Is it possible to build the same or similar 'work-placement for students' experience in the COM-FSM curricula?
- **Private sector companies that employ foreign workers are required to pay \$100 per worker.** Initially, this subsidy was meant for training workers however, it is unclear what the \$100 payments are used for. There is now a need to revisit this 'training fund'.
- **Is it possible for the Government to subsidize college graduates' wages** if they choose to stay in the FSM (especially in the private sector)?

NOTE: Dr. Patrick Tellei, the President of Palau Community College (PCC) successfully negotiated a matching agreement with the Republic of Palau government several years ago whereby PCC CTE graduates would start at not less than \$6/hour. If employers paid less than the negotiated rate, the government would make up the difference.

## Advisory councils, business liaison and other inclusive practices

The concluding discussions focused on identifying tangible strategies and practices to formalize active private sector participation at COM-FSM. CTEC is reactivating the Advisory Councils that in the past were part of the program evaluation process. Members of the Advisory Councils will be included from local industry and private sector entities.

A Business Liaison contact at the college would also ensure a direct link with the Chamber of Commerce so that communication channels are open and fluid in relation to workforce needs and agile, relevant training programs are provided by the college to address identified gaps in the workforce.

The triangulation of workforce needs, training/educational services and a continuous cycle of evaluation and improvement between the college, the public and the private sector is long overdue. Having access to the Workforce Needs Assessment[1] and Curriculum Review[2] Reports provides the data on which to build a solid platform for meaningful and sustainable change in transforming COM-FSM education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond.

[2] <https://www.comfsm.edu.fm/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/FSM-Workforce-Needs-Assessment-Stage-1-Report.pdf>

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[3] <https://www.comfsm.edu.fm/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/21st-Century-Curriculum-Project-Final-Report.pdf>

## III. Works in progress



**Figure 6: Summary of the Workforce Needs Assessment & Curriculum Review Projects**

### Workforce Needs Assessment

Consultant Dr. Marisa Crowder is now working with the Alumni Office (IAEA) to conduct surveys with COM-FSM Alumni. She is also working with the Workforce Development Office to conduct surveys in Chuuk and Kosrae. The Campus Deans are also assisting with disseminating the surveys as widely as possible. The results of this phase will provide the particular workforce needs within each State in the FSM. Importantly, identifying both similar and unique needs for each State will better inform COM-FSM's training plans and program design to address capacity development. Both stackable credentials and longer-term courses will provide the necessary resources for targeted training and certification. The college is also creating direct pathways for increased graduate employment through expanded work placement schedules for all COM-FSM programs.

### Curriculum Review

On April 29, 2026 Consultant Dr. Brad Rentz presented the Phase 2 findings from the Curriculum Review to faculty members at the National campus with State campus faculty members attending through zoom. Following the detailed and compelling presentation a workshop was conducted for reviewing the curriculum in light of the findings. A plan for the implementation pilots for revised curricula is currently being formulated by faculty administrators and instructors. Alignment with the workforce needs assessment results has also started with the introduction of the stackable credentials model, the reactivation of Advisory Councils and the establishment of a Business Liaison. These initiatives form direct bridges which will connect skills training and qualifications with employment opportunities (for new graduates) and employees who require upskilling or retraining.

#### IV. EU Micronesia

Discussions were first initiated for the European Union (EU) Micronesia project in December 2024. The Consortium Agreement signed in March–April 2026, is entitled, “Modernizing teachers’ and students’ trainings for the motivation towards blue and green careers in the Federated States of Micronesia”.

The partners are listed below:

- Slovenska Polnohospodarska Univerzita V Nitre (SUA), Slovakia<sup>4</sup>;
- Università Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore (UNICATT), Italy<sup>5</sup>;
- Igor Vitale international srl;
- College of Micronesia-FSM, Federated States of Micronesia;
- National Department of Education, Federated States of Micronesia; and
- Micronesia Justice Initiative, Federated States of Micronesia.

Under this agreement COM-FSM working alongside the NDOE will provide participants for the EU Project Team from Italy and Slovakia to ‘train the trainers’ for reforming the initial and continuous education of teachers in the FSM for the promotion of ‘Green and Blue’ careers.

**Goal: train 20 teachers, 20 College interns and 20 students.**

**Project duration: January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2028.**

#### Methodology

1. Perform a desk analysis: Summarize existing research on gaps in education regarding digitalization and student engagement in blue/green careers in remote areas, updating needs analysis with current data.
2. Create a research framework: Use qualitative and quantitative methods to identify gaps in education motivational gaps in promoting blue and green careers in FSM for students; measuring the educational gaps of teachers in motivating blue and green careers.
3. Administer the tool: Collect data from a sample of 120 participants across 70 items. Analyze data statistically (psychometrics, reliability, validity, correlational, and descriptive analysis) and qualitatively (content analysis).
4. Report findings: Develop a 100–page research report detailing concrete gaps faced by students and professors in remote areas.

#### Deliverables

- Management Plans, Worksheets and Reports
- Train the Trainers Toolkit and Legislative Integration
- Multilingual Online platform (integrating educational content and certification tools to support the development of green and blue career skills).
- Toolkit for the Cooperation between Enterprises and Education
  - Employers’ Guidelines
  - Internship Model Report
  - Higher Education Institutions–Small to Medium sized Enterprises Collaboration Framework
  - Monitoring Tools
- Educational and Audiovisual Outputs
- Impact Study and Roadmap
- Website, Social Media pages and Newsletters
- International Symposium materials
- Events materials.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.uniag.sk/sk/uvodna-stranka>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.unicatt.it/en.html>

#### Project funding

	Grant amount allocated expressed in €
Slovenska Polnohospodarska Univerzita v Nitre	172 126,62 €
Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore	157 908,89 €
Igor Vitale international srl	158 390,39 €
College of Micronesia-FSM	169 218,36 €
National Department of Education	170 855,46 €
Micronesia Justice Initiative	167 542,74 €

**Table 2: Grant amounts for the project Partners expressed in € (euro)**

#### V. Land Grant Assistance for summer training

In January 2026, the Land Grant Board approved three \$100,000 grants for the three Land Grant Colleges; the College of the Marshall Islands (CMI), College of Micronesia-FSM (COM-FSM) and Palau Community College (PCC). In March COM-FSM submitted two proposals for \$100,000 namely for a pilot ‘Drone pilot’ training program and the FSMTC Technician stackable credential training program. Following the submission of proposals to the Land Grant Central Office, revisions were required. On 27th May, VPIS Young-Uhk submitted the required revisions whereby the proposals were rewritten as ‘Youth Extension’ training activities. On 29th May the COM Land Grant Executive Director, Stanley Lorenij accepted the proposals as realigned to the federal requirements under the Land Grant. Under the direction of VPIS Young-Uhk the COM-FSM Business Office is working with the Land Grant Office to establish the relevant funding arrangements and procedures. This will enable VPIA Ehmes to work with the Deans of Kosrae Campus and CTEC to launch the Drone Pilot and FSMTC Technician training programs for the first time at COM-FSM in the 2026 summer semester.

#### HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE

For this Report, two updates have been provided by the HRO:

- The Performance Management System; and
- Vacancies at the College.

#### The Performance Management System

In the Peer Review Report presented by the ACCJC<sup>1</sup> Accreditation Site Visit Team in 2023 the following observation and recommendation were made: *The College has implemented a policy and procedure for conducting personnel evaluation systematically and at stated intervals. Criteria for evaluating personnel, including performance of assigned duties and participation in institutional responsibilities and other activities appropriate to their expertise, are clearly detailed. The team noted that timeliness of conducting personnel reviews has been a concern in recent years; however more recently, as the team learned in the interviews, the College began a process for selection of an HR management system in part to address this issue. Moreover, the new president has indicated that revision of the personnel evaluation system is a priority. As such, the College has identified an improvement plan, which states, “Review for changes to current evaluation policies and/or purchase, initiate and implement software programs to manage performance evaluation.” The team affirms the need for the College to make improvements in this area. (III.A.5).*

**INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT & EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (IAEA)**

Peer Review Recommendation: March 2023

Recommendation 2:

To improve effectiveness, the team recommends that the College strengthen its practices and systems for personnel evaluation and management as stated in the President’s Workplan. (III.A.3, III.A.5).

In 2026, for the continuing implementation of the new Performance Management System, the following updates are provided as follows:

1. Provided training and refreshers to National Campus Human Resources (HR) representatives on login credentials, the use of the system, creating, adding and deleting employees accounts, updating employee accounts (information, passwords, job descriptions), setting evaluation deadlines and assigning the correct evaluation per classifications (Management, Professional and Classified and Faculty).
2. The next phase is to provide training and refreshers (same as above) to HR representatives at the State Campuses (Kosrae, Chuuk, Yap and FMI) after the Board of Regents’ June 2026 meeting.
3. Further training and refreshers will be provided to employees per classification, that is, Classified, Professional, Management and Faculty following the Board of Regents’ June 2026 meeting.
4. The HRO continues to update the online portal by scanning and uploading past performance evaluations into the Performance Management System. This phase of the rollout started over one year ago.

**Vacancies at the College**

The information below provides the system-wide vacancies profile highlighting a major challenge in retaining employees between FY2023-FY2025. With FY2026 the number of vacancies has reduced considerably although it is noted that the fiscal year will end in approximately three months’ time (September 30). The overall trend shows that the number of staff who leave the College are substantially much higher than faculty. Of the total number of vacancies (132) from FY2023-FY2026, 84% are staff (111) and 16% are faculty members (21).

By Fiscal Year (Oct-Sept)	FY2026	FY2025	FY2024	FY2023	TOTAL
<b>CTEC</b>		<b>CTEC</b>	<b>CTEC</b>	<b>CTEC</b>	<b>CTEC</b>
Faculty	1	1	2	2	6
Staff	4	6	3	9	22
<b>National</b>		<b>National</b>	<b>National</b>	<b>National</b>	<b>National</b>
Faculty	0	4	1	6	11
Staff	6	11	10	11	38
<b>FMI</b>		<b>FMI</b>	<b>FMI</b>	<b>FMI</b>	<b>FMI</b>
Faculty	0	0	0	0	0
Staff	0	4	2	4	10
<b>Kosrae</b>		<b>Kosrae</b>	<b>Kosrae</b>	<b>Kosrae</b>	<b>Kosrae</b>
Faculty	0	1	1	1	3
Staff	0	13	4	4	21
<b>Yap</b>		<b>Yap</b>	<b>Yap</b>	<b>Yap</b>	<b>Yap</b>
Faculty	0	0	0	1	1
Staff	3	1	2	4	10
<b>Chuuk</b>		<b>Chuuk</b>	<b>Chuuk</b>	<b>Chuuk</b>	<b>Chuuk</b>
Faculty	0	0	0	0	0
Staff	0	2	3	5	10
<b>Total Faculty</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>Total Vacancies</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>132</b>

**Table 3: Vacancies at COM-FSM: FY2023-FY2026**

The IAEA Office continues to outreach and engage with all levels of the FSM governments and community to fund-raise for the COM-FSM Endowment Fund. Several issues with the four (4) main ones listed below also continue to challenge the effectiveness of fund-raising drives.

**Overall issues identified**

- Declining donor contributions since COVID-19 and constitutional changes that reduced government support.
- Lack of clear, specific program uses for the Endowment Fund weakens donor confidence.
- Need for improved donor recognition, clearer impact communication, and campus-level engagement.
- High graduate emigration and a mismatch between graduate skills and local employer needs.

Despite these challenges the IAEA Office initiated a selection of mitigating strategies which include direct engagement with partners and potential donors. For example, the following three meetings were organized and the discussions led by the IAEA Office.

**Meeting 1 – Breakfast with State Campus Deans (April 15, 2026) Attendees: Acting Deans of Kosrae and Chuuk campuses; Deans of Pohnpei campuses; apologies from the Yap Dean. Purpose: Share fundraising updates, re-engage deans in the annual campaign, and set campus targets for FY 2026-2027.**



**Figure 7: Executive Director Emanuel Mori, Acting Dean (Chuuk) Genevy Samuel, Amy Santiago, Acting Dean (Kosrae) Skipper Ittu**

**Key points**

- The FY 2025–2026 campaign raised \$79,000 which exceeded the \$60,000 goal.
- Recommendations: develop clear program descriptions, improve donor recognition (public acknowledgments and outreach), set campus-specific targets, and identify campus points of contact for Endowment and alumni matters.
- Follow-up: Minutes were emailed to all of the deans; responses received from CTEC and Kosrae (Kosrae requested more time). The Deans reiterated their commitment to engaging alumni and donors at their campuses.

**Meeting 2 – Meeting with President Simina and Vice President Palik (May 18, 2026) Attendees: IAEA Executive Director Mori and the Presidential leadership. Purpose: Request government contribution of \$50,000 to the Endowment Fund and secure high-level support for reaching the \$20million target.**

### Key points

- Emphasized that reaching \$20M would generate approximately \$1M annually in interest to support vocational and technical programs, workforce development, and national priorities.
- Highlighted the current Endowment balance of \$15.4M (about \$4.6M short of the \$20M goal).
- Explained effects of the constitutional amendment and COVID-19 on revenue streams and donor behavior.
- Argued that greater investment in vocational and technical education would reduce graduate emigration and reduce reliance on foreign labor.

**Outcome:** The FSM President and Vice President acknowledged the merits of the request and agreed to forward the proposal to Congress for consideration but are interested to see special programs at the College to develop and accelerate the development of the nation's partnerships and government needs that will consequently aim to help reduce the migration of our certified graduates.

**Meeting 3 – May 26, 2026: Meeting with Vice President for Instructional Affairs (VPIA) Delihna Ehmes; Dean of Academic Programs Kasiano Paul; Instructional Coordinator Felix Jr.; Dean of CTEC Phyllis Silbanuz; Executive Director Emanuel Mori and Amy Santiago.**

The IAEA provided updates to the academic leadership team on fundraising activities, discussions with H. E. President Simina and Vice President Palik, and sought (IA) support for developing workforce programs that provide skills training, certifications, and local employment opportunities for graduates.

VPIA Ehmes and Dean Silbanuz reported that the College is already working with the private sector, National Government, and the Chamber of Commerce to identify workforce priorities and develop training programs. Training has begun, and the first group of participants is expected to receive certification by September 2026.

### Key Points

- Expand internships and apprenticeships to provide practical experience and employer connections.
- Develop incentives for graduates and employers to encourage local employment.
- Improve career pathways, professional development, and working conditions.
- Support entrepreneurship through grants, mentorship, and business incubators.
- Strengthen public-private partnerships in priority sectors such as healthcare, technology, and infrastructure.

**Outcome:** Participants agreed that detailed program proposals should be developed to demonstrate impact and attract government and private-sector support. VPIA Ehmes and her team will present a draft workforce development program at the next meeting.



**Figure 8: L-R: VPIA Ehmes, DAP Paul, Executive Director Mori, Amy Santiago.**

### Conclusion and next steps

- Explore incentives for businesses, graduates, and locally trained workers to reduce workforce migration abroad.
- Finalize written descriptions of Endowment Fund programs, including scholarships, vocational training, internships, local employment incentives, and entrepreneurship support.
- Enhance donor engagement and recognition, including acknowledgment of major donors at commencement ceremonies.
- Visit state campuses to strengthen Endowment Fund fundraising efforts.
- Continue discussions between the College and national leaders on workforce retention strategies.

### Summary

If I may be so bold, my vision positions COM-FSM as the Pacific Island region higher education leader in Marine Science and Fisheries & Maritime Studies focusing on 'blue' and 'green' careers and climate-resilient agriculture and aquaculture best practices. Furthermore, academic and Career & Technical Education (CTE) courses and programs will be offered multimodally through learner-friendly, physical learning spaces and the COM-FSM Virtual College. Responding directly to workforce needs, entrepreneurship and seamless transfers to further educational or training opportunities, COM-FSM graduates will exemplify 21st century competencies and life-long-learning attributes.

Food for thought...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJsnlSiyH3Y>

