AGENDA ITEM

Chapter 3 policies-Instructional Affairs policies

RECOMMENDED DIRECTIVE:

The named Board Policies are as follow:

BP 3101 Academic Program Requirement

BP 3102 Major Subject Area

BP 3103 Course Substitution

BP 3104 Prior Learning Assessment

Discussion:

Policies and procedures are living documents that change as the needs and priorities of the college evolve. While the core purpose of a policy may stay the same, its details should be reviewed and updated regularly to stay relevant and aligned with the college's goals. As such, the office of the Vice President for Instructional Affairs continues to work with the appropriate offices, Curriculum committee, and relevant committees to review policies and procedures relating to Instructional Affairs.

On November 18-20, 2026, the Executive Committee (EC) was presented the following policies for review and endorsement:

Board Policy	Amendments or Deletions	Remarks
BP 3101-Academic Program Requirement	~~Degree Program:~~ ~~A Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree is awarded upon completion of the following requirements with a minimum of 120 semester credits:~~ ~~General Education: Satisfactory completion of General Education Core (36 credits) distributed across the major areas for General Education (arts/humanities, natural science, mathematics, social science, and oral/written communication) and integrated throughout the curriculum (9 credits upper division at least).~~ ~~Major: Satisfactory completion of the prescribed series of~~	NOTE: Request No action from the Board as there is need for further review. 1. Dynamic References: Replace specific catalog year references with standard text referencing " COM-FSM General Catalog. That applies at the time of enrollment" 2. Clarify Residency Rules to consider Modern Delivery: Reframe the 50% residency requirement to specify institutional credit completion (or program offering campus/online

	~~courses for the selected major.~~ ~~Total credits: Satisfactory completion of the required number of credits and courses for the selected baccalaureate degree program.~~ ~~Scholarship: Cumulative and graduation semester grade point average of at least 2.0 "C".~~ ~~Application for graduation: Submission of an Application for Graduation by the week of early registration before the semester of graduation.~~ ~~Limitations: Students transferring from other institutions must earn at least 50% of the credits of the major from the COM-FSM campus where the degree is offered. COM-FSM students must also complete 50% of the credits of the major from the campus where the degree is offered.~~ ~~Degree Program: An Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, or Associate of Applied Science degree is awarded upon completion of the following requirements with a minimum of 60 semester credits:~~ ~~General Education: Satisfactory completion of General Education Core. Major: Satisfactory completion of the prescribed series of courses for the selected major.~~ ~~Total credits: Satisfactory completion of the required number of credits and courses for the selected associate degree program.~~ ~~Scholarship: Cumulative and graduation semester grade point average of at least 2.0 "C".~~ ~~Application for graduation: Submission of an Application for Graduation by the week of early registration before the semester of graduation.~~	modality) to accommodate distance education. 3. Standardize Certificate Definitions: Establish clear credit/clock-hour ranges and GPA rules for all certificate tiers. 4. Flexible Application Deadlines: Delegate specific application submission dates to the Academic Calendar / Administrative Procedures to avoid policy non-compliance due to calendar shifts.

	~~Limitations: Students transferring from other institutions must earn at least 50% of the credits of the major from the COM-FSM campus where the degree is offered. COM-FSM students must also complete 50% of the credits of the major from the campus where the degree is offered.~~ ~~Certificate Programs: A certificate is awarded upon completion of a prescribed series of courses designed to strengthen specific occupational skills.~~ ~~Three kinds of certificates are offered by the College of Micronesia-FSM. The Certificate of Achievement requires the completion of at least 30 semester credits. The Certificate of Completion requires a program to offer a minimum of 10 credit hours. The Certificate of Attendance requires the completion of a course with the development of specific occupational skills. To receive a certificate, students must earn a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 for the prescribed series of courses. Specific completion requirements for the various certificate programs are detailed in their descriptions.~~	

	Program Requirements **Bachelor's Degrees (B.A. or B.S.)** Awarded upon completing at least **120 semester credits**, including: • **General Education:** 36 credits across arts/humanities, natural science, mathematics, social science, and oral/written communication (including at least 9 upper-division credits). • **Major:** All prescribed courses for the selected major. • **Total Credits:** All required courses and credits for the chosen baccalaureate program. **Third-Year Certificate of Achievement** programs post-associate degree programs designed to provide advanced specialization or serve as a bridge to a four-year bachelor's degree. See admission requirements per relevant COM-FSM catalog. **Associate Degrees (A.A., A.S., or A.A.S.)** Awarded upon completing at least **60 semester credits**, including: • **General Education:** The required General Education Core. • **Major:** All prescribed courses for the selected major. • **Total Credits:** All required courses and credits for the chosen associate program. **General Graduation Requirements (All Degrees)**	

	• **GPA:** Minimum 2.0 ("C") cumulative GPA and final-semester GPA or a minimum GPA as required by the program. • **Residency Limitation:** All students (including transfers) must earn at least 50% of their major credits at the COM-FSM campus offering the degree. • **Application:** Submit an Application for Graduation by early registration week of the semester prior to graduation. **Certificate Programs** Certificates are awarded upon completing prescribed coursework designed to build specific occupational skills, with a **minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA** in the required courses. Specific requirements are detailed in each program description. • **Certificate of Achievement:** Minimum of 30 semester credits. • **Certificate of Completion:** Minimum of 10 credit hours. • **Certificate of Attendance:** Completion of a specific occupational skills course.	

Instructional Affairs

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BP 3102- Major Subject	~~The program in which students plan to earn their degree or certificate is the major subject area. Every student is required to declare a major in order to graduate. Students who have questions or have not yet determined their career or educational goals are urged to consult with a counselor prior to enrolling or during their first semester.~~ ~~As the courses in the various majors are offered in sequence over several semesters, students are required to consult with a counselor or academic advisor before changing a major to avoid disrupting their program of study and lengthening their total time in college.~~	1. **Set a Declaration Deadline:** Introduce a maximum credit threshold (e.g., *"Students must officially declare a major subject area before completing 30 cumulative degree credits"*). 2. **Major Change Process:** Explicitly state the procedural requirements (e.g., submission of an official Major Change Form, approval by the department chair/advisor, and registry update deadlines). 3. **Clarify Credentials & Combinations:** Add a brief section outlining rules regarding dual majors, certificate-to-degree articulation, or restrictions on pursuing multiple credentials simultaneously. 4. **Define Advisor vs. Counselor Roles:** Specify whether academic advisors or professional counselors are

	POLICY STATEMENT The program in which a student intends to earn a degree, third-year certificate, or certificate of achievement constitutes their **Major Subject Area**. To ensure clear academic pathways and support timely program completion, every degree- and certificate-seeking student is required to declare a major subject area upon admission or by the end of their first term of enrollment. All academic majors and program requirements are defined in the current *COM-FSM General Catalog*. **GUIDELINES AND COMPLIANCE** 1. **Declaration and Program Requirements** o Students must complete the specific general education and major course requirements outlined in the catalog year active at the time of their program declaration or readmission. o Baccalaureate, Associate, and Certificate programs are structured to ensure student achievement of defined Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) as aligned with ACCJC Standard II.A. 2. **Change of Major** o Students seeking to change their declared major subject area must consult with an academic advisor or career counselor prior to initiating the change to evaluate course applicability, financial aid implications, and graduation timelines. o Changes of major must be formally processed	responsible for approving major changes versus general career path guidance. 5. **Establish Administrative Oversight:** Mention the role of the Office of Admissions and Records (OAR) in enforcing and processing major declarations/changes.

	through the Office of Admissions and Records (OAR) using the prescribed administrative procedures. 3. **Academic Advising and Guidance** o Academic advisors shall assist students in maintaining alignment with their academic pathways and tracking progress toward degree/certificate completion within expected timeframes. **RESPONSIBILITY** The Vice President for Instructional Affairs (VPIA) and the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Services (VPEMSS), in coordination with the Office of Admissions and Records the office of the Dean of academic Programs, are responsible for implementing and monitoring compliance with this policy.	

BP 3103- Course Substitution	When a student lacks one course to graduate and that course is not being offered in his/her final semester, a course substitution may be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Vice President for Instructional Affairs. See Administrative Procedure 3103. **Policy Statement:** The College of MICRONESIA-FSM permits course substitutions to ensure students can fulfill degree requirements.	NOTE: Request No action from the Board as there is need for further review. 1. Expand Eligibility Criteria: Allow substitutions for non-final semester students when a required course is phased out, not offered due to low enrollment, or conflicts with another required final-semester course. 2. Define Equivalency Standards: Include explicit criteria requiring that substitute courses match or exceed the original course's credit hours, course level, and

	Eligibility & Criteria: 1. **Academic Equivalency:** The proposed substitute course must align with the academic level, credit value, and core learning outcomes of the required course. 2. **Qualifying Circumstances:** Substitutions may be requested if a required course is: o Not offered in the student's final semester or scheduled period of completion. o Phased out or discontinued due to curriculum revision. o In direct schedule conflict with another mandatory, non-negotiable requirement. 3. **Limitations:** A student may apply a maximum of two (2) course substitutions (or up to 6 credit hours) toward any single degree or certificate program. **Approval Process:** Requests must be initiated by the student and academic advisor, reviewed and endorsed by the Dean of Academic Programs, and submitted for final approval by the Vice President for Instructional Affairs (VPIA). *See Administrative Procedure 3103 for detailed workflows, deadlines, and submission forms.*	minimum student learning outcomes (SLOs). 3. Establish a Phased Approval Workflow: Route approvals starting with the Academic Advisor, Dean of Academic Programs, and culminating with the VPIA. 4. Set Clear Boundaries: Limit thetotal number of course substitutions permitted per student (e.g., maximum of 2 courses or not to exceed 6 credit hours per degree program).

BP3104 Prior Learning Assessment	**Definitions:** A. **Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)** - Prior learning assessment is defined as the structured process for evaluating learning gained outside the traditional academic environment. Put another way, it is learning and knowledge students acquire while living their lives, such as by working, participating in employer training programs, serving in the military, studying independently, volunteering or doing community service, and studying open-source courseware. In short, PLA is the evaluation and assessment of an individual's life learning for college credit, certification, or advanced standing toward further education or training. B. **Advanced Placement (AP) Exams** – A series of tests developed by the College Board initially for AP High School courses. This is also a type of early postsecondary educational opportunity. C. **American Council on Education (ACE) Guides –** Published credit recommendations for formal instructional programs and examinations offered by non-collegiate agencies (including civilian employers, the military, professional associations, and other workplace-related training). D. **College Level Examination Program (CLEP) Exams –** Tests of college material offered by the College Board. In some circumstances, this is also a type of early postsecondary educational opportunity. E. **Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Educational Support (DANTES) Subject Standardized Tests (DSSTs) –** DSSTs are examinations administered by Prometric. While originally being restricted to active and retired military personnel, these tests are now available to civilians. F. **Excelsior College Examination Program (ECE) –** Formerly, Regents College Exams or ACT/PEP Exams, these	Assessment programs are monitored, evaluated, and revised to ensure currency and maintain alignment with U.S. Department of Education guidelines and regional accreditation standards.

	are examinations for college credit offered by Excelsior College, NY. College of Micronesia-FSM Board Policy 3104 Page 2 of 3 G. **Institutional Credit-by-Examination** – An academic program may allow students to receive credit for a course by taking a credit-by-exam for that course. The student must contact the individual program or division to learn about the availability and cost of credit-by-exam. H. **International Baccalaureate Programs (IB)** – The IB Programme is an internationally accepted qualification for entry into institutes of higher education, much like the AP program. The Diploma Program is designed for students aged 16-19; it is a demanding two-year curriculum leading to final examinations. Graduates of the IB program must demonstrate competency in languages, social studies, the experimental sciences, and mathematics. In addition, the program has three core requirements that are included to broaden the educational experience and challenge students to apply their knowledge and understanding. To receive a diploma, students must achieve a minimum score of 24 out of a possible 45 points, as well as satisfactory participation in the creativity, action, service requirement. This is also a type of early postsecondary educational opportunity. I. **Locally Evaluated Industry and Workplace Credit** – Institutions may individually evaluate non-collegiate instructional programs, such as those for industry certifications, professional licensures, apprenticeships, and other local workplace trainings that demonstrate competency required for completion of degree or certificate programs. PLA credit can be awarded based on evaluation of the training or certification by faculty members in the student's program, based on recommendations in the ACE Guide. Not all training that can be possibly assessed for college	

	~~level credit is incorporated in industry certifications, professional~~ ~~licensures, or apprenticeships:~~ ~~a. **Apprenticeship:** Apprenticeship is a combination of on-the job training and related instruction in which workers learn the~~ ~~practical and theoretical aspects of a highly skilled occupation.~~ ~~Apprenticeship programs can be sponsored by individual employers, joint employer and labor groups, and/or employer~~ ~~associations.~~ ~~b. **Certification:** Certification is a designation earned by a person that ensures the individual is qualified to perform a task~~ ~~or job. Certification differs from licensure in that certification is~~ ~~an employment qualification and not a legal requirement for~~ ~~practicing a profession.~~ ~~c. **Professional Licensure:** Professional licensure protects the~~ public by enforcing standards that restricts practice to qualified ~~individuals who have met specific qualifications in education,~~ work experience, and exams. Licensure is a means by which ~~"permission to practice" is regulated. Licensure is required by~~ ~~law.~~ ~~J. **Prior Military Training Credit** – College credit for military training may be awarded through the American Council on Education (ACE) College Credit Recommendation Service or through direct evaluation of the student's service school~~ transcripts. For ACE evaluated credit, students must request and ~~submit to the institution an official transcript from ACE in order~~ to receive PLA credit, and the training must be evaluated by ~~ACE and included in the ACE Guide.~~ The College of Micronesia-FSM recognizes that all learning does not take place in the class room. Therefore, COM-FSM awards college credit towards certificates and degrees based on assessment of prior learning. COM-FSM awards credit to students for non-traditional learning such as, but not limited to ~~institutional credit-by-exam, external examination, transfer~~	

	~~credit, and military education College of Micronesia-FSM Board~~ ~~Policy 3104 Page 3 of 3~~ ~~The college adheres to the following standards for assessing~~ ~~experiences for awarding college credit:~~ ● Credit should be awarded only for learning, and not for ~~experience or time spent;~~ ~~● Assessment is based on criteria for outcomes that are~~ clearly articulated and published; ~~● College credit should be awarded only for college-level~~ ~~learning;~~ ● ~~Credit should be awarded only for learning that has a balance,~~ ~~is appropriate to the subject, and lies between the theory and~~ ~~practical application of the subject;~~ ~~● The determination of competence levels, and of credit awards~~ ~~must be made by appropriate subject matter and academic~~ ~~experts; and~~ ~~● Credit should be appropriate to the academic context in~~ ~~which it is accepted.~~ ~~● Types of Prior Learning Assessments include, but are not~~ ~~limited to:~~ ~~o Institutional Credit by Examination~~ ~~o Standardized Exams (i.e. AP, CLEP, DSST,~~ UExcel, IB) ~~o ACE and National College Credit Recommendation Services.~~ ~~[Guides – published credit recommendations for formal~~ instructional programs and examinations offered by non ~~collegiate agencies.]~~ ~~o Institutional review of external~~ training, licenses, or certifications ~~COM-FSM will follow the requirements set forth in the~~ Standards in Credit for Prior Learning. These standards shall	

	be	

	~~consistent with U.S. Dept. of Education and applicable accreditation standards.~~ ~~Assessment programs are regularly monitored, reviewed, evaluated, and revised as needed for currency.~~ ~~See AP 3104.~~ **I. Purpose and Policy Statement** The College of Micronesia-FSM (COM-FSM) recognizes that college-level learning occurs both inside and outside the traditional classroom. COM-FSM shall be the authorizing institution that awards college credit toward certificate and degree programs based on the formal assessment of prior learning, including workplace experience, military service, independent study, open-source courseware, and standardized testing. Assessment programs are regularly monitored, evaluated, and revised to ensure currency and alignment with U.S. Department of Education guidelines and regional accreditation standards. **II. Standards for Awarding Credit** In alignment with national standards (including CAEL Guidelines), COM-FSM adheres to the following principles when evaluating prior learning: 1. Learning vs. Experience: Credit is awarded only for demonstrated learning, not for mere time spent or years of experience. 2. College-Level Rigor: Learning must demonstrate a balance of theory and practical application appropriate to college-level standards. 3. Subject Relevance: Awarded credit must directly align with the student's degree requirements and academic context.	

	4. Expert Evaluation: Assessment of competence and determination of credit awards must be conducted by qualified academic faculty and subject matter experts. 5. Transparency: Assessment criteria and learning outcomes are clearly defined, published, and accessible to students. **III. Approved PLA Pathways** COM-FSM accepts prior learning credit through four primary pathways: 1. Institutional Credit-by-Examination: Course credit granted via internally developed and administered examinations. 2. Standardized Examinations: Recognized national and international exam programs (e.g., AP, CLEP, DSST, IB, UExcel). 3. National Credit Recommendations: Evaluated workplace or military training documented via the American Council on Education (ACE) or the National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS). 4. Institutional Review of External Training: Direct evaluation by program faculty of non-collegiate training, industry certifications, professional licensures, and registered apprenticeships. **IV. Definitions**	

	• Prior Learning Assessment (PLA): A structured process for evaluating knowledge and competencies gained outside traditional academic environments for the purpose of awarding college credit, advanced standing, or certification. • Advanced Placement (AP): Standardized college-level examinations developed by the College Board for high school students. • American Council on Education (ACE) Guides: Standardized credit recommendations for formal non collegiate training offered by civilian employers, professional associations, and the military. • College-Level Examination Program (CLEP): Subject based standardized exams offered by the College Board to demonstrate college-level proficiency. • DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST): Standardized subject exams administered by Prometric, available to military personnel and civilians. • International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program: An internationally recognized, high school curriculum requiring comprehensive evaluations across core academic	

	disciplines. • Institutional Credit-by-Examination: Comprehensive exams created and evaluated by individual COM-FSM academic programs for specific courses.	

	• Locally Evaluated Industry & Workplace Credit: Direct faculty evaluation of workplace learning, industry certifications (employment qualifications), professional licensures (legal permissions to practice), and apprenticeships (combined on-the-job training and theory). • Prior Military Training Credit: Credit evaluated directly through ACE transcripts or official service school transcripts. • UExcel Exams (formerly ECE/ACT/PEP): Standardized college credit examinations administered by Excelsior University. **V. References and Related Policies** • Guam Community College Policy 350: Prior Learning Assessment • University of Hawaii Community Colleges Policy 5.302 • CAEL Standards for Assessing Learning	

ACTION TAKEN:

_____Approved as presented _____Approved w/modifications _____Disapproved

_____Deferred to a later meeting

VOTE:

____aye _____nay _____abstain Date_____