## BOARD OF REGENTS

# Meeting Minutes

1-4 September 2026 | Chuuk State

Zoom link Day 1:
https://comfsm.zoom.us/j/91844280002?pwd=oya6z5DmPUirjTDbwcF5GANQTHrbUd.1
Meeting ID: 918 4428 0002
Passcode: 921693

Zoom Link Day 2:
https://comfsm.zoom.us/j/93556970277?pwd=VFbTw6hfHbmTG5OjRvtzEZA8ooocUn.1
Meeting ID: 935 5697 0277
Passcode: 068600

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1. Call to Order: Chair Lynn Sonden opened the meeting at 0851
2. Opening Prayer: VPIA Delihna Ehmes
3. Reading of the Mission Statement: Alpha Leyangerwel, Yap Campus SBA rep.
4. Roll Call; Declaration of Quorum: 3 regents present, quorum is met.
5. Approval of Minutes: Moved to the Executive Session

    a. **June 2026**

6. Communications from the Office of the President (OTP)
    a. **22-26 June**: ODA & Compact Management FY2027 Budget Consultation
    b. **26 June – 16 July**: President Koroivulaono in Yap
    c. **23 July**: Lunch Meeting with FSM R&D Secretary Elina Akinaga
    d. **24 July**: Meeting with Office of Compact Management (OCM)
    e. **3 August**: Faculty Workshop
    f. **6 August**: Meeting with Internal Auditor Brandon Tara
    g. **17-19 August**: Micronesian Islands Forum
    h. **27-29 August**: COM Land Grant Board Meeting

7. Regents Reports
    a. **Chair, FSM National Government**: Chair Lynn Sonden's Fourth Quarter 2026 National Report highlights national and regional developments supporting cultural unity, youth leadership, women's empowerment, and sustainable development. These include the KAMORALE Expo's celebration of Micronesian heritage and youth, and the Micronesia Ministers for Women Conference's focus on women's economic participation and leadership. The report also outlines the National Agriculture Investment Plan, which seeks to improve crop and livestock production, strengthen biosecurity and market connections, and expand training through cooperation among governments, communities, and partner institutions. The report notes that the 28th Micronesian Islands Forum addressed shared challenges such as high fuel costs, limited transportation, health workforce shortages, climate change, telecommunications resilience, and regional trade barriers. For COM-FSM, the Chair emphasizes being prepared to justify the College's FY2027 funding request during Congress's

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September 15–October 4, 2026 Budget Session. She also expresses hope that the Regent nominations for Yap and Pohnpei will be addressed during that session.

b. **Vice-Chair, Kosrae State**: The State is in preparation for the El Nino season; it is also preparing for the games this year, as well as for the general elections. The Vice-Chair outlines progress and challenges in major infrastructure projects. The Arthur P. Sigrah Memorial Hospital construction was 33% complete, with completion expected in July 2027, although project management concerns, incomplete scheduling documents, and pending changes remained significant issues. Several smaller projects including road repairs, road sealing, and hospital operating room ceiling replacement were completed, while airport fencing, agricultural facilities, and quarantine facility repairs were completed or substantially completed. For COM-FSM, the report notes that the $104,288 previously allocated for the Kosrae Campus Student Center was redirected to meet runway rehabilitation matching funds, and portions of the campus security fence would need removal to accommodate the planned center. Other state projects continued to face funding shortages, unclear work requirements, staffing challenges, and pending approvals. Priorities include advancing school improvements, resolving stalled water system projects, and addressing a backlog of maintenance work across public facilities.

c. **Secretary & Treas., Yap State**: Apologies

d. **Regent, Pohnpei State**: Apologies

e. **Regent, Chuuk State**: Chuuk State is reviewing its end of Fiscal Year budget. The funding asked by the College did not go through this FY, but there is a chance the supplemental budget might be reconsidered in the next fiscal year. Also reported that the budget was finalized but the framework is still in progress. There is a team assigned for the establishment of this framework. In terms of infrastructure projects, it is hopeful that there will be a groundbreaking for the secondary roads (east and west Bou) sometime in April 2027. Also mentioned the coconut processing project to be revived in summer 2027. Added that a greenlight was provided at the latest JEMCO meeting of the new hospital ($167 million project).

8. President's Report
   a. **President**: The President's September 2026 report highlights COM-FSM's work from June 12 to August 28, 2026, to expand educational access, strengthen partnerships, and support student success. Key efforts include aligning the FY2027 budget and implementation plans with national priorities, broadening access through open admissions and flexible learning, and strengthening dual enrollment, workforce training, and student support services. Participation in regional meetings reinforced the importance of collaboration, indigenous knowledge, teacher development, and education that responds to the changing needs of Pacific communities. The report also provides updates on staffing, fundraising, and alumni engagement. COM-FSM's workforce represents 16 nationalities, reflecting its continued efforts to recruit qualified faculty and staff. The Endowment Fund stood at approximately $15.4 million in July 2026, still $4.6 million below its $20 million goal. Strengthening donor support, employee participation, and alumni connections remains a priority, particularly as fundraising participation and engagement need improvement. Overall, the report emphasizes building the partnerships and resources needed to sustain quality education and improve student outcomes.

   b. **Vice President for Innovation & Sustainability (VPIS)**: The VPIS' reported that while the IS Department did a lot of everyday work keeping the College running, it is still struggling to keep its files, vehicles, and spending under tight control. The office needs to move away from just stamping paperwork and start focus heavily on accuracy and fixing mistakes. On the bright side,

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the department did some good things this year, like doing a full physical count of campus gear, starting monthly vehicle check-ups, and building better budget reports. However, they are still dealing with some major issues, such as old 2021 orders worth over $34,000 that were never delivered, tech shipments showing up months late, and a furniture order that fell through because the supplier could not finish the job.

The biggest problem areas are vehicles and utility bills. The College has a strict rule that staff must fill out daily logs when using campus cars, but only 20% of vehicles actually followed this rule in July. Additionally, power bills at the National, Chuuk, and Kosrae campuses are bouncing up and down drastically, including some strangely high-power charges in Kosrae that still have not been fully explained. To get back on track for the coming year, the department needs to fill its empty staff seats and focus on a few simple goals. It plans to keep a close eye on late orders, use a checklist to force staff to fill out car logs, double-check all data before showing it to the bosses, and keep a master list of all open problems until every single one is completely fixed.

i. **Comptroller's Financial Status Report**: The Comptroller reported that the College possesses strong financial savings for the long term, but it is currently facing some immediate cash flow challenges. The College is dealing with a gap between its current bank balance and its upcoming short-term bills, largely due to ongoing difficulties with collecting past student fees. Fortunately, student enrollment for the new fall term is slightly ahead of what was expected, which will help bring in fresh revenue to relieve some of this financial pressure. To make daily operations run more smoothly, the College is updating its business systems by moving financial records online and switching to digital timecards. The National Campus bookstore is getting a new look, and the dining hall is undergoing repairs to improve safety and protect food storage. There are also exciting plans to open a student-run business called the Shark Reef Café, which will provide hands-on work experience for students. While a temporary shortage of office staff remains a concern, the administration is focused on steadying its daily funds and completing these campus upgrades.

ii. **Cooperative Research and Extension Report**: The CRE June–August 2026 report highlights efforts to strengthen food security, livelihoods, and community resilience across the FSM through research, training, and practical assistance. Work covered crop and livestock production, aquaculture, nutrition, food and water safety, and youth and family development. Results included farmers earning income, expanding commercial hydroponic production, youth independently continuing gardening activities, and improved hygiene practices among students. Women-led food processing and preservation training reached 2,283 households in Pohnpei and Chuuk, while research advanced climate-resilient crops and sustainable aquaculture. The report also emphasizes partnerships that expand workforce skills and community opportunities. These supported paid youth internships, invasive species certification, and training in drone technology, information technology, and fiber optics. All 25 Cisco IT Essentials participants completed their training, while Kosrae's drone program filled its 20 available spaces within two days. Overall, CRE is placing greater emphasis on demonstrating how its programs lead to lasting adoption of skills, income generation, healthier households, and employment opportunities, with continued follow-up to measure these results.

c. **Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Services (VPEMSS)**: The EMSS' report highlights steady enrollment and increased course participation for Fall 2026. The College enrolled 1,709 students, reaching 98% of its headcount target, while students generally took

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heavier course loads and a larger proportion enrolled full-time. Chuuk and Kosrae exceeded their enrollment targets, while CTEC and Yap fell short. CTEC's declining enrollment and course loads, along with lower-than-expected bachelor's-level credit enrollment, remain areas needing attention. Positive outcomes included 90% of new Summer 2026 students continuing into Fall and 30 students earning degrees or certificates during the summer. Financial assistance remained a major focus, with approximately $8.96 million in Pell Grants awarded during AY2025–2026, alongside supplemental grants and state scholarships. Summer Pell Grant processing experienced delays caused by software installation, new identity verification requirements, and discrepancies in student information. Although corrective measures had been introduced, 422 FAFSA applicants were still awaiting awards, primarily because of outstanding documentation or corrections. The Financial Aid Office aimed to complete verification and awarding by September 30, 2026, while improving coordination and processing procedures to prevent similar delays.

d. **Vice President for Instructional Affairs (VPIA):** The VPIA's report highlights efforts to strengthen teaching, modernize programs, and improve student learning across all campuses. Key achievements include approving 33 course outlines, moving the Achieving College Excellence (ACE) program fully online with campus-based support, and piloting shorter remedial math courses to help students reach college-level mathematics sooner. Program learning outcome assessments showed an overall success rate of 84%. Faculty development emphasized assessment, responsible use of artificial intelligence, and digital security, while library improvements expanded learning resources and study spaces. The report also highlights workforce partnerships, technical training, academic advising, outreach, and renewed study-abroad opportunities that connect education with employment and further learning. Instructional Affairs aligned its objectives and budget with institutional priorities and strengthened assessment training across campuses. Areas needing attention include unfilled course sections, limited program review submissions, lower online pass rates at CTEC, and incomplete follow-up on some learning outcomes. Priorities include matching course offerings to enrollment demand, improving tutoring and early intervention, and addressing student absenteeism and engagement.

e. **Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Assurance (VPIEQA)**: The IVPIEQA reported that the College is moving away from just fixing old computers and is now focusing on making campus life easier using new technology. To help students and staff, the college rolled out its own safe AI assistant, put employee paychecks and time-off requests online, and extended its Zoom license until 2029. They also upgraded their online dashboards so the public can easily see enrollment numbers, hosted important mental health and job training sessions for students, and started putting up bright new college signs across the campuses.
However, the College still faces daily struggles like power outages, slow internet, a shortage of tech staff, and online scams. To keep things running smoothly, the main goals for the next few months are setting clear rules for using AI, fixing the remaining old network cables, and setting up a backup plan in case the system goes down.

9. Old Business

a. Review of **Chapter 6: Human Resources Policies**
   i. **Board Policy No. 6002** – Academic Freedom

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ii. **Board Policy No. 6037** – Compassionate Support
iii. **Board Policy No. 6020** – Sexual Harassment for Employees

Note: All HR policies under *Old Business* were presented, reviewed and endorsed by the Board. **PASSED.**

10. New Business
    a. Review of **Chapter 1: Board of Regent Policies**
        i. **Board Policy No. 1100** – Assessment
        ii. **Board Policy No. 1401** – Limitations on Authorized Expenditure

        Note: BP No 1100 – Assessment was presented, reviewed and endorsed by the Board. **PASSED.**
        *BP No 1401 presented "as is" and was deferred to the next Board meeting for further review by the relevant committees.*

    b. Review of **Chapter 6: Human Resources Policies**
        i. **Board Policy No. 6018** – Termination

        Note: BP No 6018 was presented "as is" and endorsed by the Board. **PASSED.**

    c. COM-FSM Budget Guidelines: Fiscal Year 2028

        Note: the COM-FSM Budget Guidelines for FY2028 was endorsed by the Board. **PASSED.**
        The FY 2028 Budget will be presented to the Board in November 2026.

11. Miscellaneous
    a. The ACCT-facilitated Board of Regents Retreat will be held during the 1st Quarter Board meeting in Yap State.
12. Next Meeting: **16-20 November 2026 in Yap State.**
13. Executive Session: Closed Meeting
14. Adjournment: Day 2 - Thursday, 3 September at 3pm.
15. Action Items: ***Refer to the September 2026 Directives***

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