


PEER REVIEW TEAM REPORT

College of Micronesia-FSM
P.O. Box 159
Kolonia, Pohnpei FM 96941

This report represents the findings of the Peer Review Team that conducted a focused site visit to College of Micronesia-FSM from March 13 - 16, 2023. The Commission acted on the accredited status of the institution during its June 2023 meeting and this team report must be reviewed in conjunction with the Commission's Action letter.

Rosevonne Pato, EdD
Team Chair

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**College of Micronesia - FSM
Peer Review Team Roster
TEAM ISER REVIEW**

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President

Dr. Ardis Eschenberg, Vice Chair
Windward Community College
Chancellor

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College of the Marshall Islands
Vice President for Business and
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ACCJC STAFF LIAISON

Dr. Catherine Webb
Vice President, ACCJC

**College of Micronesia – FSM
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FOCUSED SITE VISIT**

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Vice President, ACCJC

Summary of Focused Site Visit

INSTITUTION: College of Micronesia - FSM

DATES OF VISIT: March 14-17, 2023

TEAM CHAIR: Dr. Rosevonne Pato

This Peer Review Team Report is based on the formative and summative components of the comprehensive peer review process. In October 2022, the team conducted Team ISER Review (formative component) to identify where the college meets Standards and to identify areas of attention for the Focused Site Visit (summative component) by providing Core Inquiries that the team will pursue to validate compliance, improvement, or areas of excellence. The Core Inquiries are appended to this report.

A seven-member peer review team conducted a Focused Site Visit to College of Micronesia-FSM March 14-17, 2023 for the purpose of completing its Peer Review Team Report and determination of whether the College continues to meet Accreditation Standards, Eligibility Requirements, Commission Policies, and U.S. Department of Education regulations.

The team chair held a pre-Focused Site Visit meeting with the college CEO on March 8, 2023 to discuss updates since the Team ISER Review and to plan for the Focused Site Visit. During the Focused Site Visit, team members met with approximately one hundred (100+) faculty, administrators, classified staff, and students in formal meetings, group interviews, and individual interviews. The team held an open forum, which was well attended, and provided the college community and others to share their thoughts with members of the Focused Site Visit team. The team evaluated how well the College is achieving its stated purposes, providing recommendations for quality assurance and institutional improvement. The team thanks the college staff for coordinating and hosting the Focused Site Visit meetings and interviews and ensuring a smooth and collegial process.

Major Findings and Recommendations of the Peer Review Team Report

Commendations

Commendation 1: The team commends the College for its policies, practices, and services that support its diverse personnel, particularly its strong support for professional development for all employees and their families, as an exemplar of its commitment to the success of the Federated States of Micronesia as stated in its mission. (I.A.3, III.A.12, III.A.14)

Commendation 2: The team commends the College for its strategic use of funding sources and the leveraging of financial resources, enabling the College to respond to student needs in a changing environment. (III.D.4)

Commendation 3: The team commends the College for its exemplary practice of outcomes assessment involving participation of the entire college, ranging across six campuses in four states and 1,700 miles of the Pacific Ocean. (I.B.1, I.B.2, II.A.3, II.A.16)

Recommendations

Recommendations to Meet Standards:

None.

Recommendations to Improve Quality:

Recommendation 1: To increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the College strengthen the integration of short- and long-term plans for the allocation of human, physical, technological, and financial resources to meet student needs in the post-pandemic environment. (I.B.9)

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)

Introduction

The College of Micronesia – FSM is a primarily two-year, English-speaking institution of higher education offering 31 certificates and associate degrees and two baccalaureate degrees. The College was authorized in 1992 to operate as a post-secondary educational institution and award degrees by authority of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). The FSM is comprised of 607 islands spread across approximately 2 million square miles of the western Pacific Ocean. The nation has a population of over 105,000 people of fifteen distinctive cultures and languages. Accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), the College is a single institution with six campuses located across the four main islands of the FSM, which are Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap. The administrative center is located at the National Campus in Palikir, Pohnpei. This campus serves all four states as the primary campus for delivery of two year degree programs. Each island hosts a “state campus,” which ensures access to higher education for citizens of all four states (i.e. Chuuk Campus, Kosrae Campus, Yap Campus, and Career and Technical Education Center of Pohnpei). The FSM Fisheries and Maritime Institute is located on Yap Island and funded by the FSM government.

The College had a headcount enrollment of 1,946 students in Fall 2021, which reflects a decline across the past decade, due to outmigration and other factors. The college student population has a median age of 20 years old, with a modal age group of 18-19 years old. The majority (69.5%) are full-time. Non-credit students comprise 8% of the population. Female identifying students are 58.7% of the student body. While the pandemic caused all coursework to be moved online for a period, as of Fall 2021, courses are offered face to face (20.1%), online (24.8%), and via hybrid of both (55.1%).

The largest enrollment in the college is in the associate degree programs with strong enrollment in certificates as well. The AA Liberal Arts has the largest number of students enrolled, followed by Pre-Teacher Preparation, Business Administration, and Nursing. The National Campus has the highest enrollment with other campuses having fewer than 500 students enrolled.

Course completion rates declined during the pandemic but have begun to increase. The rates fall below institutional and stretch target rates. At 75%, fall to spring persistence rates for full-time students have fallen below targets. Fall to fall persistence rates for first-time, full-time students have increased to 64%, slightly above the institutionally set standard. The college has exceeded institutional set standards for two-year, three-year, and four-year graduation rates for two-year programs with most recent rates of 10%, 19%, and 28%, respectively.

The College was strongly impacted by the pandemic, which caused the cessation of all inter-island and international air travel. The team observed that the College strategically used funding sources and leveraged financial resources, in order to respond to student needs in this challenging, changing environment.

The College was also impacted by staff turnover, particularly in the role of the President. After a series of interim Presidents, Dr. Theresa Koroivulaono, President and CEO, was appointed by the Board of Regents on November 21, 2022.

The team has observed a strong sense of community within the College. Through policies, practices, and services the College provides strong support for professional development for all employees and their families. Outcomes assessment involves the participation of the entire college, ranging across six campuses in four states and 1,700 miles of the Pacific Ocean.

Eligibility Requirements

1. Authority

The team confirms that College of Micronesia – FSM was authorized in 1992 to operate as a post-secondary educational institution and award degrees by authority of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) as evidenced by both public law and Board Policy. The College is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Associated of Schools and Colleges (WASC), which affirms it is licensed to operate and award degrees. ACCJC is a regional accredited body recognized by the US Department of Education.

The College meets the Eligibility Requirement (ER).

2. Operational Status

The team confirms that the College is operational and providing services leading to certificates, associate degrees, baccalaureate degrees, and third year certificates. Total Fall 2021 enrollment was 1,946 students.

The College meets the ER.

3. Degrees

The team confirms that the College offers 32 total programs, of which 2 lead to a baccalaureate, 14 lead to an associate degree, 17 lead to a certificate, and 3 are non-credit certificates offered through the FSM Fisheries and Maritime Institute.

The College meets the ER.

4. Chief Executive Officer

The team confirms that Theresa Koroivulaono, PhD, President and CEO, was appointed by the Board of Regents on November 21, 2022. The President does not serve as the chair or member of the governing board. The CEO has the authority to administer Board Policies.

The College meets the ER.

5. Financial Accountability

The team confirms that the College undergoes an annual, certified, independent audit conducted by an external firm. All audits are made publicly available on the college website and shared with ACCJC and stakeholders, including the Board of Regents, and FSM National Government. The audit includes an assessment of compliance with Title IV federal requirements.

The College meets the ER.

Checklist for Evaluating Compliance with Federal Regulations and Related Commission Policies

The evaluation items detailed in this Checklist are those which fall specifically under federal regulations and related Commission policies, beyond what is articulated in the Accreditation Standards; other evaluation items under ACCJC standards may address the same or similar subject matter. The peer review team evaluated the institution’s compliance with Standards as well as the specific Checklist elements from federal regulations and related Commission policies noted here.

Public Notification of a Peer Review Team Visit and Third Party Comment

Evaluation Items:

X	The institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to solicit third party comment in advance of a comprehensive review visit.
X	The institution cooperates with the review team in any necessary follow-up related to the third-party comment.
X	The institution demonstrates compliance with the <i>Commission Policy on Rights, Responsibilities, and Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions</i> as to third party comment.

[Regulation citation: 602.23(b).]

Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):

X	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission’s requirements.

Narrative:

The team verified that the College meets requirements regarding public notification and third party comment.

Standards and Performance with Respect to Student Achievement

Evaluation Items:

X	The institution has defined elements of student achievement performance across the institution, and has identified the expected measure of performance within each defined element. Course completion is included as one of these elements of student achievement. Other elements of student achievement performance for measurement have been determined as appropriate to the institution's mission. (Standard I.B.3 and Section B. Presentation of Student Achievement Data and Institution-set Standards)
X	The institution has defined elements of student achievement performance within each instructional program, and has identified the expected measure of performance within each defined element. The defined elements include, but are not limited to, job placement rates for program completers, and for programs in fields where licensure is required, the licensure examination passage rates for program completers. (Standard I.B.3 and Section B. Presentation of Student Achievement Data and Institution-set Standards)
X	The institution-set standards for programs and across the institution are relevant to guide self-evaluation and institutional improvement; the defined elements and expected performance levels are appropriate within higher education; the results are reported regularly across the campus; and the definition of elements and results are used in program-level and institution-wide planning to evaluate how well the institution fulfills its mission, to determine needed changes, to allocating resources, and to make improvements. (Standard I.B.3, Standard I.B.9)
X	The institution analyzes its performance as to the institution-set standards and as to student achievement and takes appropriate measures in areas where its performance is not at the expected level. (Standard I.B.4)

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(i); 602.17(f); 602.19 (a-e).]

Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):

X	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

Narrative:

The team has verified that the College meets standards and performance with respect to Student Achievement.

Credits, Program Length, and Tuition

Evaluation Items:

X	Credit hour assignments and degree program lengths are within the range of good practice in higher education (in policy and procedure). (Standard II.A.9)
X	The assignment of credit hours and degree program lengths is verified by the institution, and is reliable and accurate across classroom-based courses, laboratory classes, distance education classes, and for courses that involve clinical practice (if applicable to the institution). (Standard II.A.9)
X	Tuition is consistent across degree programs (or there is a rational basis for any program-specific tuition). (Standard I.C.2)
NA	Any clock hour conversions to credit hours adhere to the Department of Education's conversion formula, both in policy and procedure, and in practice. (Standard II.A.9)
X	The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission <i>Policy on Credit Hour, Clock Hour, and Academic Year</i> .

[Regulation citations: 600.2 (definition of credit hour); 602.16(a)(1)(viii); 602.24(e), (f); 668.2; 668.9.]

Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):

X	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

Narrative:

The team verified that the College meets requirements regarding credits, program length and tuition.

Transfer Policies

Evaluation Items:

X	Transfer policies are appropriately disclosed to students and to the public. (Standard II.A.10)
X	Policies contain information about the criteria the institution uses to accept credits for transfer, and any types of institutions or sources from which the institution will not accept credits. (Standard II.A.10)
X	Transfer of credit policies identify a list of institutions with which it has established an articulation agreement.
X	Transfer of credit policies include written criteria used to evaluate and award credit for prior learning experience including, but not limited to, service in the armed forces, paid or unpaid employment, or other demonstrated competency or learning.
X	The institution complies with the Commission <i>Policy on Transfer of Credit</i> .

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(viii); 602.17(a)(3); 602.24(e); 668.43(a)(11).]

Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):

X	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

Narrative:

The team verified that the College meets requirements regarding transfer policies.

Distance Education and Correspondence Education

Evaluation Items:

For Distance Education:	
X	The institution demonstrates regular and substantive interaction between students and the instructor in at least two of the methods outlined in the Commission <i>Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education</i> .
X	The institution ensures, through the methods outlined in the Commission <i>Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education</i> , regular interaction between a student and an instructor or instructors prior to the student's completion of a course or competency.
X	The institution demonstrates comparable learning support services and student support services for distance education students. (Standards II.B.1, II.C.1)
X	The institution verifies that the student who registers in a distance education program is the same person who participates every time and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit.
For Correspondence Education:	
NA	The institution demonstrates comparable learning support services and student support services for correspondence education students. (Standards II.B.1, II.C.1)
NA	The institution verifies that the student who registers in a correspondence education program is the same person who participates every time and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit.
Overall:	
X	The technology infrastructure is sufficient to maintain and sustain the distance education and correspondence education offerings. (Standard III.C.1)
X	The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission <i>Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education</i> .

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(iv), (vi); 602.17(g); 668.38.]

Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):

X	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the

	Institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.
	The college does not offer Distance Education or Correspondence Education.

Narrative: The College meets the requirements for Distance Education. The College does not offer Correspondence Education.

Student Complaints

Evaluation Items:

X	The institution has clear policies and procedures for handling student complaints, and the current policies and procedures are accessible to students in the college catalog and online.
X	The student complaint files for the previous seven years (since the last comprehensive review) are available; the files demonstrate accurate implementation of the complaint policies and procedures.
X	The team analysis of the student complaint files identifies any issues that may be indicative of the institution's noncompliance with any Accreditation Standards.
X	The institution posts on its website the names of associations, agencies and governmental bodies that accredit, approve, or license the institution and any of its programs, and provides contact information for filing complaints with such entities. (Standard I.C.1)
X	The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission <i>Policy on Representation of Accredited Status</i> and the <i>Policy on Student and Public Complaints Against Institutions</i> .

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(ix); 668.43.]

Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):

X	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

Narrative:

The team verified that the College meets requirements regarding student complaints.

Institutional Disclosure and Advertising and Recruitment Materials

Evaluation Items:

X	The institution provides accurate, timely (current), and appropriately detailed information to students and the public about its programs, locations, and policies. (Standard I.C.2)
X	The institution complies with the <i>Commission Policy on Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Policy on Representation of Accredited Status</i> .
X	The institution provides required information concerning its accredited status.(Standard I.C.12)

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1))(vii); 668.6.]

Conclusion Check-Off (mark one):

X	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

Narrative:

The team has verified that the College meets requirements regarding institutional disclosure and advertising and recruitment materials.

Title IV Compliance

Evaluation Items:

X	The institution has presented evidence on the required components of the Title IV Program, including findings from any audits and program or other review activities by the U.S. Department of Education (ED). (Standard III.D.15)
X	If applicable, the institution has addressed any issues raised by ED as to financial responsibility requirements, program record-keeping, etc. If issues were not timely addressed, the institution demonstrates it has the fiscal and administrative capacity to timely address issues in the future and to retain compliance with Title IV program requirements. (Standard III.D.15)
X	If applicable, the institution's student loan default rates are within the acceptable

	range defined by ED. Remedial efforts have been undertaken when default rates near or meet a level outside the acceptable range. (Standard III.D.15)
X	If applicable, contractual relationships of the institution to offer or receive educational, library, and support services meet the Accreditation Standards and have been approved by the Commission through substantive change if required. (Standard III.D.16)
X	The institution demonstrates compliance with the <i>Commission Policy on Contractual Relationships with Non-Accredited Organizations</i> and the <i>Policy on Institutional Compliance with Title IV</i> .

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(v); 602.16(a)(1)(x); 602.19(b); 668.5; 668.15; 668.16; 668.71 et seq.]

Conclusion Check-Off:

X	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements, but that follow-up is recommended.
	The team has reviewed the elements of this component and found the institution does not meet the Commission's requirements.

Narrative:

The team has verified that the College meets the requirements above. The College does not award student loans.

Standard I

Mission, Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness

I.A. Mission

General Observations:

The College of Micronesia–Federated States of Micronesia (COM-FSM) demonstrates a strong mission as a learner-centered institution that supports the Federated States of Micronesia and student success. Evidence demonstrates that the College implements assessments and data-based decisions to fulfill the College’s mission. The College incorporates data and assessment to create well-informed decision-making and goal setting processes for planning for the use of college resources. The mission is reviewed regularly and approved by the Board of Regents and communicated to the college community.

Findings and Evidence:

The College mission describes the institution as a learner-centered institution “that is committed to the success of the Federated States of Micronesia by providing academic and career and technical educational programs characterized by continuous improvement and best practices.” Through the implementation of academic degrees and career and technical certificate programs, it is student-centered and focused on community involvement. The institution uses data to determine how effectively it is accomplishing its mission, and whether the mission directs institutional priorities in meeting the educational needs of students. The college community reviewed the mission fulfillment indicators during 2020’s online mini summits, as reported on the December 3, 2020, Board of Regent’s Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Assurance report (I.A.1).

The College shares the mission statement publicly and through writing, online, and in recitation. The College continues to review its mission and vision in accordance with the COM-FSM planning cycle with extensive community participation. The institution uses data to determine how effectively it is accomplishing its mission, and whether the mission directs institutional priorities in meeting the educational needs of students. As of 2020, 71% of constituents believe that the College is attaining its mission with 17 of the mission fulfillment indicators achieved (I.A.2).

COM-FSM uses data to make informed decisions, and in April 2021, this resulted in Board of Regents approval of the current mission without changes. The entire college community took part in a data-driven check-in to investigate how their daily tasks connected with the holistic

view of the college mission. The 2020 Summit showed the results, and it was determined that the mission describes the purpose, student population, and types of degrees successfully (I.A.3).

The College aligns its programs and services with its mission and verifies this through instructional program review and administrative unit program review. Each instructional program has its own program mission that is aligned with the college mission and approved by the Curriculum Committee. Additionally, the College has processes in place for campus or office mission statements, together with their associated outcomes and actions, to be submitted as part of the performance-based budget process. The College regularly reviews its mission statement through a broad-based participatory process that involves all its stakeholders and shared publicly. The college mission and vision are reviewed at least every five years in accordance with the Integrated Educational Master Plan, and recommendations were last approved by the Board of Regents in March 2017 (I.A.4).

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

I.B. Assuring Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness

General Observations:

The College uses student outcomes, student equity, academic quality, institutional effectiveness, and continuous improvement of student learning and achievement to improve academic quality and institutional effectiveness. The College has identified two improvement plans around this: evaluation of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to determine appropriate personnel needed to meet the data demands of the college and adopt a Learning Management System (LMS) that integrates with the student information system and TracDat to link and disaggregate data for assessment of student learning outcomes. The College is now using Canvas Learning Management System, which will allow integration with TracDat for Student Learning Outcomes.

Findings and Evidence:

The College engages in an open and collegial dialogue about student outcomes, student equity, academic quality, institutional effectiveness, and continuous improvement of student learning and achievement through committees that focus on these themes. These dialogues culminate in the development and dissemination of an annual College of Micronesia-FSM Institutional Assessment Report that presents a comprehensive look at learning achievement across all institutional learning outcomes, program learning outcomes for all degree and certificate programs, student service, and administrative learning outcomes, as well as identified targets for all of these entities across the college for the upcoming year. This document represents an

extraordinary level of collaboration involving personnel from all campuses, and articulates a coherent vision for learning at the institution. Interviews with faculty, administrators and students across the campuses reflect this spirit of collaboration. The College continues to identify educational quality through institution-set Standards, Mission Fulfillment Indicators, and the Strategic Plan Measures of Success (I.B.1).

COM-FSM defines student learning outcomes and assesses them on a regular basis. Outcomes are identified for academic programs and courses and for student and learning support services. The College has defined institutional, program, and course SLOs for all instructional programs and courses. The institutional and program SLOs are published in the college catalog, and course SLOs are found in the individual course outline on the college website as well as provided to students on all course syllabi. As detailed above, assessment results are organized and presented in the annual COM-FSM Institutional Assessment Report and made available to the public, highlighting learning achievement across all programs at the College and targeted learning goals for the upcoming year. The College has developed learning outcomes for six student and learning support services and assesses these annually (I.B.2).

The institution has established institution-set standards that align with the college mission. The College uses its institution-set standards to track student achievement. The institution-set standards were addressed in the strategic plan midterm report. The report included student data, persistence rates, graduation rates, certificates awarded, and graduate employment rates in certificate and career technical (CTE) degrees (I.B.3).

The institution uses a wide variety of quantitative and qualitative assessment data to support student learning and student achievement through internal and external assessment instruments. The College has adopted the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) as a key set of indicators of student support effectiveness. Assessment data is collected annually and managed in TracDat. The annual budget process aligns to support strategic goals/broad educational purposes and objectives linked to SLOs and measures of success to ensure continuous improvement of the college. The College has identified the need for additional staffing and college leadership has developed an Action Plan to support this analysis. The Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Assurance has been filled as an interim position, and the permanent Vice President position was being recruited at the time of the site visit. (I.B.4)

COM-FSM disaggregated qualitative and quantitative data collected as part of the College's planning cycle. During the pandemic, the move to online delivery mode encouraged the College to explore various learning management systems. The College is now using Canvas Learning Management System, which will allow integration with TracDat for Student Learning Outcomes. TracDat is used for reporting and storing results against assessment strategies and gaps reported in the Annual Institutional Assessment Report (I.B.5).

The team found that COM-FSM uses disaggregated data to analyze learning outcomes and achievement for subpopulations of students, such as full-time status, campus location, age

group, and gender, to help support student success. TracDat is utilized to store the data and identify gaps in student learning achievement. The Annual Institutional Assessment Reports document gaps and identify strategies for improvement. These are then utilized in the resource allocation process. Further, based on review of the College's Strategic Plan 2018-2023 program review documents, the team affirms that the College has processes and plans to identify learning gaps to support academic quality and institutional effectiveness (I.B.6).

The College ensures continuous improvement through a systematic evaluation of all policies and practices. It has created a five-year master calendar for policy review that is shared with constituents for feedback. In order to promote broader understanding and implementation of policies, the college website shows all policies searchable by keyword (I.B.7).

The institution constitutes program assessments and program reviews from instructional programs, student and learning support services, and other administrative units to inform the results. The assessment and evaluation activities are distributed so that the institution has a shared understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and sets appropriate priorities. The College created a strategic report on the evaluation of the strategic plan, mission, and values (I.B.8).

The College practices integrated planning. The institution identifies short- and long-range institutional needs through comprehensive and evaluative systems. Program review serves as the foundation for unit-level analysis of performance and needs, addressing student learning achievement, enrollment, and fiduciary impact of each program. Short- and long-term plans for instructional programs and priorities, learning support services, human resources, technology, facilities, fiscal, and administrative services have been developed and linked to the Integrated Educational Master Plan (IEMP), published in 2018. The College's 2018-2023 Strategic Plan provides high-level Strategic Directions in advancement of Student Success and Strengthening Resources. The team reviewed a thorough report illustrating progress in achieving the goals of this Strategic Plan. During the pandemic, short-term priorities took precedence over development of longer-term plans. However, the team noted that the College has embarked on the next phase of strategic planning as evidenced by the February 2023 COM-FSM President's Workplan and multiple interviews. This presents an opportunity for COM-FSM to incorporate learning and growth experienced during the pandemic into effective practices for the future. For example, the approval of its Substantive Change for Distance Education, developed in response to the pandemic, may provide an ongoing source of strength and support for student progression and completion when fully incorporated into the College's strategic and integrated planning (I.B.9).

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

Recommendation 1:

To increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the College strengthen the integration of short- and long-term plans for the allocation of human, physical, technological, and financial resources to meet student needs in the post-pandemic environment. (I.B.9)

I.C. Institutional Integrity

General Observations:

The College strives toward integrity in all aspects of its activities, communications, and public interactions especially in regard to the community it serves and its accrediting commission. The institution is mission driven and provides current information to students regarding outcomes, programs, and services through its website, college catalog, and Student Guide.

Findings and Evidence:

The college catalog provides students with information on the college, academic programs, and student services and it is reviewed and updated annually. The College's website provides information on academic offerings, student learning outcomes, and services available to students. Furthermore, students and the public can access the college catalog and other information about the college from the main website. Information on the College's accreditation is available on the main webpage (I.C.1).

The 2022-2023 college catalog is available on the College's website as multiple pdf documents. The catalog includes the current academic calendar to delineate term dates, holidays, and non-instructional days throughout the academic year for each campus location. The college catalog contains all the necessary information as listed in the Catalog Requirements endnote to the Standards. The team observed that the catalog webpage design could be improved to more clearly identify the sections applicable to the current year. The team also suggests that the College continue the practice of archiving each year's catalog in order to maintain catalog rights for students (I.C.2).

The team verified that the College's documented assessment of student learning and achievement is current and published on the college website under Public Reports. This data is published in the annual Institutional Assessment Report that is available to the public. Course completion data for multiple terms, by campus and subject, are available to the public. The College also publicly provides persistence and graduation information in addition to student learning outcomes assessment reports as required in ER 19 (I.C.3).

The College shares the mission statement publicly and through writing, online, and in recitation. The College continues to review its mission and vision in accordance with the COM-FSM planning cycle with extensive community participation. The College describes and provides information on courses and programs in the college catalog and on the College's website. For

each course, the College provides a description, whether the course is a degree requirement, prerequisites and corequisites, and the learning outcomes. The College provides information on its website for the Achieving College Excellence (ACE) program and the General Education program. The college catalog provides the purpose requirements and learning outcomes for certificate and degree programs (I.C.4).

The College has a Board Policy (No. 2001) adopted in 2015 that explains the purpose of a Board Policy and the process for initiating a new policy or reviewing a current policy. As indicated in this policy, any policy can be reviewed at any time by following the review process. The Board of Regents Master Planning Calendar states which Board Policies will be reviewed each academic year. Furthermore, the college website contains multiple years of college catalogs, newsletters, Student Guides, budget procedures, and the student handbook, all of which provide evidence that regular reviews of each document are occurring (I.C.5).

The College's Financial Aid web page offers an extensive overview of the various financial aid options available to students. Additionally, the College has the Net Price Calculator available for students to determine the cost of their education. A Student Financial Aid Handbook is available on the web and in print (I.C.6).

The College maintains and publishes policies on academic freedom for students and faculty. The policies are published on the College's website and in the college catalog, Faculty Handbook, and the Student Guide. All are available to the public for review. Additionally, the College maintains and publishes codes of ethics for faculty and staff (I.C.7).

Policies and procedures that promote academic honesty, responsibility, and integrity can be found in Board Policy 3116, the college catalog, Student Guide, and the Faculty Handbook. The college uses a foundational course learning outcome (Eng120b) to "ensure that all students 'Define plagiarism and take the steps necessary to avoid it'." Academic integrity is also included in the College's Code of Ethics for faculty, students, and staff. Administrative Procedures 3116 and 6029 provide guidance on the consequences of academic dishonesty. Furthermore, as the College moved to remote instruction, it incorporated software applications, namely Lockdown Browser and Turnitin, and password protected accounts to ensure academic honesty and integrity (I.C.8).

The Faculty Handbook contains a Code of Ethics which includes both a Faculty Statement of Professional Ethics and the Faculty Code of Ethics. According to these documents, faculty are required to distinguish between personal conviction and professionally accepted views in the discipline(s) they teach. Furthermore, the College requires faculty to agree to the Faculty Statement of Professional Ethics to further enforce their commitment to the distinction. As part of the College's ongoing assessment of teaching, academic supervisors conduct regular observations of classroom activities for both full time and part time faculty to monitor the distinction (I.C.9).

COM-FSM does not require conformity to specific codes of conduct with regards to specific world views or beliefs for staff, faculty, and students, but does have codes of professional conduct for faculty and staff and polices regarding academic honesty for students. A code of ethics and academic honesty is outlined in Board Policies, the college catalog, Faculty Handbook, and Student Guides (I.C.10).

COM-FSM does not operate in foreign locations and does not have campuses, instructional activities, or sites in foreign locations (I.C.11).

The team confirmed that the College maintains an active archive available to the public of all accreditation reports including, self-studies, annual reports, progress reports, mid-term reports, substantive change reports, and follow-up reports back to 2003. Additionally, the College posts Commission (ACCJC) action letters and other correspondence with the Commission on its *Reports Archive* link, which is located on the College's home page (I.C.12).

The College's only accrediting body is the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). The College indicated no program-specific accrediting agencies. The College interacts with the Federated States of Micronesia, the United States Department of Education, the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), and local grant giving entities. The College is consistent in how it presents itself to ACCJC, students, and the public. In addition to its main webpage, the College uses social media (Twitter, Facebook) to share its accreditation status and its compliance with commission policies and eligibility requirements (I.C.13).

The College is a public institution mandated by public law and is not affiliated or related to any parent organization. The institution's sole purpose is to provide post-secondary education for the citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia. The college mission clearly states COM-FSM's commitment to a being a learner-centered institution committed to the success of the nation. Board Policy 1210 further establishes the autonomy of the college to function as an institution of higher education. The Board of Regents, through Board Policy 1400, is responsible for ensuring the fiscal stability of the institution. The College has no outside private or corporate investors whose interests the College needs to support (I.C.14).

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

Standard II

Student Learning Programs and Support Services

II.A. Instructional Programs

General Observations:

The College has developed and maintained a well-structured set of degree and certificate offerings that align with the College mission and support the Federated States of Micronesia's Strategic Development Plan. All courses have clearly defined learning outcomes that are fully mapped to program, general education, and institutional learning outcomes. Curriculum is regularly reviewed and updated to maintain currency, and these processes are supported by well-established policies and practices found in the college's Curriculum and Assessment Handbook. The mapped outcomes found in course outlines include identified assessment strategies for each outcome. The college catalog provides clear and easy-to-follow information for all programs and degree requirements, and the College's institution-wide outcomes and General Education goals and outcomes. The College reports that it has engaged in regular assessment of all course, program, and institutional outcomes. Program review documents integrate assessment results into plans for program improvement. The College has pursued and maintained articulation agreements with colleges across the Pacific, including several institutions in Hawaii and the western United States, that facilitate transfer of COM-FSM students to those destinations. The College has sustained a commitment to fulfilling its mission to serve students in its service area and the goals of the nation itself. In 2018, the College established a bachelor's degree program in Elementary Education, addressing a priority that stemmed from the cessation of a partnership with the University of Guam, where program students had previously transferred to complete their B.A. degree. More recently, the College submitted and ACCJC approved a substantive change proposal to expand its range of distance learning course offerings. This was prompted in part by the widespread use of Zoom during the COVID emergency measures necessitating the use of online remote instruction, which expanded access to courses and programs. The College has identified three areas of institutional need related to instructional programs and has created improvement plans for these areas, detailed in the Quality Focused Essay.

Findings and Evidence:

The college mission statement articulates a close affinity for the development and advancement of the Federated States of Micronesia by providing academic and career programs vital to developing the human resources that help the nation meet its strategic development plans. Programs are evaluated regularly, and performance on institution-set

standards is a key criterion used to determine the extent to which the College serves the mission for its broad constituency for the nation. While the College has focused its attention on the pass rates for its graduates, such as teacher certification or CTE certificate exams, it acknowledges that it needs a better systemic means of tracking transfer and employment rates of graduates (II.A.1).

The College states that faculty members ensure that the content of its courses and programs meet accepted academic and professional standards. The Curriculum and Assessment Handbook outlines the procedures and policies that govern course and program development, as well as quality standards that are embedded in student learning outcomes, and strategies to systematically assess student achievement of these outcomes are specified in the course outline documents for each course. Faculty participate in program reviews of each academic program on a regular schedule (2 years for certificate programs; 4 years for associate degree programs), which inform program planning and improvement, budget allocation, and maintain overall program quality (II.A.2).

The College possesses a robust, integrated infrastructure for the assessment of student learning outcomes across the institution. Course SLOs are found within course syllabi, and these are linked with Program, General Education and Institution-level Outcomes. Additionally, course outlines prescribe specific assessment strategies for every outcome, that contributes to the consistency of measures across sections and cycles of assessment.

Reviews of course outlines reveal a large number of course SLOs that present a wide span of assessment across all campuses of COM-FSM, generating a large volume of assessment data. The College uses TracDat as the repository of SLO assessment data for courses across the entire institution. Examination of the minutes of assessment team meetings over the past several years, including during the pandemic, revealed that the College has engaged in continuous dialogue to further improve its assessment practices as it involves the alignment of technology platforms, such as Canvas LMS, TracDat, and MyShark. Current faculty and staff, who function as data stewards, continue to address inefficiencies in sharing data across these platforms. The team engaged in dialogue with a cross-section of faculty, students and staff from all four state campuses, which revealed that the College has sustained processes for systematically collecting learning outcomes data, has worked collaboratively to organize data for analysis, and routinely reports gains in student learning as well as identify targeted areas for improvement. Faculty from all four campuses shared numerous examples of course-level assessment that resulted in tangible changes in instructional approaches as well as the allocation of resources to acquire and implement instructional technology to increase student success (II.A.3).

The College offers pre-collegiate courses in English (ESL) and Mathematics to assist students in preparing for success in college level courses. These courses are identified in the college catalog with a course number starting with a "0" (in other words, a sub-100 course number). These

courses are part of a pathway known as Achieving College Excellence (ACE) and are arranged in a progressive sequence that facilitates transition to 100-level collegiate courses. Success rates for students in ACE courses were robust (as high as 89%) prior to the pandemic, but saw a decline in the 2020 academic year as the pandemic limited instruction to remote modes (II.A.4).

The College maintains policies that all certificates and degree programs follow practices consistent with American higher education as they pertain to depth, rigor, course sequencing and time to completion. The associate degrees offered require a total of 60 course units, and the baccalaureate degree in Elementary Education a total of 120 units. Student learning outcomes are developed for all courses and mapped to program and institutional learning outcomes. Board Policies and curriculum frameworks are in place to ensure that these structures are in place for every course leading to certificates and degrees. The College submitted a substantive change proposal to ACCJC, which was approved at the January 2021 meeting of the Commission. This was followed by the drafting and adoption of Board Policy 3400 for Distance Education, which details the standards for distance learning will parallel the same academic scope and rigor of onsite courses. The policy meets key requirements outlined by ACCJC for distance and correspondence education as they address regular and substantive interaction between faculty and students, student authentication for participation in distance education courses including participation and the awarding of credit, and the delineation of key responsibilities for implementation and ongoing management of distance learning programs, structures, and resources. The Distance Education Program Planning (DEPP) group, identified in BP 3400, had its first meeting in February 2023, and has undertaken the work to ensure that the College's distance education offerings are of high quality and aligned with the College's mission, goals and objectives. This group, in partnership with the Institute for Student Learning and Excellence in Teaching (ISLET), facilitates near-term capacity building for faculty and students to engage in distance learning activities, while directing the College's efforts to meet the educational and service needs of students (II.A.5).

The College establishes patterns of course offerings that enable students to complete certificate and degree programs within established expectations in higher education. In accordance with the Substantive Change Application submitted to ACCJC in January 2021, the College has expanded distance education offerings in order to enable students to take classes remotely and complete programs alleviating the need to travel to and from or between campuses. The College has transformed during the COVID-19 pandemic to offer an effective balance of face-to-face and online offerings designed to facilitate successful course and program completion. Interviews with faculty, students, and staff revealed that the increase in online offerings has greatly expanded access to instructional opportunities and support services, while addressing challenges faced by users. The Distance Education Program Planning group (DEPP) has been established to facilitate the full implementation of distance learning programs in alignment with the College's mission and strategic plan (II.A.6).

The College utilizes multiple modes of instructional delivery to address the needs and learning styles of students. The College describes a significant shift in delivery following the COVID emergency, when online teaching was implemented. The College subsequently submitted a Substantive Change for distance education proposal that was approved by ACCJC in February 2021, and codified at the College by the passage of Board Policy 3400 for Distance Education. The Distance Education Program Planning Group (DEPP) has been established to facilitate the rollout of distance learning, the training of faculty in online teaching methodologies, and the assessment of learning outcomes for online courses, as well as ensuring a high-quality online learning experience that is on par with face-to-face and hybrid course offerings. This group also oversees the restructuring and of course outlines to accommodate distance learning options, changes to the assessment and program review structures to disaggregate learning outcomes data between online and onsite course offerings, and adopting a new Learning Management System (Canvas) that can further integrate and embed learning outcomes assessment, expanding the College's capacity to evaluate effectiveness and improve program success (II.A.7).

The College reports that it does not utilize department-wide course or program examinations, nor does the College utilize a direct assessment of prior learning. The College does report the results of external certification and licensure exams (such as for Elementary Education certification), which is addressed in Standard II.A.14 (II.A.8).

The College has established policies that govern the awarding of course credit leading to degrees and certificates, and these policies align with established norms and equivalencies in higher education. Course outlines for all courses detail the learning outcomes expected of all students, and SLOs for all courses, as well as the strategies for assessing achievement at the course level, are mapped to program and institutional SLOs. The College uses contact hours (instead of federal clock-to-credit hour conversions) as the basis for awarding course credit, and this is also detailed in all course outlines. The college catalog and the Curriculum Handbook provide policies, guidelines and processes governing the awarding of credits, certificates, and degrees (II.A.9).

The College's transfer of credit policies is encoded in Board Policies and found in the college catalog. The Registrar and the Vice President of Instructional Affairs are delegated the responsibility of reviewing transfer credits earned at other institutions, using existing articulation agreements as their guide. Equivalent courses are assessed according to comparable outcomes, and satisfactory achievement of course requirements (e.g., earning a C or better). Additionally, the College has maintained articulation agreements with several colleges and universities around the Pacific, including institutions in Hawaii and the western United States (II.A.10).

The College has established learning outcomes for all programs and degrees that are linked to assessment of course-level student learning outcomes. Institutional learning outcomes

articulate core learning competencies that align with economic and social objectives of the Federated states of Micronesia in fulfillment of the college mission. The college routinely assesses these outcomes to document the extent to which students demonstrate achievement of the targeted program and institutional outcomes, and these findings are reported as part of an annual institutional assessment report (II.A.11).

The College includes as part of its degree programs a required sequence of General Education courses that ensure opportunities for growth, enrichment and cultural development in support of the college mission. The distribution of these courses includes 29 required units for the associate degree and 42 required units for the bachelor's degree. Courses selected for inclusion in the General Education curriculum are assessed through the curriculum approval process, based on alignment with the GE student learning outcomes. Achievement of GE outcomes is included as part of the annual assessment report (II.A.12).

The College has established a policy as well as program development procedures that ensure that all degree programs are designed to focus on one area of inquiry or on an established interdisciplinary core, which are reflected in the major courses and general education courses, respectively. These requirements are identified for all degrees in the college catalog. Learning outcomes for courses are linked to all relevant program and general education outcomes, including identified strategies for demonstrating student achievement of the outcomes. For the Bachelor of Science program in Elementary Education, these core areas of inquiry are also aligned with standards established by the FSM and state curriculum frameworks in the core subject areas. Nine units of upper division general education courses have been added to meet ACCJC standards (II.A.13).

The College maintains career and technical programs that lead to degrees and certificates according to US Department of Labor apprenticeship criteria as related training instruction programs. Program standards and instructor certifications ensure that curricula successfully prepare students to achieve external licensure and certification in their chosen career fields. Selected examples of recent results for programs such as the AAS in Telecommunication Technology, as well as the AAS Electronic Technology programs report that all students who took certification exams in their respective areas passed. The College reports that it must develop a more effective means of tracking employment placements of its CTE graduates and has created an improvement plan to address this shortcoming (II.A.14).

The College has established a program deletion policy to guide the process of discontinuing a program that is unlikely to be offered again. The guidelines are found in the Curriculum Handbook. Additionally, the College has established a mechanism for ensuring completion in a timely manner when programs are either discontinued or requirements are significantly changed. An example provided in the ISER was the change in 2018 to the Agriculture and Food Technology certificate program requirements whereby students who entered the program prior

to 2018 were permitted to graduate under the old program or given the option to transfer to the new program requirements. A similar situation took place when the B.S. in Elementary Teacher Education partnership was discontinued with the University of Guam, necessitating the establishment of COM-FSM's own B.S. degree in Elementary Education in 2019. Students affected by changes such as these were able to complete their programs in a timely manner, and the College reports that it received no complaints from any student regarding the deletion or modification of a program or its requirements (II.A.15).

The College has established and sustained a routine and systematic procedure to evaluate the quality and currency of all of its instructional programs. Student learning outcomes are assessed for all courses, and this evidence is used to assess program learning outcomes as indicated in course outline documents. The College collects these data institution wide and reports the results of this assessment in an annual COM-FSM Institutional Assessment Report that provides a robust presentation of the results and analysis of the evidence for all programs at the College. This information also informs the Program Review process, ensuring that achievement of learning outcomes drives program quality assessment, planning, and improvement. The College continues to refine the alignment of its data collection and aggregation tools to inform changes made at the course, program, and institutional level. Instructors revealed vital insights regarding students' challenges in moving to the online learning environment, involving technology needs, connectivity issues, scheduling conflicts, and adapting to a virtual interactive environment (II.A.16).

While course-level assessment occurs regularly and consistently, the College reports that due to challenges brought about the pandemic, the most recent cycle of program-level assessment has not been completely finished. The College has developed an Improvement Plan for itself to strengthen staffing and ensure continuity in the assessment cycle (II.A.16).

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

II.B. Library and Learning Support Services

General Observations:

The College offers library and learning support services aligned with its mission and at appropriate levels of quality and rigor. Assessment of services and resources takes place regularly and informs their continuation and improvement. Surveys of learning resources indicate a generally high level of satisfaction with them at each of the campuses. The Pacific collection housed at the National Campus is noteworthy, of value to the country and to researchers beyond its borders.

Findings and Evidence:

The College supports student learning and achievement by providing library and other learning support services, including tutoring, computer laboratories, and learning technology, to students and to personnel responsible for student learning and support that are sufficient in quantity, currency, depth, and variety to support the College's educational programs. Of particular note are the materials in the Pacific collection, which are available in part online, that reflect the position of the library as the *de facto* national library. The team observed the collections and services available at the National campus and reviewed the evidence indicating the offerings at the Chuuk, CTEC, Kosrae, and Yap campuses. The team noted that collections exceed the benchmark that the College has set for volumes per student. The library has universal borrowing in place for its students to enable use of materials from any location, and the transition to a new library services platform, KOHA, will enable students at any campus and online to see holdings at all libraries more easily. The team found evidence in the student surveys that show a high level of satisfaction with library services, particularly at the National and Kosrae campuses (II.B.1).

The College has established mechanisms for inviting and encouraging the appropriate expertise of faculty, librarians, and other learning support services professionals to select and maintain the educational equipment and materials needed to support student learning and enhance the achievement of the mission. Based on survey data that the team reviewed, the library has been evaluating faculty inclusion in material selection and steadily improving outreach to faculty in response to the surveys. The team also affirmed that the library is adequately represented on the Curriculum Committee, which is necessary to inform the library of new courses requiring new materials (II.B.2)

The College has implemented means by which it may evaluate the success of the library and learning resources in meeting student needs. For example, there are the surveys administered to students and faculty which are then reflected in the annual assessment plans that align with the annual budget development process. In addition, the Learning Resources Center conducts a program review of its services across a four-year cycle, with the most recent iteration taking place in 2020. The library has developed appropriate instructional student learning outcomes that reflect the institutional learning outcome for information literacy. The team reviewed the pre-test/post-test instrument to measure instructional success (II.B.3).

The College has appropriate agreements in place with other institutions to provide information materials to students. The College's MOUs and contracts are sufficient. The team reviewed relevant documents, including the agreement with the University of Guam that enhances the College's access to information for students and the licensing agreements in place for research databases through vendors such as EBSCO and JSTOR (II.B.4)

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

II.C. Student Support Services

General Observations:

The College of Micronesia – FSM regularly evaluates the quality of student support services using a variety of effectiveness measures, including routine assessment of learning support outcomes, and the use of internal as well as external surveys; in particular, the use of the CCSSE has provided a comprehensive evaluation of the efficacy of student support programs. These measures have resulted in well-developed improvements in meeting student support needs. A noteworthy example involves the implementation of Dropout Detective, an early-alert system that has enabled the college to proactively identify students at high risk, and realize gains in student persistence, retention and success. The onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, and the restrictions in travel provided challenges as well as opportunities for the college in developing new means of access to services both in face-to-face and virtual modes, significantly expanding the college’s capacity to support the success of students throughout the FSM. The College has embraced a model of continuous quality improvement that has led to highly effective and student-centered programs. The current plans for the college to significantly expand its Distance Education offerings will necessitate a comprehensive plan to sustain the changes made during the COVID pandemic, and to ensure that key sources of information (the college catalog, student handbook, college website) are kept up-to-date and are easy-to-follow.

Findings and Evidence:

The College has created and maintained a well-developed, comprehensive program of effectiveness practices that aligns with the college mission, identifying ongoing service priorities and needs. These practices have been developed and refined through iterative cycles of outcomes assessment and augmented by a variety of internal and external surveys to provide a rich body of evidence to improve and refine service delivery. In particular, the College has made excellent use of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) to identify areas of educational practice and strengthen its capacity to better meet the needs of entering students. These insights will continue to play a vital role in sustaining the effort to provide virtual services that complement face-to-face services across the campuses of COM-FSM (II.C.1).

The College has developed learning support outcomes as well as operation for all of its student service units across the institution, in alignment to the college mission and with Board Policy 1110, which articulates the commitment toward assessment and continuous quality improvement for all programs and services at the College. Outcomes are assessed and mapped to institutional learning outcomes, providing a detailed portrait of how out-of-class experiences at the College contribute to the learning experience of the students. This focus on constant improvement led to the adoption of an early-alert program, called “Dropout Detective”, an

ideal example of a complete cycle of how the identification of a learning need led to an innovative solution. II.C.2).

The College has devoted significant energy and resources to expand support services to students through virtual means during the COVID-19 pandemic, and currently offers all but a handful of student support services through virtual and face-to-face means at all campuses and throughout the FSM. The College continually evaluates its services and delivery mechanisms as part of its continuous improvement efforts. As the College implements its plan to expand its offerings of distance education courses leading to degrees, it is taking steps to evaluate all modes of service delivery to ensure the breadth and quality of services offered online remains on-par with those offered on-site at each campus (II.C.3).

The College offers a variety of extracurricular clubs, social activities, and recreational sports, in addition to student leadership and development opportunities offered on-site as well as virtually. These activities are augmented by lectures, workshops, cultural events, and enrichment opportunities that align well with the college mission.(II.C.4).

The College provides student counseling and advising at all campuses and virtually. The College delineates the roles of counseling and advising separately. Counselors at all campuses provide personal, interpersonal, professional, and academic support in face-to-face as well as virtual environments. Advising is carried out by faculty in respective programs and disciplines, focusing on academic matters such as course selection, educational planning, and transfer to 4-year colleges. The College has advising resources in place for faculty who provide this support to students. As the College has shifted its emphasis to distance learning, with the approval of the Substantive Change proposal by ACCJC and subsequent passage of Board Policy 3400, it has created new modes of faculty professional development to address resource and support needs to deliver a “high-quality, high-impact” learning experience to students. The Institute for Student Learning and Excellence in Teaching (ISLET) has been established to facilitate the training of faculty to fulfill their roles in engaging students as teachers and advisors (II.C.5).

The College has clearly defined admissions policies that are found in the Board Policies, the college catalog and covered in the Virtual Orientation. The College states that policies and procedures are living, dynamic documents that grow and adapt with the organization. The Office of Admissions, Records and Retention (OARR), in collaboration with the Recruitment, Admissions and Retention Committee, is tasked with continually reviewing admissions policies and procedures. At the outset of its review of this standard, the team noted that key publications, such as the catalog and the student handbook appeared to be out of date. The College took steps to address this issue. In Fall 2022, the College updated its catalog policy stating that the information contained in the catalog webpage (what the College calls the “online catalog”) shall be considered the current official catalog. While this policy update provides a means of making continuous updates as program changes occur, the team identified an issue with the new policy, as it may present a challenge in establishing students’ catalog rights to program requirements detailed in the catalog for the year students begin their studies at COM-FSM. Currently, the College posts full pdf copies of the catalog for each prior year, and

the team suggests that the College continue this practice and modify its catalog policy accordingly. (II.C.6).

The College's battery of assessments for initial course placement, the College of Micronesia-FSM Entrance Test (Referred to as COMET) has evolved over the years. The instrument has been reviewed and validated at intervals, and most recently, a published study of COMET results sought to explore the differences in success rates among students who placed in developmental precollegiate non-credit courses versus those who placed in college level, credit-bearing courses, among other differences. One implication of the study is that a percentage of students who take the COMET are not admitted to the College based on their results. In its Quality-Focused Essay (QFE), the College proposes the elimination of the "non-admit" category of COMET results while maintaining the use of the assessment as a placement tool (II.C.7).

The College has an established process of managing, safeguarding, providing access to, and archiving student records. The policies align with FERPA and are communicated to students and the campus community in the college catalog, student handbook, and the Student Guide. The college maintains a sizeable archive of paper-based student records that are stored in locking file cabinets that are in a restricted area at the national campus, and since 2008, records have been kept electronically, with password-protected access (II.C.8).

Conclusion: The College meets the Standard.

Standard III

Resources

III.A. Human Resources

General Observations:

The College effectively uses its human resources to achieve its mission and to improve academic quality and institutional effectiveness. During the interviews it conducted, the team heard multiple times that the College's personnel are its greatest asset. A robust, clear, and accessible set of policies guides the College in its employment of and support for its varied personnel. The incentives and other mechanisms and strategies that the College has in place to support professional development rise to the level of commendation. The College has created two improvement plans (III.A.3 and III.A.5) to address areas in which it has identified shortcomings. The team concurs and recommends improvement in those instances.

Findings and Evidence:

The College assures the integrity and quality of its programs and services by employing administrators, faculty, and staff who are qualified by appropriate education, training, and experience to provide and support its programs and services. The College indicates that it is able to hire and maintain core staffing across categories though in interviews the team heard of the struggles with recruitment overall due to a variety of factors, including the particular geographic characteristics of the country. Job qualifications and procedures for selection are clearly established. The team applauds the College's practice of stating its mission and core values in each job posting (III.A.1).

Faculty at the College demonstrate knowledge of the subject matter in which they teach and the requisite skills for instruction. In meeting with the College staff, the team heard that the College clearly outlines expectations for educational background and professional experience. Where a department needs to meet a threshold of employing a certain percentage of Micronesian faculty members, there are clearly articulated exceptions and a process for ensuring that the College subsequently meet standards for hiring faculty. Faculty job descriptions at the College include development and review of curriculum as well as assessment of learning (III.A.2).

The College administrators and other employees responsible for educational programs and services possess qualifications necessary to perform duties required to sustain institutional effectiveness and academic quality. Moreover, the team observed that the College has in place

exemplary practices both to provide internal opportunities for professional development and support for external opportunities. On the other hand, the College has identified a shortcoming in collecting and maintaining data on organized on-the-job training undertaken annually by individual offices and departments. As such, the College has identified an improvement plan, which states, "Improve collection of available and accessible data on professional development at unit and department level." The team affirms the need for the College to make improvement in this area (III.A.3).

Since the last accreditation cycle, the College has changed its approach to ensuring that degrees held by faculty, administrators, and other employees are from institutions accredited by recognized U.S. accrediting agencies or that equivalence has been established. Current practice, as the team noted, is for new hires to demonstrate that they hold such degrees prior to onboarding at the college (III.A.4).

The College has implemented a policy and procedure for conducting personnel evaluation systematically and at stated intervals. Criteria for evaluating all 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 program to manage performance evaluation." The team affirms the need for the College to make improvement in this area (III.A.5).

Effective January 2018, Standard III.A.6 is no longer applicable. The Commission acted to delete the Standard during its January 2018 Board of Directors meeting (III.A.6).

The College has maintained a ratio of full-time to part-time and adjunct faculty in excess of 3:1 in recent years. The primacy placed on full-time faculty means that students experience consistent education delivered by committed faculty who are available on a full-time basis. The team observed that the College applies Enrollment Key Indicators as a benchmark for determining the proportion of students to faculty. According to the indicators, the proportion is sufficient. The team heard during the interviews that the College is currently reviewing the indicators with the intention of updating them to include all staffing (III.A.7).

The College has a set of Board Policies that relate to employment. Many of these policies apply to all employees, including part-time faculty, and thereby integrate such faculty into the institution. Others mention faculty or part-time faculty specifically. In these instances, the acknowledgment of these categories of employees is relevant, such as in the case of teaching. In addition, as the team observed, the College provides orientation materials to part-time faculty upon hiring as well as making such materials readily available online to employees (III.A.8).

The College maintains a ratio of administrators to students that meets the levels established in the Enrollment Key Indicators. Although the indicators in their current (dating from 2006) iteration do not account for requisite levels of all types of positions, the team learned during the interviews that the College has mechanisms in place for determining the need for staffing in other areas. The team also heard that the College is currently reviewing the indicators with the intention of updating them to include all staffing. The pool of college administrators mostly meets the requisite qualifications, and the College otherwise asserts that years of experience and ongoing professional development demonstrate an equivalence for administrators who do not technically meet qualifications (III.A.9).

The number of administrators at the College is sufficient. Their preparation and expertise are appropriate. The College has a means of evaluating the effectiveness of the administrative leadership and a process whereby those who do not measure up are demoted or dismissed. The team heard in the interviews that performance improvement plans are used to support all staff who do not meet expectations (III.A.10).

There is a set of policies related to Human Resources at the College. In addition to providing hard copies of the policies to new employees, the College has placed the policies online where the team was able to find them readily. The College has established procedures for regular review of the policies, which contributes to the fair and consistent application of them (III.A.11).

The College approaches diversity differently than an institution in the United States might. Given a student population that is 93.3% homogenous, Micronesian, the College seeks to employ Micronesians. However, a larger proportion of faculty and staff than of students do not identify as such. Nonetheless, the College has channels by which it assesses diversity, including through the sharing of data on student enrollments. During the interviews, the team learned that the College supports its personnel by means of opening its courses to its own faculty and staff as well as tracking and supporting education undertaken elsewhere. In conjunction with this, the College provides a commendable level and range of incentives for staff to encourage professional growth, thereby benefiting the College and nation at large. The team further learned that, by college policy, tuition fees for courses and programs at the COM-FSM are waived and tuition for spouses and children is reduced by half. Employees from all areas of the College utilize this opportunity, for themselves, their children, and their grandchildren. Upon completion of their educational endeavors, employees and family members frequently find career advancement opportunities at the College. This initiative supports employees in achieving academic and career goals, contributes to succession planning at the College, and broadens the impact of the College in support of its commitment “to the success of the Federated States of Micronesia” (III.A.12).

The College provides evidence of a written code of professional ethics for its personnel by means of a Board Policy addressing such a code. As the team observed, the College also has an administrative procedure that demonstrates that there are consequences for violating the code of ethics (III.A.13).

There is a robust program at the College for internal professional development activities, such as group learning experiences, as well as support for activities outside of the college. When interviewed, college employees singled out this support as a strong incentive both for professional development and for remaining committed to the College. This strong “grow your own” initiative includes an employee educational benefits program wherein each employee may pursue associate and bachelor’s degrees at the College free of enrollment fees. In addition, as the team heard, employees may take advantage of flexible scheduling and other support to pursue advanced degrees not offered at the College. The College evaluates its own professional development offerings, using that process to shape the direction and content of future professional development activities (III.A.14).

The College provides each employee with access to their personnel records in accordance with the law. The team observed that the College has a clear policy in place that ensures the security and confidentiality of those records (III.A.15).

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

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)

III.B. Physical Resources

General Observations:

The College plans for, provides, and evaluates the physical facilities needed for it to achieve its mission and support student learning. The facilities master plan is the framework for the College’s work in this area, fitting into the national infrastructure development plan. Strategies for long-range facilities planning at the college, including maintenance, could be strengthened insofar as they relate to systematic planning.

Findings and Evidence:

As the team noted, the College has an array of physical resources at six college sites on four islands that are distant from each other. The College has identified facilities projects at each site in its most recent Facilities Master Plan, though the team observed that for many of them,

there is no progress or a status of on hold. The funding process is a significant obstacle in moving facilities projects forward. The team learned that the College has put measures in place to assure access, safety, security, and a healthful learning and working environment, including actions taken to address the COVID pandemic. After discussions with the college regarding its upcoming strategic planning processes, the team anticipates that the College will strengthen its long-range maintenance plans to more effectively address future needs (III.B.1).

The College has an effective plan in place for acquiring or building, maintaining, and upgrading or replacing its physical resources, including facilities, equipment, land, and other assets. The team noted that the five-year priority project list clearly shows the projects at each of the campuses, their ranked priority, and what progress has been made. The projects listed are ones, such as controlling power consumption while cooling facilities through updated air conditioning, that assure effective utilization and the continuing quality necessary to support the College's programs and services and achieve its mission (III.B.2).

The College has in place processes by which it regularly plans and evaluates its facilities and equipment to assure the feasibility and effectiveness of physical resources in supporting institutional programs and services. The five-year priority project list is one example of the culmination of these processes. The team observed that the College collects and makes use of utilization and other types of relevant data in planning and evaluating, such as its tracking of the use of the shuttle service between two of its campuses on Pohnpei (III.B.3).

The College's long-range capital plans are necessarily connected to the national government's planning. Projects that the College has detailed in its facilities master plan are thereby included in the government's infrastructure development plan, which leads to a dependency on the national government that may be a challenge. The evidence provided indicates the costs of long-range capital expenditures. Additionally, costs for maintenance factor into the total cost of ownership of facilities, and the College asserts that it dedicates 10% of its budget to facilities maintenance. During the visit, the team and college discussed how long-range capital plans affect the maintenance cost facing the college. As a result of these discussion, the team anticipates that the development and implementation of long-range capital plans will be addressed as the college completes its strategic planning process (III.B.4).

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

III.C. Technology Resources

General Observations:

The College plans for, provides, and assesses technology that is sufficient for it to achieve its mission and support student learning. A framework of policies and procedures scaffold the work in this area. The College's IT personnel are sufficient in number and appropriate in their approach to supporting staff and students with their technological needs. The College faces challenges to its technology infrastructure due to the particular geography of the country and has worked to address them. Through interviews during the site visit, the team observed that the College has identified its upcoming strategic planning process as an appropriate place to discuss how to maintain and improve its technology infrastructure post-COVID.

Findings and Evidence:

The team observed that the College provides technology services, professional support, facilities, hardware, and software that are appropriate and adequate to support institutional management and operational functions, academic programs, teaching and learning, and support services. The framework for how the College does so is found within the set of policies related to information technology, while procedural and similar guiding documents, such as the minimum requirements, outline how the College meets its technology obligations. The team noted there is a regular cycle of review to ensure that equipment is sufficient in number and quality for the various needs at the College. While there are challenges of scale for a nation such as the Federated States of Micronesia, the technology infrastructure has been maintained and furthered (III.C.1).

The College systematically plans for, updates, and replaces technology to ensure its technological infrastructure, quality, and capacity are adequate to support its mission, operations, programs, and services. This is demonstrated through administrative procedures that account for the cycles for replacement of computers for students and for staff as well as the disposal of older equipment. The College has reviewed and updated its web presence since its last accreditation. It has also begun to explore the use of Google Workspace and the Canvas learning management system to determine whether such platforms would ensure more effective work toward the College mission (III.C.2).

The College asserts that its IT staff are its greatest technological asset, working as they do to assure that technology resources at all locations where it offers courses, programs, and services are implemented and maintained sufficiently. The resources themselves do vary somewhat from campus to campus, but this is due to the geographic dispersal of the islands and the uneven potential for technology from one campus to another that results. Access is as equitable as possible at this time, but the team encourages the College to incorporate consideration of this challenge into its long-range strategic planning process. The College has sufficient mechanisms in place to further assure reliable access, safety, and security of technology at its campuses (III.C.3).

The College demonstrates a commitment to the provision of appropriate instruction and support for faculty, staff, students, and administrators in the effective use of technology and technology systems related to its programs, services, and institutional operations. Students benefit from the involvement of the IT Office in orientation, but also from supplementary training materials, such as videos on the College's YouTube channel. As for staff, training can be provided on a one-on-one or as-needed basis, but the College also offers workshops during regular cycles of professional development. The IT Office welcomes requests, but it also harvests data from its Helpdesk service to gauge what sort of technology issues could be addressed through further instruction (III.C.4).

The College has a set of Board Policies and administrative procedures that are readily accessible online and that guide the appropriate use of technology in the teaching and learning processes. The College reviews the policies and procedures on a regular basis (III.C.5).

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

III.D. Financial Resources

General Observations:

The College plans for and implements an annual budget appropriate to its mission and with respect to available revenue and requisite expenditures. Annual audits demonstrate the relative soundness of the College's internal financial procedures and the responsiveness the College has displayed when needing to correct a practice. The College has a growing endowment, a solid liquidity ratio, and relatively little long-term liability. Communication of financial information within the institution meets the needs of those who work with the budget. The team noted that the College has a strong capacity for short-term financial planning, demonstrating creative strategies for resource generation and allocation that help it react and adapt to quickly changing circumstances. This capacity will help the College as it strengthens the link between integrated planning and long-range planning, as noted in Standard I.B.9.

Findings and Evidence:

The College asserts that it has sufficient financial resources to support and sustain student learning programs and services and to improve institutional effectiveness. The team noted that the College has realized a deficit every other year for several years but understood that this may be attributed to projects that are funded by the fund balance from the previous year and reported as expenditures in the current fiscal year. Actual expenditures have come in under

budgeted expenditures. The team observed that the College has clear structures and procedures in place for the planning and constant monitoring of its financial affairs (III.D.1).

As the team observed, the College has clear and accessible policies and procedures to guide financial planning and integrate it with institutional planning in general. The policies are reviewed on a regular cycle and are designed to ensure that the institution adheres to sound financial practices and seeks financial stability. The flow of the budget process from the top level of administration down through the various units is spelled out. Moreover, as the team heard during the interviews, the College has implemented a new financial management system to which all units that submit a budget have access. The team learned that this has improved real-time access to financial information by appropriate staff throughout the institution (III.D.2).

The College has established clearly defined guidelines and processes for financial planning and budget development. The team affirmed that all constituencies have appropriate opportunities to participate in the development of institutional plans and budgets. These opportunities are clearly demarcated in the evidence provided (III.D.3).

The College takes a conservative approach to revenue estimate, using historical data to inform predictions. The College has leveraged opportunities related to various of its programs to develop further sources of revenue while exploring and entering into partnerships with outside entities. The team found evidence of realistic assessment of short-term financial resource availability as well. Moreover, the College has been able to fund the construction of at least one new building using Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) monies, moving that infrastructure from the priority list awaiting government funding into reality. Additionally, as the team learned, the College has built a significant endowment and continues to fundraise toward establishing it as a source for future revenue. At the time of the site visit, the endowment value was approximately \$12 million. The Board of Regents has set a goal of \$50 million. The aggressive campaign to build these funds will pay dividends into college planning in the future (III.D.4).

The College has an internal control structure in place to assure the financial integrity of the institution and responsible use of its financial resources. Through the auditing process and cyclical assessment of Business Office practices, the College demonstrates that there are appropriate control mechanisms and systemic evaluation of its financial management practices. As the team learned through the interviews, the College has implemented a new financial management system to which all units that submit a budget have access. The team noted that this has led to the dissemination of financial information in an improved, timely manner for sound decision making (III.D.5).

The College asserts that its financial documents reflect appropriate allocation and use of financial resources to support student learning programs and services. The College also states that its financial documents, including the budget, have a high degree of credibility and

accuracy. The team affirmed these assertions through the evidence provided, including the audit reports. The College is a low-risk auditee (III.D.6).

The College indicates the distribution network for audit reports, including making the audits available in the library and online. The team found that responses to audit findings are demonstrably timely and comprehensive. Where material weaknesses or significant deficiencies have been found in the past, the College has provided action plans for remediation. More importantly, the team observed that there have been no such weaknesses and deficiencies noted in subsequent years (III.D.7).

The College asserts that its financial and internal control systems are evaluated and assessed for validity and effectiveness, and the results of this assessment are used for improvement. The team found evidence for this in the cyclical assessment processes of the Business Office. The College additionally uses the external review process of the audit to evaluate and assess financial and internal control systems (III.D.8).

The College has sufficient cash flow and reserves to maintain stability. The team noted that the College's liquidity ratios are at a level several times above an acceptable minimum. The College's ability to contend with the fiscal nature of emergencies and unforeseen occurrences was in evidence during the COVID pandemic, such as being able to send home students through use of the college fund. The College regularly renews its insurance to cover any risks and works with an outside agency to manage uninsured cash, maximizing earnings (III.D.9).

The team found that the College's annual audit by an external reviewer is evidence that the institution practices effective oversight of finances, including management of financial aid, grants, externally funded programs, contractual relationships, auxiliary organizations or foundations, and institutional investments and assets. In addition, the team noted that the College's own policies and procedures have gone through regular review to encourage proper monitoring of finances. The College dissolved its foundation due to inactivity of officers. This has not affected the continued growth of the College's endowment, which the team found laudable (III.D.10).

The College has a sufficient level of financial resources to provide a reasonable expectation of both short- term financial solvency. The team noted that cost-cutting measures are deployed where revenues fall short of budget whereas the growth of the endowment is a hedge against future insolvency. The team heard during the interviews, however, that the College is not yet at a point where it can draw payouts from the endowment. The College carries one significant long-term liability, namely the accrual of leave time that must be paid out. Since payouts happen when an employee leaves the college, the risk of the entire balance coming due at once is minimal. Based on interviews with the College during the site visit, the team anticipates that as the College completes the Strategic Planning process outlined in the President's Workplan, it

will further improve its long-term fiscal planning and further assure long-term financial solvency (III.D.11).

The College's only long-term liability is accrued annual leave. All of its paid obligations to employees, such as retirement and health care, are accounted for in the annual budget. The team noted that there are sufficient resources in place to meet these obligations (III.D.12).

The College asserts that it has sufficient funds for its operation and has not issued any debt instruments nor has plans of issuing debt instruments in the future. As such, there is no need for it, on an annual basis, to assess and allocate resources for the repayment of any locally incurred debt instruments that can affect the financial condition of the institution (III.D.13).

The team found that the College uses its financial resources, including short- and long-term debt instruments (such as bonds and Certificates of Participation), auxiliary activities, fund-raising efforts, and grants, with integrity and in a manner consistent with the intended purpose of the funding source. The findings of the annual audit by an external reviewer provide evidence of this. The College's own system of disbursements is consistent with what expenditures are accounted for in the budget (III.D.14).

The College is not qualified to avail the Federal student loans under the Federal aid program and thus would not need to monitor and manage student loan default rates, revenue streams, and assets to ensure compliance with federal requirements (III.D.15).

The College asserts that its contractual agreements with external entities are consistent with the mission and goals of the institution, governed by institutional policies, and contain appropriate provisions to maintain the integrity of the institution and the quality of its programs, services, and operations. The team noted examples of grants that extend beyond the institution to the broader community. In extending into the community, the College demonstrates how the health of the community is linked to the students that the College serves (III.D.16).

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

Standard IV

Leadership and Governance

IV.A. Decision-Making Roles & Processes

General Observations:

Decision-making roles and processes at the College of Micronesia-FSM are widely understood, with opportunities for input from all constituencies into the direction and projects of the institution. The College follows these processes effectively and reviews them cyclically, adjusting as needed for improvement.

Findings and Evidence:

The College encourages and supports innovation. Leaders support members of the college community in developing and deploying new or revised approaches to current problems and in developing forward-looking solutions to serve their nation and students. Notably, the College developed a baccalaureate program in elementary education to meet the need of its various communities to grow their own elementary teachers to serve their own communities. The College regularly applies for and receives grants for innovative ideas. Furthermore, since 1993 it has offered the Innovative Idea Award to employees as a way to reward innovative excellence and creative problem-solving (IV.A.1).

The College follows a thorough set of policies and procedures that outline decision-making processes and the roles of all constituents. These policies provide a clear avenue by which members of the college community can bring forward ideas and illustrate the approval stream through which those ideas flow prior to implementation (IV.A.2).

Administrators and faculty roles in institutional governance are clearly defined within the policies, procedures, and practices of the College. Faculty and administrators exercise substantive voice and influence in the areas of policies, planning, and budget relative to their positions. (IV.A.3)

The College's Curriculum and Assessment Handbook and Faculty Handbook clearly lays out the responsibilities of faculty and academic administrators in the development of curriculum. Board Policies and practices delegate appropriate authority in developing new support programs to academic administrators and faculty, such as authoring substantive change proposals to the Commission and implementing distance education as a component of program offerings (IV.A.4).

The College's system of governance is thoughtfully and thoroughly described in Board Policy and carried out in practice. Decision-making authority is aligned with the expertise and responsibility of appropriate parties. The team observed that the system supports strong and consistent long-term planning efforts and expedites short-term planning and changes to matters such as curriculum and assessment. This system will be of great benefit as the College engages in post-pandemic planning, such as its new Strategic Plan and the role and scope of distance education in advancing its mission (IV.A.5).

Processes and policies for decision-making are well understood. Decisions made through these established processes are communicated widely through a variety of means, including newsletters, Presidential messages, and meeting minutes (IV.A.6).

The College has a robust cycle of review for its leadership roles and decision-making policies and procedures. It regularly engages in these reviews, in accordance with established timelines, adjust them as needed for improvement, and communicate the changes to the college community (IV.A.7).

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

IV.B. Chief Executive Officer

General Observations:

The College of Micronesia-FSM has established a strong framework of policies and practices that delegate leadership responsibilities to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Evidence provided by the College illustrates that the CEO effectively exercises that leadership role, ensuring quality, organizing and leading the administration, promoting improvement, ensuring alignment with the Standards, laws, regulations, and Board Policies, and communicating with the public and government entities on behalf of the institution. Since the time of the team's ISER review in October, the Board of Regents has selected a permanent CEO whose qualifications, background, and experiences are ideally suited to help the College maintain effective operations, ensure broad participation in governance and decision-making, and develop and/or revise long-term plans to guide the College into the future in fulfillment of its mission to advance the Federated States of Micronesia.

Findings and Evidence:

The CEO has and carries out the responsibilities to ensure the quality of the institution. When the previous CEO departed, an interim CEO continued with these activities, providing effective leadership in each of the areas expected within this Standard. Notably, the 2016 Governance

and Visioning Summit, developed under the previous permanent CEO, illustrated broad-based input and review of the college mission, goals, and planning. The new CEO has developed and is following the COM-FSM President's Workplan, front-loading the most pressing aspects of planning, organizing, budgeting, personnel oversight, and institutional effectiveness for immediate action with key performance indicators and implementation timelines (IV.B.1).

The College's administrative structure is organized and staffed appropriate to the institution's purposes, size, and complexity. It is overseen by the CEO and authority is properly delegated to administrators and others, by policy and practice, as expected by this Standard. Notably, administrators at all levels have been developed and selected from within the College, providing stability and coupling individual and institutional growth and advancement (IV.B.2).

Through policy and practice, the CEO guides the College's institutional improvement practices. Through regular analysis, revisions of key planning documents such as the Strategic Plan, and well-crafted presidential guidance such as the 2018 White Paper, it is evident that the CEO promotes institutional improvements and planning across the College. The Integrated Educational Master Plan and its associated Matrix, developed under the previous permanent CEO, illustrate that the College has effectively linked its financial, human, physical, and technology resources to effectively deliver its programs and services. The COM-FSM President's Workplan illustrates that these effective approaches will continue under the new CEO (IV.B.3).

The CEO has led the accreditation efforts for the College, as expected by this Standard. In response to the pandemic, the CEO ensured that the College applied for and was granted approval to offer Distance Education by the ACCJC. The resulting Board Policy 3400 is thorough and well-constructed to guide Distance Education activities of the College in accordance with the Commission's Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education. College leaders illustrate through their actions that they work to align the College with the expectations of the Standards (IV.B.4).

The CEO, through personal action, leadership of the cabinet, and Board Policy, assures implementation of statutes, regulations, and Board Policies and ensures their alignment with the mission and fiscal realities (IV.B.5).

As the sole institution of higher education in the country, the COM-FSM plays a vital role in national advancement. The CEO is active in the community, participates in community events, provides updates to the community at large, and represents the College at numerous national government entities, diplomatic corps, and other regional educational entities. With executive experience at other regional colleges and expertise in distance education, the new CEO communicates a powerful vision for how the College will fulfill its mission to advance the Federated States of Micronesia and collaborate with other educational institutions and governmental agencies to promote growth and economic improvement across the entire region (IV.B.6).

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

IV.C. Governing Board

General Observations:

The College is governed by a Board of Regents appointed by the President of the Federated States of Micronesia and confirmed by its Congress. Regents are well trained, provide thoughtful oversight of the institution, adhere to high standards of ethics, and follow established procedures. The Board is self-reflective, takes corrective action when necessary, and stands committed to improving the effectiveness of the College of Micronesia.

Findings and Evidence:

The College is governed by a Board of Regents whose authority is established and granted by the national government, the Federated States of Micronesia. The Board holds and exercises its authority over essential policy matters including academic quality, integrity, effectiveness of programs, and financial stability. Review of these policies follows a five-year cycle. The Board regularly receives updates on progress on these expectations (IV.C.1).

The Board acts as a collective entity. The members engage in discussions to reach consensus and build camaraderie. While not all votes are unanimous, once decided, the Board acts in support of their collective action. The Board also reviews its own conduct in relation to this Standard and takes corrective action when it deems it necessary (IV.C.2).

The College has a clear, established process for selection of the CEO and followed it in selecting the new CEO. Upon resignation of the previous permanent CEO, to ensure consistent executive leadership for the College, the Board promptly appointed an Interim CEO, selected a second interim CEO upon her retirement to guide the College through the turbulence of the pandemic, and actively sought a permanent CEO. With closed borders under pandemic rules, off-island candidates were prohibited employment and residency. Moreover, COVID had its most disruptive infection period in the FSM in Summer 2022, which further complicated and delayed the search process. Since the team ISER review in October, the Board of Regents has selected a seasoned and highly effective CEO who has taken on the mantle of leadership with conviction and great energy. The Board followed its established policy to evaluate the previous President, including a thorough four-year analysis, and conducted an annual evaluation of the interim CEO. All evidence indicates that the Board will follow its policies and timelines in evaluating the new CEO as well (IV.C.3).

Members of the Board of Regents are appointed by the state and national governments and serve as an independent policy-making body. They reflect the interests of the states and nation and regularly engage in community meetings to hear from their constituents. Regents represent, advocate, and support the College in their states and at the national level, including securing increased funding for the college endowment. They also defend against political interests by referring external interests to established policies (IV.C.4).

The Board establishes, reviews, and follows a well-constructed set of published policies aligned with the mission and designed to ensure quality, integrity, and improvement. These policies ensure that the Board of Regents is empowered by statute and practice with the ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal matters, financial integrity, and institutional stability (IV.C.5).

Bylaws for the Board of Regents and the full slate of policies are published on the college website. The Bylaws and policies specify the Board's size, duties, responsibilities, structure, and operating procedures (IV.C.6).

The Board of Regents engages in reflection on its adherence to its own established policies and procedures. When they find departures from that adherence, they take corrective action, as evidenced by an action plan developed in 2018 in response to a letter of concern from the ACCJC (IV.C.7).

The Board of Regents regularly reviews key indicators of student learning, student achievement, institutional goals, and academic quality. At each Board meeting, the Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Assessment presents a progress report on one or more of the goals outlined in the College's Strategic Plan, ensuring that Regents are apprised of progress on student success metrics (IV.C.8).

The Board of Regents actively and regularly engage in training and professional development through both memberships in professional organizations and workshops provided by contracted trainers. The Regents are appointed by the President of the FSM with the advice and consent of Congress in staggered terms to promote continuity (IV.C.9).

The College has a clear process for self-evaluation by the Board of Regents focused on its effectiveness in promoting and sustaining academic quality and institutional effectiveness. The Board regularly follows this policy and strives to improve its performance and the performance of the College (IV.C.10).

The Board of Regents includes a statement of ethical conduct in Article V, Sections 1-5 of its bylaws. Regents are expected to abide by this statement and are held accountable when they do not, as evidenced in their thoughtful response, dated December 19, 2018, to the Letter of Concern from the ACCJC, dated August 3, 2018, and resulting action plan (IV.C.11).

Full responsibility and authority to lead the College are delegated to the President. The Board of Regents holds the President accountable for the operations of the College. When the Board learned that a Regent was bypassing the CEO and delving into college operations, the Board and President developed a remediation plan which was endorsed by the Board and provided to the Commission in December 2018 (IV.C.12).

The Board of Regents is regularly and actively informed about the various components of accreditation, including Eligibility Requirements, Standards, Policies, processes, and statuses. The Board evaluates its own role in matters of accreditation, actively participates in the Institutional Self-Evaluation process, and ensures that the College attends to the expectations of the Standards and the Commission (IV.C.13).

Conclusions:

The College meets the Standard.

Quality Focus Essay

The College's Quality Focus Essay is based on institutional self-inquiry and planning, with consultation with outside agencies (i.e. McREL international, Center for Community College Student Engagement). The plans are grounded in impactful data:

- Summer term starting students are more likely to persist than fall term starts
- CCSSE markers of academic challenge and student-faculty interaction have consistently fallen below benchmarks while those on active and collaborative learning, student effort, and support for learner are consistently met.
- Credit completion is below Institution Set Students and percent age of full-time students has declined
- Entrance test completion is in decline and also creates a barrier to admission

It was noted that these findings and the resulting solutions were consistently grounded in institutional planning (e.g. 2018-2023 Strategic Plan, Annual Summit activities). These findings resulted in plans to address engagement, persistence and enrollment through improved student advising (i.e. Welewel Student Advising Program) and student pathways (i.e. Welewel Pathways: Admission to Graduation).

The student advising initiative includes facilities (i.e. centralized advising center), co-curricular support model (i.e. transformational advising), process streamlining, clarification of roles, and evaluation. The effort includes creation of a first year experience course. Embedded tutoring, creation of early alert system, and strategic scheduling were posited to be part of this effort but were not called out specifically in implementation planning.

The Welewel Pathway initiative removes non-admission for low placement scores while revising placement criteria, remedial coursework and remedial pathways. In addition, certificates will be introduced and modified to meet student employment and skill needs, serving also as onboarding for longer term pathways.

The two combined initiatives function to address low CCSSE scores, while increasing course completion, retention and graduation, resulting in increased enrollment. It is noted that budgetary and training needs were considered along with policy, programmatic and curricular needs. The two initiatives focus on the student experience at the College. As they are implemented, they will provide critical insight into and growth based on student centered needs and outcomes.

Appendix A: Core Inquiries



Outcomes | Innovation | Improvement

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR
COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

CORE INQUIRIES

College of Micronesia FSM
P.O. Box 159
Kolonia Pohnpei, FM 96941

The Core Inquiries are based upon the findings of the peer review team that conducted Team ISER Review on October 4, 2022.

Rosevonne Pato, Ed.D.
Team Chair

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College of Micronesia - FSM

Peer Review Team Roster

Team ISER Review

October 4, 2022

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Summary of Team ISER Review

INSTITUTION: College of Micronesia Federated States of Micronesia (COMFSM)

DATE OF TEAM ISER REVIEW: October 4, 2022

TEAM CHAIR: Rosevonne M. Pato

A ten (10) member accreditation peer review team conducted Team ISER Review of College of Micronesia Federated States of Micronesia on October 4, 2022. The Team ISER Review is a one-day, off-site analysis of an institution's self-evaluation report. The peer review team received the college's institutional self-evaluation report (ISER) and related evidence several weeks prior to the Team ISER Review. Team members found the ISER to be a comprehensive, well written, document detailing the processes used by the College to address Eligibility Requirements, Commission Standards, and Commission Policies. The team confirmed that the ISER was developed through broad participation by the entire College community including faculty, staff, students, and administration. The team found that the College provided a thoughtful ISER containing several self-identified action plans for institutional improvement. The College also prepared a Quality Focus Essay.

In preparation for the Team ISER Review, the team chair attended a team chair training workshop on August 3, 2022 and held a pre-review meeting with the college CEO on September 21, 2022. The entire peer review team received team training provided by staff from ACCJC on August 29, 2022. Prior to the Team ISER Review, team members completed their team assignments, identified areas for further clarification, and provided a list of requests for additional evidence to be considered during Team ISER Review.

During the Team ISER Review, team members spent the morning discussing their initial observations and their preliminary review of the written materials and evidence provided by the College for the purpose of determining whether the College continues to meet Accreditation Standards, Eligibility Requirements, Commission Policies, and US ED regulations. In the afternoon, the team further synthesized their findings to validate the excellent work of the college and identified standards the college meets, as well as developed Core Inquiries to be pursued during the Focused Site Visit, which will occur in March of Spring 2022

Core Inquiries are a means for communicating potential areas of institutional noncompliance, improvement, or exemplary practice that arise during the Team ISER Review. They describe the areas of emphasis for the Focused Site Visit that the team will explore to further their analysis to determining whether standards are met and accordingly identify potential commendations or recommendations. The college should use the Core Inquiries and time leading up to the focused site visit as an opportunity to gather more evidence, collate information, and to strengthen or develop processes in the continuous improvement cycle. In the course of the Focused Site Visit, the ACCJC staff liaison will review new or emerging issues which might arise out of the discussions on Core Inquiries.

Core Inquiries

Based on the team's analysis during the Team ISER Review, the team identified the following core inquiries that relate to potential areas of clarification, improvement, or commendation.

Core Inquiry 1:

Library

The team would like clarification on the implementation and frequency of implementation of library, tutoring, and computer lab assessment tools, as well as the frequency and depth of analysis of the assessment results, and whether those analyses led to continual improvements. The team would also like to learn more about how the College determines sufficiency for quantity of librarians, tutors, and student computers across campuses. The team would like to learn more about library services to distance education students.

Standards or Policies:

II.B.1, II.B.2, II.B.3

Description:

The team reviewed evidence of library instruction and SLO evaluation tools, student and faculty surveys, library pamphlets, tutoring services, library and counseling assessment plans. Clarification is needed on regular and ongoing assessment and use of assessments for library instruction, collection, reference services, computer assistance to students, tutoring services to students. Clarification is also needed regarding sufficient quantity of library staff across all campuses, student computers in libraries, and tutors across all campuses. Clarification needed regarding faculty participation in selecting and maintaining library materials. Clarification needed regarding services to students regardless of location or means of delivery.

Topics of discussion during interviews:

- a. Evaluation and improvement of library instruction.
- b. Assessment of library SLOs.
- c. Analysis of data for ongoing improvement of currency, depth, and variety of library collection.
- d. Availability of library services and material regardless of location or means of delivery.
- e. Participation of faculty in selecting and maintaining library materials.
- f. Availability of computers to students in labs across campus.
- g. Computer assistance to students using computer labs.
- h. Evaluation of computer assistance and availability of computers to students.
- i. Availability of tutoring services across all campuses.
- j. Evaluation and improvement of tutoring services.

Request for Additional Information/Evidence:

- a. Collection Age by Subject (unable to open in Dropbox)
- b. Additional faculty surveys (2018 survey from Yap campus received)
- c. Additional student surveys (2018 survey from Yap campus received)
- d. Description of reference services to students regardless of location or means of delivery.
- e. Description of remote instruction to online courses.
- f. Results and analysis from SLO pre- and post-tests.
- g. Library instruction materials for live sessions, such as outlines, bibliographies, or handouts.

Request for Observations/Interviews:

- a. LRC Director
- b. Library Employees (librarians and library technicians)
- c. LRC Staff for Chuuk, Kosrae, CTEC, Yap campuses
- d. Lead Counselor or counselors responsible for tutoring programs
- e. ACE mentor coordinators
- f. Tutors
- g. ACE mentors
- h. Instructional Coordinators
- i. Curriculum Committee Chair
- j. Office of Institutional Effectiveness
- k. Director Information Technology Office
- l. Students

Core Inquiry 2:**Course Level Student Learning Outcomes Assessment/Improvement, and Sustaining Campus-wide Effectiveness Practices**

The team would like to learn more about SLO assessment practices as they inform course-level changes that lead to improving student learning. Additionally, the team would like to learn more about the progress made in ensuring that the structures and practices that inform campus wide program effectiveness measures.

Standards or Policies:

II.A.3; II.A.16

Description:

With focus on the assessment of student learning, the team has observed that the college commits a tremendous amount of energy and resources to the effort to assess learning outcomes across the six campuses and has created a support infrastructure that include Instructional Coordinators at each campus to assist in assessment and aggregate SLO data at program and institutional levels. However, what is not clear is the assessment activity and how learning gaps are addressed at the course level, leading to improvements in learning and success, as well as year-to-year gains in learning at the program and institutional level.

As detailed in the ISER, the college has experienced the departure of key personnel that have served a vital role in facilitating key processes that support the campus-wide assessment and program effectiveness efforts; the restrictions brought by the COVID pandemic have delayed the timely recruitment and hiring of qualified candidates for these vacant positions. The team would like to learn more about how assessment/improvement practices are sustained as the college manages this transition.

Topics of discussion during interviews:

- a. Structures/practices for identifying learning gaps and developing improvements designed to improve student learning at the course level
- b. Practices for providing support and/or training to assist faculty in assessment efforts
- c. Tools used for course-level assessment and improvements documentation
- d. Documenting progress on action plans identified in the annual Institutional Assessment Report
- e. Status of the transition to Canvas and plans to implement assessment capabilities in Canvas
- f. Continuity of assessment/effectiveness efforts while key vacancies are filled
- g. Tour of TracDat, focusing on course-level assessment and improvement

Request for Additional Information/Evidence:

- a. A detailed tour of TracDat
- b. A broad selection of course-level assessment reports, that identify learning gaps, plans for improvement, and assessment evidence documenting gains in learning.
- c. Documented summaries of faculty dialogue/meetings that are focused on course-level changes that target improvements in learning.
- d. Timelines for upcoming changes/modifications to assessment infrastructure (transition from COVID period/ prepare for distance education/shift to Canvas, etc.)

Request for Observations/Interviews:

- a. Vice President of Instructional Services
- b. Dean of Instructional programs
- c. Instructional Coordinators
- d. Members of the Assessment Team (may include others in this list)
- e. Instructional Faculty

Core Inquiry 3:

Long Term Facilities Planning

The team would like to know more about how the college plans for long-term facilities planning, especially in relation to national infrastructure planning.

Standards or Policies:

III.B.1, III.B.4

Description:

The team noted that the College has a facilities master plan that is connected to the national government's infrastructure plan. The team observed some inconsistency between the College's planned facilities costs and what is found in the government's planning documents. The team would like to know more about the relationship between the two plans.

Topics of discussion during interviews:

- a. The adaptability of college long-range facilities planning to changing governmental priorities or administrations.
- b. Prioritization of facilities planning at the college.

Request for Additional Information/Evidence:**Request for Observations/Interviews:**

- a. Vice-President for Administrative Services

Core Inquiry 4:**Human Resources**

The team would like to know more about how the college effectively staffs the college including how it determines sufficiency of staffing, both institutionally and per campus, and how personnel are evaluated through processes that are cyclic and systemic.

Standards or Policies:

I.B.4
 III.A.1, III.A.3, III.A.5, III.A.7, III.A.9, III.A.14
 IV.B.1, IV.B.2, IV.B.3
 IV.C.3

Description:

The team noted across several standards that the ISER referenced staffing challenges (e.g. turnover, vacancies, contractual terms, expectation of length etc.). We would like to know more about how the college determines sufficiency of staffing resources across the institution and for each campus. The team would also like to know more about how existing personnel are evaluated regularly and systematically to ensure effectiveness.

Topics of discussion during interviews:

- a. Recruitment plan for vacancies
- b. Processes for determining sufficiency and qualifications of staffing for the institution
- c. Processes for determining sufficiency and qualifications of staffing per campus
- d. Processes for maintenance of institutional stability, momentum, and long-term planning during interim staffing
- e. Progress on Improvement Plan as listed in III.A.5
- f. Systematic evaluation of personnel across the institution

Request for Additional Information/Evidence:

- a. Non-administration classified staffing numbers and qualifications
- b. Updated organizational chart with regular, interim, and vacant position statuses noted
- c. Any other documentation explaining how staffing is allocated (e.g. student/faculty ratio)
- d. Verification of annual evaluations of CEO
- e. Update on any actions taken in regard to Improvement Plan as listed in III.A.5

Request for Observations/Interviews:

- a. Director of Human Resources
- b. HR Services
- c. VP, Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Assurance
- d. Institutional Effectiveness Staff
- e. Campus deans
- f. Leadership team
- g. Dean of Academic Programs

Core Inquiry 5:

Communication

The team would like to know more about how the college disseminates information internally to inform processes and support institutional effectiveness.

Standards or Policies:

I.C.3
II.C.5
III.D.2, III.D.5
IV.A.6
IV.C.7, IV.C.11, IV.C.12

Description:

The team noted across several standards that the ISER referenced documents and processes that crossed departments/units. The team would like clarification about how the information about these documents and processes is transmitted between departments and units, as well as how information is generally disseminated broadly across campuses.

Topics of discussion during interviews:

- a. Dissemination of information regarding emergencies, such as technology outages, power outages.
- b. Dissemination of planning and budgetary information across campuses and constituencies.
- c. Formalization of interactions between levels of governance and units, particularly in regard to planning documents and processes (e.g. Institutional Educational Master Plan, Facilities Master Plan, Participatory Governance Manual etc.)
- d. Process of cyclical updating of official information repositories (e.g. website, documents)
- e. Routine update of key documents that provide timely, useful and accurate information to students, such as the College Catalog, Student Handbooks and Guides, and similar materials.

Request for Additional Information/Evidence:

- a. Emergency broadcast procedures
- b. Documentation of meetings (e.g. agendas, minutes) for major committees
- c. Documentation of financial information dissemination internally
- d. Any other evidence that shows wider dissemination of campus information, decision-making and activities (e.g. town halls, forums, campus wide events)

Request for Observations/Interviews:

- a. VP for Administrative Services
- b. Campus deans/directors
- c. Academic Deans
- d. Director of Maintenance and Security
- e. Leadership team
- f. Stakeholders (faculty, staff, students)

Core Inquiry 6:

Distance Education

The team would like to know more about how the college plans for, supports and sustains distance education, maintaining continuous improvement through cyclic, systemic evaluation processes.

Standards or Policies: Standards Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education

II.A.5, II.A.6, II.A.7

II.C.1, II.C.3

III.C.1, III.C.3

Description:

The team noted across several standards that COM FSM has rapidly implemented distance education, including student services, widely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The college submitted a substantive change proposal for expansion of distance learning programs that was approved, and promptly passed Board Policy 3400 soon afterwards, providing the authority and structures for implementation of distance learning across all academic programs at the college. A Distance Learning Program Planning Group was established in the policy, but it's not clear if this body has convened yet. The college is currently continuing to offer online courses, but it's not clear how planning these current offerings are taking place. The team would like to better understand long term planning for effective instruction, student support and resource allocation for distance education.

Topics of discussion during interviews:

- a. Analysis of student success and student learning outcomes attainment in online versus face to face instruction institutionally and between various sites
- b. Transition to and implementation of new student portal (MyShark) and learning management system (Canvas, Schoology)
- c. Long-term planning for distance education, including how distance education is incorporated into other long-term plans, including budgetary plans
- d. Scheduling of distance education offerings as components of recommended program sequences in the catalog
- e. Distance Learning professional development planning
- f. Discussion of online systems experience and satisfaction

Request for Additional Information/Evidence:

- a. Onsite tour of the Learning Management System (Canvas and Schoology). Sample of courses offered in Fall 2022 via LMS.
- b. Documentation of remote access to tutoring, library services, books, reference materials, etc.
- c. Sample student schedules from several different programs showing which courses should be completed in person and which should be completed online.
- d. Computer replacement schedule and implementation on campus (i.e. other than at dedicated computer labs)

Request for Observations/Interviews:

- a. VP Instruction
- b. Campus Deans
- c. Director of Distance Education
- d. Faculty and Staff
- e. Learning Resource Center Director
- f. Instructional Coordinators
- g. Stakeholders (i.e. faculty and students)

Core Inquiry 7:

Budgeting Process

The team would like to know more about how the college plans for and budgets revenues

Standards or Policies:

III.D.1, III.D.4, III.D.11

Description:

The team noted that there are policies and procedures to address budget processes, but requests clarification regarding revenues. The team would like to affirm that practices related to revenue forecasts and planning reflect accurate assessment of financial resource availability.

Topics of discussion during interviews:

- a. Revenue planning
- b. Revenue sources
- c. Endowment payouts
- d. Support for physical and technological infrastructure growth and maintenance

Request for Additional Information/Evidence:

Request for Observations/Interviews:

- a. Comptroller
- b. Budget Committee members
- c. Campus Deans
- d. Personnel associated with financial management, including grants