



**COUNCIL OF CHAIRS**  
College of Micronesia-FSM  
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## Memorandum

Tuesday, February 4, 2014

**To:** President

**Through:** Secretariat for the Participatory Governance Committees

**Re:** Response to recommendations by the Secretariat

Recommendation 1: Committees should elect their vice chair with the understanding the vice chair will automatically become the chair the following year.

The Assessment Coordinator and Assistant Accreditation Liaison Officer and committees secretariat representative noted that a key aspect of the recommendations was to try to create continuity by having the vice chair serve with the understanding that the vice chair would serve as the chair the following year.

In the discussion that followed two chairs noted their committee's disagreement with the single year term limit for a committee chair. Others members of the council concurred. The council chair noted that if a committee wanted to turn over the chairmanship annually, then that would be up to the committee through the electoral process in place. The council chair noted that during this time of budget issues some committees might not want to change leadership. The metaphor that was not mentioned was changing horses midstream.

The council discussed a May election for committee officers, a summer transition to new leadership, and the change of officers at the end of training in August. There was a general consensus that the new chair should step up at the end of the August training session. Elections in May would choose a chair-elect. During the summer the outgoing chair would continue to serve as chair and ensure the continuity of committee work in the summer, the chair-elect would during the summer also attend the council of chairs to help provide continuity in the council. Thus the summer council of chair meetings would include both the outgoing chair and the chair-elect. There were no specific recommendations as to how to handle a faculty chair who was not contractually obligated to be present on Pohnpei during the summer. The suggestion was that a faculty chair who is present on Pohnpei should continue to helm their committee in the summer even if that chair is not teaching summer session.

The committee made a formal recommendation for committee terms of reference to be altered to reflect May elections of a chair-elect, the dual attendance in summer, and the installment of new officers in August at the end of the training session.

Recommendation 2: Committees must hold elections at the same time of the year to prevent disruption to Council of Chairs.

Elections will be held in May for a chair-elect. The outgoing chair would continue to serve until the August committee officers training session. The committee secretariat will organize and host the August training of committee officers. At the end of the training the officers-elect will be inaugurated. Between May and September both the outgoing chair and the chair-elect will attend the Council of Chairs. The outgoing chair will be the voting member. This will provide for continuity of institutional memory in the Council of Chairs. Between May and September the outgoing chair has the responsibility to continue to call meetings of the committee. If the outgoing committee chair is a faculty member and is off-island during the summer session, then the outgoing vice chair has responsibility for convening the committee. Committees should avoid electing chair-vice chair teams where both members will be unavailable during summer sessions.

Recommendation 3: Committee chairs need to be recognized for their service.

Committee agrees the chairs deserve recognition, discussed options. The committee expressed the desire to see all officers recognized. No specific mechanism was agreed upon.

Recommendation 4: In general, recognize and reward committee service. We should recognize all committee members and formally reward them for exemplary service. This might be part of a merit system and through employee performance evaluations.

The merit system not clear, what defines exemplary? Several things are being done in four. Discussions centers on unpacking four. The committee agrees that there should be an award for exemplary participation, but the committee has no specific recommendation as to how to do this nor how to define exemplary.

Recommendation 5: Conduct ongoing training for committee chairs on how to conduct effective meetings, maintain civil discourse, and strategies for engaging all participants.

The August training should accomplish this. Secretariat has the lead. The Council of Chairs added to the recommendation from the secretariat for standing committees the additional recommendation that all officers-elect should attend the August training. This recommendation was approved by unanimous consensus.

Recommendation 6: Committees should develop a new member orientation. (eliminated)

Recommendation 7: Enhance communications between standing committees by ensuring Council of Chairs is meeting regularly and receiving administrative support.

Committee supports the recommendation.

Recommendation 8: Committees should offer open meetings, allowing and encouraging guests to attend, with permission.

Committees should have open meetings, with the allowance of executive session. TOR should reflect this. RAR and HRC may have special considerations to take into account.

Recommendation 9: Allow committees continued flexibility in the modification of the Terms of Reference so as not to stifle innovation and approaches that work best for a given committee at a given time. However, changes must go through the secretariat to ensure continuity in protocols and to avoid generation of additional problems through such innovations that might occur due to loss of historical knowledge and lacking awareness of the broader potential ramifications of such changes.

The committee supports recommendation number nine.

Recommendation 10: The ALO should serve as the secretariat to the committees.

ALO as secretariat is supported.

Recommendation 11: Strive to increase feelings of committee engagement for staff members who are not currently able to serve on a committee. Ensure offices are meeting to share what is happening in committees in order to solicit the collective recommendations from constituents. Encourage supervisors to rotate staff members who serve every couple of years.

No comment, seems to be a recommendation to administration.

Recommendation 12: Increase awareness that the role of committees is to form recommendations towards continuous improvement, not to make the final decision. Ensure members understand the administration takes the final decision as the administration is held accountable, not the committee. Committee input must be considered in genuine earnest by the administration; and, the administration must provide timely feedback, including the rationale for final decisions. Such rationale should include a clearly articulated reflection of the committee's decision, when the committee's recommendation cannot be upheld (either in person or as a guest for a committee meeting).

Committee supports this recommendation.

Recommendation 13: Increase faculty supervisor awareness that it is their responsibility to ensure they are not scheduling faculty for classes and for service on a committee that has a time conflict.

Committee supports this recommendation.

Recommendation 14: Supervisors should allow faculty and staff to serve on their committee of interest to increase motivation for service, where possible.

Again, COC supports this recommendation.

Recommendation 15: Supervisors need to meet regularly with their faculty/staff to ensure accountability for meeting attendance and to make clear the import role faculty/staff have towards representing the unit's consensus at committee meetings. Regularly meetings will also ensure faculty/staff are aware of what is occurring on all standing committees through reporting and information sharing with one another.

No comment, seems to be a recommendation to administration.

Recommendation 16: Encourage off-island officers rather than restricting leadership opportunities to those who can be present in person, and for no other good reason.

Executive Committee has a communication policy working group. The meetings ran well when teleconferencing was done using FSM telecom long distance phone lines. Attempts to use the VOIP have been technically problematic. The VOIP would save money, but technical problems and bandwidth continue to prevent the use of VOIP. The committee endorses the concept of off-island officers and calls for continued efforts to improve real-time intercampus communication capabilities.

Recommendation 17: Take an inventory of all committee communications and streamline these so that we are not overwhelming people with too much information.

This recommendation stemmed from the time when the email aliases were open and active. Faculty and staff felt overwhelmed at times by the amount of email in their inboxes. This has been essentially rendered moot as the group email addresses are no longer openly accessible. The current procedure is to post information to the college news feed or to the college wiki.

The Facilities and Campus Environment chair recommended that the communication survey needs to be redone. Surveys ten years ago suggested that faculty and staff received most of their information via email. With new systems in place that are intended to replace the use of group emails, a new survey should be done. Are faculty and staff monitoring the newsfeed? The wiki?

The FCE chair asked about the lack of Human Resources Committee minutes since late 2012 on the public facing side of the college wiki. Discussion centered on how to handle information that was private to the committee and their work. The suggestion was made to post the full minutes to the private side of the wiki, redact the material that could not be shared publicly, and post the resulting minutes to the public side of the wiki.

Recommendation 18: Include committee updates and highlights at the all campus meetings.

Recommendation eighteen was supported by COC.

Recommendation 19: Generate newsfeed summaries of committee updates and highlights monthly.

A new publications policy handbook is being produced to help faculty and staff produce newsfeed articles. The handbook is effectively a publications style manual for the college.

Recommendation 20: When committees are making decisions that directly impact students, actively seek student input rather than speculating on the potential impact and student preferences. Actively seeking student input must evolve beyond opening meetings to students and expecting students to attend. Serious attempts to engage and dialogue with students should be made and documented.

The COC chair asked the question as to what “serious attempts” to engage and dialog with students would mean. Students have now been assigned to committees. If matters that impact students arise in a committee, the chair of that committee should ensure that the Student Body Association is made aware that the matter is arising. This is where knowing what topics are being tackled during the coming year is important – advance notice to students and others that a topic will be considered.

Recommendation 21: Reduce faculty overloads to ensure they have adequate time available to serve committees effectively.

A member asked whether this referred to over loads or course loads.

The FCE chair noted that he did not favor a blanket policy in regards this recommendation. He noted his own situation as an example of someone who carries an overload and yet is not only a member of two committees, but is an officer in both committees (actually three committee memberships). Experienced, veteran faculty with institutional knowledge may be both in demand on committees and able to handle the work load.

Recommendation 22: Plan an event similar to the summit where exemplary committee members are brought in from all campuses to convene for a week around a focused theme, as well as individual meetings.

In regards twenty-two, the Council of Chairs expressed the preference for a half day Presidential retreat and asked that the institution permit the committees to be involved in choosing the representatives from each campus.

Recommendation 23: Though there are benefits to continuity in committee membership from year to year, members should be encouraged to participate on a different committee after three-five years of continuous serve.

The Council of Chairs endorsed recommendation 23 so long as the word encourage is used.