

College of Micronesia FSM

Committee Minutes Reporting Form			
Committee or Working Group		<i>Council of Chairs</i>	
Date	Time	Location	
Friday, April 25, 2014	13:00	Board Conference Room	
Members Present			
Titles/Reps	Name	Present	Absent
COC Vice Chair/Curriculum & Assessment	Gardner Edgar	X	
Human Resources	Morehna Rettin-Santos		X
COC Chair/Finance	Richard Womack	X	
Planning and Resources	William Haglegam		X
Recruitment, Admission and Registration	Lucia Donre - Sam		X
Information Communication and Technology	Shaun Suliol	X	
COC Secretary/Facilities & Campus Environment	Dana Lee Ling	X	
Faculty and Staff Senate Vice Chair/Faculty representative	Ringlen Ringlen	X	
Additional Attendees			
Agenda/Major Topics of Discussion:			
<p>Approval of Minutes (4/11/14) Report from finance committee on modifications to TOR Committee Self Assessments Update Review of self-assessment by committee: FCE Not yet completed self-assessments: FC, HRC, Staff Senate, CAC, PRC, ICT, RAR</p> <p>Establishing the CoC areas of accomplishments and barriers to accomplishment CoC Recommendations—overcoming barriers Other</p>			
Discussion of Agenda/Information Sharing:			
<p>Discussion quorum at 13:13. Voting quorum at 13:15. The minutes of 11 April were approved and posted to the Wiki. The terms of reference note only a discussion quorum of four. The terms of reference are silent on the matter of a voting quorum. As membership is presently eight members, a voting quorum was taken to be a majority of all members, or five members. The</p>			

TOR was modified with the proposed addition of the line, "A majority of all members constitutes a quorum for voting." This will be circulated to the present membership.

Staff senate elections will be at the end of April.

Finance committee is routing all recommendations to the president through the vice-presidents. The officers are now tasked with appropriate duties. The FC chair has a duty to attend council of chairs. The Vice Chair attends as proxy when Chair must be absent.

Discussion of having the key lead administrator from the hosting secretariat for a committee as a committee member. The key lead administrator would be required to attend committee meetings. The current system of administrative leads being *ex officio* is not producing regular attendance by these key administrators.

The needs of each committee may differ. Discussion turned to the history of the formation of the participatory governance standing committees. The removal of the key lead administrator in the committee area as the chair broke the chain of command, so to speak.

In the "old system" a committee was led by the administrative lead for that area. There was the risk that an administrator, as chair, could choose not to call a meeting. There was the risk that the chair could use the committee as their hand puppet, driving decisions by controlling the agenda. The baby was thrown out with the bathwater when the administrators were initially dismissed from the committees. Some committees returned the lead administrator as an *ex officio* member, others did not return the lead administrator to the committee. In those committees where the key lead administrator or administrators were invited to return to the committee, not all administrators did return or return only on an irregular basis. Committee attendance is seen as option by the key lead administrator or administrators. For some committees this hobbles the committee's ability to function.

The discussion of the history of the committees led one chair to note that they stepped in as chair in part because a former chair, who lacked expertise in the area the committee operated, was so strongly and antagonistically opposed to the decisions being made by the key lead administrator that the lead administrator had no choice but to disengage from the committee. The recommendations coming out of the committee were unrealistic and inappropriate. A rogue chair can derail a committee. A committee can heavily reflect the personal interests and inclinations of the chair who has the ability to set the agenda and dominate the discussion.

Discussion turned to the nature of the institutional role of the participatory governance committees. The committees are understood to make non-binding recommendations to the administration. The decision by a committee to recommend against a policy, procedure, document, or action does not bar the administrator from making that decision. Even if the committee is unanimous in their opposition to a decision, and that opposition reflects the will of the broader constituency that the members represent, the administrator (or administration) can proceed. A hypothetical example was cited in the discussion of a decision that would be broadly opposed but could conceivably be approved by the administration. The question raised was whether this does not mean that participatory governance is a pretense.

At the center of this discussion was whether the inability to make decisions means that there is no authentic "participation" in governance.

The facilities and campus environment chair noted that in some committees decisions are made. Curriculum committee can return an outline to a division for further work and that is a decision, a de facto veto of the outline in its current form. The outline will not be forwarded into the administrative chain of command until the curriculum committee recommends the outline for approval.

The FCE chair continued, noting that other committees, such as the facilities and campus environment committee, may not have the background and knowledge to make a decision per se, decisions properly belong to the director of facilities and maintenance. If something were to go wrong, responsibility would fall on the director, not the committee. Directors are under contract, not committee. Put more bluntly, a director can be terminated, a committee cannot. The FCE committee has a key lead administrator who understands the distinction between committee recommendations and administrative decision-making.

Another member of the council of chairs countered, expressing the opinion that the council of chairs should provide a check and balance on administrative decisions. The council of chairs does not have real input in its present form. The committees and the council only make recommendations, and administrators can make any decision they wish to make. There are no checks and balances to ensure an administrator does not use their position to drive a decision that committees oppose.

The FCE chair noted that this is as it should be – administrators make the decision, they are not bound by the recommendation of the committee. He then recounted the history of the closed circuit television policy.

The response to the above was that this is why people see the committees as a waste of time, just a talking shop. The committees have no real power. The member noted that this was why attendance was so poor in all committees, including the council of chairs. The committees have no real authority.

The counter-response was that the administrator gets fired for a bum decision, not the committee. Institutions are led by administrators. They are paid and authorized to make decisions through a chain of authority. Not committee members.

The suggestion was made to stop using the term *participatory governance* and use instead use the term *consultative governance*.

Discussion continued on the nature of the role of the council of chairs given that the committees have no authentic role in governance, provide no check and balance.

Separately, the desire was expressed by more than one member of the council to have the lead administrator(s) present in every committee meeting. Finance committee would want the

comptroller and VPA in every meeting. Curriculum and assessment would want the VPIA and DAP present at committee meetings, possibly the assessment coordinator also. The FCE chair noted that the committee is dysfunctional without the presence of the director of facilities, maintenance, and campus security.

A side discussion focused on to whom a committee reports. The FCE chair noted that FCE has maintenance as secretariat. The committee reports through the director of maintenance. The FCE chair thought that the Information and Communication Technologies committee reported through the director of information technologies. He was corrected by the ICT chair who noted that the committee reports through the VPIEQA, not the director of information technology. The director is not a member, not even an *ex officio* member according to the terms of reference for the ICT committee. The FCE expressed the opinion that the director of information technologies should be an *ex officio* member and recommendations should be reported "up" through his office.

Ex officio should not mean "attendance is optional." The suggestion was made to modify the committee terms of reference s to make *ex officio* members attendance mandatory unless committee requests a closed "voting members only" session.

Noting the absence of decision making administrators on committees (which is seen as part of the disconnect between the committees and governance), every committee should have an administrator as an *ex officio* member. These non-voting members would be as compelled to attend as rank and file committee members. Non-attendance could have, as it does for rank and file members, consequences. Note that some absence of decision-making administrators is due to the key lead decision-making administrators not being an non-voting member of a particular committee (a terms of reference problem), others are absent because they choose not to attend (an attendance issue).

The committee was forced into adjournment without a vote due to time having lapsed on the room occupied by the committee. A committee with actual governing authority brought about the adjournment of a committee with questions about whether it has any authority or meaning for its existence.

Documents Referenced

- http://wiki.comfsm.fm/@api/deki/files/3143/=fce_2014_04_13_self-assessment.pdf
- [http://wiki.comfsm.fm/Committee Terms of Reference/INFORMATION COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE](http://wiki.comfsm.fm/Committee_Terms_of_Reference/INFORMATION_COMMUNICATIONS_TECHNOLOGY_COMMITTEE)

College Web Site Link:	http://wiki.comfsm.fm/Committee Minutes/Council of Chairs		
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Prepared by:	Dana Lee Ling	Date Distributed:	04/25/14
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Approval of Minutes Process & Responses:

Submitted by:	Dana Lee Ling	Date Submitted:	04/25/14
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Summary Decisions/Recommendations/Action Steps/Motions with Timeline & Responsibilities

Next meeting: To be determined. Tentatively 23 May 2014. If no quorum, then 06 June 2014. Terms of reference modification will have to be voted upon.

All committees should have key lead administrators for that particular committee's area as non-voting members. Those administrators should be required to attend meetings unless the committee chooses to go into a "voting members only" closed session. (The council of chairs has not yet discussed who the key lead administrator for the council itself would be, this author suspects that the only logical candidate would be the administrator of all administrators, the president.)