



COLLEGE OF MICRONESIA-FSM

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MEMORANDUM

PARBICA 14 trip report 09/06/2011

What: Pacific Regional Bureau International Council on Archives conference 14

Dates: August 22 – 27, 2011

Venue: Apia, Samoa

Mission:

The mission of the College of Micronesia-FSM library (including media and instructional technology services) is to serve the students, faculty, staff and other college community members in providing reader, instructional, media and technical services to meet their educational needs and interests and provide opportunities for lifelong learning.

Theme of conference:

The theme “Evidence and Memory in the digital age” was a very appropriately named and discussed during the conference because it addressed some issues which archivists, librarians, and record-keepers are facing in today’s society. The aim of the conference was for the participants to come together and seek ways to develop “a robust system that can sustain evidential information and document the memory of the world in the digital age”. As we understand and seen today that various organizations and individuals creates significant amounts of records in digital format, but overtime, these records get misplaced, cannot be accessed, or forever lost. The purpose of this workshop or conference is to familiarize the participants in using phase 5 of the “Recordkeeping Toolkit for Good Governance” (<http://www.parbica.org/Toolkit%20pages/ToolkitIntropage.htm>).

I am certain that at the College of Micronesia-FSM, our daily business has been overwhelmed with the amount of records we created daily in electronic format such as memorandums, news, and emails: just to name a few. What kind of robust computer system do we have in place to make that the records created today can be accessed twenty years from now? How do we access those paper records that are kept by those departments with evidential records. We need to collaborate on this effort so that the records transferred to the archives collection can be accessed in the near future. And the College of Micronesia-FSM could cooperate among departments to ensure the success of this program.

As we may know and understand that the digital age comes with the risk of creating a digital landfill - where information may be discarded, expensive to locate and retrieve, or just lost forever. In this digital age, we come to understand that new technologies provides exciting opportunities for us to connect more users to our collections and preserve fragile records through digitization, and support our government’s commitments to good information governance by

utilizing the guidance available from PARBICA. But there are still Pacific Islanders who does not have these commodities in their society which may include electricity and telephone. Discussions on the conservation and preservation were also addressed. The major issue during the PARBICA 14 was the “access” of records that were kept by institutions or individuals overtime. Can these records be accessed in their original format in digital form in a time frame of 20 years from now? Some PARBICAN’s points out that paper record can be accessed in a 20 year period if kept properly and safely following set standards and process, but as for digital archiving might not be possible since the technology hardware and software keeps changing rapidly. Therefore, the “Recordkeeping Toolkit for Good Governance” might be a module that the institution can take a look at and implement the process based on its own recordkeeping strategies.

Several issues about preservation and access were discussed on Monday and Tuesday. Participants pointed that these issues are real and that something has to be done about them. The issues about how to store digital records properly and how we access them were also of major concern especially it was pointed out that by digitizing the materials in whichever format it comes in is only good for access, but not preservation. Another point by Mr. Wright indicated that when there is no electricity, the access part is a major dilemma. As we all know that in the Pacific Islands, most places still does not have any running electricity and even the one’s have running electricity are facing some power outages. So our data on these computers cannot be accessed.

Why I attended the conference?

A major component for the conference was the phase 5 of the "Recordkeeping for Good Governance Workshops" in the digital age. In 2009, in Brisbane, Australia, the workshops included phase 4 which covers guidelines 11 (Train the Trainer). This year, the "Recordkeeping for Good Governance Workshops" in the digital age covers guidelines 12 to 19 which covers, if I do not attend this workshop. But that will depend on financial support from the College of Micronesia-FSM Staff Development funds.

How would the college benefit from sending me to this workshop in Apia, Samoa?

By sending me on behalf of the college community, I can assure LRC Director, VPIA, and all concern that I will do my best to gain background and detailed information, so when I come back I could do other similar presentation for the college community and also during Staff Development Day. Other benefit for the college would be in line to what the program offers. In the program and schedule regarding "Recordkeeping for Good Governance in the digital age." Three other workshops will also be held during the week which includes "Archives Basics: Running a Reading Room Service, and Disaster Preparedness and Response." By attending these workshops, I may able to re-iterate the content of these workshops via a presentation of ideas afterwards.

The two fields that I notice that is most needed in the FSM is library and archives, but currently both of these fields has no locals studying to become librarians or archivists. We have people with some experiences and no professional trainings. My aim at attending the PARBICA 14 is to network with other librarians and archivist to find out how these fields can be improved in the FSM. As a librarian, I am aware of the obstacles which are faced by FSM citizens for not having any professional librarians and archivist on island.

What was the outcome of this conference? The conference was a successful one. There were at least 98 participants from all over Pacific region who attended the workshop. The outcome of this year conference that the network of professionals and those participated comes out and discussed issues and ideas which may be implemented at their own institutions.

What can I contribute to the college especially the archives collection? I attended three workshops during the conference and would at least do a workshop during the Staff Development Day in 2012. The first workshop (Recordkeeping for good governance in the digital age) offers various ideas. Ideas like planning, selection of materials for scanning, strategies, equipment needed for a project.

What was the highlight of the conference? The highlight of this conference was that of various people with different job background coming together to share their experiences and knowledge regarding digital matter and issues based on the theme. Like it mentioned on the theme explanation is that so much information has been created and used, and most of these might be lost if not carefully cataloged and stored. Patrons would be easily pleased when their research information can be accessed in a quick manner. However, if an institution has not setup any recordkeeping tools to assess with the proper standards, the records can be lost forever.

Plan for the archives section now and in near future.

The college archives will conduct a survey to find out what sort of records we have within each department or division. How are they being created? What was the purpose behind its day to day business? How are they being handled? What sort of standard or governance are in use for creating such records? And how are they sustain in the matter that they can be accessed later on. And if there are plans on giving them to archives collection once they are not active anymore. A Recordkeeping for Good Governance Toolkit can be used as a baseline for this project.

Since the conference was a discussion of evidence and memory in the digital age, the college leadership should start dialog on how we should save the evidence and memory of those valuable records we are daily creating: emails, publications, records, pamphlets, brochures which informs the public about what the college is for, about, and how it operates. The archive constitutes our memory of our institution so it is collecting information regarding the college.

Thank you's. First of all, I give thanks to the LRC Acting Director for allowing me to attend this conference. And a huge thank you goes to Staff Development Committee for funding the departure fees from Samoa, departure fees for Pohnpei, and a voluntary registration fees for the conference. A tremendous and huge thanks goes to PARBICA Bureau and all its supporters for sponsoring my trip to Apia, Samoa so I can attend the PARBICA 14 conference. Your wonderful support enables me to renew my network contacts, meet new colleagues, learn more about issues and developing projects which may enable me to better understand the archives process in this digital age. All PARBICAns deeply care about their recordkeeping and archives.

Submitted by:

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