



FACILITIES AND CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

College of Micronesia-FSM

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Action Memorandum

Sunday, February 9, 2014

To: Director of Information Technology
Through: Vice-President Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Assurance
Vice-President of Administrative Services
Director Maintenance, Facilities, and Security
CC: Chair Council of Chairs
From: Dana Lee Ling, Chair, Facilities and Campus Environment committee
Re: Synchronized clocks in classrooms at Palikir site

The Facilities and Campus Environment committee on the seventh day of the second month of two thousand and fourteen recommended that the Director of Information Technology explore the feasibility and affordability of network synchronized clocks in the Palikir classrooms. The following is background to this recommendation.

Two faculty at national campus have each asked the following:

- a. Is there any way we could get a working clock and in each classroom and have whoever hangs them up/switches the batteries out synchronize them?
- b. Could we get clocks that are set to the correct time in the classroom?

As chair I took the privilege of responding in the following manner to these notes prior to the committee meeting:

"Thanks for bringing this to my attention. I will report it into committee. Clocks in classroom have long proved problematic. Keeping them powered and synchronized sounds simple but has never been achieved and may not be achievable. The campus once had a bell, and that was worse. The bell was always wrong, so faculty coming from off campus could not know when their period actually started.

The college stopped using the bell and set policy to use the Internet time that computers with clocks set to read Internet time will faithfully report. This is also within a few seconds of the time one's cell phone will display if the cell is set to update automatically. This is also the time available at <http://www.time.gov> which is based on the atomic clocks in Boulder. This time can also be accessed at sites such as <http://www.timeanddate.com/>, which is possibly more useful as the Java plugin is often

problematic at time.gov This works well when everyone is using a time piece synchronized to standard time, and can be accessed from any Internet connected device. The clocks on the wall inevitably drift away from standard time and will never be a complete 'out of box' solution."

One of the faculty members responded prior to the committee meeting time, and this response was read into the minutes by the chair:

"Thanks. I still think having a clock on the wall in each classroom would be nice and is expected in any typical college environment. Many times I forget to bring my cell phone to class. When this happens, I have no idea what time it is, as my students cell phones can vary up to 30 min! So, I either need to trust a random student cell phone or walk back to my office to get my phone. Putting up clocks and having a set schedule to change batteries once every 6 months, 8 months, whatever, in a proactive fashion, should not be that difficult nor that expensive. Even if they are not perfectly synced, something would be better than nothing."

At the committee meeting the chair noted his own personal bias against wall clocks. He noted that in the past students had altered a clock's time during the day. Clocks also tended to get missing. He recalled that the best efforts still had glitches that upset faculty. He noted that keeping that number of individual battery operated clocks synchronized sounds simple but proves to be complex.

Another member of the committee noted that he preferred not to have a clock in the classroom, noting that ten minutes into the period the students would stare fixedly at the clock.

The chair sought and received the permission of the committee to ask the Director of Information Technology whether the wireless network would provide the possibility of network connected clocks that would remain synchronized via the network time. That request would include whether such a system is feasible and affordable.