

College of Micronesia – FSM

Committee Minutes Reporting Form

Committee or Working Group	<i>Faculty/Staff Senate Executive Committee</i>	
Date:	Time:	Location:
February 16, 2012	2:00-3:15 PM	BOR Conference Room, National Campus

Members Present			
Titles/Reps	Name	Present	Absent
President	Resida Keller	X	
Vice-President	Reedson Abraham	X	
Secretary	Rafael Pulmano	X	
Treasurer	Ketiner Kenneth		X
Faculty-At-Large – National Campus	Frankie Harriss	X	
Staff-At-Large – National Campus	Joseph Saimon		X
Faculty-At-Large – Pohnpei Campus	Phyllis Silbanuz		X
Staff-At-Large – Pohnpei Campus	Maureen Mendiola	X	
Faculty-At-Large – Chuuk Campus	Alton Higashi		X
Staff-At-Large – Chuuk Campus	Deliver Salle		X
Faculty-At-Large – Yap Campus	Robert Yangerluo		X
Staff-At-Large – Yap Campus	Teresa Filepin		X
Faculty-At-Large – Kosrae Campus	Latika Raisinghani		X
Staff-At-Large – Kosrae Campus	Maver Jonathan		X
Faculty-At-Large – FMI Campus	Joseph Falmed		X
Staff-At-Large – FMI Campus	Alice Pagal		X

Note: The following situation prevented members from Chuuk, Yap, Kosrae, and FMI Campuses to participate in this meeting via teleconference or online:

- (1) Power outage at the National Campus where the meeting was held*
- (2) Breakdown of power generating unit at the National Campus*
- (3) No internet connection at the National Campus because of the brownout*
- (4) FSMTC was unable to provide the Senate with teleconferencing number because all their lines were already reserved*

Additional Attendees: | None

Agenda/Major Topics of Discussion:

- I. Old Business**
 - 1. Bylaws
 - 2. Minutes and Treasurer’s Report
- II. New Business**
 - 1. Salaries
 - o Salary Freeze
 - o Possible Change in Basis for Paying Faculty
 - o Part-Time Instructor’s Salary
 - o Summer Pay
 - 2. Tuition Waiver Issue
 - 3. Loanable Amount from Retirement Fund
 - 4. PELL’s 67% Completion Requirement
- III. Other Matters**
 - 1. Registering the Senate
 - 2. Separate Senate for Faculty and Staff
- IV. Communication**
 - 1. Senate Wiki
 - 2. LRC as repository for minutes
 - 3. Updated course outlines as basis for book and reference acquisitions by LRC

Discussion of Agenda/Information Sharing:

I. Old Business

1. BYLAWS

- a. Resida Keller explained that the Planning and Resources Committee (PRC) is working on the governance policy, and that they want copies of all the updated Terms of References (TOR) and bylaws to be given to them so that they can incorporate them to the governance policy.
- b. At the beginning there was consensus that the Senate bylaws need to be revised and updated.
- c. A copy of the bylaws (last updated in 1997) is on the Senate Wiki.
- d. Everyone is reminded to propose changes/updates by posting comments and suggesting revisions to the bylaws through the Senate Wiki or by email.
- e. Keller will send out an email to the college community and get their inputs; everyone will have **until Friday next week, or February 24**, to email back or post comments/suggested revisions to the Senate Wiki.

2. MINUTES AND TREASURER'S REPORT

- a. Background information: Keller explained that Alton Higashi earlier manifested his request thru email, for copies of all past Senate Minutes of meetings and Treasurer's Reports, and that Rafael Pulmano went ahead and started to gather minutes and those are put up on the Senate Wiki.
- b. Frankie Harriss thanked Pulmano for this and said that she can use them as evidence in her report.
- c. Keller said she did ask the Treasurer for a report but that she had not yet received any report. She also mentioned that the Senate stopped collecting the Five Dollars (\$5.00) membership dues, that there had been questions about what it was for, that it was being used for the Christmas Party, that there was no Christmas Party last year, that it wasn't clear why the Senate was collecting, and that it is up to the current Senate to decide what the purpose is of the membership dues.
- d. Keller said she would ask Ketiner Kenneth to be ready with the Treasurer's Report by next meeting and also to bring the Senate passbook. Likewise, a decision will have to be made as to who will be the new signatories for the bank account.
- e. Pulmano suggested that in the meantime, the Senate can request Kenneth to at least provide the members with information about the current balance of the account; whether the account is still active or passive; when was the last banking transaction and for how much, and for what purpose; and, who were the signatories.
- f. Keller said she would email a request to Kenneth.

II. New Business

1. SALARY ISSUES

a. Salary Freeze

- i. Background Information: Under the approved 2013 COM-FSM budget there is no step increase for everyone, both faculty and staff. Senate recognized that the College is going through hard times, but it is also true that faculty and staff were not consulted before the decision was reached to freeze the salaries. There needs to be transparency in the decision-making process.
- ii. Harriss explained that there was at the meeting minimal discussion on this, and also much of what the Board received as sort of final product was without line-by-line details, and also they didn't have the full background of the depths of decisions that were made. It had come out that this had been done, that there was a freeze in salaries, but no one asked how long

we would expect to do that.

- iii. Keller said faculty and staff all depend on their salaries, so this is a major concern for them. And as their representative, the Senate needs to come up with questions to the Board since they approved this budget.
 - 1. How long will this freeze in step increase be?
 - 2. Is this a permanent or temporary measure?
 - 3. If your salary is frozen this year, does that mean when the step increase is reenacted two years later, will you get two step increases to make up for your sacrifices during difficult times, so you would then be elevated to where you should have been? (People would be willing to sacrifice if they knew that there will be an end to it and that they will eventually get back to where they should be when the tough times are over.)
 - 4. How does the salary increase support the last job audit and the resulting streamlining which were supposedly intended to make our salaries more competitive to help the College attract and retain qualified personnel?
 - 5. Since new job applicants are being hired and since they will be signing employment contracts, we need answers to these questions soon, so when can we expect to receive answers from the Board?
- iv. Keller will write a letter addressing this issue and include this in the Senate's report to the Board that goes in their notebook tomorrow.
- b. Possible Change in Basis for Paying Faculty
 - i. Background Information: During the February 2, 2012 Division Chairs Meeting, it was mentioned that in order for the College to save money and be cost-effective, one suggestion has been to go back to paying by the credit hour, rather than the contact hour.
 - ii. Affected by this possible change are those teaching courses with lab hours, such as developmental and vocational courses.
 - iii. The Senate feels it needs more information about this issue.
 - iv. Maureen Mendiola was requested to ask Gardner at Pohnpei Campus as to how vocational instructors are paid, because they are among those affected.
 - v. Keller will also talk to Karen about this and get more information.
- c. Part-Time Instructor's Salary
 - i. Background Information: Amount of salary for part-time teaching remains the same for a number of years now, and it is the same for everyone whether you've been teaching one year or 10 years.
 - ii. This affects the College's ability to retain qualified part-time teachers who are not going to stay if they see that they will be receiving the same amount of pay year after year.
 - iii. Usually after X-number of years, like a couple of years, teaching part time at an institution, you are eligible for a slight increase in pay
- d. Summer Pay
 - i. Background Information: Most of us teaching in summer are regular full-time faculty. We usually teach the same course that we teach each semester for which we receive regular pay, but we get paid differently for the same job during summer. And like part-time instructor's salary, the rate is fixed and hasn't been changed for a long time. Last year was an exception, when all summer teachers were given 20% increase. We're not sure if this is one-time or what it will be next summer.
 - ii. We are getting step-increases every year but we receive lower summer pay, which is a constant special-contract rate that doesn't reflect faculty's

actual rate in the pay scale.

- iii. Data shows higher completion rates and better learning outcomes during summer, but faculty teaching in summer do not get rewards for this.
- iv. This makes it difficult to encourage regular faculty to stay and teach for the summer, thereby limiting the number of courses that the College may offer during the term.
- v. Harriss suggested that we put together a plan, or come up with a matrix or some sort of a pay scale for summer teaching, to take into consideration number of years teaching, degree, etc., present it to the Senate for feedback, then send it to administration for consideration.
- vi. Keller said she would get more background information from Karen, then share this with the Senate and find out what they think about this.

2. TUITION WAIVER ISSUE

- a. Background Information: This issue was brought up by Joe Saimon. Some staff members were concerned about this because there had been some changes in the policy.
- b. Frankie said it was brought up during the Board meeting but apparently no action was taken. A question was raised but it never got answered. It would be nice to know how much money is involved, how much on average does this tuition waiver cost the College.
- c. To Do: Get cost information from the Business Office. Table further discussion next meeting, ask Joe for suggestions.

3. LOANABLE AMOUNT FROM RETIREMENT FUND

- a. Background Information: Jun Felix of the Business Division asked and found out that the amount one can borrow from the retirement fund is up to 50%, while in other places the amount that can be borrowed could be up to 80%. He wants to know whether this can also be done at the College. If an employee needs to borrow anyway, it is better to get a loan from the fund rather than from a bank because the interest goes back to the borrower as earnings for his fund contributions.
- b. Discussion: Pulmano reported that he asked the Controller about the loan policy and the latter explained that the policy can be found in the Business Office web site; that in order to change the loanable amount limit a request must be submitted to the fund managers along with justification for it. The change can be done, we just need to follow the process.

4. PELL'S 67% COMPLETION REQUIREMENT

- a. Background Information: Frankie Harris's emailed a request for an early agenda item to discuss the new 67% completion rate PELL Grant rule, to ensure that faculty are not pressured to change grades to passing when students have truly failed. We need to keep the integrity of the institution and degrees offered. Students will need more services and assistance, but we can't become dishonest.
- b. Discussion: Before when students withdraw from a course, that was helping them to prevent getting GPAs that are too low. But now, not only do they have minimum GPA requirement, the students must also successfully complete at 67% of all courses attempted, and this is not only per semester but also cumulative. The student's earned credits in a given semester, for example 12 credits, is divided by the number of credits attempted for the same period, say 15 credits, and you get the percentage of completion. In the following semester the cumulative credits earned is also divided by the cumulative credits attempted, and at any point where the student's completion rate goes below the required 67% then that will affect the student's financial aid eligibility. A lot of students are withdrawing and advisers should point out to these students that they are putting themselves at risk because it is not only the GPA that matters, but the completion rate as well.

The other issue is, we all aware that the College is struggling financially as an institution, and with this new PELL policy we may be seeing less students moving up to the next term and so it would mean less tuition money. We just want to make sure that academic integrity is maintained, and there is need to spend more time with students because a lot of them still do not understand this. Advisors also need to be trained, make sure they fully understand the policy and its implications. Students need to be advised that it is no longer okay to enroll or add any course even though they really don't need it, thinking it would be alright to withdraw them later. Because these courses will still be counted as credits attempted, which will then be weighed against their credits earned or completed. It is better for the student not to withdraw as long as he has the chance to get at least a grade of D.

- c. To Do: Ask Eddie Heliyalig to make sure this is the correct interpretation. It may be possible that a student may get a GPA of 4.0 and still lose PELL eligibility due to frequent withdrawals resulting in less than 67% completion rate.

III. Other Matters *(Not included in the Agenda that was sent out to members, but were added and discussed during the meeting)*

1. Registering the Senate
 - a. Background Information: In 2007, there was a plan to register the Senate with the FSM Attorney General's Office. The plan had not yet materialized to date.
 - b. Question: Does the Senate still want to do this?
 - c. Harriss suggested opening a discussion page on the Senate Wiki and let faculty and staff voice out their opinions and decide.
2. Separate Senate for Faculty and Staff
 - a. Background Information: There was a suggestion to split the senate into two: Faculty Senate and Staff Senate. It was argued that the two have different sets of concerns and issues, which might be better addressed under the proposed setup.
 - b. After a brief discussion of the pros and con, it was recommended that another discussion page be opened at the Senate Wiki to let faculty and staff voice out their opinions and decide.

IV. Communication

1. *Senate Wiki* - Thank you to Rafael and Shaun for setting up the Senate Wiki page. For those who haven't checked the wiki page please visit it and see what information we have there. It is open for comments, and we encourage everyone to put in their comments.
2. *LRC as Repository of Minutes* - Rafael suggested that the LRC be made the repository of all committee and Senate minutes. He already broached the idea to LRC Director and she is amenable to the idea. Committee and Senate compositions constantly change, people come and go, and we need to have a constant place where all information can be kept and retrieved later when needed.
3. Updated course outlines have sections dealing with required textbooks and references. LRC can use these outlines as basis for book and reference acquisitions so students can have access to copies of these materials.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 3:15 PM.

Handouts/Documents Referenced:

1. None

College Web Site Links:

Prepared by:	<i>Rafael Pulmano</i>	Date Distributed:	<i>February 22, 2012</i>
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Approval of Minutes Process & Responses:

Submitted by:	<i>Rafael Pulmano</i>	Date Submitted:	<i>February 16, 2012</i>
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Summary Decisions/Recommendations/Action Steps/Motions with Timeline & Responsibilities

1. Senate bylaws need to be revised/updated and submitted to Planning and Resources Committee for inclusion in the governance policy. Everyone has until February 24, Friday, to suggest revisions, either through email, wiki, or through their representatives.
2. Minutes of Senate meetings are now available at the Senate's wiki pages. Treasurer will be requested to provide report next meeting. There is need to clarify the purpose of \$5.00 membership dues being collected, and recently discontinued, by the Senate.
3. There is no step-increase for all personnel under the 2013 budget. Questions: Until when? Is this temporary or permanent? When step-increase is reenacted in the future, are skipped increases still recoverable or not?
4. To save money for the College, it is looking into possible shift of paying faculty based by credits instead of by contact hours. Faculty teaching courses with lab hours and vocational instructors are most affected.
5. Part-time instructors' salaries had remained the same fixed amount for a number of years now. This affects retention of qualified part-time personnel.
6. Summer pay is also fixed in amount and, except for last year when a 20% increase was given, the amount has remained the same for a number of years. This makes it difficult for the College to encourage faculty to stay and teach during summer, thereby limiting the number of courses offered for the period.
7. Some staff members raised concern about changes in tuition waiver policy. This will be tabled again next meeting after additional information is received.
8. PELL's 67% completion requirement could have significant impact on many students' ability to maintain eligibility to receive financial aid. Faculty and adviser should be trained and prepared to clarify this to students. Revenue from tuition will be reduced. There is need to ensure that faculty are not pressured to change grades to passing when students have truly failed. Integrity of the institution and degrees it offers should be compromised.
9. Registering the Senate with the FSM Attorney General's Office as was planned in 1997 but not yet done to date. Does the Senate still want to pursue this? A discussion page at the Senate wiki will be opened so everyone can post opinions and preference.
10. Proposal to have two senates, one for faculty and one for staff. Is this better than the current single Faculty/Staff Senate? A discussion page at the Senate wiki will be opened so everyone can post opinions and preference.
11. Communication: Senate wiki is open, everyone is invited to visit, check information available, post comments, and participate in discussions. There is suggestion to make LRC the repository of all committee and Senate minutes, and to use updated course outlines as guide for LRC in book and reference acquisitions.

Action by President:

Item number:	Approved:	Approved with conditions:	Disapproved:	Comments/Conditions: