

College of Micronesia-FSM Female Safety and Inclusion Summer 2019 Student Focus Group Outcome Report

Purpose:

The purpose of this focus group was to elicit feedback and recommendations from female students at COM-FSM regarding their feelings of physical safety at National Campus. The group also looked to identify possible barriers to the inclusion and success of female students at COM-FSM National Campus.

Participants:

The focus group consisted of four female student participants, all of which were Residence Hall students. Out of those present for the meetings, three were from Chuuk and one was from Yap. There was another student from Chuuk who attended the first meeting, but failed to follow up with the second two meetings, therefore, she is not included in this report. All students participated under the promise of anonymity and confidentiality; therefore, their names are not available to be included in this report.

Meeting Dates:

The focus group met for a total of three meetings on the following dates: Thursday, June 13th, Thursday, June 20th and Thursday, June 27th. Each meeting lasted about an hour to an hour and a half, with four participants attending all three meetings.

Overview:

Thursday, June 13th:

The first meeting consisted of introductions and icebreakers, followed by an overview of the format and purpose of the focus group. Emphasis was placed upon the importance of confidentiality and the creation of a safe space, with all participants agreeing to support and respect each other's opinions. This was followed by the initial identification of major concerns specific to female students at National Campus. Areas of concern included:

- The unauthorized use of emergency exit doors by students at the Residence Halls;
- Lack of lighting behind the Dining Hall and around the Residence Halls;
- The prevalence of student pregnancy;

- The presence of outsiders on campus;
- Lack of safety at the store across from campus in the evenings;
- The influence of peer pressure;
- Cultural expectations and inability to voice concerns related to age and gender.

Thursday, June 20th:

The second meeting consisted mainly of a mapping exercise, where students were given a map of the National Campus along with colored stickers. They were asked to place stickers on the map according to the follow guidelines:

- Yellow = More Lights Needed
- Green = More Security Presence Needed
- Red = General Feeling of Being Unsafe
- Blue = Occurrence of Physically Unwanted Contact
- Silver = Occurrence of Verbally Unwanted Exchange

Attached to this report are the four maps, as created by the students. However, the main takeaways from the activity, as discussed by the students include:

- More lights are needed on the road behind the Dining Hall; along the main road by Buildings A & B (near the trees and benches); by the volleyball court; by the Cultural Huts; around the Nursing Building; around the Sports Center and outdoor basketball court; between the Residence Halls; by the Yapese Corner; and on the Residence Hall balconies.
- More security presence is needed by the main road, between Buildings A & B; by the Faculty parking lot; around the large parking lot in front of the Library; and around the Sports Center, including the Yapese Corner.
- Students generally feel unsafe when walking in between the Residence Halls at night, around the Nursing Building, the Cultural Huts, the Faculty Parking Lot, as well as, along the road behind the Dining Hall, leading up to the Nursing Building.
- Students have been approached and have experienced unwanted physical and verbal contact near the store across from campus, by the Sports Center and around Buildings A and B (near the trees and benches).

Thursday, June 27th:

The third meeting focused on the identification of students' top concerns and the creation of possible solutions to consider. A total of four major concerns were discussed as follows:

- Campus lighting;
- Safety issues surrounding the store across the street;
- The presence of outsiders on campus;

- Unauthorized use of the exit door by students.

Recommendations by the students to address each of these concerns are included in the following section.

Student Recommendations:

1.) To address the lack of lighting on campus, students are suggesting that either new streetlights be installed in the following locations or existing lights be fixed:

- Along the walkway to the Nursing Building, behind the Dining Hall & LRC;
- Around the trees and benches near Buildings A and B;
- Around the Residence Halls;
- Underneath the Residence Hall balconies;
- Around the volleyball court;
- Around the basketball court.

2.) To address the safety issues surrounding the store across the street from campus, the students are recommending that the College look into opening up an evening store for Residence Hall students to use. There are two proposed options for this recommendation:

- The Bookstore extends its working hours to match the Residence Hall curfew, which is currently set for 10PM during the week and 12AM on weekends.
- The Business Office opens up a miniature store in the Female Residence Hall, which would be open from the time that the Bookstore closes until curfew. This could be run by the Female staff and supplied by the Bookstore.
- Students are seeking access to the following items in the evenings: snacks, water, tissue paper and sanitary items (such as soap, toothpaste, laundry detergent and women's hygiene products).

3.) To limit the disturbances caused by outsiders, the students are recommending the following actions:

- More security vigilance in monitoring the area around the Residence Halls, especially in the evenings;
- A sturdier roadblock (maybe a chain) leading up to the Female Residence Hall, as the one that is currently being used can be easily moved and/or driven around.

4.) To help prevent unauthorized use of the exit doors and to keep students from entering the Residence Halls when they are not supposed to, students are recommending the following:

- More security vigilance in monitoring the Residence Hall and doing regular rounds around the building, checking to ensure that all exit doors are securely closed.
- More vigilance from the Residence Hall staff in checking the exit doors when doing their rounds to ensure they are securely closed.
- Possibly revisit the option of reengaging the exit door alarms.

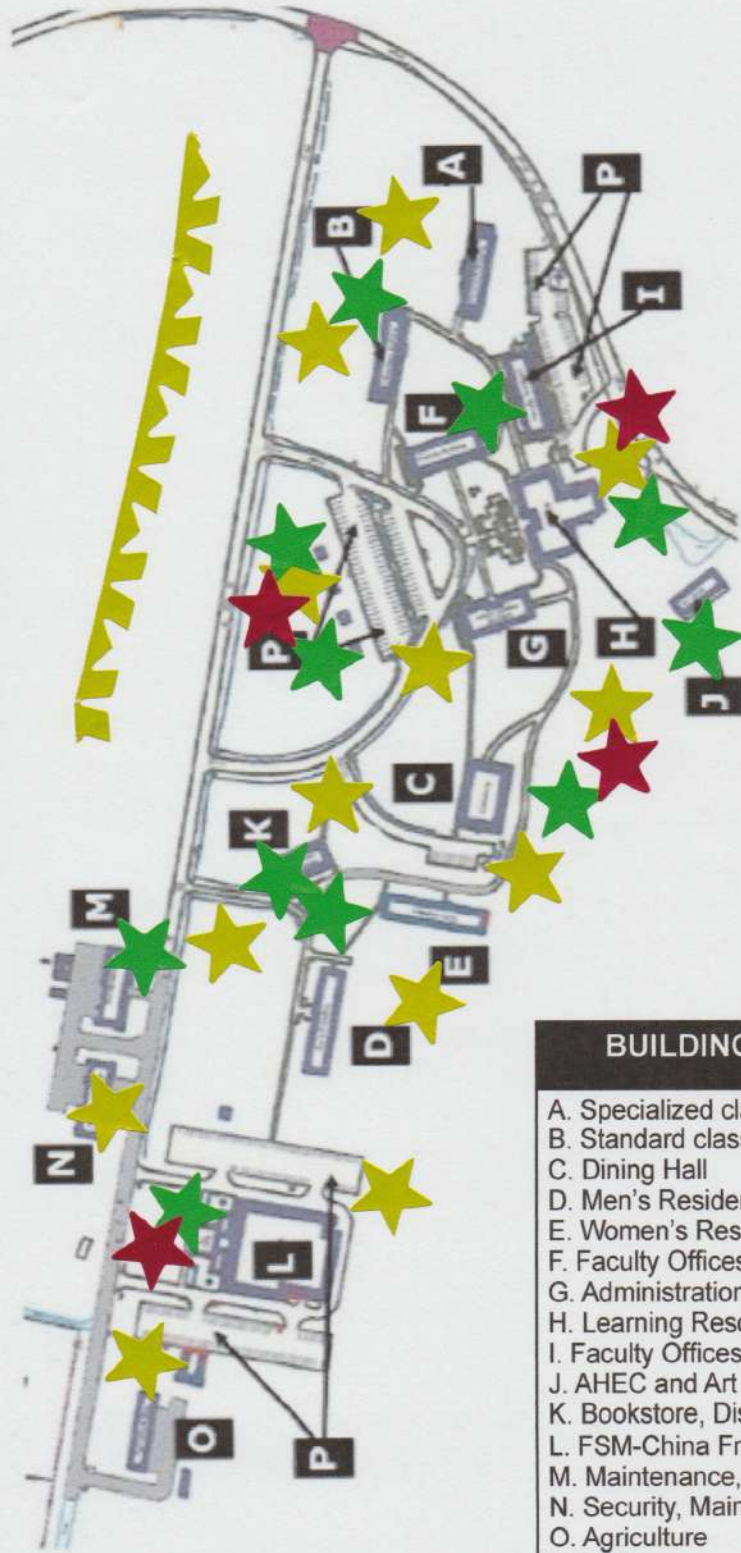
In short, the biggest concern stemming from the Focus Group is the disruptive presence of outside community members. This is prompting the need for more lighting and security presence, as well as the recommendation for the creation of an on-campus evening store.

Focus Group Feedback:

On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the most positive response, students rated the focus group a 9.5 overall.

Suggestions for improvement included the need for more female student participants, as well as longer and more frequent meeting times.

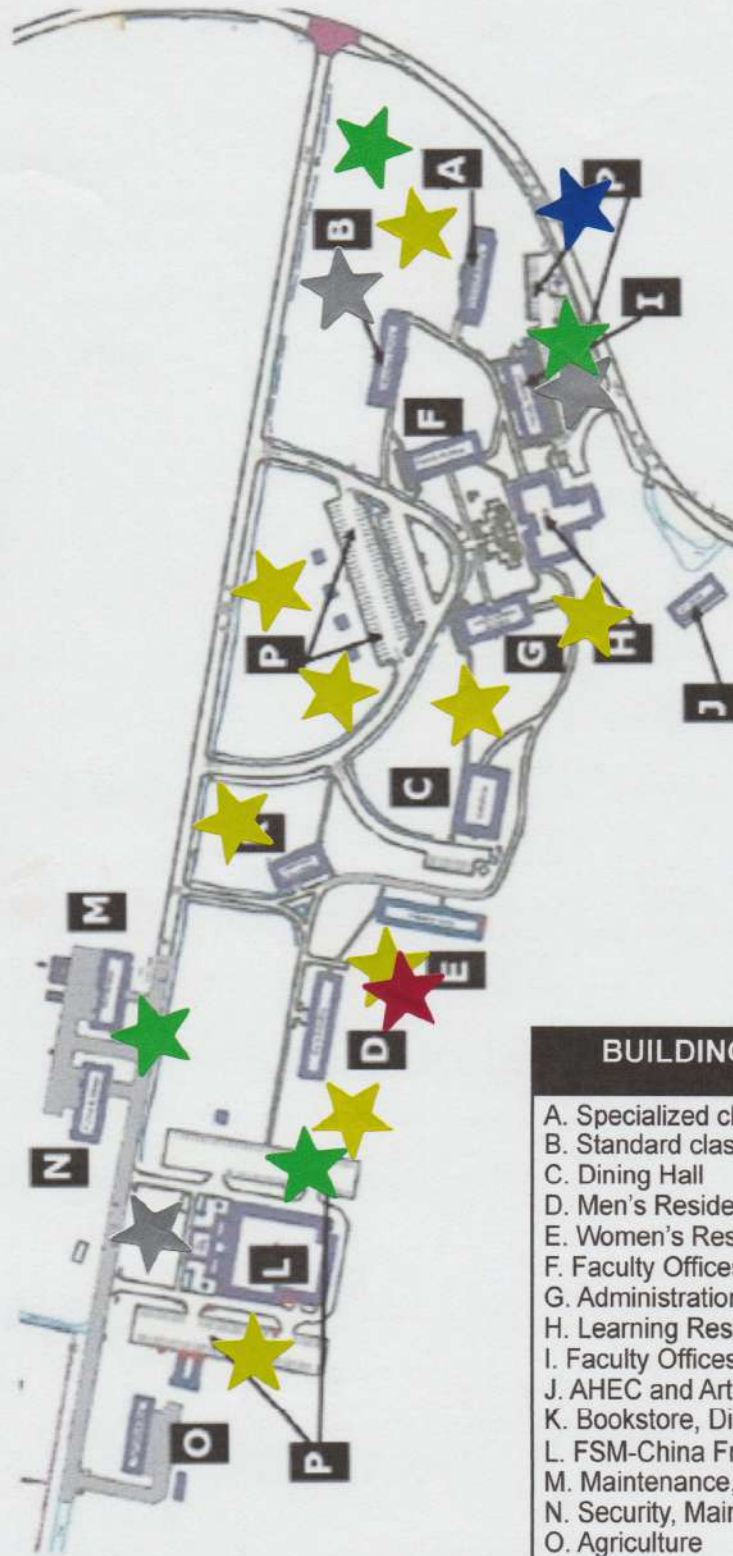
Campus Map
College of Micronesia-FSM
NATIONAL CAMPUS



BUILDING LEGENDS

- A. Specialized classrooms (Building A)
- B. Standard classrooms (Building B)
- C. Dining Hall
- D. Men's Residential Hall
- E. Women's Residential Hall
- F. Faculty Offices (old)
- G. Administration
- H. Learning Resources Center & MITC
- I. Faculty Offices (new)
- J. AHEC and Art Classroom
- K. Bookstore, Dispensary, A+ Center
- L. FSM-China Friendship Sports Center
- M. Maintenance, CRE, Music Classroom
- N. Security, Maintenance, IT Shop
- O. Agriculture
- P. Parking

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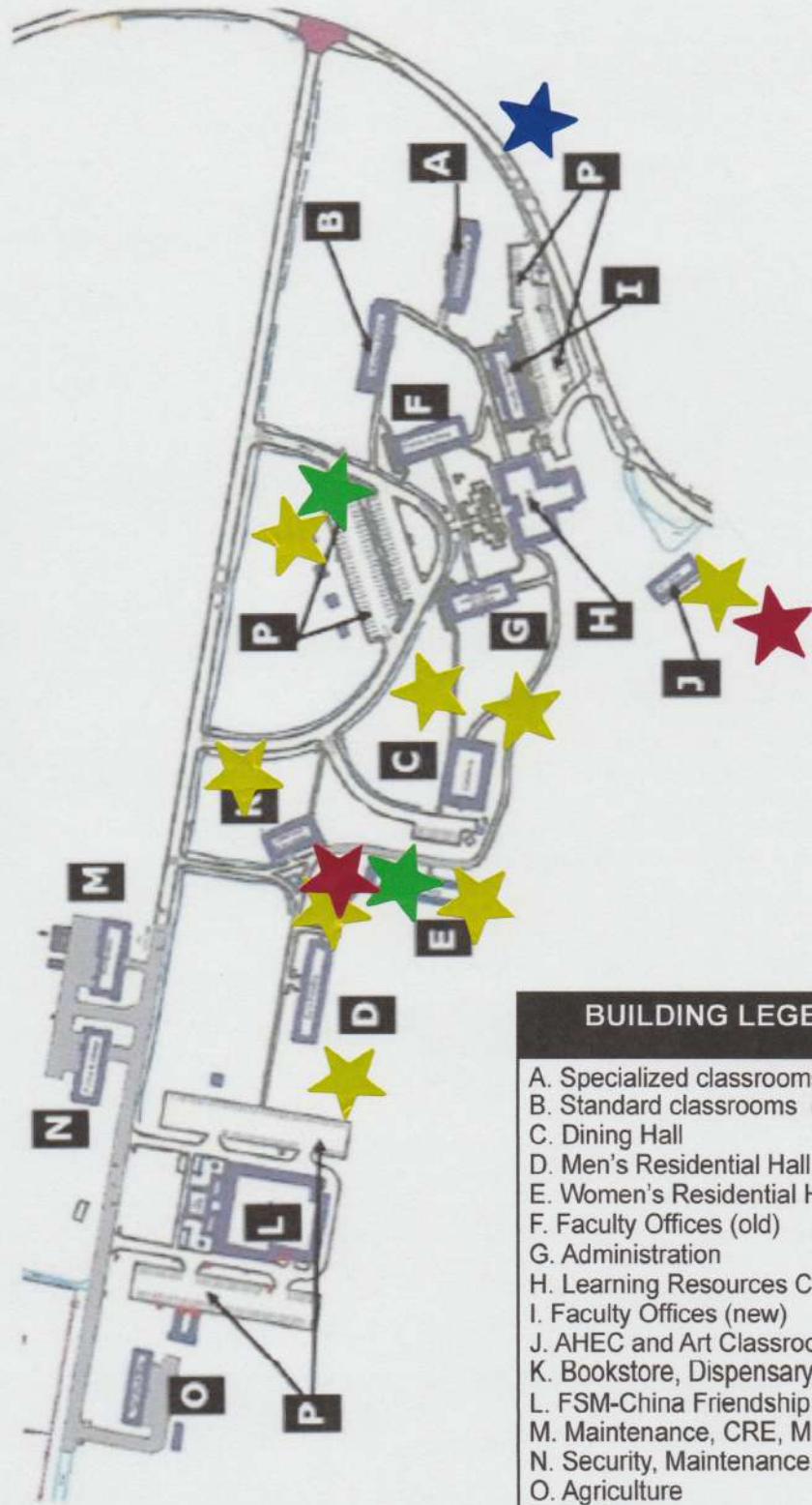
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