



**NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE  
BOARD OF REGENTS  
Regular Meeting of April 28, 2021**

**Minutes**

**I. Call Meeting to Order**

The regular meeting of the Board of Regents of the Northern Marianas College was held on Friday, April 28, 2021 in the BOR Conference Room, Saipan Campus in person and online (remotely) using the Zoom platform.

Regent Charles V. Cepeda., BOR Chairman called the meeting to order at 10:20a.m and called for the roll of the members. Six members were present and a quorum was established. Chairman Cepeda welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**a. Roll Call**

Regents present in person:

Regent Charles V. Cepeda., Chairman  
Regent Elaine Hocog Orilla, Vice-Chairperson  
Regent Michaela U. Sanchez, Treasurer  
Regent Jesse Tudela  
Regent Zenie P. Mafnas  
Regent Irene T. Torres

Excused Absence:

Regent Michelle Lin Sablan

NMC College Staff/Faculty present in person:

Frankie Eliptico, NMC Interim President; Helen B. Camacho, Executive Secretary to the Board of Regents (Recorder).

Present virtually via Zoom:

Charlotte Cepeda, Dean of Learning and Student Success; Shelly Tudela, Interim Chief Financial Officer; Patricia Coleman, Interim Dean of CREES; Polly DLG. Masga, Human Resources Director; Raymond Muna, Prior Learning Assessment; Renedel Buno, Information & Technology; Jerome Ortiz, Information & Technology; Maria Aguon, Tinian Center Director; Manny Castro, Office of Admissions & Records Director; Hedwig Hofschneider, Project Proa; Rachel Fusco, Capital Improvement Project Director; Dr. Virendra M. Verma, Scientist (Horticulture/Crop) CREES; Lisa Hacskaylo, Institutional Researcher; Arthur De Oro, Community Development Institute Director; Jesusa Atalig, Media Specialist III, Tinian Center; John Mithnoy, Administrative Assistant III, Information & Technology; Tayna Belyeu-Camacho, Program Lead-Family, Youth and Community Development. CREES; Geraldine Rodgers, Assessment Specialist, Office of Institutional Effectiveness; Michael Ogo, Aquaculture Extension Agent, CREES; Polly Omechelang, Extension Aide II; Dr. Randy Yates, Associate Professor, SPED; Joaquin Deleon Guerrero, Extension Aide III, CREES; Neda Deleon Guerrero, Career Office Manager; Dr. Laura Taylor, Associate Professor, SMHA; Charlene Masiwemai, School of Education Faculty; Viktoria Buniag, Research Assistant II (Aquaculture), CREES; Dr. Yunzi Zhang, School of Business Faculty; Becky Sablan, Executive Secretary to the President.

Others present virtually:

Tiberius Mocanu, BOR Legal Counsel  
Mark Scoggins, NMC Legal Counsel

**b. Review and Adoption of Agenda**

Regent Orilla motioned to adopt the agenda with amendments to move the executive reports after the old business item, seconded by Regent Sanchez. All members voted yes, the motion carried.

**c. Review and Adoption of Minutes**

The following minutes were submitted for review and approval:

1. September 29, 2020 regular meeting
2. November 12, 2020 special meeting
3. December 30, 2020 special meeting
4. February 25, 2021 special meeting
5. March 30, 2021 special meeting

**Action:** Regent Sanchez motioned to adopt the minutes, seconded by Regent Orilla. All members voted yes, the motion carried.

The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved and Chairman Cepeda moved on to the next item on the agenda.

**II. Public Comment Period**

Individuals may orally testify on items on the agenda during the Public Comment Period. Written testimony is also accepted. Oral testimonies are limited to five (5) minutes.

- 1) Richard Hofschneider, a private citizen, was present to speak before the board under public comments. He requested to speak in the vernacular. He went on to say that he is present today to request for a meeting with the board to discuss his case.

Chairman Cepeda explained the process to Mr. Hofschneider by which his request needs to be channeled through the President's Office before it can be entertained by the board. Mr. Hofschneider thanked the board for their time and excused himself.

### **III. Reports from Standing Committees**

- a. Finance Committee

None.

- b. Audit Committee

None.

- c. Human Resources Committee

None.

- d. Regent Nominating Committee

None.

- e. Program Committee

None.

### **IV. NMC Executive Reports**

- a. Interim President's Report

1. Program Feature: Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

Nicole Babauta, Administrator for the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) in the CNMI, is today's program feature. Ms. Babauta outlined the mission and services of the center which include supporting growth and economic development of the U.S. affiliated Pacific Islands in the western pacific region by providing high quality training and one-to-one confidential counseling to existing and prospective small businesses. The CNMI SBDC is a program funded by the Small Business Administration. The center also provides other training programs to include Business advisement services, small business training programs and access to business research. There was a question-and-answer portion with the board.

#### **Spring 2021IP**

Frankie presented the spring enrollment for Spring 2021. An unduplicated headcount table of this was also shared with the board.

## **Course Formats**

A table of the different types of course formats was shared which include: Online, Hybrid, Virtual Hybrid, Virtual and Face-to-Face (Web-Enhanced).

## **Fall Semester**

A table of the fall enrollment numbers was shared with the board.

## **COVID Campus Entry Procedures**

The Northern Marianas College campus entry procedures were also shared with the board. The campuses on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota will implement the COVID-19 safety measures to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 at NMC and in the CNMI.

## **Vaccinate**

The College launched its COVID Vaccination Campaign for its students and the first schedule will be administered at NMC 8am-12pm on Saturday, May 1, 2021.

## **2020-2021 Graduates**

NMCs Commencement Exercise is set for May 21, 2021. IP Frankie commended the students for their resilience despite facing Typhoon Yutu and the pandemic.

## **Student Activities**

IP Frankie commended the student leaders, LSS leaders, OSAL Leaders and others who are involved in leading students. Student Activities include Beach Volleyball, Rollerskate Night, Beach Clean Up, CHCC Beautification, MYPi Disaster preparedness. IP Frankie shared photos highlighting some student engagements with the board.

## **MYPi Disaster Preparedness**

Patty Coleman, Interim Dean of CREES talked about the preparedness initiative work with Youth which is a collaboration with the Department of Fire Emergency Management System (DFEMS) and Homeland Security. As a result of the great efforts from the team, they were able to certify 12 youths to undertake preparedness activities such as putting out fires, assisting human beings who have fallen under large amounts of weight, other life skills and life preparedness skills. There's also plans to provide training in Tinian and Rota.

## **LSAMP Presentation**

Students in the LSAMP program participated in research work with several students and hope to make this an annual event.

## **NMC Golf Tournament**

IP Frankie thanked the volunteers, sponsors, and everyone including the Board for helping with the golf tournament. The tournament sold out and it was a huge success despite the pandemic. Photos were also shared with the board highlighting the event.

## **Workforce Development**

Certified Nursing Assistant Training set to launch this summer 2021. The certified nursing assistant training prepares participants to provide basic nursing care to elderly, ill and persons with disability in long-term care.

## **Nursing Student's Success: Passed the NCLEX exam**

IP Frankie also shared that many of our NMC students have passed the NCLEX exam. He highlighted eight (8) individuals who passed the exam in the past three months.

Chairman Cepeda congratulated the nursing students who passed the NCLEX exam and who are now part of the working community. Regent Tudela also congratulated the nursing program and also thanked the students for being part of the taskforce team and most especially for being at the front line of this pandemic.

## **Accelerated Pathways & Apprenticeship**

Ray Muna, Apprenticeship Coordinator met with NMTI and the Public School System, to help students accelerate their pathways to careers (i.e. construction, hospitality and entrepreneurship).

## **College Now Agreement Signed**

The College Now agreement allows Highschool students to earn college credits while in high school.

## **Saipan Chamber of Commerce**

Met recently with Joe Guerrero, Saipan Chamber of Commerce President to foster and grow our partnership to respond with the private sector needs in the Commonwealth. NMC will be making a presentation at the general membership in June to talk about the workforce development programs and plans for rebuilding.

## **OVW Training**

Sexual Teen Violence Training conducted by NMCs counseling team through the OVW grant.

## **DPS Memorandum of Understanding**

NMC signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Department of Public Safety (DPS). Ms. Zerlyn Taimanao who works with Criminal Justice Planning Agency (CJPA) however she is a big part of the college in terms of helping run some of these programs and the partnerships. The first class was held recently for the police academy. The academy students will be earning 39 college credits.

### **Department of Fire Emergency Management Systems (DFEMS) MOU Signing**

The Community Development Institute (CDI) conducted training for the DFEMS personnel. In the discussion with the DFEMS Commissioner, Dennis Mendiola to start working on the next academy for the fire DFEMS academy. A renewal of the MOA was held recently as well. The college is also happy and excited to have Mr. Clement Bermudes, retired Army Lt. Colonel, as our Criminal Justice Director.

### **Slaughterhouse on Tinian**

Patty Coleman thanked Regent Sanchez for her help at the slaughterhouse meeting that was held recently in Tinian. Patty provided a brief update that in January 2021, we were able to assist the mayor's office in submitting the certification application to the USDA food and safety inspection service. The mayor's office is on track to complete the enhancements to the current slaughterhouse facility so that they will be ready for the inspection towards the end of June. We will provide more updates on the outcome of the inspection which will lead up to the certification and opening of the slaughterhouse.

### **Recovery Update**

IP Frankie shared that the members of the board were on campus when we were in the final stages of the projects. Photos were shared with the board. Completion of the renovation of Building V.

- CREES Building: NMC was awarded \$10 Million
- US Commerce awarded \$13.2 Million to NMC for a new research, extension center (CRED Building) which will house CREES and other programs, and had the kick off meeting with EDA.
- Completion of discussions with FEMA - Total award for the college is \$38.6 Million. This was a two-year process.
- Facilities Masterplan – Option 1: Preliminary renderings shared with the board. The FMP masterplan will be shared with the college and subsequently to the board for approval.

### **Legislative Activities**

A handout was provided in the packet. IP Frankie also shared that the college had some legislative activities recently. The members of the House Education Committee were on campus for a tour of the facility and ongoing projects. They also visited the CREES experiment station. The Senate Education Committee also visited the campus. Overall, the visit went very well and

we also reminded the members of the House and Senate that it is an important accreditation year for us and that financial sustainability is very critical to NMC.

### **Accreditation Update**

IP Frankie shared some accreditation updates to include some highlights and timelines for the upcoming visit.

- 1) October 27-28, 2021 WSCUC Site Visit
- 2) Accreditation Reaffirmation Steering Committee (ARSC) meeting every Friday at 8:00a.m.
- 3) WASC Lines of Inquiry
  - a) Presidential Leadership
  - b) Governance at NMC
  - c) Strategic Planning
  - d) Faculty and Staff
  - e) Financial Sustainability
  - f) Physical and Technology Resources
  - g) Culture of Evidence and Data Supported Decision Making
  - h) Student Success
  - i) COVID-19 Response
- 4) Preparation for the WSCUC Visit (Meetings, Mock Interviews etc.)

Chairman Cepeda shared that it is very important that the board is involved in the process and recommended that they participate in the discussion by way of becoming members of the Lines of Inquiry (LOI). IP Frankie thanked the chairman for the recommendation and suggestion, the college welcomes their participation.

### **CFO Report**

A handout of NMCs current financial status was shared in the packet.

(Break called at 12:04p.m. Break ended at 12:30p.m)

Chairman Cepeda called the meeting back to order. He went onto the next item on the agenda which is the Presidential Search.

## **V. Old Business**

### **Presidential Search**

Chairman Cepeda opened the floor for discussion regarding the presidential search. The board members engaged in a full discussion where they shared their comments and concerns about moving forward with the search. Regent Orilla encouraged the board to move forward and urged everyone to be strong and move with their conscience. She also mentioned that the Regents have

already made their decision to interview the five (5) candidates. After much discussion, the board members took the following action.

**Action:** Regent Orilla motioned to proceed with the presidential search process, seconded by Regent Sanchez. The votes are listed as follows:

Yes

Vice-Chairperson Orilla

Regent Sanchez

Regent Tudela

Regent Mafnas

No

Chairman Cepeda

Regent Torres

## **VI. Board Meeting Assessment**

Executive Session (At any time during the meeting, the Board of Regents may be required to enter into executive session to discuss matters deemed privileged and confidential).

## **VII. Upcoming Board Activities**

a. Upcoming Events/Activities

None.

## **VIII. Adjournment**

**Action:** Regent Orilla motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Regent Sanchez. All members voted yes, the motion carried. The meeting ended at 1:08p.m.