Northern Marianas College
A Brief History of NMC

Northern Marianas College was established in May 1981 when Governor Carlos S. Camacho created the College as an official governmental entity through Executive Order #25. The Executive Order established the College as one of the divisions within the Commonwealth Department of Education. By mid-summer of 1981 the College was offering training programs for government employees and teachers of the public school system.

In January 1983 Public law 3-43 established NMC as a public, nonprofit corporation having the Board of Education as its governing board. In March of 1985 the passage of CNMI Public Law 4-34 made NMC a public corporation under the general governance of its own Board of Regents, and granted it autonomy in both fiscal and personnel matters. This law stipulated the mission of the college and designated NMC to serve as the land-grant college for the Commonwealth.

In November of 1985 the Second Constitutional Convention in the CNMI adopted a series of proposed amendments to the CNMI Constitution. Among them was Amendment 38 concerning education in the Commonwealth. Article 15, Section 2 of that proposed amendment provided for the establishment of Northern Marianas College, and stipulated that the College’s Board of Regents should have autonomy in conducting its affairs. This amendment restated the mission of the college and guaranteed annual funding. Amendment 38, among others, was adopted by the people of the Commonwealth in a special election held in January of 1986.

In June 1985 the college received its initial accreditation from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The accreditation was reaffirmed in 1990, 1996, 2001, and 2009. In March 2001, the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges & Universities of WASC granted NMC initial accreditation for offering a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education. This marked the first time in history of WASC that a two-year community college offered a four-year degree.

Since its beginning, NMC has focused on meeting the higher education and vocational training needs of the CNMI. From the times of its first program in teacher education, NMC has developed a comprehensive set of academic programs and services to meet the social, cultural, occupational and economic development needs of its island communities. Today, students are enrolled in various educational programs of study leading to Certificates of Completion, Associate Degrees, and Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education. In addition, there are hundreds of students enrolled in credit and non-credit, continuing adult education courses.
Throughout the years, more than 20,000 people have enrolled in regular NMC degree and certificate courses, over 3000 persons have been awarded certificates and/or degrees in programs offered or coordinated by NMC; and more than 12,000 individuals have been served in our community through such programs as the Adult Basic Education, Continuing Education, and the Cooperative, Research, Extensions, and Education Service.