APPROVED MINUTES
for
THE REGULAR MEETING
of the
BOARD OF REGENTS
on
DECEMBER 29, 1997

PUBLIC SESSION

People Present
Board Members
Regent Justin S. Manglona (Interim Chairman), Regent Manuel A. Sablan, Regent Helen H. Abayare, Regent Vicente N. Santos, Regent John I. Schwarz, and Regent Teresa I. Taitano.

College Staff and Faculty
President Agnes McPhetres, Vice President Jack Sablan, Vice President Barbara Moir, Acting Provost Roy Fua, Bob Scruggs, Jim Holan, Vicki Uludong, Ray Mafnas, Fran Ascencio, Sam Gugliotta, Alfred Johnson, Ed Zehr, Roger Madriaga, Malinda Matson, Jack Peters, and Allen Cameron as recorder.

Others
Transition Education Sub-committee Team members: Esther Fleming, Rhoda Smith, and Sandy McKenzie. Also present was Benhur Saladores, reporter, Saipan Tribune.

At 10:05 a.m. Chairman Manglona called the meeting to order in the Board of Regents conference room on the As Terlaje campus of the college, and asked the President to call the roll. As all six members of the Board answered “Present,” the President announced that a quorum was present for the conduct of business.

Chairman Manglona then welcomed the members of the Governor-Elect’s Transition Team’s Sub-committee on Education, Esther Fleming, Rhoda Smith, and Sandy McKenzie.

I. Opening Procedures
A. Review/Approval of Agenda
ACTION # 1. It was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved to accept the agenda as presented.

B. Review/Approval of Minutes
The chair requested the members to review the minutes of September 24, 25 and 27, 1997 sessions.
**ACTION # 2.** It was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved to accept the minutes of the September 24, 25 and 27, 1997 sessions.

**II. Chairperson’s Report:**

A. Designation of a Board member to participate in the personal interview process for appointments to Executive Positions. Regent Sablan stated that there may be a possible “conflict of interest” if the interview committee for a Dean or Unit Director were to include an employee of the same department. He also commented that the following phrase be included in the Administrative Procedure, Human Resources # 4008: “there should be no linkage between members of the interview committee and the applicant.

President McPhetres explained the lengthy process of search for and selection of a Dean or Unit Director. Any complaints of unfairness may be lodged with the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, who also serves on the interview committee. There are protections in NMC’s Administrative Procedures to prevent conflict of interest situations. Regent Santos reported that he had recently participated in the five meetings of an interview committee for the Vice President for Instruction. He said he was very impressed by the fairness and objectivity of the process.

**Action # 3.** It was moved, seconded and unanimously approved to accept the change in Administrative Procedure, Human Resources #4008, adding the words, “a member of the Board of Regents appointed by the Chair of the Board of Regents” to the composition of the interview committee.

B. Meeting with House Ways and Means Committee. Chairman Manglona reported that steps had been taken to arrange for a meeting between the Board of Regents and the House Ways and Means Committee. The meeting would probably be held shortly after the New Year.

Since members of the Transition Team on Education Sub-Committee were present, the Chair suspended the agenda and entertained the members of the Committee.

President McPhetres proceeded to outline for the benefit of the Committee some of the financial problems experienced over the years by the College. She stated that for the past eight years, the College Board-approved, budget has been reduced drastically which left the College with a shortfall for its personnel. For instance, the College do not have any more money to cover the last three payroll. Since 1993, the College has suffered a 48% cut under Public law 5-32 which has never been restored. She also explained that College Operations are funded by its own generated funds, not through appropriations. Additionally, neither the Board of Regents nor the CNMI Archive, though mandated by law, have never been funded by an appropriation. Most of the equipment in the Archive are antiquated dating back to the Trust Territory times. They certainly, need replacement in the near future.

Referring to item #8 in the Transition Team’s memorandum, Regent Sablan noted that this year, the College is awaiting a financial audit for FY 95 & 96 which will have CPA opinion. He also expressed disappointment that nine of ten Marianas High School graduates come to the College needing developmental courses in English and
mathematics. He added that for the past 16 years the College has not received funds for either Capital Improvement (CIP) or for Operations and Maintenance. He said that the CNMI Executive and Legislative branches should work closely with the College. He viewed the presence of members of the Governor-Elect’s Transition Team at this meeting as a step in the right direction.

Ms. Esther Fleming stated that she shared concern for the financial problems of the College. As a member of the Board of Education (BOE) she suggested that the BOE and the Board of Regents meet together occasionally to assure better mutual understanding. PSS teachers, she said, face many difficulties with a policy of fostering classroom heterogeneity. Some PSS students, especially those from off-island, have little or no English. Some are students with special needs. Some have received “social promotion.” All are together in one classroom. Ms. Fleming reported that the Governor-Elect’s plan during the first 100 days is to appoint a special Education Liaison to sit in on Board of Education and Board of Regents meetings.

Regent Sablan voiced several recommendations in behalf of the Board of Regents: (1) that the College be allowed to begin its fiscal year on August 1 rather than October 1; (2) that legislative authorizations not forget to include appropriations as well; (3) that NMC have the same payment arrangement with the Retirement Fund as enjoyed by other government agencies; (4) that appropriations be made to cover NMC’s Commonwealth Utilities Corporation bill; (5) that there be better cooperation and coordination between PSS and NMC to ensure proper preparation of Marianas High School students for College-level courses.

President McPhetres remarked that there was a Memo of Understanding between PSS and NMC regarding the 2+2 program as a first step in the right direction. She said, unfortunately a communications slip caused a poor showing at December placement tests for “off-track” 11th & 12th grade MHS students. The next placement tests attracted 45. She stated that the 2+2 program targets both honors students and those with special vocational career interests.

Regent Sablan commented that the College needs to concentrate on teaching college-level, not remedial, courses to utilize the full potential of its faculty.

There ensued a discussion among Regents Santos, Sablan and Ms. Smith which touched on several concerns of parents in the CNMI: (1) the easy availability of drugs; (2) College expenses being highest every August, just when funds are least available toward the end of the CNMI fiscal year, (3) the issue of illegal non-residents in the public schools, and (4) parental preferences for private schools on-island, and off-island colleges and universities. Regent Sablan said that for those who can afford choice in education, there are no problems, but we have to be concerned about poor families who have no choices.

Ms. Fleming and Ms. McKenzie expressed their satisfaction that this meeting has taken place and their hope that the two Boards will meet regularly in the future. Ms. Fleming
stated that she will bring the recommendations expressed at this meeting to the attention of the Governor-Elect.

Regent Schwarz expressed gratitude for the visit of the Transition Team’s Sub-committee, and summarized several College concerns as follows: (1) assuring the College’s continued accreditation which requires a continuity in its Board of Regents members, (2) that the College had never received certain mandated monies, namely, an allocated $500,000 from the Public Land Trust under PL 3-11 and an allocated $250,000 from the Marianas Visitors Bureau; (3) that the College alone among government agencies is required to pay into the Retirement Fund; and (4) that as far back as 1993 only $1.3 million has come to the College from the $5 million collected by P.L. 5-32 (now P.L. 10-66) for vocational/technical education to eliminate the need for non-resident workers in the CNMI. Regent Schwarz praised the College’s financial managers by saying that he feels that the College will merit CPA opinions for FY95 & 96 audit. Mr. Lawrence mentioned that his responses on the audit will be completed by the end of December.

President McPhetres stated that the CNMI Constitution stated that the Board of Regents “shall formulate policy relating to the higher education needs of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands” (CNMI Constitution Art. XV, Sec.2a). Therefore, scholarship, being a higher education program related to the needs of the Commonwealth, should certainly fall under the responsibility of the Board of Regents. The Executive Order took away that responsibility and placed it in the Office of the Governor under the guidance of another Board. The President feels that such responsibility should be given back to the Board of Regents. It is unfortunate, she added, that current practices under the financial aid program promote different treatment to students. For example students from Rota and Tinian attending NMC are not given the same amount of financial assistance compared to students attending colleges outside the Commonwealth. The students from Rota and Tinian must bear the extra expense of coming to Saipan for their College education as those going to Guam or elsewhere.

Ms. Fleming added that Scholarship funds need to be prioritized according to local manpower needs. Kindergarten and early childhood teachers should have top priority but do not.

President McPhetres again thanked the Transition Team Sub-committee for sharing their expertise at this meeting. At 11:50 a.m. Chair Manglona suggested recess for lunch and reconvening at 1:30 p.m.

Upon resumption of the meeting at 1:30 p.m. the Board returned to the following agenda items:

**III. Fiscal Committee’s Report**

**A. Financial Statements** (Tab 3): Comptroller Lawrence presented a brief explanation of the budget process at NMC. Any expenditure request, he said, must be matched by availability of funds in the
proper budget category. He reported that the College has five new staff members in the Business Office, all working out well at present.

Regent Sablan praised the work of the Business Office in producing the current thorough financial reports. He noted that 90% was for payroll and 10% for “all others,” divided among all the College departments. Mr. Lawrence added that, though payroll is received as a lump sum from the Department of Finance, the College carefully itemizes payroll department by department. He stated that he planned to tailor future reports to make them more understandable. Regent Sablan proposed that the Board and the President consolidate the forthcoming FY 99 budget to assure the President some financial flexibility in the operation of the College.

President McPhetres said there was need to add in the value of the College’s real property as “matching funds” for grants. Mr. Lawrence stated that it might be time for a re-appraisal since evaluation may have changed since the last appraisal in 1991.

Mr. Lawrence said that there was a built-in “cash flow” to the financial system under which the College operates. According to some grants, money must be expended before it can be received as a reimbursement. Regent Sablan suggested that it is good to set aside 2% as a cushion for emergency expenditures, such as the recent typhoons.

Regent Sablan summarized his position, as follows: (1) the College needs maintenance money for the gym once it is constructed; (2) the Arts and Sciences unit, now providing 66% of the college courses taught, will keep on growing; (3) perhaps we can aim at a Ph.D. in every classroom; (4) faculty need to be encouraged to go on for their Ph.D.

Regent Schwarz complimented the Comptroller and the Business Office for the thorough and clear financial statements presented to the Board. He asked if our computers can accommodate “four digit numbers,” such as 2001,” i.e. to go beyond the millennium. The response was that Information Systems is working on the problem, which is critical for Admissions and Records and for the Business Office. The capacity to adapt to the post-millennium varies from program to program.

President McPhetres stated that the College was looking into an integrated computer system for overall college administration instead of two separate computer software systems, “Champlain” (for Admissions and Records) and “Micro Information Products” (for the Finance Office). Although the entire integrated system will cost around $200,000, she suggested that it may need three different sources of funding for the entire computer system, as well as to fund the changes required by the post-millennium “four digit numbers.”

IV. President’s Report
A. Program Presentations
1. Arts and Sciences Unit (Tab 4): Dean Barbara Moir introduced the three Arts and Sciences unit chairpersons, Mr. Jim Holan (English), Mr. Sam Gugliotta (Science, Math, Health & P.E.), and Ms. Vicki Uludong (Social Sciences, Fine Arts & Humanities).

**English:** Mr. Holan offered his department’s findings that the root cause of problems in English was the lack of reader models at home, which spills over into a dislike of reading, and in turn this causes difficulties in writing. This is the basic reason why 90% of new students taking the placement exam do not test beyond the developmental English course level. Regent Sablan observed that this is indeed unfortunate, since these courses are not creditable toward a college degree, and are not college-level courses, properly so-called. He thought that the College should seek special money specifically to fund these developmental courses in both English and mathematics.

Speaking of CNMI high school graduates who go to college in California or Oregon, he asked why the government scholarship funds should support them to go abroad just to take developmental subjects. Regent Taitano stated that the entire CNMI high school program is working on implementing higher graduation requirements in both areas. Regent Sablan proposed that a possible solution was to offer longer than the present 2-hour developmental classes. Mr. Holan said that longer 6-hour classes are offered during the summer session and have had good success, but it means the students cannot take any other courses.

**Science, Mathematics, Health and P.E.:** Mr. Sam Gugliotta introduced his presentation with mention of the vast amount of science and math information available on the Internet. He said that the University of Hawaii had already invested in a so-called “Computerized Adaptive Placement Assessment and Support System” (COMPASS) for placement tests and an “Academic Software Interactive Math” program for the courses themselves. Both of these are new technologies which would also be most appropriate for NMC students. Here 97% of new students test into developmental math. 65% of the entire department’s students are enrolled in math courses.

Regent Santos remarked that, as a community college, NMC has an obligation to serve the entire community, especially those with less than optimum high school achievement levels, to qualify for jobs in the private or public sector.

President McPhetres made special note of the fact that the Arts and Sciences program could not succeed without the support of the Learning Assistance Center program. She also said that NMC needs to offer higher mathematics, and can do so only if high school honors students come to NMC with a solid background in math.

**Social Sciences, Fine Arts and Humanities:** Ms. Vicki Uludong began her report by situating Social Sciences, Fine Arts, and Humanities in the total emotional development of the person. In response to a question of Regent Sablan regarding how successful NMC graduates were in upper division college work, President McPhetres reported that the College was presently doing a follow-up on NMC graduates transferring to other colleges off island. Her impression is that almost all do well and transfer right into
their junior collegiate year. Information for this kind of a survey, she said, was more ready to hand when NMC itself managed the entire CNMI College Scholarship program.

Regent Sablan declared that the aim of NMC should not be mediocrity, but excellence. Regent Santos shared his knowledge that some young people have trouble with academic pursuits because of problems with drugs and marijuana. Dean Moir reported on her experience that a Ph.D. degree was no assurance of excellence as a classroom instructor, and stated that the College should seek to hire the very best teachers with at least a master’s degree rather than individuals with Ph.D.s but without demonstrated teaching skills.

B. Trip Report (Tab 5)
President McPhetres made a trip report on her participation in a Honolulu conference on “Public-Private Partnerships,” December 8-12, 1997. She distributed to the members copies of her presentation, entitled “Privatization and Public-Private Partnerships.”

C. Typhoons Keith and Paka (Tab 6)
Mr. Al Johnson reported that the total losses due to Keith amounted to $52,000 on Saipan campus, $2,000 for Tinian and $4,000 on Rota. The College is still awaiting figures on losses due to Paka on Rota where older buildings may have been part of the problem. Regent Sablan asked if the College buildings were insurable, or at least the contents. President McPhetres responded that no company has been willing to make an insurance proposal to date. She also expressed the hope that the College and the High School on Rota would be able to share the library. She will make a few inquiries of the new Mayor and the Board of Education. Without a library, she said, there can be no program.

D. Multi-Purpose Gym (Tab 7)
Mr. Al Johnson reported that Public Works is presently redesigning the Architectural and Engineering (A&E) plans. The contractor cannot begin work until the A&E is completed.

E. Accreditation/PPEC Meeting (Tab 8)
President McPhetres asked the Board’s approval that she and the Board Chairperson travel and participate in a Honolulu meeting soon to update NMC’s accreditation and to attend a meeting which will give special attention to the problem of college funding.

ACTION # 4. It was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved that the President and the Chairperson of the Board of Regents attend the meetings in Kauai.

F. Student Profile (school year 96-97) (Tab 9)
(see attached)

G. Spring Schedule (Tab 10)
(see attached)
H. Monthly Reports (Tab 11)  
(see attached)

I. Travel Reports (October - December 1997) (Tab 12)
President McPhetres indicated that this material was presented mainly for reading. If any clarification or discussion is needed, the matter could be addressed at the next Board meeting.

V. Old Business
A. Relocation Allowance. President McPhetres indicated that this was now brought to the full Board for its action. She said, in the long run, the College will save money with the proposed policy. The President said that the associated Administrative Procedure would be presented to the Board at its subsequent meeting.

ACTION # 5. It was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved to accept the “Relocation Allowance” policy proposal for incorporation into the NMC Board Policy manual as an amendment to Board Policy, Human Resources, # 4142.

B. Class size for Rota/Tinian (referred by the Program Committee) (Tab 14). President McPhetres stated that to have ten (10) students in a class as a determining factor whether a class will be canceled or not, is common among institutions of higher education. NMC adopted such practice mainly for economic reason when dealing with part-time faculty. Having ten students as a minimum is a class will pay the fee of the part-time instructor. The College has, at times, approved a class to go below ten, if such class is being taught by a full time faculty or is needed for student(s) to graduate during the academic year. Such policy has been applied on all three islands. However, we did not take into consideration the overall population of the other two smaller islands. Students in Rota and Tinian are at a disadvantaged with this policy. President McPhetres stated that since there are more students on Rota and Tinian taking college credits at present, the Board should take into consideration the population factor.

ACTION # 6. It was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved that as a general rule, ten will be considered minimum class size for Saipan, six for the Islands of Rota and Tinian. The President may give exception, on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the needs of the population of the smaller islands and the student(s) needs for completing their graduation requirements.

C. Classification Plan (referred by the Finance Committee) (Tab 15). This matter was referred to the meeting of the Program-Finance Committee on December 23, 1997. The Committee presented to the Board that it is their feeling that such proposed classification should be adopted by the Board for 1998, and that further studies be made to improve the plan.

ACTION # 7. It was moved, seconded and unanimously approved to adopt the proposed Classification Plan for one year only, and that a Task Force will be appointed.
to do a more thorough study on cost-of-living allowance (COLA) and other benefits more suited for institution of higher education employees.

VI. New Business
A. Board Policies
1. Safety and Health (Tab 16):
Action was deferred for the Program Committee to review the proposed policy.

2. By-laws, Art. V. Sec. 1. (Tab 17)
ACTION # 8. It was moved, seconded and unanimously approved to make the following amendments to Board Policy manual, Board Operations 1000, Board By-laws, Article V, Section 1, Regular meetings: Delete “Wednesday of March, June, September and December,” and insert “Friday of each month.”

B. Schedule of Program Presentations for 1998 (Tab 18):
There was a brief discussion on the schedule of program presentation and since the Board feels that the next meeting will be in Rota, the Board made some changes to the proposed schedule.

ACTION # 9. It was moved, seconded and unanimously approved to accept the “Schedule of Department/Program Presentations for 1998” with the following amendments. January 1998 Rota Campus
May 1998 Nursing Program/Marine Technology
August 1998 Education / Teacher Training Lab
December 1998 Arts and Sciences Unit (English; Science, Math, Health & P.E.; Social Sciences, Fine Arts and Humanities)

Advocacy Survey (Tab 19). Chairman Manglona asked the Board members to respond to the Advocacy Survey now being conducted by the Association of Community College Trustees.

EXECUTIVE SESSION
(The Board and President went into executive session to discuss personnel matters.)

PUBLIC SESSION
C. Confirmation of Executive Appointments.
1. Provost School of Education. Action on this appointment was postponed until the January 30, 1998 Board of Regents meeting. Chair Manglona appointed Regent Sablan to serve as the Board representative on the Interviewing Committee for the Provost for the School of Education.

2. Vice President for Instruction. Regent Santos stated that he served as the Board member representative in the Interviewing Committee for the Vice President for Instruction, and heartily agree with the Committee’s recommendation.

Action # 10. By unanimous vote the Board of Regents confirmed the appointment of Dr. Barbara Moir as the Vice President for Instruction.
D. **Sabbatical Leave for Mr. Raymond D. Diaz** (Tab 21):

**Action # 11.** After discussion it was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved to grant Mr. Raymond D. Diaz sabbatical leave to pursue his BA degree.

E. **Election of Officers of Board of Regents**

**ACTION # 12.** By unanimous vote, Regent Vicente N. Santos was elected Chairman of the Board of Regents, and Regent Justin S. Manglona as Vice Chairman.

VII. **Miscellaneous**

A. **NMC Employees Administrative Leave - Dec. 31st**

**ACTION # 13.** By unanimous vote the Board of Regents granted NMC employees administrative leave from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. on December 31, 1997.

B. **Space Rental for Aerobics and Weight Lifting classes:** Recommendations on these matters were postponed till the January 30, 1998, Board meeting.

C. **Car Rental - Rota Campus:** Recommendation of this matter was postponed till the Board meeting on Rota, January 30, 1998.

Since there was no further public discussion of matters treated in today’s session the meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

**Adjournment:** 4:55 p.m.