Final Minutes
for
an Informal Meeting
of the
BOARD OF REGENTS
October 8, 1998

PUBLIC SESSION

People Present
Board Members
Chairman Manuel A. Sablan; Regent Justin S. Manglona; Regent Teresa I. Taitano,
Regent Justice Ramon G. Villagomez, Regent Abelia Cing Cabrera, and Regent
Helen H. Abayare.

College Staff and Faculty
President Agnes McPhetres; Legal Counsel Jesse C. Borja, Esq.; Vice President
Jack Sablan; Vice President Tee Abraham; Vice President Barbara Moir, Provost
Roy Fua; Comptroller Harris Lawrence; Julia Ulloa-Heath; Sarah Osborn; Jeanette
Villagomez; Janice Tenorio; Vince Merfalen; Ed Camacho; Ray Mafnas; Bob
Scruggs; Philip Swett. Allen Cameron was present as recorder.

I. Opening Procedures

A. Welcoming Remarks by Chair and Roll Call:

At 10:35 a.m. Chairman Sablan called the meeting to order in the Board of Regents
conference room, As Terlaje campus, Saipan, and asked the President to call the roll.
As all five members of the Board listed above answered “Present,” the President
announced that a quorum of 6 of 7 was present for the conduct of business.

B. Review/Approval of Agenda:
ACTION #: It was moved, seconded and unanimously approved to accept the
agenda as presented. The Agenda was as follows:

I. Opening Procedures
   A. Adoption of Agenda
II. Old Business
   A. Reorganization
   B. Budget Allocations
III. Executive Session

II. Old Business:
A. Reorganization: Chairman Sablan gave a brief introduction to the issue of
College Reorganization. He stated that the Board should look at the Mission of the
College an provided in the CNMI statutes, consider the tightening economic environment, and requested the President to collect ideas of from everyone from bottom to top. V.P. Moir stated that input had been sought from all through the Deans.

The President introduced Julie Ulloa-Heath, the Chair of the Task Force charged with considering various Reorganization plans. The task Force. She said, was composed of several graduates of the first San Diego State University Master’s degree program, faculty and department chairs. The goal was quality education that was both efficient and revenue generating. The three-page handwritten originals, listed on the “white board’ for all to review, are reproduced in the appendix to these minutes.

Chairman Sablan asked several questions: where would the Public Information Officer (PIO), Auxiliary Services, and Rota and Tinian extensions be located. Are any functions to be privatized, he asked. The answers were that the PIO would be in the President’s office. Auxiliary Services is distinct from the College. Rota and Tinian were located off to the side of the chart with future situation to be determined

Regent Villagomez asked if reorganization required for accreditation purposes. The President answered that the College is being offered a unique opportunity by the Western Association to conduct a pilot project of associating a single bachelor’s degree program of the School of Education with a community college. The SOE would receive support from support services.

Referring to the chart, the President said that the functions are all there, but are merged. This would result in a reduction of the number of department chairs. Chairman Sablan and Regent Cabrera expressed a desire to have the changes “priced out” so they could see clearly the savings generated. The President said that any future suggestions could be presented to the Task Force committee, which has been meeting daily from 10:30 to 12 noon.

Regent Villagomez proposed that if some positions are closed down, the people may well qualify as a instructors. Mr. Merfalen said that the committee has not yet considered the options as part of the scope of its work.

Chairman Sablan asked which should receive priority, academic programs or vocational education. The President indicated that vocational education, usually quite expensive could be offered through Continuing Education, and pay for itself. She said the College could provide basic vocational education, and students would move on to better financed institutions abroad. Mr. Camacho said that the trend at Guam Community College is to transfer all vocational education programs to the high schools. The President reminded the group that vocational education, besides the trades, also includes nursing, accounting, and teacher education. Terminology can be confusing, she said.
Regent Villagomez said that the CNMI still needed 200 nurses to provide health care. Ms. Ulloa Health recalled research done that local people would not accept the $3,00/hour wage scale. The President said to encourage recruiting she had worked to classify nurses at a higher rate encouraged them to take their R.N. exams. Regent Manglona stated that it will be 80 years before we can replace guest workers, unless we raise salaries and make the jobs attractive to local people.

V.P. Abraham stated that the College needs the assistance of the Board in setting its vision. What is the Board’s vision for NMC, she asked. Shall it be (1) transfer to other institutions, (2) occupational/vocational education; (3) remedial or developmental programs; or (4) community services, through providing a professional licensing board, e.g. for paramedical and nursing professions. She envisions remedial programs which could be offered 4-6 hours a day through Continuing Education, and which would be revenue generating. She asked what local industry was demanding, e.g. in the line of computer repair technologists. She added that the College's vision should include that of molding character.

Regent Cabrera stated she liked the two-track approach of NMC, namely both academic and vocational. She felt that members of the House Committee on Health, Education, and Welfare should be kept informed of the high quality of graduates we are producing. The President said that the College has done surveys among employers regarding their satisfaction with NMC graduates in the work force, and they have been encouraging. The Accreditation Commission requires what they call "outcomes."

Chairman Sablan noted that the College suffers from incorrect perceptions in the community. There are too much developmental courses which remedy previous educational deficiencies. He recommended employing the Federal JTPA concept of placing students in the private or public sector to learn what a job demands as an important part of education. The President stated that the law gives the College responsibility but insufficient material support. In Hawaii the JTPA program was given to the community colleges, and on Guam to Guam Community College. Not so in the CNMI.

Mr. Scruggs asked for the direction of the Board in the establishment of priorities. V.P. Moir urged that we establish 3 or 4 major priorities rather than 15, and do them well. She spoke of the fact that she has realized that NMC is more appreciated and esteems abroad than at home. We should do more to convince the community of our achievements.

Chairman Sablan expressed a question whether or not we are addressing the needs of the local job market. The President responded that the Continued Education (CE) program is intended for job training in the community, both long and short term. She said we are planning to expand C.E. and establish an Office for Development which would emphasize that the future and higher education go hand in hand. Education, she said, is more like banking for the future and construction work for the immediate
present. She pointed to the success of the Master’s program which was offered at the bargain of only $12,000 and not involving travel and living abroad for more than a year.

Ms. Janice Tenorio mentioned that the majority of our students are of the non-traditional type. Some come to us from the professions. They are not yet full-time accountants, and it takes a length time to graduate.

Chairman Sablan asked for some plan to deduce the number of guest workers. 90% of our students, he said, are working for an A.A. degree with the hope of transferring for further education. They are into accounting, not the carpentry and plumbing professions. The President said that the College has been successfully offering vocational education programs for years in nursing, teacher education, and accounting. Reports are submitted to government officials on a regular basis, but not to the same officials, because positions change over the years.

Chairman Sablan expressed the thought that we should share with the Public School System responsibilities for so-called remedial or developmental education, and that NMC should elevate apprenticeship to a higher level, and should link up with and work in conjunction with the business community. He added you cannot get a B.A. degree without a library which provides for scholarly research. He said this as true even with the “Internet.”

V.G. Villagomez said he was surprised to hear of searching for a vision at this stage in the College’s development. He said obviously the pressure was on the College to provide some visible products. For the next few months the Board will have to make some hard decisions, cut some programs.

Regent Manglona remarked that we do not have multiple education institutions at NMC. We should not try to do everything. Maybe some programs were added over the 17 years. We shall have to come to some decisions in the next 4-5 months.

Regent Abayare noted that the Board of Regents did not know there would be hard times ahead. If the vision of the College is not shared by the legislature, where personnel change every two years, then we have to ask PSS to go back to basics to reduce the number of college students in remedial and developmental courses, but neither NMC nor PSS can close our institutions off to the developmental area.

Regent Cabrera remarked that PSS and NMC should be working closely together to achieve their common goal. If the College is not understood, then we have to communicate constantly what NMC is actually doing. Is there some problem why NMC’s reports are not being understood.

Chairman Sablan stated that the reason why he involved himself in co-signing P.O.’s, etc. was to get a better feel for the work being done at the NMC. He added there are three with whom we have to meet frequently: (1) the Governor, (2) the Legislature,
and (3) the private sector. He said he views his role as not one making policy in a vacuum. He said that as a public institution we have to work with governmental bodies and officials. Hence he considered important the meeting this morning with the House Health, Education, and Welfare Committee. He said also that the President needs this reorganization and the efforts being made to make it efficient.

Regent Villagomez recalled a practice of the Federal Judiciary to bring to U.S. Courts newly appointed Judges so that they may learn how the courts function. Could we not do a similar thing, bring the legislators to the College periodically individually or in small groups. Other agencies are doing the same.

Chairman Sablan stated that he thought the Board of Regents should have its own budget, get out of Operations and emphasize policy-making. He suggested trying to meet evenings after working hours or on weekends in one of the classrooms here.

After a five-minute break, there ensued an executive meeting.

Next meeting: Wednesday, October 14, at 4:00 p.m.

Adjournment of Regular Meeting: 12:30 p.m.