APPROVED MINUTES
for
the Special Meeting
of the
BOARD OF REGENTS
on
DECEMBER 4, 1998

PEOPLE PRESENT:

Board Members:

Manuel A. Sablan (Chairman), Teresa 1. Taitano, Abelina Cing Cabrera, and Justice Ramon G. Villagomez were present. Regent Helen Abayare phoned that she would be late to today’s meeting. Regent Justin S. Manglona’s term of office expired Nov. 17, 1998.

NMC Faculty and Staff:

Vice President Jack Sablan, Vice President Barbara Moir, Provost Roy Fua; Tinian Administrator Herman Sablan; Legal Counsel Jesse Borja, Esq.; Faculty Senate President Rik Villegas; Ray Mafnas; Ed Camacho; Cyndy Tice; Ray Basa; and Melody Actouka. Allen Cameron was present as recorder.

Others:

Sheila Amor, reporter from the Saipan Tribune; Hila\ria Santos, Director of CNMI Financial Aid Office; Dan Nielsen, Special Advisor for Education Affairs; Gabe K. Asper, student; Justin S. Manglona

Agenda
I. Opening Procedures and Welcoming Remarks by Chair
   A. Review/Approval of Agenda
II. Business:
   A. Financial Aid
III. Executive Session
IV. Miscellaneous
V. Adjournment

OPENING PROCEDURES

Chairman Manuel Sablan called the meeting to order in the Board of Regents conference room at 3:30 p.m. on the As Terlaje campus of the College. He asked the President to call the roll. The President announced that a quorum of four out of seven were present and constituted a quorum for the conduct of business. She said that Regent Abayare had informed her that she would be delayed by the flight from Tinian.
**Business: A. Financial Aid:** Regent Justice Villagomez introduced to session saying that he had asked for this Special Meeting. He had in a previous Board meeting suggested that students who qualify for financial aid go to the Financial Aid Office to receive their grant money and then come to the College to make their deposit at registration time. He said that after a meeting with Mr. Nielsen, Ms. Santos, and Mr. Harris he realized that there were problems with this arrangement.

Ms. Santos further explained problems that had arisen with the fall semester Financial Aid awards, which delayed the process. She reported that she had been informed of a decision by the Secretary of Finance that Northern Marianas Academy (NMA) and Marianas High School (MHS) were not eligible for financial aid, on the grounds that they were secondary and not postsecondary students. Their names had to be removed from the list of grantees, causing a delay. Ms. Santos reported that the total grant to NMC students amounted to $127,000 for the fall semester.

President McPhetres explained that NMA and MHS students are all in early placement taking postsecondary courses at NMC, a postsecondary institution. Regent Villagomez proposed that the Board turn the question over to our NMC Legal Counsel and the attorneys for the Secretary of Finance. Mr. Nielsen noted that the Secretary of Finance has considered the "intent of the law," and the question of is matriculation," namely that NMA and MHS students were no yet "matriculating" at NMC.

Mr. Nielsen suggested that all the parties involved in financial aid questions meet the week of December 15, at which each would explain their views, and the process and time line of financial aid would be outlined and agreed upon to the satisfaction of the College, the Financial Aid Office, and the Secretary of Finance. He added that once the mechanisms are agreed upon, he would follow up by monitoring implementation.

Chairman Sablan indicated that besides the issues of the NMA and MHS students, there are two other questions that need to be addressed: (1) the situation of Rota and Tinian Students, coming to Saipan, as college students, and being treated as though there were on-island residents, and (2) avoiding all the problems associated with "reimbursement."

Mr. Nielsen suggested that a temporary arrangement be made for the spring semester. Regent Villagomez assumed that then in the fall '99 students would apply directly to the Financial Aid Office.

Regent Villagomez made note of the fact that the Bookstore has had refunds to students delayed, perhaps over a definition of what constitutes a "book." Mr. Nielsen reported the government's policies on financial aid need to be revisited, adding that the Secretary of Finance and the Director of Budget and Finance have been taking a closer look that the documentation of purchases of books, and whether or not a particular book is required for the course.

President McPhetres observed that "all others" funds have never been received by NMC from the government. She said that a simpler solution would be to fund "NMC
operations," so that the College would no longer be dependent on tuition to operate the institution. This would result in much lower tuition costs to the students, as is the case in other community colleges.

Chairman Sablan questioned the fact that each qualified college student going out of the CNMI off island receives $2,500 in financial aid, but not students remaining on island. He proposed a loan program as an equitable arrangement, saying that certain financial institutions would agree to buy all the student loans, something analogous to how Northern Marinas Housing Corporation sells its housing loans to banks.

Regent Villagomez expressed the hopes of phasing out all remedial programs at NMC, and insisting that PSS do its job of assisting toward the realization of this goal. Chairman Sablan suggested having an academy like NMA for economically disadvantaged students on island.

Ms Santos expressed her satisfaction with the fact that there has been a meeting every Friday on the questions raised by NMC.

Mr. Nielsen stated his agreement with Mr. Sablan's stand. He added that by our generous CNMI financial aid program we are in effect subsidizing the Federal Government, since when students apply for a Pell Grant, they must list the CNMI financial aid as received, and thereby reduce the amount of their federal Pell Grant. He indicated this is another reason why he would favor a loan program rather than outright grants. Student loans, since they are not considered "income," do not have to be listed on the Pell Grant application.

President McPhetres expressed her agreement with the idea of loans. She added that the word "Scholarship" should be restricted to "scholars," that is, those earning a GPA of 3.5 and above. Mr. Ray Mafnas also expressed approval of the loan concept. Chairman Sablan proposed that the ideas expressed at this meeting be shared by the President at the next meeting with the Commissioner of Education, Dr. Rita Inos.

Mr. Ray Basa, NIMC Director of Financial Aid, asked if there was not something that could be done for the Students from the FSM. He reported that Guam has been receiving $500,000 for assisting FSM people, and now that the CNMI is also involved in providing assistance, it should share in that "cost recovery" program. He added that the enrollment of FSM students at NMC is increasing.

Chairman Sablan proposed that students for the B.A. in Education at the NMC School of Education should not be treated on a par with the community college A.A. and A.S. candidates, but on a par with those students attending college off-island. He added that 7 out of every 10 students receiving financial aid is at NIVIC.

President McPhetres reminded the Board that by the year 2000 the College will have to begin preparation for its application for accreditation reaffirmation.

As a final note, Regent Villagomez reported that the CNMI House Of Representatives had last week passed the bill allowing the College Foundation to seek more lucrative investments, but the bill has yet to go before the Senate.
**Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the Board, which would be its regular meeting, will occur on Thursday, December 10, at 10:00 a.m.

**Adjournment:** 4:10 p.m.