RECOMMENDATION #4: INTEGRATE PLANNING

The college must develop and implement college-wide planning that
- *Includes all six sites (Standard IB),*
- *Integrates all aspects of planning, evaluation, and resource allocation (Standards IB.3, IB.4, IIA.1, IIA.2, IIB.4, IIC.2, IIIA.6, IIIB.2b, IIIC.2, IIID.1a, IIID.2g, IIID.3, IVA.5, and IVB.2b),*
- *Includes a technology plan that evaluates, supports, and plans for the future of instructional, student services, and administrative functions across the college's sites (Standards IIIC.1c and IIIC.2),*
- *Is driven by the college mission and goals (Standard 1A.4),*
- *Relies on involvement of faculty and staff across the college's sites (Standards 1B.4, IVA.1, IVA.2, and IVA.3),*
- *Incorporates research and data in a strategic plan that contains measurable outcomes (Standard 1B.3, IIA.2f, and IIC.2),*
- *Guides decision-making for both short-term and long-term planning (Standards IA.4, 1B.3, and IIID.1c),*
- *Is well-documented and widely disseminated (Standards IB.4 and IB.5), and*
- *Is periodically reviewed to assess the validity of the process (Standards 1B.6 and IB.7).*

Resolution

After the college initially received this recommendation in 2004, the first response was the reactivation of the planning council in March 2004. In July 2005, the president and planning council called together over 40 college community members representing all campuses and external stakeholder representatives. At this retreat with the help of a facilitator from the University of Hawaii, the college developed a new strategic plan to include a new vision, values statements, an updated mission, and a set of strategic goals. In September 2005, the board of regents approved the college Strategic Plan 2006-2011. Since then, the strategic plan is the guiding principle of the college for strategic planning, assessment, resource allocation and reporting of institutional effectiveness. (Standard 1A.4, IB)

The Strategic Plan 2006-2011 that lays out the college's mission and goals is widely published. A majority of the official college documents contain the mission statement and strategic goals along with the related objectives. The mission and goals are also published on the college website. Members of the board of regents read the mission statement at the beginning of every board meeting and written copy of the current goals and yearly objectives are included in all board meeting information binders. At each presidential retreat, the mission and goals are reviewed. All departments and divisions prepare quarterly performance reports based on the college goals and use a template that is a matrix of the college's strategic goals and objectives. All units report their accomplishments and outputs against the goals and objectives. (Standards IB.4 and IB.5)

A presidential retreat held annually continues to bring together representatives of the various internal stakeholders representative of all sectors of the college including students and external stakeholders. During the annual retreat, the college reviews quantitative data and qualitative data from survey reports as measures of institutional effectiveness. Retreat members review the mission and goals to ensure that they reflect the need of the stakeholders, make recommendations for improvement and set upcoming institutional priorities and plans. An extensive review of the college's mission and strategic plan goals was conducted at the 2007, 2008, and 2009 retreats. These retreats will continue annually. (Standards 1B.4, IVA.1, IVA.2, and IVA.3)

The college has developed year strategic plans in several areas such as the enrollment management plan, the facilities master plan, and technology plan. These plans are developed to link to the mission and goals and support the college's short and long term plans.   The college's technology plan was developed in 2005 by an ad-hoc committee that included the director of research and planning and director of information technology. The current plan was approved by the COM-FSM Board of Regents during their May 2005 meeting. The plan ensures that technology is fully integrated with overall institutional planning. The plan continues to be monitored by the information, communication, and technology committee. This committee is comprised of representatives from all areas of the college community including state campuses representatives. (Standards IIIC.1c and IIIC.2)

To provide for increased communication and participatory decision making, the college refined its institutional governance policy. This included realigning standing committees and updating all committee terms of references to clarify the shared governance roles and responsibilities across the various sectors of the college. Committee memberships provide for broad participation of the various constituency groups within the college including students. All campuses are involved in the institutional planning and assessment process and are represented on standing committees, represented at college wide retreats, and participate in budget development and resource allocation discussions. According to the committee terms of reference, each of standing committees serves to identify areas for improvement and to provide recommendations to the cabinet and president for participatory planning and decision making. (Standards 1B.4, IVA.1, IVA.2, and IVA.3)

At its March 2009 meeting, the Board of Regents adopted a continuous improvement cycle policy that expresses the college's commitment to persistently improving its programs and services. Accordingly, the planning, evaluation, feedback, and resource allocation system needs to be continuously reviewed and improved. This public commitment pledges the college to meet more effectively its mission by establishing clearly written processes and procedures that ensure understanding of the framework in which the continuous improvement cycle occurs. The planning processes of the college will be evaluated and revised as part of the institutional improvement cycle. (Standards 1B.6 and IB.7)

Since the recommendation addressed here was first presented, the gathering, reporting, sharing and use of qualitative and quantitative data for planning and decisions making has increased dramatically at the college. A student information system (SIS) was developed and implemented. The student information system (SIS) is a web-based tool designed to provide accurate and timely information on student enrollment, courses, grades, progression, persistence, retention, and graduation to provide a foundation for evidence-based decision making at the college. The SIS is accessible from all campuses. Currently, the SIS is utilized for a variety of planning and reporting activities. With the SIS in place, access to data for institutional planning, assessment activities, and evidence-based decision making is greatly enhanced. (Standard 1B.3, IIA.2f, and IIC.2)

To reduce the problem of conflicting data being disseminated by different offices to the college community and the public, the IRPO was designated on October 2005 by the college president as the only authorized office to disseminate data to the college community and the public. Since

2005, requests for data are presented directly to the IRPO office. A data technician was hired to assist the director to provide the available data from the SIS or to assist in locating required information in collaboration with appropriate offices. The IPRO also assists instructional divisions, offices and departments to design appropriate surveys or research activities to garner the data required for assessment, planning and decision making. IRPO currently administers a variety of surveys administered across the college annually such as student satisfaction, employer satisfaction, and a communication survey. The office annually updates the enrollment management indicators, compiles and submits IPED's data, and contributes data to the Consortium for Student Retention and Data Exchange annual survey.

Beginning with 2008, the college prepared an annual fact book along with other Pacific Post Secondary Education Council (PPEC) colleges in the region on key indicators that also allows for points of comparison. Also through the PPEC, data on transfer students between institutions is being compiled and made available for informing institutional effectiveness and planning. (Standard 1B.3, IIA.2f, and IIC.2)

The reactivation of the Planning Council in 2005 was accompanied by a similar action in re-activating the assessment working group in preparation for becoming a full committee of the college. During the 2005-2007 period, instructional divisions developed student learning outcomes for all course and programs. Student and administrative services similarly developed mission and outcomes. All groups initiated assessment activities and began compiling assessment data and reports. However, the mechanisms for reporting the assessment findings and program reviews to appropriate committees and offices and to loop into planning and resource allocation were not clear. To address this, the assessment working group moved to full committee status with membership representing all sectors and campuses across the college. Through 2007 and 2008, the assessment committee along with the office of institutional research and planning moved forward to become the focal point for the development of an integrated and comprehensive institutional assessment plan. (Standard 1B.3, IIA.2f, and IIC.2)

The assessment committee developed the framework for college wide planning and assessment with the college's "Integrated Planning, Evaluation, and Resource Allocation System" This five step cycle system is described in chart form on page 44 of the Institutional Assessment Plan (IAP) Handbook. The handbook provides details of the continuous process on program assessment and program review. The college's integrated; continuous improvement process has been developed based on best practices in higher education and includes the following steps:

> 1) Development of long range plans: Set purpose, vision and mission, of long term goals and objectives, and set multi-year financial plans based on assessment and review for all programs, offices and divisions of the college. Develop 3-5 year strategic and technical plans which include technology plan, facilities plan, and communication plan.

> 2) Development of annual improvement plan: Include annual performance budget and performance plan with annual campus, division, program, and project improvement plans. In these plans SMART objectives with timelines, needed resources, obstacles or issues are considered. (Worksheets #1, 2, 3 in IAP Handbook)

3) Implementation of plan with action steps: This step is quarterly work plans, implementation of activities, and real time compiling of evidence.

4) Evaluation and Reporting stage: Quarterly performances are reported to the Board of Regents, FSM government offices and the Joint Economic Management and Compact Office (JEMCO). In this stage, program evaluation, evaluation of annual improvement plans impact and results are reported. This stage includes community stakeholder involvement.

5) Adjust/Develop Annual Improvement Plan: Institutional priorities are adjusted based on resource allocation, establishment and adjustment of annual college performance based budget, evaluation, and adjustment of campus, program, division and project annual improvement plans, and update of strategic plans.

The IAP Handbook was prepared to provide the details of the assessment plan and includes worksheets to guide divisions and departments in the preparation of annual assessment plans with specific and measurable objectives linked to the college's strategic goals and annual objectives. Three worksheet templates commonly referred to as Worksheets 1, 2, and 3 guide departments, divisions and offices across campuses to plan, conduct, and use assessment to close the loop in a continuous cycle of improvement of student learning outcomes and institutional effectiveness. (Standards IB.4 and IB.5)

The system is centered on the development of annual plans for all programs, offices and services that are based on program assessment and evaluation. Other considerations for planning included institutional effectiveness indicators, enrollment management and equity indicators, institutional and program/office surveys and input from stakeholders. The annual improvement plans are expanded through development of assessment plans using Worksheet 1. Using Worksheet 2 the plan sets forth evaluation questions; identify data and evidence to be collected and the analysis to be conducted with timelines and persons responsible. The assessment report, using Worksheet 3 directly addresses each evaluation question from Worksheet 2 is based on the major data/evidence collected and identifies use of results for improvement.

The assessment plans, results, and recommendations are then used in the development of the college budget.   Budgeting at the college has shifted from line item format to a performance based budget model. The fy 2011 budget preparation for the college was the first formal cycle of the Integrated Planning, Assessment and Resource Allocation system. To "close the loop" in the continuous improvement cycle, units used data and assessment results along with the respective assessment worksheets to develop plans for fy 2011 with activities and measurable outcomes. The next step was to assign necessary human and fiscal resources as required. Proposed assessment plans with performance based budgets were submitted to the Planning and Resources Committee for recommendation and approval. The Finance Committee and Planning and Resources committee collaborated to balance the fy 2011 proposed budget based on institutional plans and priorities and the performance based budget needs of separate departments, divisions and units across the college. The assessment plans and corresponding performance based budgets were reviewed and approved by the Planning and Resource committee and then transferred to the president's cabinet who then recommended the fy 2011

budget be transmitted to the board of directors at the December 2009 for approval and endorsement. At the board meeting, the director of research and planning presented the new budget formation process and approved budgets to board members prior to their taking action on the recommendations. (Standards IB.3, IB.4, IIA.1, IIA.2, IIB.4, IIC.2, IIIA.6, IIIB.2b, IIIC.2, IIID.1a, IIID.2g, IIID.3, IVA.5, and IVB.2b)

With the coordination provided by the director of research and planning, all quarterly reports are compiled using a matrix which includes the college strategic goals along with the measurable objectives and priorities for the current year. Progress is reported with information, data, highlights and accomplishments reported in the matrix to demonstrate how the college activities link and support the accomplishment of the college mission, goals, annual objectives and priorities. These department and division reports are then compiled by IRPO into college wide reports for dissemination and publication. The college publishes and shares data through the quarterly reports to the board of regents and FSM government offices, annual reports to the FSM president's office, US Department of Education IPED's. These reports are published in hard copy and placed on the college website under the vice president of administration and IRPO http://www.comfsm.fm/national/administration/VPA/researchdocs/irpo.html (Standard 1B.3, IIA.2f, and IIC.2)

The institutional framework to support program assessment and program review includes assessment working groups at each college campus, a college wide assessment committee and the planning and resources committee. The assessment committee is responsible for reviewing and approving improvement and assessment plans and reports. Of major concern is to ensure quality of plans and reports across different programs and campuses. The assessment committee is in the process of adopting program review checklists to assist with ensuring quality of plans and reports. Recognition is given to different approaches to improvement and assessment, but ensuring that quality standards are met. The assessment committee reports all results to appropriate committees and to the planning and resources committee for use in setting priorities and determining resource allocation. Results of the assessment committee and the planning and resources committee are currently maintained on the college's IRPO web site. (Standards IB.4 and IB.5)

Analysis

With the development of the 2006-2011 Strategic Plan, the college used an inclusive campus wide process to create a vision, mission, values statements and goals that have guided the college's long and short term planning. With the yearly presidential retreats, the college continues to review the mission and strategic goals and set yearly planning priorities.
The college reestablished the planning council and reformed it to become the planning and resources committee with representation from all standing committees of the college and each campus. Along with this committee, the assessment working group evolved into a full standing committee. Through the collaborative efforts of the office of research and planning, the assessment committee and the planning and resources committee, the college has put in place a system for integrated planning process that is inclusive of all campuses and groups in the planning and evaluation process. This system is described in detailed in the Institutional Assessment IAP) Handbook.

For the fy 2010 budget preparation, the college used assessment information and institutional effectiveness data to in form planning priorities and objectives and link this to performance budgeting. Not all sectors of the college were well versed in the processes and how resources are allocated to foster continuous improvement. For the fy 2011 budget cycle, the college moved to a performance based budget model and used the assessment planning information to develop budgets based on improvement plans with measurable outcomes. This process while new to many at the college, provided the opportunity for campus wide dialog on integrated planning processes , assessment and resource allocation and hands experience in "closing the loop" with the fy 2011 budget development. The college now has in place a model and is using it for integration of planning, evaluation, and resource allocation.

Work on integrated planning, evaluation, and resource allocation is being conducted through the committee structure, through the assessment committee, and the planning and resources committee. Membership on these committees represents various sectors of the college and campuses to ensure the broad involvement of the college community in planning. The IAP handbook   provides detailed information to assist the college community to understand and use assessment and planning for continuous improvement of student learning outcomes and as a student centered institution. The handbook provides worksheet for planning and reporting of assessment activities link planning to mission and goals and link resource allocations.   To its credit, the college was recently approached by the University of Guam with a request to share our handbook and templates as they develop a similar tool.

The IAP Handbook has been distributed across campuses and offices and is posted on the college website. Training was conducted by the director of institutional research and planning, the director of academic affairs, and vice presidents during from fall 2008 to summer 2009 across all campuses. At the end of October 2009, a campus wide workshop was held to kick off the preparation of the fy 2011 performance based budget. This workshop held on Pohnpei with representatives from all sites provided a foundation in performance based budgeting and an opportunity to increase campus wide understanding of the links between planning, assessment and resource allocation. Following the workshop, all sectors of the college community were tasked to use college wide planning priorities, program and institutional assessment findings to develop their program planning goals and objectives and a performance based budget for their respective units.

While training has been conducted across all campuses at this time the level of understanding across campuses may not be consistent.   More exposure, additional training, direct involvement and experience in the processes will help to increase both understanding of the process and the value of the integrated planning, assessment and resource allocation system across all campuses and units. The timeline for assessment report preparation, approval by the assessment committee and sharing across sectors needs to be examined. Additionally, from feedback from last fiscal year budget preparation, campuses and units requested for timely reporting of changes to budget allocations requests. This is to allow adequate lead time to adjust plans and performance indicators to reflect adjusted budget allocations.

In 2005, the college adopted and began implementation of an integrated technology plan. The plan was the product of collaborative work of an ad hoc committee with representation from various areas of the college. The plan is being monitored as changes in the global and local information technology infrastructure present new challenges and opportunities for the college to consider in both short and long term planning. Recently, an undersea fiber optic cable that will link Pohnpei with Guam reached the island. The cable will provide potential for greatly increased bandwidth access for Pohnpei to Guam and the internet beyond. However, it more than likely will do little to improve the current inter island communications with Kosrae, Chuuk and Yap. Increased bandwidth may come with additional fees and increased rates and a need to update the college IT infrastructure. The implications for the college and the technology plan will need to be carefully reviewed and adjusted. The information technology department, information technology and communication committee, and the cabinet are currently working to determine next steps as the local telecommunication infrastructure changes go operational. Inclusive participation in committee meetings with representatives from other islands through internet based conferencing calls continues to be a challenge. This has been reported in the communications survey and evidenced from the attendance patterns of off island participants in conference call meetings. First, the time differences across campuses is a minor challenge with Chuuk and Yap campus starting the day an hour later than Pohnpei and Kosrae. The more significant challenge however is the unpredictable heavy demand on the limited bandwidth the college can utilize to run the VOIP phones for conference call and real time interactive communications. Sometimes communication in clear without delays or breaks; other days it becomes garbled and intermittent. The web based Elluminate program designed for low bandwidth environments is user friendly and appreciated by the college community. However, to date it is under utilized due to bandwidth constraints to run the program with all features on the college's current wide area network and internet access configurations.   For critical planning agenda items and decisions, if face to face meetings are not possible, a conference call through the local telephone provider is used but at great expense.

With the recent announcement of the fiber optic cable running from Guam to Pohnpei, it hoped that this development will offer some improvement in bandwidth and latency time for Internet traffic. Nonetheless, the college will be challenged to afford increased bandwidth to support communications to the other three islands where the cable is not being landed. At the recent December 2009 board of regents meeting, a technology fee increase was approved. The increase in the technology fee will in part provide funding for increased bandwidth. Along with the fee increase, the college committed additional funds in the fy 2011 budget for increased bandwidth. The information technology department along with the information, communication, and technology committee is further exploring alternative options for intra campus connectivity using small satellite dishes and alternative internet service options to improve communication in real time across all campuses for the real time inclusive participation of the highest quality possible through interactive telecommunication.

Beginning in 2008, the college moved out of a developmental stage into using the integrated planning, assessment and resource allocations system.   More recently with the preparation of the fy 2011 budget, the college completed its first formal cycle using the integrated system. The college wide meeting in late October 2009 required the college community to use institutional data and program assessment findings to measure progress in meeting the college mission and

established goals.   Yearly assessment results for programs conducted by departments, divisions and units were used in developing developed fy 2011 budgets. These new budgets are based on program assessment and improvement plans with specific and measurable objectives. Resource allocations to support the improvement activities formed the performance based budgets and thereby completed the "closing the loop" step of the integrated system. The fy 2011 budget preparation moved the college to complete its first full formal cycle using the integrate system. The college has firmly moved out of a developmental stage for institutional planning and is now on the path to refining the college's system and processes to become proficient in integrating planning assessment and resource allocation in a continuous and sustainable effort that promotes improvement.

The college's continuous improvement policy requires the review of the strategic planning and assessment system and processes. Formative and summative assessment of the processes and system as a whole will begin with the closing of the fy 2011 performance based budget preparation and with feeding into the preparation of the next strategic plan.

Additional Plans
- Continue to institutionalize the use of data and information dissemination for planning and decision making.
- Continue training and seek buy in across all campuses for the integration of all aspects of institutional planning evaluation and resource allocation system
- Monitor communication for inclusive participation from all campuses and external stakeholders groups.
- Monitor information technology and telecommunication infrastructure developments and revise the technology plan as appropriate.
- Development of the new strategic plan for 2012-2018

Evidence
- 2006-2011 Strategic Plan
- Institutional Assessment Plan Handbook
- Governance Policy
- Terms of Reference for Standing Committees
- Continuous Improvement Policy
- Technology Plan
- FY 2011 Performance Based Budget
- Minutes of Assessment Working Group