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**POLITICAL LEADERSHIP PERCEPTIONS
ON THE COLLEGE OF MICRONESIA SYSTEM
IN THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA**

by

Elizabeth Diaz Rechebei

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education**

University of San Diego

March 2003

Dissertation Committee

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ABSTRACT

Political Leadership Perceptions on the College of Micronesia System in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)

Political leaders who establish policies and priorities for the nation have influence on how the FSM's sole postsecondary education institution, the College of Micronesia, Federated States of Micronesia (COM-FSM) sets its goals and priorities. During this critical juncture of the FSM nation's growth and its effort to be self-reliant, COM-FSM's purposes and priorities are intricately related to the ongoing processes toward self-reliance.

Using a case study methodology, this study examined the perceptions of political leaders in the Federated States of Micronesia relating to the purposes and priorities of the College of Micronesia-Federated States of Micronesia (COM-FSM), and the four campuses in Chuuk, Kosrae, Yap and Pohnpei. Open-ended interviews, review of documents and observations provided the data for the study.

The findings suggest that national and state level perceptions are aligned with the stated purposes and priorities of the college. Teacher training and vocational education are perceived as major roles for the college while issues related to the college's role with respect to culture and language remain ambiguous. The study also noted that managing a multi-campus system in Micronesia has its advantages and disadvantages in terms of logistics, cultural and linguistic diversities, and unstable funding. Implications, recommendations and limitations of the study are noted.

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My Dissertation Committee

Johanna Hunsaker, Ph. D.
Robert Donmoyer, Ph. D.
Cheryl Getz, Ed. D

Individuals, Organizations, Agencies

The respondents
College of Micronesia
Micronesian Seminar
FSM state and national governments
Friends and colleagues in the region
Several students in the doctoral cohort
My family
University of San Diego & San Diego State University

As in most accomplishments, if I may call this study that, the nature of those accomplishments is the result of so many players, spectators, and supporters. There are also those who inspire and question what you are doing while others simply wonder why you are doing what you are doing. I have accepted these gifts with an open mind and I have gained much in doing so.

The beginning of this study goes back farther than the day when I decided to take courses for want of something stimulating. It began when I worked in the former Trust Territory government as a summer student just starting high school. I did not realize it then but I was perusing names that would later attach themselves to leaders in the region who guided their islands toward independence and a future of their own making. Much later, I again worked as a summer employee at the then Congress of Micronesia and the names that I read years ago attached themselves to faces. There were great leaders then who helped shaped my future as well as my appreciation of the people in the region.

Some of these leaders are now shaping the future of the Federated States of Micronesia as well as the other island nations that have since gained political independence. Sadly, several have also passed away; many left important legacies for FSM's future generation.

My appreciation goes to the educators at San Diego State University and University of San Diego for their leadership in establishing an innovative doctoral program to serve non-traditional students like myself. I thank Dr. Janet Littrell, Dr. Fred MacFarlane, and the two institutions for their vision.

Without the cooperation and support from the College of Micronesia, I would not have had the opportunity to undertake a study that is connected to my deep interest in the region. Mrs. Susan Moses, President of COM-FSM at the time, helped facilitate approval of my proposed study with the Board of Regents; Spensin James, Vice-President for Instruction, patiently provided me with sources of information; and Norma Edwin, a person whose institutional knowledge about the COM-FSM is almost unmatched, responded to all my requests with professionalism and courtesy. Many other personnel at the College national and state campuses kindly assisted me throughout my research work.

Leaders who agreed to the interviews were especially supportive not only during the interview sessions but also with the study itself. At a critical juncture of the FSM's development politically as well as socially, these individuals never failed to address the bigger picture affecting the nation as well as their respective states. It is no easy task indeed.

I am grateful to many individuals including Fr. Francis X. Hezel of Micronesian Seminar who opened his facility especially the marvelous library, and went out of his way to assist me in many other ways. There is also the Sasakawa Peace Foundation that

indirectly supported part of my work through an online distance education project they funded for Micronesian Seminar. I also want to thank the many people in Micronesia who encouraged me, offered advice, and followed my progress from the very beginning. Finally, I am indebted to my parents, Francisco Diaz Diaz and Maria Reiko Tanaka Diaz for their encouragement; my husband, Ramon, my son, Roy, and my daughter, Rowena, for their understanding and support; to friends who went out of their way to find materials and information for the study; and to all who are not specifically mentioned but graciously took the time and trouble to help me. As a social protocol in Micronesia, a bond is established once a certain level of interaction takes place. I am indebted to so many and I view my place in the chain of obligations and sense of belonging as a gift and a blessing.

I am solely responsible should problems emerge from this study.

Elizabeth Diaz Rechebei

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CHAPTER ONE

STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

Colleges and universities have always been viewed as one of the keys to creating and maintaining a successful nation. In Micronesia, they are regarded as “symbols of the national identity and pride” (F.X. Hezel, personal communication, May 15, 2000).

Colleges in Micronesia that offer two-year programs similar to community colleges in the United States, are expected to respond to multiple needs and crises ranging from workforce development, preservation of cultures and traditions, and the preparation of students to attend four-year colleges and universities in the United States and other foreign countries.

For the sole college system in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), responding to the needs of a new nation can be quite challenging and problematic. Father Francis X. Hezel, a noted social historian in Micronesia and Director of the Jesuit Institution, Micronesian Seminar, for more than twenty years, summed up the predicament of the colleges by noting that colleges find themselves “pulled in many different directions, often unable to respond to all the demands that are made of them.” He further argued that “a strong sense of finitude of the community colleges” is needed since the colleges can only do so much. He emphasized that the determination of the community colleges to meet the needs of the young people today is crucial and that much

depends on the readiness of political leaders to “leave hands off” the community colleges (F.X. Hezel, personal communication, May 15, 2000).

Background of the Problem

As one of the youngest nations to achieve its independence in Micronesia in 1986, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), along with the other three new political groups—the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, inherited a piece of a former regional community college institution from the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI). In 1991, an agreement restructuring the College of Micronesia to allow for more local autonomy was signed by the governments of the FSM, Republic of Palau and Republic of the Marshall Islands. In 1992, the FSM Government established the College of Micronesia-Federated States of Micronesia (COM-FSM) as a public corporation. In 1993, the College became a separate institution independent from the three-country College of Micronesia System (COM-FSM Catalog, 1999-2000). COM-FSM is now the national higher educational institution with its own representative governing board of regents. COM-FSM System consists of the national campus and the four state campuses. The national campus and the Pohnpei State campus are in Pohnpei State.

COM-FSM is in the process of solidifying its identity as a national institution of higher learning while attempting to respond to the needs of a developing nation. How COM-FSM navigates through the uncertain political, social and economic waters will be significant in its development as a solid institution of learning in the years to come.

An important issue, the roles of the campuses at the national and the states, emerged as the COM-FSM attempted to respond to the needs of the nation and the

individual states. The growing pains of the College may be a reflection of the growing pains of the nation itself in its continuing attempt to solidify the unity of the federation consisting of four distinct states. The states, historically, were independent, with their own distinct cultures and languages.

Different priorities, availability of resources, levels of economic development, as well as the significant autonomy of the four states may have some implications for how the COM-FSM and the four state campuses function and are perceived. How stakeholders and key decision-makers perceive the campuses, and the agreement or lack of agreement among policy makers about the mission and priorities of COM-FSM and its various components may have implications for COM-FSM's effectiveness. The degree of congruence or disparity that may exist in the perceptions among key decision-makers at both levels regarding the purposes and priorities of the COM-FSM may offer useful information for policy makers and planning purposes.

Purpose of the Study

This study attempted to determine the perceptions of political leaders in the FSM relating to the purposes and priorities of the COM-FSM National Campus and the State Campuses, and whether there are similarities or dissimilarities between the perceptions of the two levels of government, national and state. In addition, the study examined the extent of alignment between these perceptions with the officially stated purposes and priorities of the COM-FSM National and State Campuses as articulated in its College catalog for 2001-2003 academic year.

Research Questions

The research questions for the study are:

1. What are the officially stated purposes and priorities of the COM-FSM National Campus and the respective State Campuses?
2. How do national and state leaders perceive the purposes and priorities of:
(a) COM-FSM national campus, and (b) the respective state campuses?
3. In what way, if any, are these perceptions similar and dissimilar at the national and state levels; which perceptions are consistent/inconsistent with the officially stated purposes and priorities?

Methods

A qualitative research method using an embedded case study approach was employed in this study. Qualitative research takes place in a natural setting using a variety of approaches and is emergent and interpretive (Rossman and Rallis, 1998, in Marshall and Rossman, 1999). The study attempts to elicit perceptions and interpret them within the social context of the participants and without any prior standard or criteria of interpretation. The case is the College of Micronesia-Federated States of Micronesia (COM-FSM) as an organization. The embedded units of analysis of the study are the political leaders' perceptions of this organization and its various components. A semi-structured, open-ended interview instrument was developed and used to obtain and report the perceptions of political leaders.

Marshall and Rossman (1999) described case study as relying on document analysis and observation, as well as interviewing. In this study, observations and document reviews were used to supplement interview notes, especially for triangulation purpose. Yin (1984) described triangulation as a process of converging lines of inquiry that addresses construct validity and provides a broader range of information. In this

study, triangulation was used to establish plausible explanations as well as to portray a more comprehensive understanding of the case that may not be possible if only one method is used.

Sites and Respondents

The venues for the interview were at the national and state levels. Interviews, document reviews and observations were conducted at each of the four sites. The researcher has worked in the region for more than twenty years. Preliminary research consisting of informal discussions and collection or notation of information about COM-FSM began in 2000. In depth document reviews and actual interviews were conducted the following year while additional research continued until 2002. Certain data from various states were also acquired using telephone, fax, email and the Internet.

Respondents, as listed on Appendix A, consist of:

1. National Level: high level officials in the executive branch including the President of the nation, education officials, a member of the education committee of the FSM Congress, and COM-FSM board member and officials of the COM-FSM. Seven individuals were interviewed from the national level.
2. State Level (Chuuk, Pohnpei, Yap and Kosrae): eight individuals that included governors, a lieutenant governor, and chairs and members of education committees in the state legislatures were interviewed.

Data Collection

The interviews served as the primary data for the study. In view of respondents' preference, data from the interviews were written as field notes. Other data were from documents and observation notes. Documents reviewed included official

communications, minutes of meetings, laws, planning documents, newsletters of the College, statistical records, accreditation reports, budget documents, news articles, correspondence, etc. Casual observations of activities at the College campuses were also noted while conducting document reviews. Journals of interviews, site visits, and personal feelings about the process were kept as notes.

Data Analysis

Analysis was conducted using the data generated from themes and categories for the above groups of respondents, the documents reviewed, notes from observations and other information obtained by the researcher during the course of her involvement in the region. National and state levels perceptions served as the major categories.

Significance of the Study

The literature on the higher education institutions in Micronesia is still extremely limited. For example, nothing has been written to date that describes the perceptions of political leaders regarding the roles of the COM-FSM at the national and at the state level. With the exception of a dissertation on the perception of students and staff about the desired role for COM-FSM (Suhm, 1996), most of the literature relating to the COM-FSM consists of government documents and reports.

At a more general level, not many people are familiar with how the colleges are situated in the political context of Micronesia even within the FSM itself. Literature on the goals and mission of the College is only available in the management documents, reports, and related government documents. A comprehensive analysis of the goals and mission is also lacking particularly with respect to how the goals and missions relate to the four state campuses and the national campus.

The circumstances surrounding the colleges and their role are unique. Literature on U.S. mainland colleges is not entirely applicable in the island context in part because of the unique circumstances and expectations of the nation on island colleges, and the roles that island colleges are frequently counted upon to fulfill and perform sometimes without adequate preparation or support.

This study is an attempt to fill a small part of the information gap about the COM-FSM purposes and priorities as perceived by the political leadership in the FSM. The study also hopes to serve as a preliminary resource guide to assist decision-makers in their ongoing effort to shape the COM-FSM.

Assumptions of the Study

Micronesia is a changing region politically, socially and economically (Kiste, 1999; Asian Development Bank, 1997). Much of the change could be attributed to the introduction of new ideas, values and beliefs that have been integrated into existing cultural contexts and modified to fit newly created circumstances in the islands. Whereas in the past, isolated cultural groups existed within their bounded social structures, today these formerly isolated groups are connected politically if not socially and economically as a relatively cohesive entity and must function as such.

The introduced concepts and systems have brought with them a collection of practices for those concepts and systems to operate effectively; however, cultural practices intrude, impact and transform these introduced practices into different forms (Crocombe, 1993, 2001). A new level of awareness may be emerging with respect to the concept of education and higher education in general.

The challenges of meeting the needs of a young nation within the constraints of limited resources, cultural restraint and influence, and political ramifications may have significant implications on the future role of the COM-FSM. In view of the challenges that the College is facing, the Asian Development Bank report on the FSM noted that the effectiveness of the College depends on many variables including proper educational infrastructure, population and leadership (Asian Development Bank, 1997).

The perceptions of key policy-makers such as governors and legislators play a critical role in establishing purposes and priorities of public services and programs. It is especially important to have this information when policies emanating from political leaders and administrators directly or indirectly influence programs and policies of higher education. If decision-makers have different goals and expectations for an institution, it is important that these differences are defined so they can be discussed and potentially conflicting agendas can be resolved.

The community needs to know what these perceptions are and how they may affect and shape public services and institutions. As the national institution of higher learning, the COM-FSM is vulnerable to the political actions at both levels, national and state. Furthermore, this is compounded by limitations imposed by geography, culture, lack of resources, and aspects of relationships between the relatively new national government compared with the seasoned state governments. How the political leaders of these two levels perceive the COM-FSM may have significant implications with respect to the purposes and priorities of the College system and how the College implements its programs.

Limitations of the Study

The study was conducted within the context of one researcher's views and potential biases, and the circumstances and uncertainties of an emerging nation and emerging institutions. The researcher's familiarity with some of the respondents and experiences as an education administrator in the region may have a potential influence in the presentation of the study. Therefore, any application to other situations should be done with reasonable caution and understanding about the purpose, period, and context of the study.

The study is limited to the extent that it may only be applicable to phenomena relating to the FSM as a political entity, and to the COM-FSM as part of that political entity. The other limitation is that it is confined to the perception of only the key leaders in government and that an elitist view may possibly be generated from this study; therefore, any generalization beyond that level will not be appropriate. The study also was conducted during a critical juncture of FSM's political as well as economic prospects in view of an important renegotiation with the United States on certain provisions of the Compact of Free Association. Therefore, the findings may only be relevant for this period. Furthermore, the elite respondents themselves may be inherently unique due to cultural factors and political uncertainties. The respondents in their capacity as officials are only participants in the current political processes and may or may not be in the same position after their current terms.

In view of the short history of the COM-FSM as the sole postsecondary institution in the FSM, and in view of the development of the College in the region of Micronesia that historically included the other new independent nations (Republics of Palau and the

Marshall Islands) as well as the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, it is not the intent of this study to present a comprehensive picture of the political, social and education developments of the region that are so closely tied to the role of colleges.

Definition of Terms

Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). The FSM is a federation of four island groups: Pohnpei, Chuuk, Yap and Kosrae, formerly part of the U.S. Trust Territory. The FSM consists of 600 islands and land area of 702 square kilometers with an estimated population of 105,500 as of the 1994 census. In 1986, the FSM and the United States signed an agreement known as the Compact of Free Association (COFA). The COFA established economic and political relationships between FSM and the U.S. for the period 1986-2001. Certain funding provisions in this agreement are now under renegotiation (Retrieved June 10, 2002, from <http://www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/9656pf.html>).

FSM's national government consists of the executive headed by a president, the national congress, and the judicial branch. The national government has jurisdiction over the College of Micronesia-Federated States of Micronesia System.

States. The FSM states consist of Pohnpei (formerly Ponape), Chuuk (formerly Truk), Yap and Kosrae. Each of these island groups has a constitution, elected governor, legislature and judiciary branches. The FSM Constitution bestows the state governments a high degree of autonomy from the national government. Public education falls under the jurisdiction of the state governor. Schools are scattered throughout the islands including the remote islands in all the states except the single island of Kosrae. The state college campuses are located in the center island of each state.

Except for Kosrae, traditional leaders, especially in the states of Yap and Pohnpei, play major roles through political and cultural influences. Each state has its unique cultural and linguistic characteristics. Relationships based on extended families, lineages and clans are very important. Subsistence farming and fishing are mostly practiced in the more remote islands while a cash economy is more prevalent at the commercial centers of each state.

College of Micronesia-Federated States of Micronesia (COM-FSM) System.

COM-FSM was once a part of the former regional College of Micronesia system during the Trust Territory Administration. COM-FSM's main campus, known as the national campus, is in Pohnpei State. In addition to the national campus, there are four campuses, one in each of the FSM states of Pohnpei, Chuuk, Yap and Kosrae. A director who is appointed and supervised by the president of the COM-FSM manages each state campus. State campuses offer vocational, remedial, non-degree courses and a few courses leading toward the associate degree levels. The Fisheries and Maritime Institution (FSM/FMI), a training institute located in Yap, was reopened in 2000. COM-FSM's board of regents, a policy making board, is appointed through a nomination by the COM-FSM president and advice and consent approval by the National Congress. The board exercises direct authority over the COM-FSM System including the state campuses. Although each state has a representative in the COM-FSM board of regents, state governments do not have jurisdiction over the COM-FSM system including the state campuses.

Compact of Free Association (COFA). The agreement that establishes the relationship between the United States and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). It provides to the FSM assistance including funding for various programs, government

operations, and access to federal grants in education and other areas. In exchange, the United States is given military use and operating rights in the FSM. Certain sections of COFA relating to funding expired in October 2001 and renegotiations have since commenced and concluded in 2002 awaiting the approval of the U.S. Congress. Funding for the College is included in the renegotiation (Retrieved December 19, 2002, from <http://www.fsmbassay.org/compact>).

Political leaders. Political leaders for this study include elected officials and key education administrators at the national level (FSM National Executive and Legislative Bodies) and at the respective state levels. At the respective state levels, the political leaders are leaders in the executive branch and chairs or members of the education committees in the state legislatures. Political leaders may have multiple roles. Some hold traditional titles and roles, others are religious ministers or business leaders. Elections take place every four years for the political offices held by most of the respondents in this study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

To appreciate the institutions of higher education in Micronesia, it is fitting to place them alongside the historical development of community colleges in the U.S. Many of the issues affecting U.S. institutions of higher education appear to be relevant to higher education institutions in Micronesia. Formal education as it now exists in Micronesia was transplanted from the United States immediately after World War II when the United States acquired Micronesia as part of its “strategic mandate” (United Nations Security Council, 1947).

Printed and online materials such as journals, news articles, books, special reports on education and community colleges, statistical information, dissertations, and manuscripts make up the literature review. Guiding topics include politics and education, history of community colleges, perception, state and federal roles in education, current community college issues, among others. Books and pertinent documents available in print and on the Internet about Micronesia, particularly education, ongoing political and social issues, special reports, government documents, news articles, etc., were reviewed. Libraries and government offices as well as the College provided most of the printed materials. Online collections at the University of San Diego were also searched mainly for journal articles related to community colleges, and information on qualitative research with a focus on perceptions and leadership.

This section begins with a synthesis of how U.S. institutions of higher learning came about, their purposes and priorities, and the importance and expectations placed upon community colleges by society during significant periods of their development. This is followed by a review of the studies and accounts relating to how institutions of higher learning are perceived by individuals and groups in leadership positions and how they influence policies affecting the institutions of higher learning in the U.S., and by default, how some of the same issues apply in the region served by the COM-FSM.

In order to place this study in its proper context and circumstance, the second part of the review of literature gives a historical background on the region known as Micronesia. Micronesia has now added a new political definition in its history with the emergence of separate nations within slightly more than a decade. The review includes explanations on the political and social changes during the first significant encounter with foreign nations who introduced Western schools to the people. This is followed by an overview of the early developments of formal education beyond the secondary level. This section concludes with an overview of events within the last fifty years leading to the formation of the College of Micronesia-Federated States of Micronesia and the four state campuses in 1993.

Finally, the review describes some of the Federated States of Micronesia's political leadership at the national and state levels, their involvement in education, and the political and social conditions that may influence their views about education including institutions of higher learning.

The Community College in the United States

How the Community College Started

The evolution of community colleges in the United States has been attributed to many factors including changing economic and social circumstances that led to new demands and expectations of society. As the needs of various communities changed over time, new demographic circumstances were reflected. One recent and notable trend is the interest in lifelong learning among the older population and nontraditional students.

Geiger (1999) explained that the junior colleges, the precursor of community colleges, first appeared in the 1900s to serve isolated communities in the West as well as to provide higher education access to cities. As a result, the development of junior colleges “profoundly affected the thinking about the structure and purpose of American higher education” (p.58). Higher education began to redefine its various components through establishment of programs for populations that could not be served in traditional institutions of higher education, and through status delineation of different types of institutions offering specialized programs, two-year collegiate instructions, and comprehensive institutions (Cohen, 1998).

Many definitions have been offered on the community college (Thornton, 1966; Gleazer, 1968) in accordance with the changes experienced by the colleges. Gleazer (1968) explained that the identity of community colleges arose out of society’s needs and aspirations, and the colleges’ ability to function as a member of the educational community. George Baker, III, (1994), described the community college as a uniquely American institution while Diener, (1986), viewed the community college as an American invention that responds to changing needs in society. In particular, Diener

views the community college as the principal means for meeting the changing needs of society by offering relevant programs and opening educational opportunities to an increasingly diverse population.

Roles and Relevance of the Community College

In A Handbook on the Community College in America (1994), Baker and other practitioners and theoreticians examined the role of community colleges, their potential, and relevance. They suggested that the community college was created to serve many purposes. Ratcliff (1994) described the community college as an institution that should find its place anywhere between high school and higher education, as well as between adult and higher education. He further identified the community college as the link between industrial training and formal technical training. The same idea was expounded by Diener's (1986) concept of adding value to what learners already possess and to promoting this concept as a critical mission of community colleges. The central role of the community colleges was viewed as providing services to the local community in addition to the traditional college age students (Harlacher, 1969; Gleazer, 1973).

The contributors (Baker, 1994) described the community college as the answer to many of the problems of society. Furthermore, community colleges are expected to address the gaps in education, training, and community services. Tschechtelin (1994) offered that a certain tension, if not confusion, exists in the nature of community colleges in that community colleges focus on local needs rather than state needs. He further explained that the term "state community college system" may be an oxymoron—a contradiction in terms to refer to an institution that is oriented to the needs of the state as

well as the local community. This mix of expectations is a clear indication that there is an ongoing need to define more clearly the purpose and roles of community colleges.

Growth and Development of the Community College

Ratcliff (1994) asserted that the higher education innovation in the United States went through a period of growth and development. This began when the states and communities were allowed to control their own colleges and authority to charter colleges. More independence for colleges was given when Dartmouth College (*The Trustees of Dartmouth College v. Woodward*, 1819) was granted independent corporation status, which reaffirmed the authority of private colleges.

This move encouraged more states to open colleges to promote their cultural status and their identity as educated communities (Boorstin, 1965). However, since the initiative to establish colleges were not followed by financial and related support for their continued existence, many of the colleges were eventually closed in the nineteenth century (Ratcliff, 1994).

Not only was the lack of sustained support for colleges the reason for the closing of community colleges, another problem that colleges frequently face is low student enrollment. A solution to the low student enrollment and financial constraints resulted in the development of the first two-year college when a decision to restructure the existing Baptist colleges in Texas and Louisiana was made (Roark, 1926). This restructuring, according Ratcliff (1994), allowed colleges to begin limiting programs for the first two years only, thus reducing the demand for faculty, students and related resources. He explained the role played by several university leaders in differentiating the purposes and priorities of universities and colleges. The intent of these leaders at the time was to

reserve university work primarily for research, and to have colleges provide undergraduate work. This resulted in a 1907 California legislation that authorized high schools to offer collegiate work.

During 1910 to 1920, overcrowding of elementary and high schools necessitated the creation of junior high schools, thus creating opportunities for former four-year high schools to open junior colleges. These, according to Ratcliff, were elements in the restructuring of elementary, secondary and higher education. Many junior colleges originated from normal schools (Rowland, 1949). Normal schools served as alternative secondary schools for aspiring women teachers in the 1880s (Ratcliff, 1994). Eventually normal schools added more postsecondary courses and later, these schools were restructured to become junior colleges.

Another higher education innovation following the restructuring of elementary, secondary and higher education was when vocational and technical programs were more fully integrated into the college curriculum allowing colleges to serve not only as technical institutes but also vocational schools (Ratcliff, 1994).

During the first twenty years of the 20th century, increase in immigrants, diversity of cultures and educational background, and the influence of suffrage for women contributed to the demand for more access to higher education. The scope of higher education was adjusted to meet both, the diverse needs of the community as well and the need of the individual. Non-traditional courses were also introduced when vocational education became an integral part of the community colleges in the early twentieth century. Together with the services to non-traditional students, the community colleges offered access to higher education. Open access became one of the characteristics of

community college, another innovative development in higher education. Finally, after World War II, a feature of community and junior colleges—community service, attained prominence. AACC President, Edmund Gleazer (1973) described service to the entire community and not just traditional college-age groups, as the focus of community colleges.

It is important to note that from the beginning, two-year colleges were also offering remedial and preparatory courses as well as college level courses. Social and economic influences and changes during the early twentieth century played a role in the expansion of higher education. The expansion was to meet diverse populations' needs caused by increase in the number of immigrants who needed different types of educational support, the women's suffrage movement, and non-traditional students, according to Ratcliff (1994).

A Pennsylvania junior college president used the term, community college, for the first time in 1936 when he described the purpose of the junior college as a community college (Gleazer, 1994). The term "community college" was officially designated to colleges providing educational needs of local communities in 1947 by President Truman (President's Commission on Higher Education, 1947).

Characteristics of Community Colleges

Adaptability, flexibility and accessibility were the characteristics that best described community colleges (Ratcliff, 1994). In order to sustain these characteristics, the President's Commission (1947) listed five important functions: (a) continuous assessment of community needs (Bogue, 1950); (b) offering of a well-integrated program including vocational education and academic courses; (c) offering of courses for further

education and professional study; (d) offering of adult education; and, (e) provision of flexible programs for working students. Copa and Ammentorp (1988) identified two-year institutions as being at the center of change in higher education. They are the linking organization and pathways that help people of all ages connect to common “life places” in work, family, and the community (p. viii). Furthermore, they are the pathways whereby access to opportunity is afforded to many who may otherwise be excluded from higher education.

In 1960, the community college was defined using all of the above characteristics and functions by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (1962). Further expansion of the definition took into consideration and encouraged diversity wherever possible (Shuster, 1963). The response by the community colleges broadened the definition of the community college and incorporated some of them into statutes, institutional goals, and policies (Anderson and Spencer, 1967).

Emerging Expectations and Questions About Community Colleges

By 1970, the diverse needs of the community became an attractive educational market and other non-traditional service providers became potential competitors with community colleges (Chronicle of Higher Education, Nov. 25, 1974). As a result, community college enrollment declined. This prompted ideas on how to make community colleges more marketable by adding value to ensure customer satisfaction (American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, 1973; Diener, 1986). The widening of potential clientele further raised questions relating to the conventional practices and procedures applicable mainly to traditional students (California Postsecondary Education Commission, 1976).

Copa and Ammentorp (1988) claim that “higher education is no longer sustainable pedagogically, technologically, or economically” (p.iii). They suggested that conversation with stakeholders is one of the key processes in the transformation of colleges in order to address diverse needs in the community. Their target audiences include administrators responsible for restructuring and designing new institutions, and policy makers involved in funding of institutions and promulgation of regulations and policies.

In a review of the literature for a dissertation by Strattan (1990), community colleges were viewed as having an important role in the building of a nation. She also pointed out that the changing political and social conditions resulting in legislative reforms call for visionary leadership if the colleges are to address future challenges effectively. Zusman (1999) asserted that higher education would face major challenges in the twenty-first century in view of the changes in public expectations and funding and that “current changes are transforming higher education to an extent perhaps greater than in the past half century” (p. 109). One of the challenges, according to Zusman, is that higher education is viewed as the engine for the nation’s [United States] economic growth.

Federal and State Policies and Perspectives on Community Colleges

Political Influences on Community Colleges

By the 1980s community colleges became institutions that touched almost every aspect of community life, be it religion, family life, recreation, among others, giving community colleges an identity as a lifelong learning institution (Gleazer, 1980). However, the capability for community colleges to meet change in communities was not

reflected in the policy framework at the federal and state levels (Gleazer 1994). While the community colleges were ready to broaden their programs to be more responsive to the needs of the community and the individual, policy issues surrounding the mission and financing of the colleges were not keeping up with the pace.

Gleazer noted, however, that it is a mistake to assume that government does not possess its own “adaptive experiences to parallel those of the college” (1994, p. 94). Actions of elected officials determine the policies under which colleges operate; this means that elected officials must endeavor to understand community needs and keep updated with changes. Other players such as government agencies also have an influence in shaping policies for the colleges especially if these agencies have certain relationships with community colleges (Martorana, 1994).

Certain types of legislation affect community colleges (Martorana, 1994). Special legislation, as opposed to general legislation, often has precedent setting effect on community colleges. However, laws affecting community colleges too often resulted from compromise, guesswork and political strategies instead of careful investigation and leadership. As an example, programs offered by community colleges that benefit the community may sometimes be difficult to measure. Inadvertently, these types of programs attract the attention of legislators and governors especially when budgets become more limited and when competition for public funds are dependent on the information that are available and attractive to legislators and policy-makers (Breneman & Nelson, 1981).

When the report, A Nation at Risk (1983), came out, governors, legislators and other federal officials questioned the benefits that students were receiving from higher

education institutions (Gleazer, 1994). The Brookings Institute (in Breneman and Nelson, 1981) also brought attention to the need for a better measure of social and economic outcomes of certain programs offered by community colleges. Subsequently, accountability of higher education itself was focused upon by the end of the 1980s. As Gleazer (1994) asserted, the educational role of community colleges is not easily understood by elected officials. Elected officials tend to gauge the effectiveness of community colleges in terms of transfer, employment and degree acquisition. Furthermore, legislators, he argued, were getting into the details of college operations thus raising serious questions and interest about the importance of legislative attitude (Gleazer, 1980).

Martorana (1994) suggests that community colleges align themselves with all three levels of government: federal, state and local. Colleges view alignment with federal agencies as a practical move in view of the financial and programmatic support emanating from national programs and their own sense of duty to serve the nation. Martorana (1994) alludes to the “growing exercise of power by the state in setting community college policy directions,” (p. 53) and that more research is needed.

The legal status of community colleges determines, to a large extent, their purposes and priorities. The legal statuses of the colleges are made more complex due to their involvement and relationships with diverse groups such as businesses, government agencies, and organizations. Martorana (1994) cited the three possible sources for determining legal status: the locality served, the state and the federal government, or all three. However, he emphasized that the state has the “clearest and strongest authority” (p.46) based on the 10th Amendment of the federal constitution granting the states the

powers not delegated to the federal government. Similarly, the local government, when authorized by the state, may also play a role in defining legal status.

Public service is viewed by key government and legislative leaders as the main purpose for community colleges. At the same time, government and legislative leaders are mindful and attempt to respond to other leaders in community colleges who desire legal status that will enhance the colleges. This is made more complex when the federal government initiates national programs and encourages local or regional entities to work closely with organizations such as community colleges. The role of community colleges tends to shift as the needs of the community, the state and the federal governments change.

Martorana (1994) suggests the need for research studies that will explain the history, mission or purpose of community colleges focusing on the perspectives of governmental and community college leaders. I hope that this study will address at least some of his concerns relating to the perspectives of government leaders in a small island setting.

Growing Involvement of the Federal, State and Other Policy Makers

Governors and legislators. The signs of the times point to more and not less involvement by both. Since community colleges serve communities, the array of social issues that catch the attention of government inadvertently is directed to the colleges as well. The attention given to colleges may be in the form of expectations for solutions or criticism on the quality of services provided by the colleges. According to Cohen (1999), by the 1990s, policies pointed to more micromanagement and evidence of accomplishments especially in remedial and vocational education. Legislators more than

governors are often viewed as having greater influence on education (Marshall, Mitchell & Wirt, 1986; Berdahl & McConnell, 1999). The power of the legislature on colleges and universities is based on how these institutions spend appropriated funds. Tschechtelin (1994) explained that the role of state governments in setting policies affecting community colleges is proportional to the funding provided colleges. In six states studied by Marshall, et al., (1986), he found that the political group with the most influence was the members of the state legislature that specialize in educational issues. The governors' influence was ranked sixth.

While state policies traditionally are confined to institutions in specific states and localities, these policies will no longer be realistic and will require changes in state and federal policies to account for innovative delivery of services beyond even the state region such as policies on distance education (McGuinness, 1999). Changes on how courses are delivered, roaming teaching faculty, the move away from credit hours to competency-based measures, expansion of service areas as a result of the internet, may require significant changes in state and federal policies since these services transcend across states and even beyond the nation.

The role of governors in education rests with policies that affect schools including higher education. The collaboration and cooperation between government and private businesses in the form of initiatives to address education concerns, has placed the governors in the forefront of reform. One such initiative is the report, *Action for Excellence (1983)*. This report increased the stature of business over educational policy (Springer, 1998) as did another major report that focused on higher education a decade later, *An American Imperative: Higher Expectations for Higher Education* (Wingspread

Group, 1993). The report was critical of schools and especially teachers. Governors as a group themselves, have also created task forces to address issues toward improving education (O'Banion, 1997, Springer, 1998).

Furthermore, governing boards are essentially appointees of politicians and thus indirectly, they are the spokespersons or under the control of legislators and governors in some instances (Berdahl & McConnell, 1999). In order to remove community colleges from the political influence of both governors and legislators, a number of states granted constitutional status to their public universities. This was intended to make them function co-authoritatively with the three branches of government: legislative, judiciary and executive.

Other interest groups. Springer (1998) differentiated influence from elected political groups and educational politicians such as boards and state agencies. He explained that groups outside of the sphere of government such as interest groups also have influence. Economic and political motives, according to Springer, will continue to dictate the direction of education in the future. He further argued that while educators are the last to admit that schools are not the solution to the world's problems, economic policies continue to lead education sometimes without the necessary financial support. The perceptions and actions of political leaders which are often influenced by various interest groups, particularly in the business community, has a bearing on how policies are enacted and education is influenced, particularly the colleges. Springer expressed concern about the trend that schools may end up primarily serving the interests of business and politicians and not the interest of a free society.

Legislators and governors, as elected leaders, perceive their role as representing the public. Elected officials tend to focus on public perceptions and opinions unlike college officials who search for the truth, according to Tschechtelin (1994). Consequently, the myriad needs of the public are frequently reflected through the governors or the legislative leadership. The public is also aware of the value of higher education, placing the colleges in an even more vulnerable position for public scrutiny. Berdahl and McConnell (1999) assert that the public is no longer remote from higher education. They are finding that public lives are increasingly influenced by these institutions, particularly public colleges and universities. Competition for limited funding is forcing colleges to account for and defend their contribution to society during budget hearings and legislative initiatives and oversights.

Federal Government Influence

Another key political influence is the federal government. Research grants, student financial aid, and other federal grants to colleges and universities come attached with conditions and standards. Gladieux and King (1999) reported in their analysis of the 1995 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, that about a third of the 21 million postsecondary students during academic year 1992/93 received federal aid. The constituents represented by this number, and their families are politically significant and congressional leaders are aware of the voting implications. Senator Patrick Moynihan warned that “universities must now expect a long, for practical purposes permanent, regimen of pressure from the federal government to pursue this or that national purpose, purposes often at variance with the interests or inclinations of the universities themselves” (Berdahl & McConnell, 1999, p. 79). While the federal intervention and

funds may be viewed as “untidy, piecemeal, and not without headaches for institutions, students and states,” Gladieux and King (p. 180) were of the impression that the purposes they serve are national in nature and also still protect the special characteristics of higher education including diversity, choice and independent thought. Likewise, these authors described the federal impact on higher education institutions as pervasive and enduring; and the product of deeply rooted traditions but also short-term decisions.

While the impact of the federal government on colleges will remain, state governments will still be the dominant players since states retain regulatory authority over most public higher education institutions where nearly 80% of college students are enrolled (Zusman, 1999). State initiatives in the areas of accountability, planning, program review, and language policies, will continue to refocus the missions of colleges and universities. According to Zusman, the most important function of the state, of course, is the budgetary process that could be used to persuade institutions to accept the desired actions by the state.

Policy Issues and Challenges

While colleges and universities may be persuaded to follow state initiatives, the potential difficulty of carrying out these initiatives in view of the limited terms of political leaders such as governors and legislators exists (Zusman, 1999; McGuinness, Jr. 1999). Short-term tenure at times encourages short-term perspectives. The trend toward term limitation is contributing to major changes in state leadership, while stability provided by long-term legislative leaders is disappearing. This situation is compounded by incoming political leadership, often with inexperienced staff, both eager to make their mark before next election turns around.

Colleges are protective of their autonomy and academic freedom when dealing with state and federal agencies. Several writers have described the sometimes negative notion of government regulations on higher education's autonomy and academic freedom. Berdahl (1999) pointed out that perceptions by colleges of interference by state and federal agencies should be confined to the proper topics; Newman (1999) encouraged more constructive relationship between higher institutions and the state; McGuinness (1999) also agreed that the higher education community must engage in collaboration with state political leaders in defining the nature of their relationships and how this relationship is to be governed. State governors will remain key players in this relationship as long as the higher education institutions have an impact on state economies (McGuinness, 1999).

State policy makers have at times been the driving force behind restructuring of institutions through political pressure (Zusman, 1999). Governing boards recognize the influence that state policy makers have on budget appropriations for colleges. At times, these pressures from policy makers result in reallocation of funds to support certain programs at the expense of other programs in the effort to find a balance between state and national interests, and program quality. Zusman suggests that government influence will continue but will vary depending on conditions in the economy, appropriateness of programs in relation to the needs of the community, historical conditions that determine autonomy for higher education, individual state context, and the legitimacy of the public to demand institutional accountability.

McGuinness (1999) predicts that American higher education will be forced to restructure in order to meet the challenges of economic constraints, negative publicity,

and unstable political leadership. Colleges and universities had four choices to make under these conditions according to McGuinness: (a) meet the public's expectations with less funding; (b) accommodate only a few of the students to commensurate with less funding; (c) compete with other public services such as schools; and, (d) raise revenue from non-government sources even though these sources may be already heavily taxed. Meanwhile, Tschechtelin (1994) offered four factors that would determine the extent of public support for community colleges: (a) policy makers' perception of need and values, (b) sense of ownership by the funding authorities, (c) strong and positive relationships with policy makers, and, (d) perceptions of performance and public good will.

The challenges for community colleges for the future will be quite different from what they were in the last century. In the future, globalization and technology will bring different perspectives of what the "community" in community college means. Community will encompass wherever services can be delivered using modern technology, guided by policies that are more relevant, and with a more diffused influence. New policy issues will emerge that will consider these factors. These developments mean that the missions of community colleges will continue to evolve and that at times the resulting missions may not be compatible with previous funding patterns.

Social issues relating to diverse groups of people with nontraditional value systems may have to be addressed not only by policy makers but also by higher education. The perception of the people including policy makers on the purposes and priorities of higher education will still have a major impact on the future of community colleges but this time, the impact will not be gradual but instantaneous. Therefore, the need for a more integrated delivery of education may need to be considered with

community colleges taking the lead role in this effort in view of their historical credibility.

Education and the Federated States of Micronesia

The previous section described briefly the development of the junior and community college systems in the United States. In addition, the social and economic realities of the times that the U.S. community colleges must address and how they cope with new expectations and perceptions of key stakeholders in the United States offer a relevant comparison with what the COM-FSM may be facing today and in the future. These challenges and perceptions will serve as a contextual background in the next presentation about the College of Micronesia-Federated States of Micronesia, its roles and priorities, and the sources of influence and perceptions from the political leaders as well as the unique political, cultural and economic circumstances surrounding the region.

Despite its many variations and historical origins, U.S. community college system served as the logical model in the FSM as well as in the other former U.S. territories of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Republic of Palau and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The community college system is not the only educational system transplanted to the islands; elementary and secondary education administration and curriculum were also adopted as models for the schools today. The governments in the various newly independent island nations including the Federated States of Micronesia, replicate the government in the United States consisting of the legislative, executive and judiciary branches. On a daily basis, the values and trends in the U.S. are transmitted to the islands through the media, especially television. English is the regional medium of

communication and serves as the only language that is understood by all the Micronesian nations including within the FSM itself.

Tradition and cultural practices, however, remain strong in most of the island groups especially Yap and Pohnpei, where the traditional chief systems still play important roles especially in relation to recognition of individuals and their roles in the community. However, even these systems have had to adjust particularly where the subsistence economy has been replaced by a money economy. Some traditional title-holders are provided with a token stipend or honorarium from appropriated funds by the state legislature or municipal governments (Mauricio, R., personal communication, December 19, 2000). These title-holders are viewed as fulfilling an important role in their respective communities particularly where traditional practices are involved.

Federal grants from the U.S. are the main sources of financial support for student tuition, and therefore, a major source of revenue for the operation of the college. A critical program is the PELL Grant. Almost all of the students at COM-FSM are eligible to receive PELL Grants amounting to about \$3,622,005 or 77% of the total enrollment in 1998-99 academic year (Ed Haleyalig, personal communication, 10/2/00). Because of strong lobbying and the recognition that education remains a critical need in the FSM by the negotiators from both sides, FSM's eligibility for this grant remains in effect. COM-FSM is also a Land Grant College and eligible for specific grants for Land Grant colleges. Administered on a regional basis among the three former Trust Territory entities, Palau, the Marshalls and the FSM, the Land Grant program is a grant given to the College of Micronesia (this is different from the COM-FSM) for the three island

nations and administered by a board representing COM-FSM, Palau Community College in Palau and the College of the Marshall Islands in the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

As long as the United States is the main source of financial support, initiatives that affect the United States colleges would also impact the colleges in the former territories. Inadvertently, this dependence on United States grants and support, as well as the historical beginning of the colleges on the islands, will continue to mold the college systems in these territories including the COM-FSM. In addition, a large percentage of FSM students continue their college education in the United States; therefore, the compatibility and ease of transfer are critical.

However, other observers of the Pacific such as Crocombe (1995) suggest that this may change in view of emerging economic partnerships that are occurring in many Pacific Island nations, northeast Asia in particular. Crocombe suggests that since the 1980s, the importance of the United States in the Pacific has declined on almost every dimension. In 1991, FSM joined the United Nations and has membership in a wide range of regional and international organizations including UNESCO. As of October 22, 2001, FSM has established diplomatic relations with fifty-three countries (Retrieved October 31, 2001, <http://www.fsmgov.org>).

Political Independence

The road to independence began in 1968 for all the island groups in the Trust Territory. The four island groups of Chuuk, Pohnpei, Yap and Kosrae joined as a federation. The Compact of Free Association (COFA) between the FSM and the United States was signed in October 1, 1982 and came into full force on January 14, 1986. The Compact of Free Association defines the political and economic relationships between

the FSM and the United States for fifteen years. The United States and the FSM commenced renegotiation of certain provisions of the COFA since 1999 and recently concluded in late 2003. As of the writing of this study, the renegotiated COFA is awaiting ratification by the U.S. Congress and the FSM National Congress.

In exchange for defense and military rights in the region, the United States granted the FSM financial assistance under the following arrangement: Section 211 grants \$60 million annually for the first five years (1986/87-1990-91); \$51 million annually for the subsequent five years; and \$40 million for the final five years. Section 216(a) grants \$3.7 million annually for 15 years to finance post-secondary scholarships, health programs and maritime surveillance. Section 221(b) grants \$7 million annually for 15 years for education, health and social programs. In addition, the U.S. Congress continued eligibility of the FSM to receive a range of federally funded programs outside of the COFA agreement. Included in these programs are grants for libraries, student financial assistance, and challenge grants, among others (U.S. Public Law 99-239, 1986; Asian Development Bank, 1996).

Background on Micronesia

The group of 2,000 islands and atolls in the central Pacific was named Micronesia, meaning tiny islands. These islands, excluding Nauru and Kiribati, total only 700 square miles (about half the state of Rhode Islands, USA) and are scattered over three million square miles of ocean (Heine, 1974). Within the geographical region of Micronesia are islands groups consisting of the Marianas (Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands), Yap, Kosrae, Chuuk, Pohnpei (now the Federated States of Micronesia), Marshall Islands (now the Republic of the Marshall Islands), Palau (now the

Republic of Palau), the Gilberts (now Kiribati), and Nauru (See map in Appendix B). Nauru and Kiribati were not included in the group politically when the islands were colonized by the Spaniards (1668 mainly in the Marianas until 1899), Germans (1899-1914), Japanese (1914-1945) and the United States (1945 until 1994 when Palau became a republic in its own right). For the purpose of this study, Micronesia means all the above islands with the exception of Guam, Kiribati and Nauru.

The independence of the Republic of Palau in 1994 completes the political development and transition process in Micronesia. After almost 400 years of foreign control, all the islands are now independent and have the right to chart their future course. The leaders recognize the critical importance of education in nation building. Once again the island nations have the important responsibility for preparing the people as they see fit. However, immediately obvious is the heavy dependence on foreign assistance, particularly the U.S., for the continuation of higher education in the islands.

In the case of the FSM, as well as in the other former territories of Palau and the Marshall Islands, there is only a single public community college for them. Private colleges or universities have yet to be established and it is unlikely they will in the near future due to the geographic isolation and the small population and financial feasibility. The heavy responsibility for the single higher education institution in the FSM is evident. This is an important consideration for small islands. Its leaders must be able to converse and deal with other nations on equal terms, as well as understand technology that will be used in harnessing the island resources as a source of revenue.

All the islands in Micronesia have since achieved new political status as independent nations in free association with the U.S. when the last island group, Palau,

achieved its independence in 1994. Guam is the exception since it was ceded to the United States after the Spanish American War in 1898 as part of a peace settlement with Spain (Wiens, 1962). Guam is now a territory of the United States.

Literature on Micronesia

Compared to other cultures in the Pacific, the literature specifically on Micronesia is meager. A number of books, articles, reports, and essays have been written by anthropologists, political writers, early missionaries and explorers, consultants, and government agencies, and more recently, by Micronesian people themselves. A few dissertations on education in the region as a whole (Antilla, 1965; Heine, Peacock, 1990) describe the early years of American administration as well as prior years during the administration of the islands by Spain, Germany and Japan. Several dissertations, mostly focusing on social structure and education in particular island groups (Colleta, 1989, on Pohnpei; Shuster, 1982, on Palau; Lingenfelter, 1971, on Yap) are also available.

Literature that is relevant for this study, although relating to pre-independence era, referred to segments of educational developments or histories of the islands as a group or separate groups, but still within the former Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (McHenry, 1975; Colleta, 1980; Shuster, 1982; Peacock, 1990; Hezel, 1995). To date, only one dissertation has been written about the COM-FSM (Suhm, 1996); and not much has been written about FSM education in general with the exception of reports sponsored by governments, occasional unpublished essays, and conference proceedings. Suhm (1996) examined the perceptions of staff and faculty regarding the role of education at COM-FSM and found that the College had too many roles, that the students and staff want basically the same things but for different reasons:

For the students, operating under one paradigm, it is completely logical [to] go through school doing the minimum amount necessary to get through because they see the degree and the doors it opens as the most important outcome. For the staff, what is important is that the student grow and learn and go on to make a difference in society. This they believe to be the result of an awakening of a sense of responsibility toward the nation if not the world. The two groups are like two ships passing in the night. (p. 237)

Suhm also noted that “at any one time, the mission of the College was being determined by the degree to which all forces were balancing or canceling out each other” (p. 238). He also concluded that the College lived in a highly volatile and reactive state because it was not guided by a clear vision and appeared to be adapting to different forces and “finding the best balance or niche” (p. 238).

No literature exists that was found that relate to any analysis of political leadership and their perception about their respective colleges.

Prehistory

Micronesia as a whole including the FSM was estimated by some social scientists to have been settled more than 4,000 years ago by seafaring people from Island Southeast Asia (Lum, 2000; Russell, 1998; Alkire, 1977; Howells, 1974; Spoehr, 1957). Others have estimated the settlement of Micronesia as being more recent and possibly from different origins than suggested earlier (Oliver, 1989; Bellwood, 1978; Osborne, 1966; E.W. & D.S. Gifford, 1959). There are different theories as to the specific origin of the people in the different islands based on research using linguistics, DNA, and ocean

currents to name a few. New theories might emerge as knowledge about the region increases.

Over the years, the people of Micronesia may have kept and adapted their cultural practices. While the islands may have been limited in terms of food and shelter, the ocean on the other hand was an excellent source for protein and provided transportation between islands. This was crucial for certain groups such as the Central Carolines who live on atolls that are in the path of devastating typhoons. With the exception of the islands in the Marshalls group, the FSM and Palau all have high islands in addition to atolls. The islands developed complex social structures, unique navigation skills and knowledge, and rituals and practices affecting their daily lives including the training and education of the young.

Some of these social structures survive to this day such as the traditional organizations of chiefly systems in Yap, Palau, Pohnpei and the Marshalls Islands. Different organizations based on lineages, control of land, tribe affiliations, and district alliances made up the traditional organizations. The powers of traditional organizations depend on several factors including the conditions and size of the islands, the wealth of families and clans, and seniority of settlement by a family or clan (Alkire, 1977). Kosrae's traditional ranking system consisting of one paramount chief, disappeared when around the middle of the 19th century, missionaries from Boston converted to Christianity almost the entire population. Chuuk's traditional political system consisted mainly of lineage chiefs having authority over a clan or group only (Hezel, personal communication, July 23, 2000), although at one time in the past, there were two loose confederations of districts in Chuuk (Alkire, 1977).

Despite the drastic changes in some of the islands' traditional authority, much of the cultural knowledge and practices continue to this day. Knowledge is of great importance to Micronesians. Skills and knowledge were ingrained in the young through oral traditions and participation in events such as funerals, tribute giving, and bestowing of titles (Colletta, 1980). According to a prominent educator who also was the first Micronesian Director of Education for the region during the Trust Territory Administration, traditional education was a family affair that followed prescribed and well-defined labor divisions (D. Ramarui, 1976). Ramarui further explained that:

While there were specific trades which were exclusively transmitted from the father to the son as family trades, there were also communal activities that young men and women were taught in a wider context to instill in the youths the spirit of communal cooperation (p. 9).

Ramarui described the education of the former days as a "way of life" as opposed to the formal education whose purpose is to prepare individuals for adult life; this parallels the concept of lifelong learning trend in education. Hezel (personal communication, Nov. 2000) as well as Colletta (1980) explained that there are two types of traditional education in Micronesia: informal—rooted in the family or community, and formal—techniques of navigation, construction of canoe, and the art of healing, for example.

An individual with the most knowledge was usually a holder of a certain prestigious title or role in the clan or community. This applies to both genders. Communities are tightly knit and headed usually by the elder male members. Roles of various age groups were well understood and reinforced through community events and competition between various clans in certain cultures. As with any other culture, life in

the islands was also dictated by the context of their environment and nature as human beings. As described by a Pohnpeian (in Colletta, 1980), education is guided by societal sanctioning, and satisfaction is derived from societal approval of one's actions with the goal of enhancing social solidarity, an important characteristic of small, isolated communities for survival.

I would like to put a caveat to the above in that the lumping of the groups into one as Micronesia does not necessarily make them one group. Micronesia is just a name given to the region and consequently, the tendency to view the different cultural groups as one was more for expediency than accuracy. This happened when foreign nations began writing about the islands and when the islands were colonized or administered by four different countries at various points for almost four hundred years. A Micronesian author (Heine, 1974) wrote that after many years of isolation, suddenly the people in the islands discovered that they belonged to a group of islands called Micronesia, "an entity created and shaped by outside powers" (p. 92). This is an interesting point to note in that eventually, the island groups did develop an affinity to consider themselves as a unit under different circumstances especially when dealing with outside organizations. The reverse is also true, outside organizations tend to lump the islands together mostly for expediency. At times, this tendency could be advantageous as well as detrimental to the individual island groups. During the political transition toward independence, the FSM emerged with the four island groups minus Palau and the Marshall Islands, and retained the official flag of the former Trust Territory Administration minus the two stars representing Palau and the Marshall Islands.

The convention when writing the story about the islands in Micronesia is to attribute certain periods into four main eras sometimes referred to as the colonial eras. Although this may not be an agreeable method for many in describing the history of the islands, it is commonly used in reference to Micronesia and even used by the people from the islands themselves. Regardless, I will use the term contact period for this study.

Many of the issues that will be addressed in this study as pertaining to the college in the FSM, relate to practices and concepts that were introduced and adopted in the areas of politics, economics and education. While the dynamics of these introductions and adoptions are complex since different nations with different purposes have made their mark throughout history, simplifying the traces of influences across the four nations for the purpose of this study is necessary. As stated earlier in this section, more detailed information about Micronesia's political and social history is available. Therefore, I begin with a chronology of major events that will be related to this study.

Early Contact

Hezel (1980) acknowledged the dilemma about writing history, particularly, history of an oral culture:

History is never the story of the past. It is not a photograph, but a portrait of a long-dead subject painted from as many likenesses as the artist has the good fortune to find. What goes under the name of history is in fact a personal reconstruction—and a highly selective one, at that!—of what are judged to be the most significant events in former times. But the historian is, of course, limited in his work by whatever written accounts and fragments of information happen to be available to him. This is an especially serious restriction in the case of the Pacific

islanders, who have only begun to produce their own body of written literature in recent years. (p. I).

The dilemma here is that henceforth, almost all accounts until recently were based on these early writings and therefore may be suspect particularly when knowledge based on power in the traditional systems is involved and when knowledge is based on oral traditions.

Knowledge and Power

Knowledge and power in the current context have certain historical antecedents particularly with respect to the introduction of Western education and how that education is interwoven with traditions. Knowledge and power are further confounded by the evolution of what was once a privilege of the few to what is now a universal privilege regardless of status and gender in the islands.

This study describes and analyzes the perception of leaders, some of whom hold certain traditional titles. The cultural underpinning of knowledge possession may play a role in the process of discussions relating to a knowledge-based institution such as the community college, and to education in general. Furthermore, the influence and power relationship among key players are directly affected by the manner in which knowledge and authority are perceived in a community whose perceptions are also tinged with tradition and modern knowledge and discussions.

Since knowledge is hierarchically aligned and authoritative in the cultural tradition, there are ramifications in decision-making and discussions on issues such as the role of the college, the priorities of the nation, and how to allocate limited resources to fulfill roles and address priorities. High respect is given to position and rank especially if

possessed by the elders, and personal power based on title and age is the foundation of the social hierarchy in Pohnpei (Colleta, 1980). Questioning the knowledge of persons in this category is tantamount to questioning the entire social order.

Many of the other islands share this cultural tradition although with certain variations. To this day, one can still observe the high respect and deference attributed to traditional title holders in almost all of the island groups. Modern political leaders have been extremely sensitive in recognizing the role of traditional powers and have made every attempt to accommodate the two systems, modern and traditional, to avoid conflicts and intrusive situations. However, there are instances when the two collide and the ultimate authority sometimes rests on the Western legal system—the courts.

As noted earlier, many of the traditional title-holders are also holders of political positions in the Western style of government. There are advantages as well as disadvantages in being in both worlds in view of the deference and trust attributed to titled persons. How people view leaders in this category is important especially when leaders can affect their constituents politically in both cultural tradition as well as the modern political system. At times, this presents problems to leaders and their constituents when placed in a situation where both culture and Western government conveniently present themselves. Colleta (1980) describes an incident involving a paramount chief who also served as chief magistrate. When asked how he handled his dual role, he responded:

I can live in both worlds. When I'm Nahmwarki (paramount chief of one of the municipalities in Pohnpei State) I tell the people and the flow of communication is from me downward. When I'm chief magistrate the flow of communication

reverses itself and the people tell me. When you mix the roles it is bad business. Like once I was at a traditional funeral in Wone (another village) and decided to take the occasion to thank the people for voting (Western political position) for me. They were angry with me for weeks afterward. (Pp. 91-92. Explanations in parentheses, mine.)

First Major Contact with Spain and Portugal

The islands were in the path of the early explorers from Europe in search of treasures and spices. These explorers were the first to document the locations and descriptions of their findings. In the case of the islands and even major continents, most of them were encountered by accident (Hezel, 1980). The first documented encounter with the islands in Micronesia occurred on March 6, 1521. Antonio Pigafetta, a crew member in one of Magellan's ships, wrote about the first interaction with the islanders of Guam (Antonio Pigafetta, 1975 [1864]). Subsequent explorations brought more foreigners to other islands in the region some ending in mutiny, bloodshed or natural disasters during the stormy seasons of the Pacific Ocean.

For about one hundred years, Spain used Guam as a stopover for provisions and water during trips between New Spain and the Philippines. In 1668, the Jesuits under the leadership of Father Diego Luis de Sanvitores established the first mission in Micronesia on Guam (Carano, P. and Sanchez, P., 1968). The mission work introduced another type of education in the islands with emphasis on spiritual salvation. By around 1850, the first translation of the New Testament of the Bible was done (Hezel, personal communication, July 17, 2000). Spanish missionaries also came to Yap and Palau but their impact was not as significant as in the Marianas.

Other Encounters with Foreigners

Between 1783 and 1800, Palau encountered a shipwrecked British merchant ship off the coast of Koror. This encounter resulted in several events including the education of a chief's son, Lee Bo, in England, participation by the British in a war in Palau against another chieftome, and more interactions with foreigners thereafter (Keate, 1789). During the 19th century, whalers, merchants, Russian scientific expeditions, French explorers, and later Protestant missionaries arrived in Chuuk, Kosrae, the Marshall Islands, and Pohnpei. The missionaries, once again, made an impact through education that subsequently also affected the native cultures and organizations.

Three American and two Hawaiian couples were the first Protestant missionaries to Micronesia. Their first visit was in Kosrae (1852) with King George, paramount chief of Kosrae. In a letter from one of the missionaries, he described what success he had teaching English to his pupils ages ranging from seven to thirty years old: "Some of them can read and spell well words of one or two syllables; they are beginning to write a little" (Benjamin Snow, letter to Mr. Dole, 18, January 1853, in Hezel, 1980, p. 229). Truk (Chuuk) and Ponape (Pohnpei) also received the missionaries where they set up schools and houses of worship. Catholic missionaries likewise followed the Spanish soldiers "to plant the Spanish faith and culture" (p. 363).

In 1899, at the conclusion of the Spanish-American War, Spain ceded Guam to the United States and sold the rest of the islands in Micronesia to Germany for 4.25 million dollars. An official report for 1904-1905 on schools and missions went like this:

Eastern Carolines: The German school ran by the Capuchin mission in the government settlement on Ponape enjoyed success and good attendance. The

personnel of the American mission has changed, with the departure of Miss Olin from Kosrae and of the Reverend Stimson and his very ill wife from Truk. . .

Western Carolines: The German language class was attended mostly by Chamorros and the military police, a class of twenty-four men and women. . . .On

Palau, there are two schools in which instruction is given in the local language.

Marianas: German instruction of island children was given by officials until the arrival of the German teacher. . . . Many islanders, adults and children, speak intelligible German.

Marshalls: The school for the numerous children of Likiep Atoll, which had been closed in 1903 because of the death of the priest directing it, has been reopened.

(Hezel, 1980)

Japan in Micronesia

The next major world event, World War I, once again put the islands in the hands of yet another nation, Japan. Important social programs including education were organized. For the first time, a majority of the children attended school for three years with two more years in certain islands (Hezel, 1980). Japan transformed the islands through the production of agricultural products and harvesting of the rich ocean resources. Education became mandatory even to the point of bringing in remote island students to the main islands in order to enroll them at least for the first three years of school. Two additional years were offered for promising students and a few were sent to Japan for further education mostly in the vocational/technical areas. This was the beginning of a formal, articulated education system in the islands. In addition, the government instituted educational tours to Japan for the island elite, thus exposing them

to new knowledge, ideas and values that later impacted on the culture and lifestyles in the islands.

Administration Under the United States of America (U.S.A.)

It was during the American administration that the lasting impact of education on the people in Micronesia occurred. This came about immediately after the end of World War II. With the surrender of Japan, the islands were designated as strategic trust by the United Nations and handed over to be administered by the United States. One of the first actions by the Americans was opening schools in all of the major island groups. Makeshift schools were built from materials leftover after the war. Hezel (1995) wrote that in 1952, there were not enough Micronesian teachers in Chuuk, education materials such as textbooks were hard to come by, and the salary for teachers was about \$17 a month with many more teacher never receiving any salary at the various municipalities. There were several heroic attempts at education during the early years such as one older American woman who sailed the open ocean in her plastic boat with whatever supplies of educational materials were available, her tent and her portable tub for bathing (Hezel, 1995). Many other individuals, Americans and Micronesians, have dedicated years of their lives in trying to bring education to the level where the Micronesians were able to go abroad for further training and education. In 1962, President John F. Kennedy responded to a highly critical report by the United Nations Visiting Mission to Micronesia by increasing the annual appropriation to the Trust Territory from \$7.5 million to \$15 million for the purpose of developing the islands socially and economically (Hezel, 1995). The evolution of education in the region was also indirectly affected by availability of education federal grants in the United States and in Micronesia.

The Kennedy years began a crash education program known as the Accelerated Elementary School Construction Program in 1963 that brought with it not only classrooms but houses for about four hundred teachers from the U.S. by the end of 1966 according to Hezel (1995). The seed of American education has been planted. This led to opening of more elementary schools, centralized high schools, teacher training centers and later the community college for the region. The community college, College of Micronesia (COM), served as the regional college system until 1993 when the new island nations, including FSM, took over control of whatever college system was in place in their respective island groups and restructured it as their national community college system.

The education system in all the islands is an adaptation of the U.S. educational system; the language of instruction is English starting around the third grade in most schools; U.S. textbooks are used, and schools are administered by principals, directors, secretaries and ministers of education. Private schools have since opened both elementary and high schools in the region following the same system as private schools in the U.S.. The state governments have full control over elementary and secondary education in the FSM.

The Value of Education

Oral tradition was supplemented with the written word and new values and systems were instituted. Although each of the foreign countries left their mark particularly in the form of religion and government organizations, the most important inheritance from these foreign nations was education. In the case of the United States administration of the islands, the democratic form of government had a significant

impact. A Micronesian author (Heine, 1974) from the Marshall Islands who wrote prior to independence expressed his ambivalence about this inheritance with regard to the Americans (U.S.) as follows:

The Americans may someday leave Micronesia, but they will long be remembered, for despite all their shortcomings in governing Micronesia, they made possible a new phenomenon in Micronesia, “the liberation of the mind.” Through education, this has become possible. The irony of the situation is that Micronesians are now using what they have learned as a weapon, not to destroy but to gain equality and social justice, not only against their masters, but also against the archaic, the traditionalist, element. (p. 93)

Education is now the basic tool for survival in a modern island setting and has made an impact on almost every aspect of life in the community. Heine (1974) stated that, “Micronesia knows that she cannot go it alone” (p. 94). The dilemma that Heine alludes to is the heavy reliance on the United States and outside support for the modern social and economic development of Micronesians. Heine suggested that education is part of the solution toward reducing that dependency. David Ramarui (1976), the first Micronesian to head the department of education for the entire Micronesian region prior to independence, stated that the most important national goal for Micronesia is to establish a center for a truly Micronesian institution of higher learning.

There is a concern that some of the languages of Micronesia may slowly disappear due to the strong influence of Western culture in particular and the use of English in education, commerce and regional communication even within the Micronesian region itself. Without English, the regions will not be able to communicate

with each other and with the rest of the world. Despite many years of federal assistance to promote bilingual education, English still dominates in education particularly at the higher levels starting from grades three and above. Materials have been developed in the various vernacular languages, however, they are far from adequate to cover the subject areas. English textbooks dominate the materials in the schools. Ramarui (1976) wrote that bilingual and bicultural education funded by these grants would hopefully

. . .blend the inevitable values influenced by the American style of education and American culture with the various Micronesian cultural heritage and values so that Micronesia's identity will not be lost" (p. 13).

Education also plays a subtle role in the transformation of cultural norms to a certain extent. Whereas traditional education was strictly based on certain rules and not universally applied, Western education is generally intended to be all inclusive and should not discriminate based on social status and gender. All children are expected to learn a standard curriculum. The generations that receive formal education must now cope with the challenges of adapting and adopting new values and knowledge into their cultural norms when necessary. At times, there are obviously conflicts between the two. The "liberation of the mind" that Heine alluded to earlier is in relation to the dilemma that Micronesians face with respect to the suppression by the traditional culture and the liberation of the individual through modernization. Micronesians are now able, through education, to fight against social injustice both within and outside of Micronesia (Heine, 1974). Another Micronesian scholar (Sweeter, Sachuo, 1992) described the process of Western education as a "powerful cultural force" (p. 3) in the socialization of the young to foreign ways as well as "indelible imprints of colonialism" (p. 8) and that U.S.

education is . . . “a disaster in the making. . .” (p. 32) because, in his view, it created false expectations for the people in the islands since the education system is patterned after U.S. society that does not exist in Micronesia.

Ramarui (1976) on the other hand, raised the issue of education’s impact on Micronesians by asking questions related to the extent of the impact of education on the people politically, socially and economically. Were Micronesians victimized by education and as a result became more subservient to alien domination yet also dependent on foreign economic support? Is education a vehicle merely to succeed in a wage economy at the cost of sacrificing one’s culture?

Colleta (1980) in his analysis of education in one of the FSM States, Pohnpei, concluded that the process of education transformed a process of cultural transmission that was fully in the control of the Pohnpeians to a process that was alien and controlled by the formality of schooling characterized by cultural discontinuity. He further attributed the introduction of formal education as a major technological innovation by the colonial powers and, furthermore, political, social and economic expediencies guided the formation of the early schools in the islands. Interestingly, this process, Colleta asserted, also assured maintenance of a power relationship and servility.

This perspective by Colleta is of interest in that modern day leaders in Micronesia and even the people themselves, have totally accepted the important role that education has in the lives of every islander today. From a subsistence economy, the people, for the most part, have adopted a cash economy today. Furnivall (in Colleta, 1980 [1956, p. 383]) claimed that education is not to prepare for the business of life but rather for a life of business. In many ways, this is true in the islands as evidenced by the large

government sector and concentration of population in the capitol or centers of each island group. The observations noted above are being played out in the role of the college. How the college will meet the changing needs of the community while integrating outside influences and resources presents a major challenge.

Micronesians are indeed in a unique and challenging situation in terms of what lay beyond their islands, the relative ease of travel to new places, and the struggle for self-reliance amidst an emerging global and interdependent world. Education remains the key for success and even for survival of the people in the islands. Higher education in the islands must respond to the needs of the people in the community; however, in some respects, the needs of the people extend beyond their community and beyond their islands. For example, there is an increasing dependence of imported products including services for basic human survival such as medicine and fuel.

Aside from the continuing reliance on the United States and other countries for social and economic development, Micronesians have recognized the importance of learning about the rest of the world. Many people have been surprised by the uncommon awareness level of islanders about the world, and in particular, about the United States. Many of the younger islanders are now more aware of the United States than of some of the islands within the region. As Pacific islanders, more of them are in tune with what is happening in the world rather than what is happening in the neighboring Pacific islands. Part of the reason for this is the availability of television programs from the United States and the news media as well as written literature and books used in the schools. What does this mean for the COM-FSM? This is part of what the study will attempt to find out.

College of Micronesia – Federated States of Micronesia (COM-FSM)

In 1992, during the Second Special Session of the Congress of Micronesia in the Federated States of Micronesia, the public law that created the COM-FSM (Public Law 7-79) was passed. In 1993, COM-FSM was officially opened serving the four FSM states of Chuuk, Pohnpei, Yap and Kosrae. COM-FSM serves a group of islands spread out over a million square miles of ocean. The implications for the establishment of the college in a young nation are significant. The establishment of COM-FSM gave the new FSM government an opportunity to create and guide the purposes and priorities of a single institution of higher education. The political and educational demands influencing the college from all directions were already being felt in 1993 (Suhm, 1996). In order to understand where these demands and pressures are coming from and how these pressures and demands have affected and will continue to impact the college system, the COM-FSM needs to be placed in the proper historical context of Micronesia prior to independence for the FSM as described in the following section.

The mission statement of COM-FSM reflects its historical roots as well as its present status and future dreams:

Historically diverse, uniquely Micronesian, and globally connected, the College of Micronesia-FSM is the national institution of higher education of the Federated States of Micronesia. Originally established to develop teacher education, its current mission is to provide educational opportunity—academic, vocational and technical—for all people. Aimed at nourishing individual growth and national unity, scholarship and service, COM-FSM is dedicated to developing integrity, critical thinking skills, a breadth of vision, and the habit of reflection in an

educational environment enriched by cultural traditions. (COM-FSM General Catalog, 2001-2003)

The institutional goals approved by the Board of Regents in September of 1999 are listed below:

- Instill and maintain pride in the unique heritage of linguistic and cultural diversity in Micronesia.
- Promote national economic self-sufficiency/self-reliance
- Develop individual's capacity for reflection, vision, critical thinking, and analytic problem solving in relation to local, national and global issues.
- Provide a safe, healthy, and attractive environment that promotes a sense of achievement and belonging for students, faculty, and staff.
- Obtain an adequate and stable financial support for COM-FSM.
- Demonstrate fiscal, management, and programmatic accountability.
- Provide relevant, up-to-date, quality, technical, and vocational degree and certificate programs, continuing education activities, and services enhanced by state-of-the-art technology to facilitate satisfying careers or transfer to schools in any geographic setting.
- Attract, employ, and retain highly competent faculty and staff who pursue professional development and contribute to a positive institutional culture which encourages honesty, appropriate moral values, and respect for human and cultural diversity.

- Establish partnerships with educational institutions, national and state governments, businesses, and other community agencies to identify and address common goals.
- Conduct necessary and appropriate research. (COM-FSM General Catalog, 2001-2003)

The mission and goals are not much different from many of the missions and goals of other colleges. Yet, COM-FSM is very different from other U.S. colleges in terms of student population, community and cultural characteristics, political origin, fiscal situations, and logistical circumstance. As can be seen in the missions and goals, the COM-FSM desires to do everything that a college in the U.S. generally can do plus more. The COM-FSM is expected to have a major role in the development of a young nation. In order to understand the role that COM-FSM has in terms of nation building, a brief explanation of how the COM-FSM evolved follows.

Early Teacher Training Programs

COM-FSM parallels the development of the region politically. The first taste for college education was when the American Administration offered scholarships and fellowships for college level education in the United States (Heine, 1974). However, the need to add by increments educational levels and to train indigenous teachers was the first step toward what eventually became the College of Micronesia and eventually, for each of the island nations, their own college system.

Several documents including information from the current college catalog for the COM-FSM showed the chronological history leading toward the establishment of the current system in the FSM. I would like to note here that this historical background also

applies to the college systems in the Republics of Palau and the Marshall Islands until they became separate college systems under their respective governments.

The early teacher trainees received their education in Guam from the Marianas Area Teacher Training School established in 1947. A year later, this school relocated to Truk (now Chuuk in FSM) and renamed Pacific Islands Teacher Training School. The program in Truk started as a two-year program then added another year. The Truk Program was later transformed into a four-year high school program in Ponape (now Pohnpei) in 1952 (Edwin, Norma, personal notes, 2001).

As education in the region increased in the 1950s and 1960s, a tertiary level program was instituted with assistance from the University of Hawaii in 1963 called Micronesian Teacher Education Center (MTEC) in Ponape (Pohnpei) at the public high school campus. Eventually, high schools were opened in all the island groups across Micronesia with the accompanying teacher training centers at each district center or capitol of each island group. The island groups at the time consisted of Marianas, Palau, Truk (Chuuk now), Ponape (Pohnpei now, and also Kosrae that was part of Pohnpei prior to independence), Yap and the Marshall Islands. Between 1963 and 1970, MTEC offered in-service teacher training, pre-service associate of science degree, and eventually became the Community College of Micronesia (CCM).

In 1974, CCM added business management and incorporated the Trust Territory Nursing program in Saipan. In 1975, associate of arts degrees made it possible for students to transfer to four-year institutions abroad. Three years later in 1978, the Micronesian Occupational Center in Palau merged with CCM and the School of Nursing

program to form the College of Micronesia (COM) system. In the same year, the CCM received accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

A three-year program in elementary education and special education was in place at CCM by 1982. Associate of science degrees in agriculture and marine sciences were added between 1982 and 1986..

In 1986, the School of Nursing campus in Saipan was transferred to the Marshall Islands when the Marianas (Northern Marianas) became a separate political entity. By 1989, the School of Nursing separated from the COM system and became the College of Micronesia-Majuro in the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Nineteen ninety-one was a historical year when the respective new governments of the FSM, the Republic of Palau and the Republic of the Marshall Islands signed an agreement giving the colleges more local autonomy. In 1992, FSM established the COM-FSM as a public corporation and in 1993, CCM separated completely from the three-country COM system to become the COM-FSM.

COM-FSM added new programs and established articulation agreements with Chaminade University in Hawaii, Hawaii Pacific University, Guam Community College and the University of Guam. A three-year program in educational leadership was then added and the COM-FSM participated in various U.S. federally funded programs (Talent Search, Title III for strengthening institutions, Upward Bound). It should be noted that the programs were based in different states.

Between 1996 and 1999, more degree and certificate programs were added in the areas of health, media studies, Micronesian studies, and hotel and restaurant management, among others. Other articulation agreements were signed with the various

campuses of the University of Hawaii, and an agreement to offer a four-year elementary education program at COM-FSM National Campus by the University of Guam was approved and implemented.

An added responsibility was given to COM-FSM when the leaders of the FSM designated the college to be the lead agency for the Micronesian Maritime and Fishery Academy (MMFA) based in Yap State. WASC also reaffirmed the COM-FSM accreditation for the next six years (COM-FSM General Catalog: 1999-2000).

The development of the college since its origin is a reflection of the political development in the region. As the island groups regained their political sovereignty, the new political entities assumed whatever was on site that could be divided. The consolidation of programs at the FSM resulted in the COM-FSM that now serves the national government and each of the four states that make up the federation. Palau took over the Micronesian Occupation Center (now Palau Community College), and the Marshalls received the Nursing School that became the College of the Marshall Islands. This was formalized in the agreement among the three countries signed in 1991.

The agreement effectively dismantled the existing regional college system to allow the newly independent nations of the FSM, Palau (in 1994), and the Marshalls to control and manage their respective higher education institution to meet their respective development needs. In the 1986 College of Micronesia Masterplan, the desire for economic development and college opportunities for the people were the two main goals (College of Micronesia, 1986). The two goals as stated in the plan are as applicable today with the COM-FSM as they were over a decade ago.

National and State Campuses

The training centers in the former island groups of Chuuk, Yap and Kosrae became part of the COM-FSM and were designated as state campuses. The campus of the former College of Micronesia in Pohnpei became the Pohnpei State campus. The FSM Fisheries and Marine Institute, now under the direction of COM-FSM, is located in Yap State and offers fishing, navigation and marine engineering as core programs and supplemented by related programs.

While the mission of the COM-FSM is to provide educational opportunities in the academic, vocational and technical areas for all people in the FSM toward individual growth and national unity, the priorities at the state campuses are to “provide short and long term academic and vocational, certificate and degree programs” to respond to the needs of the local communities and governments as well as to provide remedial programs to “bridge the gap between high school and college” (COM-FSM College Catalog, 1999, p. 20).

The range of enrollment among the four campuses was approximately 83 students in Yap Campus, 736 students in Chuuk, while the National Campus had around 942 in the fall of 2001. A variety of courses both specialized and degree-related are offered. All campuses are partially sustained by federal grants from PELL Grants, Land Grants and others. The state campuses are located on either rented or government land (COM-FSM College Catalog, 1999).

Land Tenure System

Heine (1974) wrote about one of the former Micronesian entities, the Marshall Islands, that land is essential in economic development and yet the Marshalls has a land tenure system that resembles a feudal system. Commoners stand to lose rights to land if

they are not supportive of certain chiefs who frequently have authority over certain lands as well as have influence in government and traditional functions. Heine's observations directly relate to an ongoing situation in the islands including the FSM. The need to rent or own land has been a major consideration in all government operations including the college itself. Land issues in the islands, could pose potential problems for the college as it has for the elementary and secondary education facilities. Individuals rarely own land; clans and extended families generally control land matters. Due to land rental issues, some schools in some of the states have been closed by landowners. Although the governments have the power of eminent domain in their constitution, it has never been utilized. Instead governments negotiate to rent or exchange land as much as possible, a practice that the government frequently could not afford in view of the limited funding for payment of rental and the limited amount of land for exchange.

This is in sharp contrast to the frequently coercive delineation of land ownership by the four previous administrations. In many respects, the confusion and controversy surrounding land issues in the islands today are the result of the early division and taking of land from their original owners. Subsequent transfer of power created more confusion and alienation of land from the rightful owners (Hezel, 1995; Alkire, 1999, in Kiste, Marshall, 1999). To this day, families continue to describe, if only through oral history, their ownership of certain locations.

Government and Politics

As noted earlier, the political system of the United States serves as the model for all the governments in Micronesia after their independence. Within the Federated States of Micronesia, there are three levels of government: national, state and municipal. Within

each of these levels with the exception of the municipal level, there are three branches of government. In addition, traditional authority continues to this day. The influence of traditional systems is strong in most of the islands except for Kosrae and to some extent, Chuuk.

The national government has power over matters pertaining to the nation as a whole. From among the members of the FSM Congress, a member is elected to serve as the president of the nation. The executive at the national level is headed by a president and a vice-president with the usual cabinet members. The key positions in government are headed by cabinet members who were nominated and approved, through advice and consent by the FSM Congress. Education is under the Department of Health, Education & Social Affairs (DHES). The secretary of DHES is a member of the FSM President's cabinet. Although the secretary does not have supervisory authority over the only public community college in the FSM, the department and the college interact on various matters and the college could be affected directly or indirectly by policies from this Department. The COM-FSM President as well as the staff of the college participate in various FSM-wide committee activities related to training and education. The college president is also a member of the Cabinet.

The Unicameral Congress consists of fourteen members. The term is two years for ten members and four years for four members. Member representatives consist of Chuuk (5); Pohnpei (3), Yap (1) and Kosrae (1) who serve two-year terms; one member from each state serves a four-year term. Matters relating to education are assigned to the committee on Health, Education and Social Affairs.

A chief justice heads the judiciary branch that consists of a supreme court and is independent of the government. The U.S. legal system is generally followed in the FSM courts. Most of the legal professionals are graduates of law schools in the United States.

Internal matters in each of the four FSM states are under the jurisdiction of the local state governments. Each state has an executive, legislative and judicial branch. Chuuk is the only state that has a bicameral legislative body. Governors are elected state-wide and serve for four-years with a maximum of two terms; the same applies with lieutenant governors. Education is a major department in all of the states and is headed by a director of education who reports to the governor. Each state, except Chuuk, has its own unicameral legislative body and education is assigned to the health, education and welfare committee. All the four states also have their own supreme courts.

Another layer of authority is the municipal government and the traditional system. FSM government recognizes the role of traditional leaders in the community. The state constitution of Yap provides for two councils of traditional leaders who actually play a powerful role in the government especially when it comes time to select political candidates. They also have veto power over legislation that relates to traditional norms and practices. Traditional title-holders sometimes run for elected positions and serve in both roles.

FSM's estimated population as of 1996 is about 105,506 (Asian Development Bank, 1997). The main source of financial support is the United States as provided for under the Compact of Free Association. Other sources of aid come from Japan, Australia, China, New Zealand, to name a few. Over half of the population in the FSM is of school age and this poses significant challenges in the years to come particularly due to the

uncertainty of funding support from the United States that makes up about two thirds of the total national revenue. The condition of the schools both physically and academically requires major improvement. Education is compulsory at least up to the eighth grade or up to age fourteen, and at least half of the population are of elementary and junior high school level age.

Conclusion

Halfway around the world, community colleges in the United States are facing what they have always faced since their inception—clarification of their identity and purpose and how best to serve the public in a period of rapid changes both in the United States and around the world. Meanwhile, the only higher education institution in the far away Pacific of the Federated States of Micronesia is also trying to cope with similar questions of identity and purpose, if not survival, in order to serve a constituency spread out in an area of ocean approximately the size of the United States.

President Susan Moses, a long time educator in the region, has set the tone for the future of COM-FSM as one of excellence and as a potential hub of learning in the FSM. In addition, she foresaw the College as providing technologically oriented library services, as an institution that parents will be proud to send their children to, and as the college of first choice for students desiring postsecondary education (Suhm, 1996). For the 100,000 plus population of the FSM and its sole national college system, the hopes and dreams expressed by President Susan Moses are reflections of the hopes and dreams of the first Micronesian Director of Education, David Ramarui, who was one of the early leaders of education who made the first college in Micronesia a reality.

The hopes and dreams for many in FSM may depend in part by the dynamics and the influence of political leaders, their perception of the purposes and priorities of the College, and the policies that emanate from these perceptions.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This study attempts to determine the perceptions of political leaders in the Federated States of Micronesia relating to the purposes and priorities of the College of Micronesia-Federated States of Micronesia System (COM-FSM), how these perceptions are aligned to the officially stated mission and goals of the COM-FSM, and whether there may be similar or dissimilar perceptions between the national and state participants. To accomplish this, the qualitative research method using the case study approach was employed.

Methodological Overview

Rossmann and Rallis (1998, as cited in Marshall and Rossmann, 1999) described qualitative research as research that occurs in the natural world using multiple methods, is emergent and fundamentally interpretive. Marshall (1987, as cited in Marshall and Rossmann, 1999) described the benefits of qualitative research particularly in depicting complex social phenomena, in studying “problems in cases in which experiments would be unethical,” for “research on real, as opposed to stated, organizational goals,” research that explores “where and why policy and local knowledge and practice are at odds” (p. 57).

The dimensions of the research questions involving policy, cultural factors, levels of policy-making and implementations, levels of authority and power, and potentially

conflicting priorities within policy and policy-makers, make the qualitative approach appropriate. Glesne (1999) asserts that qualitative research deals with “multiple, socially constructed realities or ‘qualities’ that are complex and indivisible into discrete variables,” and that the task of the researcher is to understand how participants in these settings “construct the world around them” (p. 5). Woolcott (1994) used the term “qualitative inquiry” rather than qualitative research to “suggest a broad range of scholarly activity that encompasses creative dimensions beyond a preoccupation with data per se” (p. 4). He described the three ways of collecting data in qualitative inquiry as experiencing, enquiring and examining. By applying the qualitative research method, using the case study strategy, the importance of the participants’ experiences, historical, cultural and political frames of reference in their respective settings are acknowledged and accommodated.

Research Design

Single Case Study Strategy

The case study strategy in qualitative research has become prevalent in studying society and culture with a focus on groups or organizations (Marshall and Rossman, 1999; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1994). Yin (1994) offers that one of the rationales for a single case study is the uniqueness of a case. This case study used three data collection techniques: interview, document review and observation.

The case study approach is appropriate for this study for the following reasons:

1. The focus of the study is an organization within a larger society consisting of different groups of cultures and societies. The focus or the case for the study is the College of Micronesia in the Federated States of Micronesia system (COM-FSM), the

sole higher education institution with a national campus and four state campuses in a particular island nation. Three of the state campuses: Chuuk, Yap and Kosrae, are located in different island groups each with its own set of cultures and languages. The national campus and the Pohnpei State campus are located in the main island group of Pohnpei, where the capital of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) National Government is located.

2. Immersion in the setting is necessary in order to provide the level of description needed for meaningful analysis and interpretation. The setting for this study is not easy to describe without understanding the history, geography and the culture of the people. These along with the introduction of new systems such as higher education and formal education in general and government structures based on democratic principles serve to make this study even more involved.

3. Determination of the “world views” of the respondents and the researcher serving as the instrument will contribute towards the “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of perspectives based on oral narrative data gathered from natural settings, review of pertinent documents and observation of settings and situations.

The researcher’s theoretical framework including background and extent of prior acquaintance or involvement with the case and the participants also provided some of the boundaries for the “thick description” that was generated from the data. The theoretical framework helped guide the research process including data collection strategies, identification of relevant concepts, analysis and interpretation of the findings (Schultz, 1988, as cited in Merriam, 1999). Merriam (1999) explained that the researcher’s orientation serves as the “structure, the scaffolding, the frame of the study”

(p. 44). Schatzman and Strauss (1974) described theoretical framework as providing some of the initial order and control for what may otherwise be a chaotic situation, and Yin (1994) describes it as a blueprint for a research study.

In defining the researcher's theoretical framework, the researcher holds the assumption that organizational priorities and goals are perceived in different ways depending on an array of factors affecting individuals such as culture, political stance, gender, educational background, the particular period in time, among others. As Thomas (1949) noted, "If men [or women] define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (cited in Marshall and Rossman, 1999, p. 301). How those in power articulate their perceptions may have a bearing on how these perceptions are translated into policy. The researcher also initially held the assumption that different levels of government such as the state and national governments in this study, would hold certain dissimilar views with respect to the roles of the College. This assumption was based on the known historical and cultural experiences of the states as well as the ongoing challenges in addressing national and state development needs during a critical period of its nation-building effort.

The research questions focus on perceptions, feelings, opinions, and specific understanding of information. The respondents in this study illustrate the "complexities of a situation" as well as offer the advantage of hindsight that may be relevant to the present (Merriam, 1999, p. 30). Respondents also presented certain aspects of their personalities on issues in a variety of ways and from their own respective viewpoints (Merriam, 1999). While the respondents are similar in terms of their positions, they have differences in terms of their length in office, background within their respective cultures,

educational background, and their exposure to issues related to institutions of higher learning. The worldview of each of the participants offered a rich variety of perspectives coming from their leadership status and political situation, and their positions in the context of their respective islands and cultures.

4. A single case study may require more than one unit of analysis. Yin (1994) explained that in an organizational study, the embedded units might also be considered as processes. Yin called this kind of study, “embedded case study design” (p. 42) and the units of analysis as “embedded units of analysis” (p. 44). The design of the study is the single case study design using embedded units of analysis. The units of analysis consisted of the fifteen respondents from the national and state levels in the FSM. Additional data collected from documents and notes allow for a more comprehensive perspective, for validating data sources and for cross-checking (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Yin (1994) referred to subunits not only as helpful tools for “focusing a case study inquiry” but also as tools for detecting possible “slippage” (p. 42) of the study’s orientation during the course of the study. Lipset, Trow and Coleman (1956, as cited in Yin, 1994) provided a helpful model for conceptualizing embedded units of analysis. This model shows the types of data to be collected for each level of analysis. As illustrated in Figure 1 on page 70, the researcher conducted the data collection process, coding, analysis and report preparation based on this model. The model helped maintain the focus of the study.

Strategies and contingency plans were critical in the course of the study. More

Figure 1. Case study using embedded units of analysis at the state and national levels.

Research Questions	COM-FSM Stated Roles And Priorities	Documents on Roles and Priorities	Observations	Perceptions of Leaders
<p>1. What are the stated roles and priorities at the National/State Campuses.</p> <p>2. How do national and state leaders perceive these roles and priorities at the national and the respective campuses.</p> <p>3. In what way, if any, are these perceptions similar and dissimilar at both levels; which perceptions are consistent or inconsistent with the stated roles and priorities.</p>	<p>General Catalog 2001-2003; Mission Statement: Acts as national institution of higher education of FSM providing academic, vocational and technical programs; nourish individual growth, national unity, scholarship/service, and acknowledgment of rich cultural traditions.</p> <p>Institutional goals: Instill pride in unique diverse cultural heritage; promote self-sufficiency, develop individual capacity for solving local, national and global issues; promote healthy environment; stable financial support, quality programs and staff to facilitate careers or transfer to other schools; partner with other institutions; conduct research.</p>	<p>Official statements and documents such as catalogs, accreditation reports, self-study reports, budget presentations, board meeting minutes, newsletters, policy statements, historical documents related to the development of the College, legal documents establishing the College, among others. Online documents related to events in the FSM, COFA, and other information.</p>	<p>Interaction of college officials, staff, students on campus, meetings of board members and college officials, informal gatherings involving college staff, interaction and conduct during budget hearing, graduation ceremony activities and presentations, openness and accessibility, among others.</p> <p>Prior knowledge, experiences, and possible biases of researcher.</p>	<p>Conversations related to the roles and priorities of the College, personal experiences as related by interviewee, opinions and speculations related to the roles and priorities of the college, historical knowledge and inferences/references on certain roles and priorities of the college, general statements, suggested actions, comparison statements, expressions of frustration, general observations on certain issues, hopes/dreams, among others.</p>
<p><i>Respondents: National Level(Officials at Executive Branch including Education Division, Congress of Micronesia, College of Micronesia Board of Regents and Officials); State Level: Executive (Governors or Lt. Governors), and Legislative Branches (Chair or Representative of Education Committees in each legislature)</i></p>				

than one location for the sources of documents were visited in order to ensure that as much relevant information was gathered. Substitute respondents were identified early in the process. Schedules of events such as board meetings, sessions of congress were explored in advance through personal and formal communications with appropriate agencies and individuals. Personal interaction during the course of the researcher's involvement over the years in the region helped facilitate access to documents, respondents and other relevant resources.

Research Sites

In order to understand the logistics of the region (See maps in Appendix B1 and B2.) and the process required to conduct the study, a brief explanation is offered here:

1. National Level located in the FSM capitol at Palikir, Pohnpei State. Eight of the fifteen interviews were conducted in Pohnpei State; including the two respondents from the State level. With the exception of one, all of the interviews with the national level respondents took place at Pohnpei State. COM-FSM's national campus is also at Palikir. Most of the document reviews were also conducted in the State of Pohnpei. Pohnpei State government and Pohnpei State campus are located in Kolonia, about a half hour drive from Palikir. The Pohnpei State campus was formerly the main campus for the College of Micronesia before it became COM-FSM.
2. Kosrae State is about 347 miles from Pohnpei State. At Kosrae, the researcher interviewed three leaders, including one national level respondent, visited the state campus and met with campus officials.
3. In the State of Chuuk, the researcher interviewed the two political leaders,

toured the State college campus and conducted informal interviews with the acting director of the campus and some of the college staff. The campus tour was given by a college student who shared some of her views about the college during the tour. Chuuk is about an hour away by jet from Pohnpei State and about one hour and 45 minutes from Guam.

4. In Yap, the researcher interviewed two political leaders, and had an informal interview with a government official who has knowledge about the COM-FSM. The researcher also met with the campus director, observed the campus site, met with campus staff, visited the FSM Fisheries and Marine Institute and discussed with FMI Director about the program. Yap is about a full day's travel from Pohnpei State and about a half-day travel including transit time from Saipan.

Continental Airlines is the only airline that links the major islands within Micronesia; few small planes connect the remote islands to the main islands. Travel through Micronesia is one of the most expensive in this part of the world. The researcher resides in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The most economical and least stressful travel schedule still required almost an all day travel itinerary as all flights to the islands must originate or transit from Guam, another 30 minutes flight from Saipan. Early morning flight schedules such as 1:30 a.m. departures or 4:30 a.m. departures were typical airline schedules for this region. Schedule of respondents also dictated the researcher's travel schedule.

Although the researcher has extensive experience and familiarity in the region in her former career, preliminary research work began in 1999 and culminated in 2002. A significant amount of documents were reviewed onsite at Pohnpei State for the most part,

a few in Yap, Kosrae and Chuuk States. Throughout the four years of research work, meetings and informal discussions also facilitated understanding and information gathering. Formal interviews of respondents at each of the four FSM states were conducted within a five months period in 2001. Several weeks were also spent in Palau to collect pertinent information at Palau Community College (PCC) Library and to gather information informally from some of the individuals who were involved with the College of Micronesia System before it became three separate college systems. Since 2000, PCC has had a significant number of students from Yap State. The researcher continued to stay abreast of developments at the College through the news media, reports, visiting the College website, meetings and conferences in the region, and communication with various individuals knowledgeable about the College.

The Interview Setting

Preparation

The process of gaining access for the interviews began at least three to four months in advance through informal communication to determine willingness, availability, and whether the intended respondent is appropriate for the study. Subsequently, a letter (Appendix C) was sent by mail or delivered in person by someone else to each of the respondents requesting for an interview at least a month in advance. A set of information related to the study was also included with the letter: a) topics for the interview, b) major research questions, c) proposal abstract, d) other data collection to be conducted intended only for the respondent's information, and, e) a sample of a consent form (Appendix D) consistent with the procedures of the University of San Diego Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects. A fax was also sent to all the

respondents and sometimes followed by phone calls. Once on site and after the respondent had agreed to the interview, follow up phone calls were made to set the time. Interview schedules were determined by the respondents for the most part. In two cases, it was the researcher who was asked to set the appointments for the interviews while in another two cases, the officials allowed the researcher to finish the first interview and proceed to their offices afterward. It was during the preparation for the first interview that the researcher learned informally that tape recording the interviews was not advisable and instead relied on recording the interviews as field notes.

Conducting the Interview

The researcher requested the respondents to decide the interview setting in every case. With the exception of one respondent who was interviewed at a hotel restaurant, all the interviews were held at the respondents' offices. The interview began with formalities appropriate for the occasion and the respondent by thanking the respondent; this was followed by an explanation of the interview and the purpose of the study. A copy of the interview guide (Appendix E) was presented to the respondent; however, the researcher noticed that most of the respondents did not really take the time to read it. The respondent was then requested to read and sign the Consent Form before proceeding with the interview. The researcher answered any question from respondents before starting the interview. Durations of the interview ranged from one hour to two hours with an average of about one hour and twenty minutes.

Follow Up

A few weeks after the researcher returned home, a letter of appreciation was sent to each respondent. Only two respondents requested copies of their interviews for their

review and reference. Within two weeks' time, the researcher sent by email attachment a double spaced transcript of the interviews to the two respondents with the request that any discrepancy or misinformation be corrected and sent back to the researcher. No comment was received from either respondent. After all the interviews were conducted, another letter describing the progress of the study and expressing appreciation was sent to each respondent.

Participant Selection

Criteria for Selection

The fifteen participants were selected based on their positions as leaders, as officials in government, as administrators in high-ranking positions, and officials in positions to influence and affect policies and priorities affecting agencies and institutions such as the COM-FSM. In addition, these participants were also selected for the wealth of information associated with their position and previous professions before entering politics or assuming their current positions. Marshall and Rossman (1999, p. 113) called this "elite" interviewing, and suggested that this type of interviewing offers advantages as well as disadvantages.

Elite Interviewing: Advantages and Disadvantages

Elite interviewing advantages relate to their perspective of organizations at the macro level, their familiarity with policies, national and local development goals and plans, the structure of government, and their intimate knowledge of the cultural practices and expectations in their communities. Other advantages to elite interviewing include their potential ability to contribute insights during the interview process and their comfort with open-ended interviews.

The majority of the respondents also hold high positions in their respective cultural traditions allowing for a good grasp of both worlds, traditional and modern. Several of the more senior political leaders were key figures in the formation of the FSM as an independent nation as well as high-ranking officials during the Trust Territory administration of Micronesia. One of the respondents is female. With the exception of one respondent, all are indigenous peoples. The non-indigenous respondent has been living in Micronesia for over thirty years and is the spouse of a high-ranking government official who also holds a high traditional rank in his municipality.

As Marshalls and Rossman (1999, p. 114) pointed out, the researcher may be constrained to the need to adapt to the “predilections” of the respondent who can take charge of the interview. This did not present a problem to the researcher in view of the rich information provided by the respondents when this occurred. Furthermore, the respondents who tended to take charge also tended to address other issues or topics related to the research questions as well as generate more information without being prompted. The researcher viewed this as an indication of the interview guide’s level of coherence.

Protection of Human Subjects

The required letter of consent was sent to each respondent in advance. The researcher explained the purpose of the consent form before each respondent signed it. It was understood that the respondents could cease the interview at any time and that their statements would not be connected in any way with their respective names or titles unless specifically authorized to do so. Respondent anonymity was further protected by not identifying the respective states individually in connection with any quotes. The

researcher exercised every caution to honor this commitment. However, both the researcher and the respondents are fully aware of the difficulty in protecting their anonymity as public figures especially if the research is to be read, as it probably should, in the region.

The category of respondents consisting of the national government officials and the COM-FSM top official and board member may be easy to identify in some instances. The fact that they are highly visible public figures means that individual identification should be no more problematic than what a newspaper reporter would do. Galliher (1973, as cited in Barnes, 1980) pointed out that government officials who are accountable to the public do not have the same rights to privacy when matters relating to their roles in government are examined. The researcher was also mindful of any future ramifications from the interviews on the respondent as well as on the researcher.

This was controlled during the interview by checking with the respondents whether the information, if viewed as sensitive by the researcher, could be included in the study. There were instances when the respondent agreed to withhold certain stated information, but, for most of the interviews, the respondents themselves advised whether certain statements they made were off the record. The researcher followed the wishes of the respondents in every instance. It is anticipated that none of the written responses will jeopardize their personal or political positions. Confidential information served to provide context and background, and at times, to validate the respondents' comments.

Data Collection

Data collection consisted of interviews, document reviews and observations at the four FSM states over an intermittent period of about two years. Using an interview guide,

interviews were conducted within a six months period while document reviews went on for two years. Observation was an integral part of the interview and document review activities as well as purposeful observations during board meetings, budget hearing, and other events and activities associated with the COM-FSM. Appropriate field notes and samples of documents were also taken.

Interview Data

The Interview Guide

According to Patton (1990), the interview guide specifies topics or issues to be covered in outline form but lets the interviewer decide on the sequencing and the formulation of the questions during the interview. Patton described the strengths and weakness of this method as follows: The outline form allows for systematic data collection, increases comprehensiveness in that gaps in data could be filled during the interview, and that the interview is fairly conversational and situational; the weaknesses are that the interviewer may miss important topics and the flexibility in the sequencing and wording of the questions may reduce comparability of the responses. To avoid these weaknesses, the researcher attempted to follow an established logical sequence reflected in the guide. This strategy became easier toward the end of the interviews.

Rationale for the interview guide. Ever since the former Trust Territory entities split into four different political groups, the researcher has often wondered about the unique political and public service arrangements in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and how they play out at the two levels of government, national and state. FSM consists of four separate states with each state having its own culture, language and priorities. One of the research questions for this study is about the perception of political

leaders on the purposes and priorities of the College of Micronesia at both national and state levels. The researcher's prior and ongoing experience in the region led to the formulation of the guiding questions in the context of the COM-FSM and perception of political leaders at the national and state levels.

Recent developments at the COM-FSM as well as at the overall government level also provided the background for the guiding questions. Furthermore, the researcher's experience with officials and political leaders in the region influenced the overall direction of the guiding questions most of which are presupposition questions. Patton (1990) asserts that "qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit" (p. 178) and that this type of interviewing offer information that the researcher cannot directly observe such as what happened in the past and how the respondents organized their world and attach meanings to them. The respondents in this study were expected to have a lot to offer with respect to the COM-FSM and this type of question would allow them to go directly to their perception without affirming or denying whether they have knowledge or experience related to the question. The questions were primarily to elicit respondents' perceptions, opinions, feelings, and values based on the present for the most part, the future in terms of expectations, and the past. Glesne (1999) stated that the past and present provide good opportunities for stories, descriptions and interviewer probes. Questions were also worded to allow different voices for respondent with the assumption that the respondent may be speaking in a "personal voice" but using varying "degrees of directness" (Glesne, 1999, p. 73).

Focus of the interview guide. The interview guide focused on impressions or opinions about the mission, purposes and priorities of the COM-FSM campuses (national and state), transformation of the College into a four-year college, effectiveness of the COM-FSM in the context of the political structure of the FSM, its strengths and weaknesses, governance structure, the benefits of attending local versus off-island campus, role of colleges and role of elementary/secondary relating to remedial programs, implications related to the renegotiation of the Compact of Free Association, and the future of the college.

Researcher as the Instrument

All interviews were conducted by the researcher. The researcher capitalized on tacit knowledge and experience in the development of the questions, data collection and analysis. According to Schatzman and Strauss (1973, p. 53), “to entirely repress past experiences and their associated observational consequences is neither possible nor useful for the researcher.” They also suggested that past experience is also a “lever” (p. 123) that may lead to “subsidiary perspectives” of data. The researcher used her past experiences as one of the “levers” throughout the study to guide her to other relevant perspectives.

Similarly, Marshall and Rossman (1999) described intuition as having a role in the initial conceptualization of the research process such as the construction of the interview guide. For the purpose of this study, intuition also was supplemented with review of literature in the development of the research questions and the interview guide. However, the researcher did not rely on unsubstantiated intuitions or knowledge gained through personal experiences throughout the study.

Control for bias. The issue of researcher bias and control for bias was addressed through a review of the interview guide by knowledgeable individuals and through triangulation of data. Knowledgeable persons include a college president and a professor. Peer review of the interview guide was also conducted during a dissertation seminar class. Informal reviewers knowledgeable about COM-FSM and education in the FSM also suggested insights on the relevance of some of the issues raised in the guide as well as better wording of the questions. Transcripts were shared with respondents if requested for clarification, correction or updating of information. Trustworthiness of data collected was enhanced through triangulation of data generated from observations, document review and the interview (Glesne, 1999).

Documentation Data

Patton (1990) and Glesne (1999) explained that documents provide important information in addition to generating insights that may offer useful contextual dimensions in observations and interviewing. The stability of documents was described as one of its greatest assets in addition to it being grounded on “real-world issues and day-to-day concerns” that may be very useful in qualitative case studies (Merriam, 1998, p. 126). The historical background of COM-FSM and the process leading to the formation of the purposes and priorities of the organization, as well as current developments, served as the principal reason for using this method of data collection.

Types of Documents Reviewed

Documents that were reviewed included annual reports, budgets, congressional records, laws, accreditation reports, regulations, procedures, meeting minutes of the board of regents, college faculty and administration reports, newsletters for the College

and campuses, communication documents from policy makers such as governors, the president and congress/legislatures. Other documents included college catalogs, news media on the college, speeches regarding the college by elected officials and government officials, national plans, economic reports, program proposals and evaluations, and conference proceedings and recommendations. In addition, ongoing communication by email, telephone and other means were maintained with key people for the purpose of accessing information throughout the study as well as for verification of information such as population data and specific cultural information.

To stay current on developments in the FSM and the College, the researcher also accessed online data sources for news releases, special reports, videos, photos, and other events. Merriam (1998) explained that researchers no longer are the primary instrument for data gathering when collecting data online due to the software, process for selection, the type of technology, and their inherent biases, that are beyond the control of the researcher. The researcher exercised due caution by being mindful of the potential ethical implications and accuracy of online information. None of the online information came from unofficial websites.

Document Review Process

It should be noted that the documents review process commenced very early in the course of the proposal development until the completion of the study. Documents were obtained, copied, or summarized in notes for later reference. As expected, there were repetitions of information in numerous documents that also helped in affirming consistency of information. At least three file cabinet drawers of materials were gathered

throughout the process that augmented the other information the researcher has collected over the years about Micronesia.

Potential weaknesses of documents. While documents may serve as important sources for corroboration and evidence, there are certain potential weaknesses. These include bias on the part of the researcher in reviewing selected documents only, author bias that may be unknown to the researcher, and the possibility of missing or lost documents that in their availability would have provided significant information for the study (Patton, 1990). Merriam (1998, p. 122; citing Guba and Lincoln, 1981; citing Clark, 1967) lists a set of helpful questions for determining the authenticity and accuracy of documents that the researcher used as a guide.

Observations

The researcher utilized observation mainly as an extension of the information provided in the interview and documents review. According to Merriam (1998), observation is often interwoven with interviews and conversations. In this study, the researcher focused mainly on the subtle factors as described by Merriam (1998) that included symbolic and connotative meanings of words, informal and unplanned activities, nonverbal communication such as physical appearance and clues, and what should have occurred. In addition, comments on the researcher's thoughts and behavior formed part of the observation notes. Finally, cultural contexts and behaviors that added richness of information to the observations were noted. Observation notes were generated at all times beginning with entry, data collection and exit (Merriam, 1998). These notes included short memos about the data collection process, reflections, possible themes, and possible information to follow up. The researcher used these notes to help with the writing of the

findings as well as the analysis of the findings. The definition by Merriam (1998) of observer as participant fits the type of observation method used for this study. In this method, the researcher's role is known but the type of information or activities was controlled by the organization being observed.

What was observed. Observations were noted about the general physical appearance of the campuses (state and national), the atmosphere and interaction among college staff, students, events during a graduation ceremony, budget hearing in Congress, board of regents meetings, informal gatherings, and other events that were not specifically associated with the College but provide context and background information about the general education, political, economic, cultural and social conditions of the place. Social as well as official events generated some insights related mainly to the states' economic, social and political characteristics. Interactions with individuals and groups also served as points of information about the people, the nation, and the College.

Strengths and weaknesses of observations. Gaining entry, flexibility in generating new insights, least intrusive and enhancing qualities when combined with other method are some of the strengths of observation strategy (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). The weaknesses are the general issues of validity and reliability. Validity issues include exclusive reliance on the researcher's perception particularly when there is bias. Reliability issues relate to findings due to chance.

Internal coherence in the presentation of the findings and the research as a whole may counter validity concerns while reliability issues may be reduced through systematic processes and consistency of practice in the conduct of the research. With regard to this

research, the findings are unique to the study and the situation surrounding the study. Generalizability beyond this case study is not considered as part of the study's purpose.

Accuracy of Information

As in any research using document review, observation, interviews and surveys among others, there is the possibility that some of the information may be perceived as inaccurate or misleading. As Patton (1990) notes, "Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit" (p. 278). He further explained that the quality of the interview depends largely on the researcher's ability to "provide a framework within which people can respond comfortably, accurately, and honestly" (p. 179).

The researcher made every effort to determine whether potentially "inaccurate" responses have significant relevance to the study and the rationale underlying the responses. In addition, the researcher tried to gauge whether the responses would implicate the researcher and the respondent at any time, or would require further clarification or additional information to put the responses in their proper context. As much as possible, member-checking and immediate clarification of perceived "inaccuracies" were done during the interviews.

The researcher was mindful that information presented by respondents are to be respected. The researcher was aware that "inaccurate" information could emerge after the report is completed. Therefore, the researcher recognized the importance of contextualizing information generated by the study. The researcher is aware of the inherent limitation in the nature of this study with regard to detecting inaccuracies. In an

article by Altheide and Johnson, Criteria for Assessing Interpretive Validity in Qualitative Research, (in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p. 486-7) they suggested that:

As long as we strive to base our claims and interpretations of social life on data of any kind, we must have a logic for assessing and communicating the interactive process through which the investigator acquired the research experience and information. If we are to understand the “detailed means through which human beings engage in meaningful actions and create a world of their own or one that is shared with others” (Morgan, 1983, p. 397), we must acknowledge that “insufficient attention has as yet been devoted to evolving criteria for assessing the general quality and rigor of interpretive research” (Morgan, 1983, p. 399).

Data Analysis

Merriam (1998) described data collection and analysis as a recursive and dynamic process with analysis becoming “more intensive as the study progresses, and once all the data are in” (p. 155). Merriam also noted that the process of qualitative data analysis is highly intuitive and that without ongoing analysis, the researcher runs the risk of producing data that are voluminous, unfocused and repetitious. The suggestions by Bogdan and Biklen (1992, as cited in Merriam, 1998), and Miles and Huberman (1994), helped the researcher in the preliminary data analysis such as focusing on relevant data, developing strategies for pursuing data, writing reflective memos, exploring relevant literature that will help in the analysis, and expanding the analytic horizon to a higher level of abstraction.

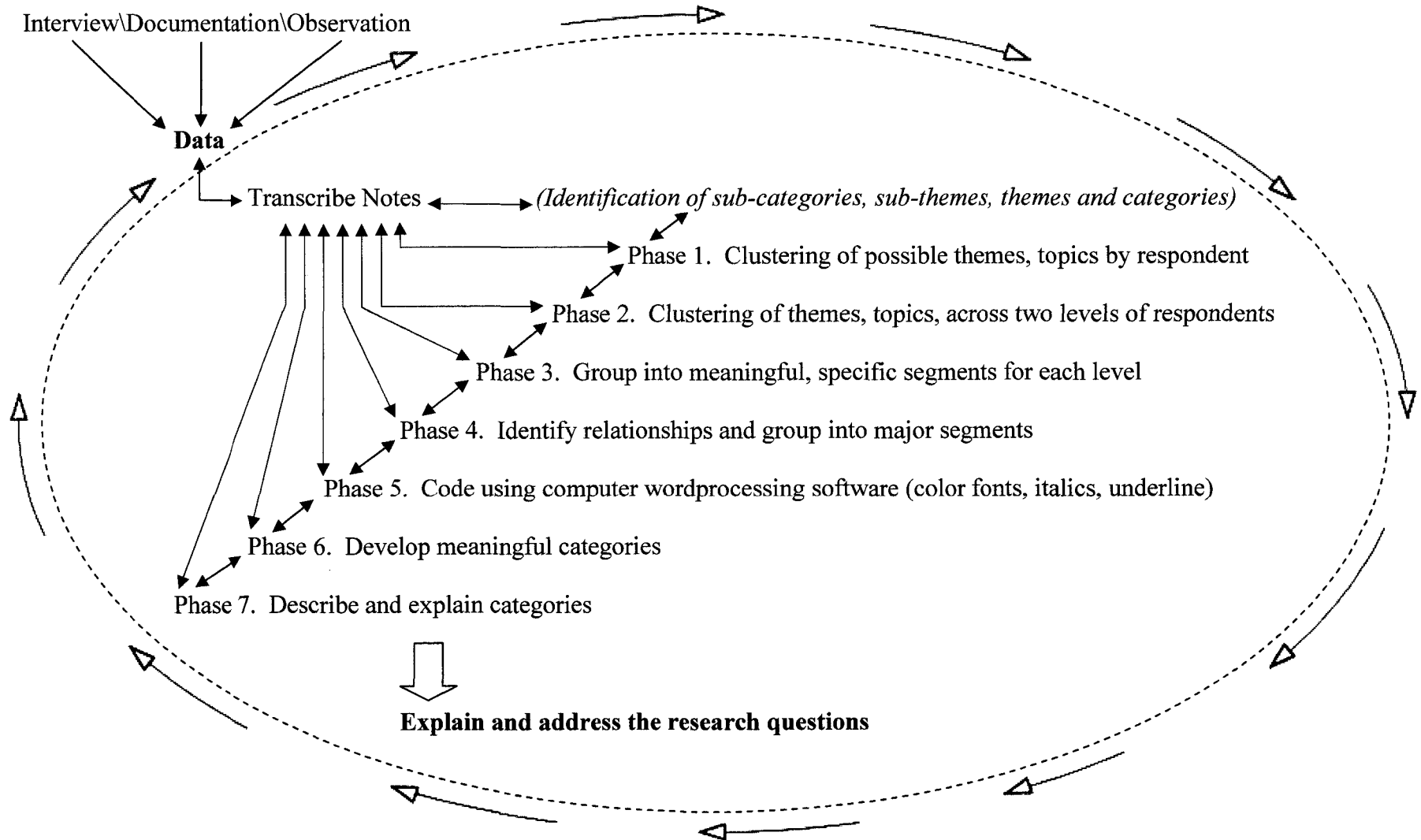
The development of categories, themes and patterns began at the first point of data collection using interview, document review and observation methods. In actuality,

the planning and writing of the research questions and the interview guides served as beginning of category formulation at least conceptually at first. In keeping with the true definition of qualitative research as an emerging process that will bring to light salient points for the researcher to focus upon, the researcher refrained from developing any categories before data collection.

The researcher used computer word processing software and tables to accomplish the data analysis process. Analytical and mechanical processes as illustrated in Figure 2 on page 88, involved transcriptions, segmentation of phrases to convey meaning or possible themes, grouping, further regrouping to reflect themes, developing color and font coding schemes to identify themes and finally, organizing relevant themes into categories. Sample tables reflecting the categories and themes are provided in Appendices F1 to F9.

Insights gained from previous experience, knowledge about the College and the region, the process of qualitative inquiry, and data gained from documentation and observations during the study guided the formulation of themes and categories as well as the mechanical display of the data. It is also important to point out that throughout the data analysis stage of this study, the heuristic process combined with repetitive actual analysis of written records formed the basis for the development of topics, clusters, themes, concepts, and categories. These categories and concepts were further analyzed to describe and interpret the perceptions of the political leadership at the national and state levels with respect to the roles and priorities of the COM-FSM. Furthermore, the process attempted to illustrate the similarities and dissimilarities among the perceptions of the

Figure 2. Analytical and mechanical data analysis process (Adapted from Carney, 1990, in Miles and Huberman, 1994).



two levels of political leadership and the possible implications of the phenomenon regarding the COM-FSM's situation.

Data Organization

A coding scheme was developed to help identify themes and patterns. Glesne (1999) described coding as a “progressive process of sorting and defining” (p. 135) pieces of data from observation notes, interview transcripts, documents, into meaningful sequence that will help the researcher make new connections, gain new insights and imagine how the final report will look like. Merriam (1998) explained that there are two levels of coding, “identifying information about the data and interpretive constructs related to analysis” (p. 164). Keeping the research questions constantly in focus, the researcher developed the following multilevel coding schemes:

1. Using computer word processing software, interviews were transcribed, edited and sorted into two groups: State and National. Individual interviews under each group were segmented according to topics, e.g., statements related to nation building, teacher education, roles, quality, etc. Next, segments by topics or concepts were combined across within the two separate groups. For each of the two groups, preliminary identification and clustering of themes and concepts was carried out. Using a table format, self-contained phrases, sentences or words were coded in color or font type. Three stages of formatting using the table format resulted in the next steps below.

2. Clusters were re-examined for internal consistency, similarities, as well and distinctness from other groups. Clusters were then grouped according to possible categories. Emerging categories were then organized to determine their relationship to the research questions, clarity of relationship and comprehensiveness for each of the two

groups as well as for each respondent. Topics that did not seem to fit anywhere were also identified and set aside for possible reference later on in the analysis.

3. A visual examination of the clusters to determine similarities and dissimilarities among respondents at each of the two levels was done.

4. By combining the two groups' clusters, a set of general themes and concepts emerged. Next, relationships were identified among the themes and clusters that suggested meaningful categories.

5. Using the constant comparative method of data analysis (Merriam, 1998), conceptual categories were developed that were heuristic and self contained. To stay close to the data and to ensure that the data management process did not limit or introduce superfluous information, the researcher kept revisiting the transcribed notes.

Summary

This is a case study with embedded units of analysis using the qualitative research approach. Semi-structured, open-ended interview guide was used to elicit perceptions of two levels of leaders with respect to the purposes and priorities of the COM-FSM. Document reviews and observations to augmented and enhanced information from the interviews. Multiple reviews, interpretations and analyses of information were conducted in the formulation of themes, topics and categories to produce meaningful descriptions and interpretations of the data in addressing the research questions. The next section presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

This study examines how political leaders at the national and state levels perceive the purposes and priorities of the College of Micronesia-Federated States of Micronesia (COM-FSM); what similarities or dissimilarities, if any, exist between the perceptions of the levels of government; and whether these perceptions are consistent with the College's stated purposes and priorities.

The section begins with the major and related findings. Next, salient perceptions and commentaries related to the purposes and priorities, followed by a description of the relationships across the emergent categories, themes, and a summary are presented. Tables in the appendices and figures are provided to illustrate the relationships among the themes.

Major Findings and Themes Related to the Major Findings

The major findings are: (a) Teacher training and vocational education are important roles for the College to play, and (b) there are elements of skepticism and uncertainty related to the teaching of island cultures and languages, as well as to the possible evolution of the College into a four-year institution.

The themes associated with the major findings are the general dissatisfaction with quality as well as a feeling of optimism about the College's potential. Other themes associated with the major findings include the perception that the leadership supports the

College, that there are high expectations and optimism about what the College could do, and that there is pride in the College as the nation's educational institution. Finally, the perceptions alluded that the College has the potential to provide the people with a sense of unity, ownership and belonging.

A majority of the respondents at both the national and state levels also believed that the College needs to prioritize the sciences, research and development of specific areas unique to the FSM such as marine resource studies, and place more emphasis on entrepreneurship to encourage private sector development and reduce reliance on government employment. However, they all agreed that in order to achieve these expectations, a good education and skill development are necessary. Conflicting perceptions were also noted in relation to the College's ability to respond to the needs at the state level.

These findings resulted from the interviews which generated a considerable amount of data related to: (a) assumptions and beliefs about the purposes and priorities of the College, (b) impressions on how things are done and why, (c) suggestions for change and improvement, (d) opinions on what programs should be offered and where, (e) ideas to improve or expand the College, (f) anticipation that the College will be the solution for the nation's development and progress, and (g) pride in the College and its political role as a unifying element viewed as critical for the FSM. The data also elicited themes related to concerns regarding quality, authority and relationship issues, and uncertainty surrounding future financial condition of the College.

Data from documents provided the context, background and additional information on some of the perceptions. Observation data suggest similar background

information with more focus on aspects of relationships, physical conditions and the organizational culture of the College. Observations and findings from documents are interwoven within the interview description and analyses.

The Important Roles of the College

The two most important perceived roles of the College are teacher training and vocational education. This finding is explained below.

Teacher Training

Background. To understand the respondents' perceptions related to this theme, a brief background might help in contextualizing the findings associated with teacher training. The associate degree is the current certification requirement for teachers in the FSM. It has been the requirement for more than three decades since the United States administered the region and it has never been fully enforced. College courses (generally remedial (developmental), vocational and certificate courses and some education courses) are taught at the state college campuses. Public schools are the responsibility of state governments and managed by a director of education who is hired by a state board of education. Teachers are hired and paid by the respective states. The National Government Division of Education has no jurisdiction on public schools except for setting teacher certification requirements, assessment and curriculum standards; state governments have no jurisdiction on the COM-FSM including the state campuses. The national government funds the College system. The College operates as a corporation under an independent board that represents the four states and the national government. Board members are appointed by the FSM President through advice and consent from the National Congress.

Importance of Teacher Training. Teacher training for certification purposes is considered a very important role of the College. The need for properly trained teachers is clearly in the minds of the respondents. This is further supported by national and state documents related to education and other social and economic development plans since the performance of the elementary and secondary schools affect everyone in the FSM. Perceived issues such as social and individual development, the nation's economic progress, political maturity through an educated citizenry, relationships within the nation and the world, and other issues associated with making the FSM a viable and respectable nation were linked with quality education. Qualified and dedicated teachers are needed to meet these expectations. A national respondent's comments illustrate these views:

We have been working hard to upgrade the knowledge, skills and competencies of our teachers to meet the certification requirements. Having these four campuses will give them [teachers] the opportunity to take courses. . . .In addition, it [the campus in each state] stimulates the economy in that the campuses will need to hire employees, provide materials and support. It is a form of capacity building in itself.

The data (See Appendix F.1) suggest strong agreement by both national and state leaders that the original intent of the College as a teacher training institution continues to be relevant. Teacher training is viewed as the foundation for the FSM's development as a nation, as well as the enlightenment of its individual citizens (See also Appendix F.7).

Other themes that emerged related to the importance of this perceived role are concerns regarding education quality at the elementary and secondary schools (See

Appendix F.5), the need for better coordination between the College and the schools, and the highly visible role of the College and the state campuses related to developmental programs. A national level respondent described his views related to the quality of education below:

If we start right, there should not be a need for remedial programs. . . .It is true that the schools are not to be fully blamed for the remedial needs of the students as the high schools do not educate students only for the sole purpose of attending college when they graduate. . . . I still don't know why we call certain programs remedial in this context. . . .These programs are meant to fill the gaps needed to take college courses as well as the gap created by the lack of good teachers, facilities and resources at the elementary and secondary levels. This is a stigma that is unhealthy and the focus should be to fix these gaps as much as possible.

Another national respondent pointed out that the need for developmental or remedial programs should not be used to justify the College's existence at either the national or state levels: "That shouldn't be the basis for the existence of the campuses because they are a college. It is one system and in all the states, they should have quality." Other national and state respondents felt that there really is not much choice since 80% of the students are inadequately prepared for college and that remedial programs provide the only opportunity for students to go to college.

At the First Nationwide Summit on Education, it was pointed out that a majority of the high school students did not pass the COM-FSM entrance test during the past three years and that only 6% of all the FSM freshmen were able to pass the college level math

(FSM DOE, 2000). More recently in 2000, about 58% of all FSM high school students tested was able to take college level English courses.

Two state respondents expressed a strong position and also questioned the need for remedial programs at the College and indirectly alluded to the role of the College in this regard:

High schools should do remedial programs. . . .We must be selective and admit [into college] students who are ready. We want to groom the best at our local institutions. It is a disservice to our students and we don't want to waste resources on remedial programs. . . .Students in remedial programs should go to vocational education. . . .Remedial programs are a waste of faculty time.

The data suggest that the notion of quality and remedial or developmental programs are closely linked with the ongoing need for qualified teachers. Furthermore, the high visibility of the College's developmental programs tends to further influence the perception and concern for the overall quality at the College.

The College's capability to provide training was noted by a few respondents and pointed out in a recent strategic planning document:

At the current time, there is little linkage between secondary education and postsecondary education curriculum and instruction. . . .Additionally, there is a general agreement that COM-FSM needs to be a leader in providing technical assistance and support services to the FSM education system, however, in practice COM-FSM has not been chosen by the National Division of Education or the States [departments of education] as the first choice for seeking technical assistance for program design and training. (FSM DOE, 2000, p. 80)

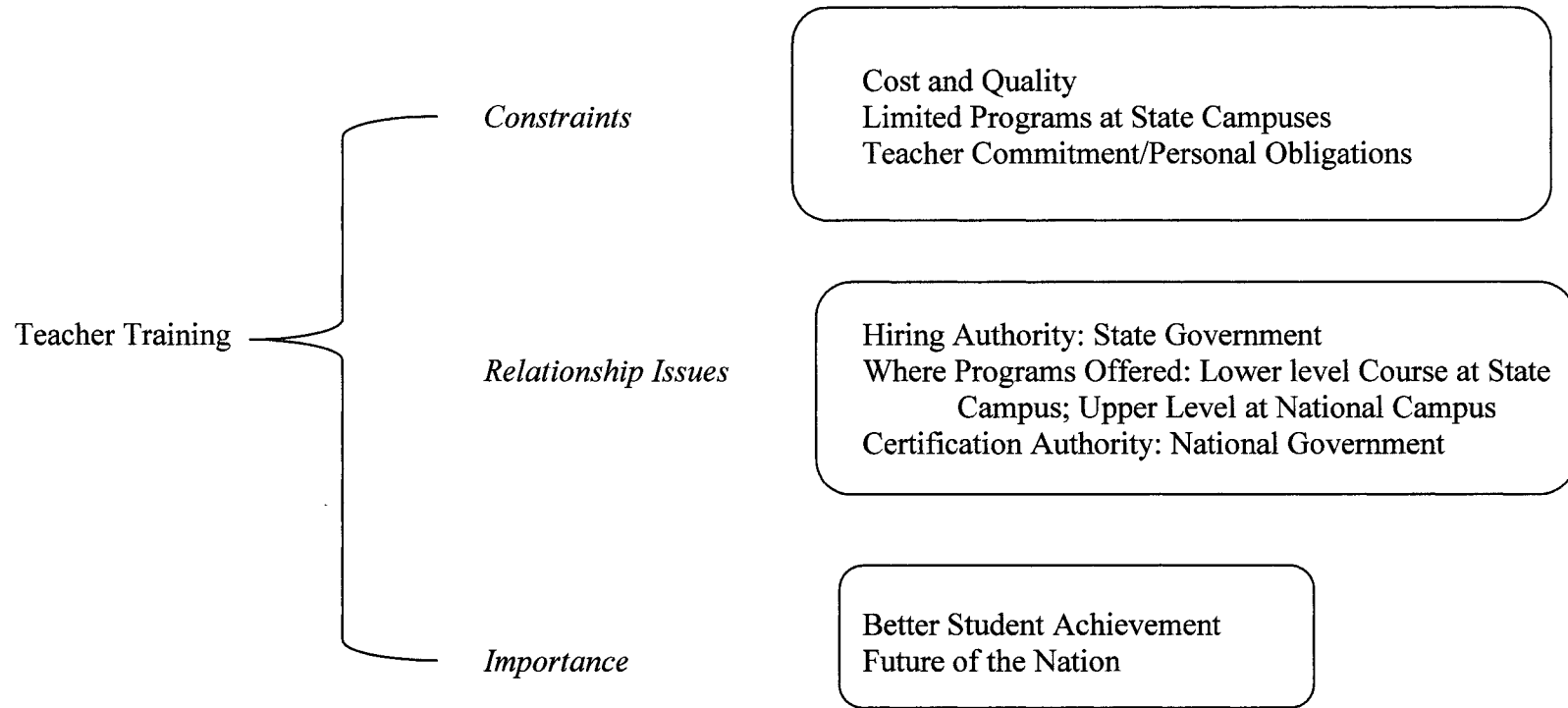
Difficulties and constraints. Respondents are aware of the problems and difficulties of training teachers in the FSM as reflected in the layers of perceptions in Figure 3, page 98. Many teachers are unable to fulfill the certification requirements. Some respondents indicated that the requirements are inadequate for modern day education standards. Several respondents at the national and state levels expressed feelings of dissatisfaction on the perceived lack of progress in education. Others recognized that the effort to train teachers would be a long and difficult process.

The data suggest that this situation is not new and that reports, summits, conferences, and other official publications point to the ongoing difficulty in the teacher certification effort. According to a report from the National Education Division (2000, pp. 8-9),

The normal FSM teacher has only an AA/AS degree, with a substantial percent having no degree. The AA/AS degree is often not in education related fields and beginning teachers often lack educational backgrounds. The same is true for content knowledge, teachers are often teaching subject areas without a sound understanding of their content. . . .Content knowledge of teachers is also largely not documented. Teachers need only possess an AA/AS degree to be certified to teach in the FSM. No provisions or requirements are made regarding either knowledge or basic educational knowledge such as appropriate teaching strategies, classroom management, or in the content knowledge of the courses they are teaching.

To illustrate the problem, in school year 98-99, about 54.5% of the teachers were AA or AS degree holders and 15.5% were BA/BS holders while the rest (about 29%)

Figure 3. Themes Context Chart: Teacher training an important role of the College



lacked college degree. Therefore, it is not surprising that teacher training remains a high priority in the minds of the respondents.

There is also a perception among respondents that teachers are trying their best under the circumstances as explained by a national respondent:

Teachers are required to obtain their credentials but there are no substitute teachers to replace them during the academic year. There are also not enough evening classes for teachers. . . .Students are not performing well. . . .

While training teachers is recognized as a priority and a major undertaking considering the circumstances, the data also suggest that courses at the state levels are inadequate or lack consistency. According to several respondents from both the national and the state levels, lack of progress in this effort also point to teachers themselves. Some teachers do not take advantage of opportunities due to other obligations. There is also the perception that despite difficulties, the College and some teachers are trying their best.

Some respondents believed that the existing programs are better than no program at all and that in this regard, the College has been providing a great service for the nation. A national respondent questioned the effectiveness of the effort pointing out that the millions of United States Federal dollars for training of teachers have not produced the expected results even when the associate degree requirement was extended four times and “now it is put on hold waiting for new regulations to be adopted.”

Where the program should be placed. State respondents felt that teacher training courses must be provided at the state campuses rather than the national campus. This sentiment is shared even within Pohnpei State where the national and the Pohnpei State campuses are located. According to a state respondent:

The state campus is a low-level campus that is only to prepare students for the main campus. That is not how I think it should be done. They [state] should have the same courses as what they have at the national campus. . . . We have big problems. . . . things move slowly and there are prejudice and distance that we must deal with. . . . The FSM is a nation with different situations and needs. The FSM is not one island. COM-FSM should allow campuses to offer all the programs they can have. State campuses should be the same level as the national campus.

A national respondent seemed to confirm this perception among state leaders; in addition, the respondent provided the rationale for the perception:

The COM-FSM is one system and all the states should have quality. The perception of low quality is due to funding limitations. The states can do the same as the national—if we have the resources and if we have a good leader who is capable of doing it. People avoid coming to resolution of the problems because there are no resources. We changed the states [campuses] from “continuing education centers” to campuses. We want real campuses and not Micky Mouse ones. What is a real campus? This has not been defined.

Upper level courses are typically offered at the national campus; however, a majority of the state level respondents expressed disagreement with this and stated that not only some but all of the comprehensive teacher training program should be made available at the state campuses and if there had to be a choice made on this matter, the priority should be given to the state campuses. Only a few of the state respondents agreed with the current system noting that some of the state campuses may not be prepared to

offer the comprehensive program at this time. This is interesting to note since the thinking of the faculty at the national campus is to concentrate upper level courses only at the national campus while certificate, remedial and vocational courses are to be offered at the state campuses (Communication, 2001). Other documentation and informal discussions revealed a similar mix of expectations related to other programs at the College. State respondents expect as much, if not all, of the courses to be taught at their respective states.

By contrast, most national respondents believed higher level courses should be taught on the national campus. Issues of unity, bringing students together, and funding implications were cited to support this preference. Figure 3 on page ___ further illustrates the themes elicited from the data related to the importance of the teacher training role of the College, relationship issues, and constraints to teacher training.

Education and the four-year institution. A few of the respondents expressed their views about the evolution of the College into a four-year institution in relation to the role of training teachers. The data suggest that a majority of the respondents was not aware that the four-year program discussed at the College would offer a bachelor's degree in education only. It is noteworthy, however, that most respondents are not fully aware of this potentially significant development in the role and effort by the College to upgrade teachers and to further strengthen its role in providing teacher training that may lead to overall improvement in education. The four-year program in education will be explained in more detail later in this chapter.

Summary

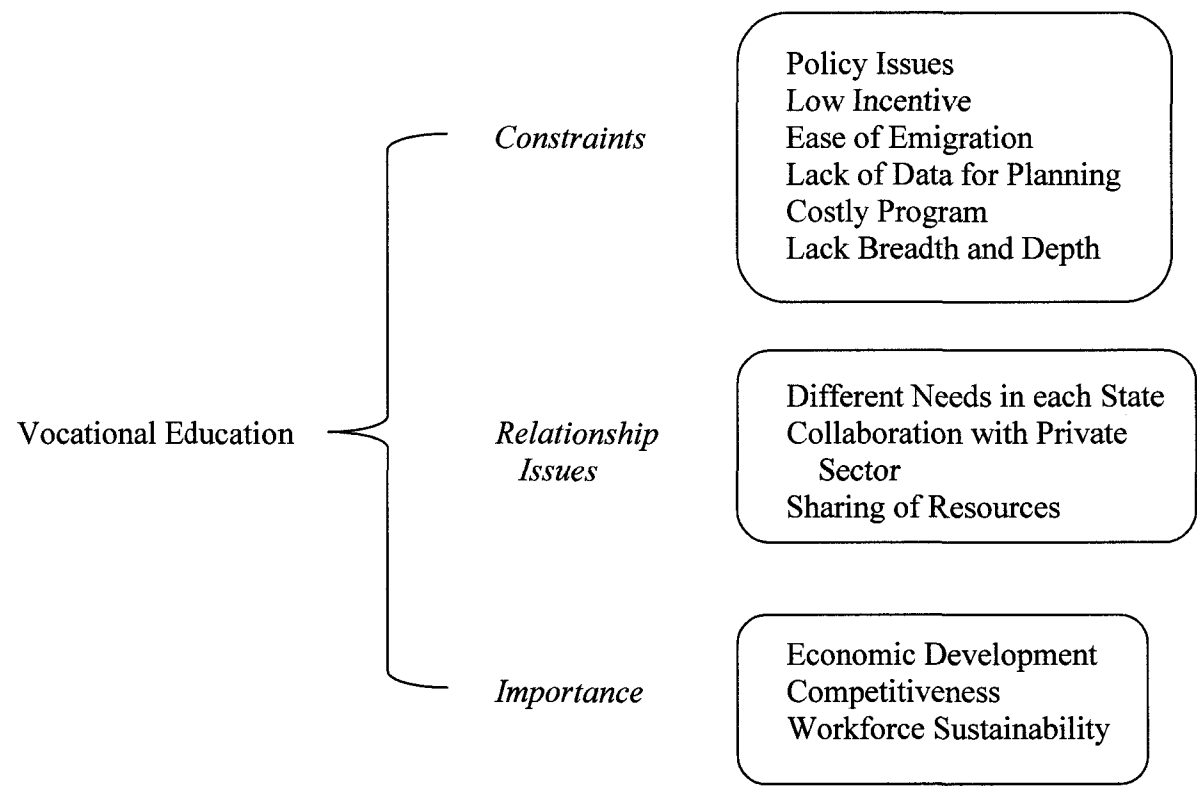
In sum, respondents are aware of the difficult circumstances surrounding teacher training as indicated by their comments that sympathized at times with teachers and at other times with the College. This may be the reason for the level of tolerance of the situation despite some of the criticisms and demands for quality education. Some respondents expressed frustration and impatience about the slow progress in preparing teachers to meet the certification requirements; however, respondents recognize the constraints involved, as well as the importance of putting qualified teachers in the FSM education system.

Vocational Education

Background. Like teacher training, vocational education has been an important priority in postsecondary education and in the high schools for decades in Micronesia. Vocational education was taught at the Palau Micronesian Occupational Center as part of the former College of Micronesia system. As an independent system for the FSM, the COM-FSM has since established its own vocational education programs.

Importance of Vocational Education. The emergent themes, as illustrated in Appendix F.2 and in Figure 4, page 103, suggest that, although vocational education is viewed in different ways, there was a recurring belief that it is very important especially for a new nation. The themes further illustrate underlying issues of priority, location, quality, management, and feasibility of the program under the current policy, cultural and economic environment. Vocational education, understandably, is the result of multiple influences from politicians, businesses, parents, and even the College itself. In addition, external forces such as evolution of technology, global economic developments, reliance on external funding sources, and even political events shape vocational education. All of

Figure 4. Themes context chart: Vocational education an important role of the College



these factors come to play in the views of the respondents, in the rationale for the program as stated in various documents, and in observed events.

Perceptions about vocational education. Among state respondents, themes that emerged concerned the program's relevance to jobs, the program's depth and breadth, the program's place in the College system, the need for better coordination/collaboration with private sector, associated stigma, quality, and the differences among states' needs for vocational education. The emphasis is to meet the needs of the states without much apparent reference to national needs. To illustrate an almost unanimous view about the location of the program, a national respondent expressed this sentiment:

The national campus should not be rushed to offer vocational education. It should be left to the states to do this because the need is in the states where the people are—where the business communities are located, and sharing of facilities and expertise should be encouraged in this setting to be more cost-effective.

This view is also consistent with a recent decision by College officials, and as indicated in the program descriptions in the College Catalog (2001-2003). Observations at the national and state campuses further confirmed this practice.

In addition, state respondent concerns focused on providing jobs to stem the emigration to the United States and the other U.S. affiliated entities such as Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. Respondents furthermore expressed commitment to prepare those who choose to leave the FSM to work abroad with the necessary work skills as described by a state respondent: "Vocational education [graduates] is easy to hire. . .should not only look at local [jobs] but also abroad." A significant number of state and

national respondents considered vocational education as one alternative for students who need remedial programs at the College.

A prevailing perception from state as well as national respondents is that collaboration is not happening between the schools, the College and the private sector. A suggestion that emerged is to consolidate all vocational education related activities under one agency in order to reduce bureaucracy, confusion, and to maximize the use of the limited resources. Whether this is an indirect suggestion that the College may not really be the appropriate place for vocational education is unclear.

Themes that surfaced from national level perceptions were similar to state perceptions with regard to the importance of the program for economic development, the lack of relevance to jobs, the belief that states should offer the program, and the need for collaboration and cooperation with the private sector as well as the importance of sharing facilities. Other themes referred to employment opportunities that in respondents' views, are available; the need to strengthen the program; the need to change attitude about vocational education; the need to address internal policy issues that allow for easy hiring of foreign labor; and low wages that tend to discourage interest in vocational education. For more information related to this topic, see Appendix F.2.

Both groups of respondents also felt that work ethic is a problem among many local workers and that more training is important. Both groups also noted that there is a tendency to prefer foreign workers for their extensive experience and skills as well as their work ethic. Respondents' opinion, presents another dimension to the program's feasibility. In their opinion, jobs are available for graduates; however, an underlying

theme is that, all things considered, the employer is allowed by law to hire foreign workers if they are more suited for the jobs.

Another factor favoring foreign workers is the relatively low wage structure. A state respondent's comments echo some of these themes:

We talk too much and it's about time we do something about it. If we don't do it, we should hire from outside to do it. . . . In (state), we need to be realistic about what kinds of vocational education will be appropriate for our people. There are issues of economic feasibility, inclination of the people, work habits and values. . . . The present vocational programs at the College are inadequate to prepare our students for the work force. . . .two-year programs or certificates are not enough. These students compete with outside foreign labor that we can bring in at cheaper cost but with higher qualifications and experiences. Most of these foreign laborers have had years of experience as well as training. The College needs to have more comprehensive programs in vocational education if our students are to enter the workforce.

Two additional respondents, one at the national and one at the state, were mindful about this dilemma and pointed to the need for a review of existing immigration and labor laws in the FSM. An underlying theme across the different perceptions is the dual political achievement of satisfying the businesses and preparing constituents for future employment. In this respect, the College does have a very important role in vocational education.

Lack of data for proper planning. Official documents from plans, conferences, and summits, continuously highlight the critical need for relevant vocational education

programs. The official priorities for the nation are agriculture, fisheries and tourism. Yet, reports have consistently decried the lack of interest in these areas as shown in program enrollments, and the apparent economic activities that favored retail/wholesale, subsistence farming, and government employment (FSM, 1999). Other documents revealed that proper planning in this area is complicated:

Data on specific manpower needs . . . are lacking. . . . One of the urgent needs, in fact, is for a system of determining manpower needs, supported by adequate employment data. . . . The main difficulty is that the needs are so diverse and often small in number. Virtually every occupation, profession and specialty is needed to support the developing island societies scattered throughout the remote and isolated region. Moreover, the small population base of any one island, and even of the region as a whole, cannot support the full range of diverse specializations needed in a developing society. (College of Micronesia, 1986, p. 38)

In response to this problem, the National Department of Education's recommendations for surveys to determine needs for educational planning and career development was an attempt to plan for more relevant programs (FSM DOE, 2000).

Interestingly, with the exception of a national respondent, the absence of accurate data on careers or the high cost of some vocational education programs were not commented on. The rapid change in the field, in technology, the cost of importing equipment, materials, hiring of qualified instructors, and the deteriorating effects of the tropical climate are some of the obstacles to vocational education program implementation in the islands. Respondents, on the other hand, realized the necessity of duplicating efforts in some instances. This means four state campuses and the national

campus being provided with the necessary infrastructure for vocational education programs.

Other problems noted in several reports include unstable and diverse funding patterns and sources, conflicting data, unpredictability of services (Asian Development Bank, 1994), the low regard held by students for vocational programs (College of Micronesia, 1986), and more about the lack of relevance in the program (FSM, 1999).

Degrees as opposed to certificates. Vocational programs are certificated programs at the College. Yet, a few of the state respondents expressed hope that, one day, the College will graduate more students with degrees instead of certificates. This view reflects the general impression about the need to provide breadth and depth in vocational education programs. Although not stated by any of the respondents, vocational education students could also eventually take courses leading to associate of arts degrees as noted in the 2001-2003 College catalog: "The vocational education certificate programs offer a chance to develop technical skills and provide a pathway for future training, education and employment:" (p.9). The College does provide this opportunity.

Coordination with High Schools. Almost all of the respondents at both levels see the ongoing need for better coordination between the College and the high schools. Vocational education traditionally has also been an integral curriculum of the high schools in Micronesia. A few of the respondents even suggested that the high schools might be a more suitable place for vocational education considering that the programs and students are already in place. This idea has some positive implications in terms of facilities, teachers, and even the costs of the program. It also could address concerns regarding limited facilities, desire for degrees rather than certificates in vocational

programs, and the development of a parallel program that could enhance closer relationship between the high schools and the College.

Summary

Vocational education is perceived as an important role of the College. Furthermore, this is consistent with the stated role of the College. The problems associated with implementation, priority setting and external factors that tend to discourage interest in the programs are viewed as ongoing challenges. Existing policies, documents and records refer to the importance of vocational education; however, respondents are aware that internal policies and other constraints are some of the obstacles to successful implementation of the program. Ongoing economic activities and the low wages in the FSM private sector discourage interest in the programs. There are too many needs for a relatively low population; therefore, the importance of prioritizing those needs was noted by the respondents.

There is also a clear indication that vocational education is a politically powerful agenda for both the states and the national level respondents as well as for the College that depends on the good will of the politicians. There are also tremendous and innovative opportunities for collaboration with the private sector and the high schools that could be more suitable for island settings such as the FSM.

Reservations and Uncertainties

The second major finding in addition to the importance of teacher training and vocational education as presented above is the element of reservations and uncertainties with respect to the College's role in promoting language and culture, and with the issue

of becoming a four-year institution. A description of this element is presented below and also illustrated in Appendix F.3 and F.4.

How language and culture fit in the College's role.

COM-FSM's mission statement and goals recognized the importance of promoting the various languages and cultures of the FSM. The College described the diversity of languages and cultures as a source of enrichment in the learning process and that the College's priority is to "Instill and maintain pride in the unique heritage in the linguistic and cultural diversity in Micronesia" (COM-FSM, 2001). Unlike vocational education, language and culture study do not have a separate identity and visibility as they are integrated within programs such as education, business and Micronesian studies. A Bilingual Teacher Education Program has recently been established as a joint program between the Pohnpei Department of Education and the FSM National Language and Cultural Institute. This program is expected to train educators, develop vernacular materials and disseminate them to the schools.

Mixed views. The data revealed themes associated with the importance of language and culture in maintaining and developing the identity of the people and the nation. Other themes alluded to the possible loss or corruption of local languages and cultures while still others suggest language and culture as a political tool for unifying and strengthening the ties to the traditional and historical past of the various groups. A consistent theme is the pride in the diversity of cultures and languages in the FSM.

A majority of the respondents particularly at the national level felt that there are different ways of promoting and teaching the indigenous languages and cultures. Several respondents from both levels noted that the community or the elementary and secondary

schools, instead of the College, should have this role. Furthermore, the schools are already providing courses in these areas. The theme of appropriateness when it comes to the teaching language and culture emerged from these perceptions related to who are qualified to teach and in what context or setting. The community was noted earlier as an appropriate venue for students to learn new ways of seeing and appreciating what they already know through enhanced language and culture programs.

Low commitment for language and culture. A few of the respondents at both levels felt that perhaps the College is not prepared to teach these two areas in view of the limited representation of FSM people in the faculty. A theme that emerged is that students need role models that they can identify with and can understand in order to appreciate and expand their knowledge about the various cultures including their own. With such a diverse group of cultures and languages, the need is even more pronounced.

At least two national level respondents stated that language and culture are frequently talked about in meetings including the concern that they need to be promoted. They also noted that “this is all rhetoric” and that the “the College can do it if they prioritize it.” A national level respondent explained that for the last seven years, the national government failed to endorse the national language policy through the National Language and Culture Institute that would support language and culture programs at the College. He also noted that COM-FSM has not been able to convince the leaders to approve this policy. Another national level respondent expressed his feelings about the need for such a policy:

It is an injustice to our students [to deprive them of their culture and language]. If we do not learn to write our languages, they will be endangered. . . .At present, COM-FSM is not doing this.

Two national level respondents suggested that the College is not truly committed to developing programs in this area due to its inability to convince leaders to endorse the National Language and Culture Institute presently fully funded by the U.S. federal grants. According to these respondents, it has taken seven years since this was first introduced without the desired result:

We are pushing the Congress to fund the National Language and Culture Institute and we will resubmit the legislation from 1999 again. We are also resubmitting (three times now) the language policy to be approved by Congress.

A state level respondent rated language and culture a priority after the sciences and technology if they are to be taught at the College. To this respondent, the culture and languages of his state are already “intact”:

We have our culture. In our society, no one starves because we look after each other. This is what I mean by culture. We share our homes, food, even if we don’t have much. We have respect for each other. These we cannot prioritize because they are beyond prioritizing.

This same respondent felt that FSM should now “move on with the rest of the world” and that at the College level, applied studies in language and culture should be taught such as the art of traditional navigation.

The data also generated other views related to language and culture. Some national and state respondents believed that this role would not really make much impact

on college students and that the study of language and culture should be an elective. Several respondents noted that the role of the College should be to develop curricula for the schools, teach the FSM languages with the idea that one will eventually emerge as the national language, and that culture and language are to be viewed as deeper than just dances and performances. These views further reveal the ambiguity surrounding the role of the College with respect to language and culture.

A state level respondent expressed his views about learning other states' languages and cultures:

Languages of the FSM should be taught in all the campuses. I attended [school name] and picked up the [language] there. Because of that, I learned to appreciate and understand the culture and values of the people in [state]. This created bonds between different cultures and I now have lot of friends in [state]. Before, I was afraid.

In 2000, the National Division of Education alluded to nation building in its Strategic Plan by placing emphasis on the teaching of the FSM languages, by bringing students together at the national campus, by developing educational materials on FSM's history and culture and learning about the individual states and their respective cultures, and by promoting the COM-FSM (FSM DOE, 2000). Constitutions for each state and for the nation clearly hold the respective languages and cultures as very important.

It is noteworthy that students in college tend to begin appreciating who they are, their heritage and their local or national identity. Language and culture, as a means of unifying and strengthening the nation while at the same time instilling pride in FSM's diversity, were perceived by a few respondents as an important role for the College. The

opportunity to share knowledge and to understand FSM's new collective culture as well as the individual island group cultures is recognized by a majority of the respondents.

English language, a tool for survival. Another theme that emerged in connection with this issue is the need to teach English. As stated earlier, many FSM citizens have emigrated for various reasons but mainly to find employment and or get an education. The ability for FSM citizens to survive outside of the FSM depends also on their ability to read, comprehend and speak English. Several respondents recognized the trend of emigration in recent years since the Compact of Free Association came into effect. These respondents expect the College to prepare FSM citizens to survive anywhere. This view is consistent at both national and state levels.

At the same time, some government reports have cited that the failures in college and even in the work arena could be attributed to poor English skills. A large percentage of entering college students at COM-FSM needs remedial English courses. Poor performance in math is also linked partly to inadequate English skills. It appears that English would dominate the education arena as it is closely tied to success in further education, jobs and survival abroad.

Summary

In sum, the data suggest that maintenance of language and culture is important to protect the peoples' identities, to unify the nation, and as a source of the nation's pride in the FSM's diversity. An underlying assumption about language and culture is the general uncertainty as to what these entail. Respondents' comments point to teaching of languages and cultures targeted for students instead of the pedagogical aspect of language

and culture mainly associated with teacher training as suggested by the documents reviewed.

There is also an indication that the issue of language and cultures associated with the College's purposes and priorities is unclear. Respondents believe that the College is able to provide what they perceive should be offered; furthermore, respondents do not necessarily view what is offered at the College and what respondents expect the students to receive as related. This may suggest that while there is clearly strong feeling about this topic, different respondents view language and culture in different ways and for different purposes.

Uncertainty About the 4-Year Status

About two years ago, the College initiated formal discussions on the feasibility of becoming a four-year institution by offering a bachelor's degree in education. Leaders were also consulted in the development of this recommendation. The idea is not new. A 1997 Institutional Self-Study report raised this possibility. In the intervening years, the topic continued to be discussed formally and informally. In 2001, WASC officials presented a workshop on issues related to becoming a four-year institution to the board of regents and college officials. The following paragraphs describe the perceptions related to the various issues associated with this idea. A summarized thematic explanation associated with this topic is presented under Appendix F.4. Appendices F.1 to F.9 further illustrate the integrated nature and relationship of the various issues with this topic.

Change of status for all campuses. Perceptions related to future improvements of the College are tied to the idea of the College becoming a four-year institution. The data suggest that this idea has gained momentum throughout the College community and the

government sector. There are also controversies associated with its feasibility in view of funding instability especially during the renegotiation of certain sections of Compact of Free Association. Some of the respondents acknowledge the possible progression of COM-FSM as a 4-yr college is a long-term dream of the College and that it is good for the nation and the four states. However, there were differences of opinions in terms of the timeliness and the process for this to occur. One respondent at the national level was clearly opposed to this idea at this time; however, he also wants the state campuses to be 2-year colleges should the College become a 4-yr institution. The respondent observed that there is much yet to be done to improve the existing basic programs:

It is a good idea to restructure the College into a four-year institution and make the state campuses into community colleges. However, there are certain factors that need to be studied first and this should not be rushed. We should make sure that our basic and immediate priorities are met first and we should not only do it for prestige. The College is not pressured by the leaders to become a four-year institution; it is only being encouraged to consider this possibility.

However, perceptions from other respondents at both the national and state levels seem to imply that the leaders strongly support this idea as expressed by a state respondent:

COM-FSM plays a major role in the development of human resources. At present, it is only a 2-year college but it should be a four-year institution and beyond. . . . The leadership will support this move. . . . As a four-year institution, COM-FSM can (do more). . . Will not mind if the national campus becomes a four-year

institution because that is the pride of the nation. . . . We also need to make the national campus attractive enough.

The variations in perceptions further address the need for improvement of the campuses, the need to clarify the roles of campuses, and the funding implications. A state respondent pointed out that he “support(s) the four-year concept and the state campuses should become community colleges not remedial colleges.” Another state respondent stated that “the four-year institution can focus on degree programs while the state campuses serve community needs.” State and national respondents further agreed that a four-year institution will mean more quality programs and faculty, an advancement of the nation’s educational prestige, potential to attract more students not only from the nation but also the region, less out-migration, and the opportunity for more programs in the sciences as well as research opportunities. Finally, a state responded emphasized that “state campuses should be at the same level implying that a four-year status should equally apply to the states.”

One state level respondent thinks that what the people get out of this is what should matter and that while there has been discussion on this topic for a long time now, he would be more interested in

. . .looking after the welfare of the students to make sure that they are really learning and are preparing for a career. The school-to-work concept is what I would like to see the college do. A four-year program is fine but we should blend that with the workforce development concept.

Clarify campus roles first. An underlying theme relates to the lack of clarity about the roles of the state and national campuses. One state level respondent expressed his

frustration and said that the role clarification should have been done before anything else and that the role of the national campus is to address the needs of the nation as a whole while the state campuses should address the states' needs. He sees the importance of upgrading the state campuses before even thinking about becoming a four-year institution. This official stated that if the COM-FSM cannot do this, then other institutions would be invited to open campuses in his state: "Education is education and we want what is most efficient and most effective."

Whether the leaders fully understand the implication of becoming a 4-year institution is unclear, according to a national level respondent. This respondent now has second thoughts about this idea. Alternatives to becoming a four-year institution were suggested such as affiliation with universities and distance education—practices that have been going on for years at the College.

Implications unclear but if the College can do it, then why not. Some respondents seemed to view the 4-yr issue as something that the College alone should decide as expressed by a national respondent: ". . .as long as the COM-FSM is able to secure accreditation as a four-year institution and if it can improve the quality of the programs, then why not." The data suggest that there was hesitation among some of the leaders to take a firm stance on this issue and that whatever the College decides to do about this will be acceptable.

Summary

There is no denying that a four-year status for the College is considered as beneficial and prestigious for the FSM. However, the timing for this to happen is being questioned in view of the ongoing need to clarify some roles associated with the

campuses, the need to provide better facilities particularly at the state campuses, and the perception that the College needs to improve in other areas. The uncertainty about the issue is illuminated by “if, then” types of comments suggesting that there are too many considerations involved in becoming a four-year institution; however, should the College attain this status, the state campuses are expected to follow suit or become community colleges themselves. Still, there is the general feeling of “let’s try if it will work.” As one national level respondent noted, the implications of this move are not fully understood by many leaders in the FSM.

Themes Related to the Major Findings

In addition to the major findings described above, there were other relevant factors associated with the attitudes, expectations and feelings about the purposes and priorities of the College. Inferences gathered from the data suggest how perceptions could mean several things at different levels of discussions, and how topics themselves could influence perceptions among certain respondents as, again, perceived by the researcher. The salient elements that were derived to describe the dynamics of the perceptions and ranked in order of relevance to this study are:

1. Perceptions regarding quality. The notion of quality was a common theme in terms of not only the specific purposes and priorities of the college, but also, was implied in relation to the general condition of the College’s state campuses, in particular. Feelings of dissatisfaction extended to suggested changes, some drastic. Dissatisfaction also alluded to the physical conditions as well as the academic aspects of the state campuses and to a certain extent, the national campus (See Appendix F.5). Management issues

surfaced in some of the data from the state level while financial concerns were common themes across all levels.

2. Campus roles. Another related element is the lack of clarity associated with the roles of the campuses particularly in relation to program offerings and the perceived needs at both levels (See Appendix F.8 and F.9). Although the roles of the campuses have yet to be clearly and officially determined, programs have already been established at the state campuses. Compounding this issue is the perception that only certificate and “lower level” courses are offered at the state campuses. Respondents view the significant number of students taking remedial programs at the state campuses as another indication that the state campuses have, in the words of one respondent, “low status.” Remedial programs are also viewed as misplaced and that they are a waste of faculty time. State respondents believe that the needs are in the states where the communities are; thus calling for more programs at the state rather than the national. The data also suggest the perception that the national campus is expensive to operate thereby limiting what goes to the state campuses. There are feelings of inequity related to distribution of resources and lack of ownership and authority over state campuses especially among state respondents. These views are illustrated below by a state respondent: “National campus is too powerful. . .The COM (FSM) is like the [national] government. . . why not have [only] four campuses.” Another state respondent described his views as follows: “. . .always had a view that the national government was taking too much and ought to share because the state is where the action is. This is like the COM-FSM. . . maybe the way they divide the funds. . .national government should fix up state campus facilities. . .[COM-FSM] may be overstaffed. . .should exercise some control in hiring of staff. . .”

Documents such as meeting minutes, communication (informal comments) within the College itself, and informal discussions with several campus directors and staff alluded to the need to clarify the roles of the campuses. This question as illustrated in Appendix F.8 and F.9, tends to weave itself throughout much of the data by inference or as directly stated as such. In view of the political and historical roots of the FSM, this question would continue to emerge in discussions about roles and purposes of the College.

3. Optimism associated with the College's potential and support for the College. Optimism about the potential for the College is very high among all respondents. There is a "can do" attitude and the anticipation that things will improve if certain conditions are met. These conditions relate to funding for the most part, and the issue of role clarification and control. Respondents expressed hope that in the future the College will attract students outside of the FSM when it becomes a four-year institution and when it offers higher level courses. Respondents also hoped that the College will be undertaking research projects that are relevant to the FSM and the region and that the College will graduate future scientists and professionals. Respondents also expect that the need for remedial programs will decrease and that the state campuses will become two-year colleges when COM-FSM becomes a four-year institution. Respondents anticipate more renovations and improvements of facilities at the state campuses and that the states will be more involved in their respective campuses. Finally, respondents expect distance education to become a priority, and that the state campuses will offer specialized programs such as the fisheries/marine related institute in Yap State.

A connecting theme is the belief that the College is receiving as much support as could be provided by the leaders. The perception among respondents is that there is a very strong support for the College both at the national and state levels. Although the state governments do not have jurisdiction over the state campuses, the state support in other critical areas such as providing land and public works projects as well as state financial aid for students are evident. State respondents, for the most part, were confident that they could do more for the College.

The data also noted that the board of regents is viewed as one of the key positive aspects of the College due to the fact that the members are all Micronesians and also that the College has a capable leader as president (This president resigned in December of 2001; a new president assumed office in January of this year, 2002.).

4. The College provides a sense of ownership by the states, a source of national pride and high expectations. As one national respondent noted, the reason for the creation of campuses at the state level is to strengthen the sense of unity, ownership, belonging, and pride in the nation's college (See Appendix F.7). The theme that is linked to this is the emerging awareness about the College in the community, its potential for the region, its unique position to offer relevant as well as specialized programs, and its accredited status. The College is viewed as a key player in nation-building, promoting self-sufficiency through economic development; this is also reflected in the College's mission statement. All these serve to stimulate leaders to have high expectations of the College.

5. Multiple and overlapping membership/interests. Respondents have multiple interests and membership, some more than others. As such, the data suggest that perceptions may have been negotiated between and among these memberships and

interests, therefore, the data did not really produce straightforward and clear-cut stance on issues. Comments tend to be similar in approach and tentativeness for the most part. It is also possible that themes that may otherwise be plausible were muted due to conflicts or inclinations. Except for one respondent who was more direct in terms of what the state needs and will do to get them, the majority of the respondents adopted the accommodative mode and spoke in terms of expectations for the future.

Even though national and state level politicians and administrators represent either level of government, their roots belong in the states. The national government and the FSM as a nation are emergent concepts that have evolutionary origin only within the last century when colonial powers controlled Micronesia. At the same time, the FSM has some of the most politically seasoned, well-educated leaders who led the political independence of the islands and the formation of the only new federation of states in Micronesia. Frequently impacted by external as well as internal forces, the identity of the new nation as well as each state are interpreted or perceived at a critical juncture in the FSM's political and economic development.

6. National campus--a relatively new idea. The COM-FSM may be viewed as a microcosm of the new FSM nation with a national campus and four state campuses. There were similarities in perceptions about the relationship between the national and state governments, and the relationship between the national and the state campuses. The major difference is that the state campuses are controlled by the national leadership who, again, has its roots in the states.

State leaders imply that they would like to have more say about their respective campuses while admitting that funding is controlled at the national level through congress

and the president's office. The data suggest flux between desire for states to have more say about postsecondary education needs of the states, and the responsibility for funding the campuses. National level respondents hope for more support from the states while state respondents imply ownership in terms of deciding what and how programs will be conducted. Implicit in the comments is the concept of community college serving the community suggested by some respondents and perhaps, allocation of the funding to the local community, ergo the states. As someone would put it: Therein lies the rub.

Summary

The data indicate that training teachers and preparing the workforce through vocational education are priority roles for the College. Language and culture are much talked about but the data suggest that teaching of language and culture is more appropriate at the community and the schools and that the role of the College in this area remains unclear except for its curriculum development role.

The issue of the College becoming a four-year institution is perceived in different ways. For some, this is a long-term goal toward raising the prestige of the College and meeting the advanced degree requirements for its citizens; for others, a four-year institution will help state campuses become community colleges.

Underlying the perceptions related to the four themes above are factors associated with the need to improve quality especially at the state campus levels, and address ongoing funding concerns. The data also revealed that there are issues of relationships and jurisdictions as well as different views on needs at the state and national levels. There is also a clear indication that the leaders have high expectations and optimism that the

College will some day become an institution to be proud of through attainment of certain objectives including becoming a four-year institution.

The perceptions of the respondents indicate that the various aspects of the College's purposes and priorities are intricately interrelated. This interrelationships challenge definite conclusions on the part of the researcher as to how these purposes and priorities are actually perceived. Respondent membership within the four states and at the national level, other affiliations of the respondents, and the situation and interest of respondents, may have some bearing on their articulated perceptions. As a newly established College system in a new nation, the perceptions from respondents may indicate that the role of the College is still developing in the context of its historical origin and the future development of the FSM nation itself.

Finally, the data suggest more similarities than dissimilarities of perceptions between the national and the state respondents and that, for the most part, respondents are in agreement with the purposes and priorities of the College as a whole.

In the next section, chapter five presents a synthesis of the findings in the context of the literature about community colleges and the research questions followed by the conclusion. Implications, recommendations and limitations are also noted.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS & FINAL CONCLUSION

The purposes of this study are to determine the perception of FSM leadership with respect to the roles and priorities of the College of Micronesia-Federated States of Micronesia (COM-FSM), to assess whether these perceptions are similar or dissimilar between the national and state level respondents, and whether the perceptions are consistent with the stated roles and priorities of the COM-FSM. The preceding chapter presents the findings of the study. Chapter Five concludes the study with a list of discussions about the findings, with the conclusions summarizing the findings, and with recommendations and implications for policy makers including educators and leaders. The limitations of the study are also noted.

Discussion

Major Roles: Teacher Training and Vocational Education

Teacher Training

The data suggest that teacher training and vocational education are likely to be entrenched roles of COM-FSM for some years to come. Notwithstanding the past efforts beginning shortly after WWII to train enough teachers, the need for qualified teachers continues to be a major challenge. There is a predominant view that the solution to educational problems rests upon good teachers. In addition to the need for certified

teachers, perceived problems in education include the large number of remedial students, the low achievement levels in the schools, and the need for more graduates with advanced degrees or skills who will eventually replace foreign workers in the government and the private sectors.

While leaders see education as the tool for political, economic and social development, political and financial realities tend to detract efforts and resources to more immediate issues of the day such as the urgent need for capital improvement and other infrastructure development, public works, health services, among others. Teacher training, as an important role for the College, faces other challenges. A majority of the students need financial support to go to college. Reliance on outside financial assistance to support local funding remains a reality for a majority of the students. The leaders want training to be delivered locally so that the teachers will continue teaching since there are practically no substitute teachers or the financial resources to pay them. However, taking courses while teaching is an added burden for teachers especially in an environment where custom and other family obligations frequently intrude. Not only teachers but also other workers in government and the private sector face the same predicament in all the islands. The normal practice is to offer training during the summer break and although this is working to a certain extent, respondents noted that the summer is the time for some teachers to return to their home islands if they are teaching in the main islands.

In the absence of enough teachers to begin with, uncertified teachers are allowed to teach in most of the public schools. The certification requirements could not be enforced in many instances until many of the challenges noted above are addressed. The respondents are greatly concerned and frustrated about the ongoing extension of the

deadline for certification but could not do much about it for these reasons. And, while some respondents see the need for the College to put more emphasis in other programs such as the sciences, technology, and business, the fundamental education needs particularly at the elementary and secondary schools are their most important concern.

Training of teachers is a major activity for the College now. The data revealed that the College has undertaken innovative steps to fulfill this role through articulated course agreements with several colleges and universities in the region and in the United States. The recent move to become a four-year institution offering a bachelor's degree in education is another evidence of the College's commitment to fulfill this important role. Similarly, for many years now, the state departments of education have also initiated collaborative projects with organizations, institutes, and higher education institutions. For their part, the national education officials have also attempted to address this priority through policy initiatives, formal dialogue, and monitoring activities.

The governments, both local and national, assist teachers through financial assistance, scholarships, administrative or educational leave, and attendance at workshops, conferences, and seminars either in the region, on-island or abroad. Clearly, these efforts are financially draining in view of the geographic distance of the islands from the mainstream education service providers. However, the importance of collaborative effort among all the stakeholders is an important step toward reaching the goal to certify teachers.

In sum, there is the perception that FSM's future depends on certified teachers and that the nation is in a hurry to join the rest of the world, to be at par with the best educational system, and to produce citizens who can compete. At the same time, leaders

recognize the difficulties and challenges involved in certifying all teachers. While this has been an ongoing effort by the College and the other education agencies, the perception is that the student achievement levels in most schools are not satisfactory.

Vocational Education

Vocational education has been a priority since the beginnings of Western style education; however, despite the obvious necessity for vocational education, other extenuating circumstances make this a difficult program to implement. Aside from the limited and unstable funding sources, mostly from external sources, internal factors seem to work against the viability of vocational education. While leaders recognize these problems, putting the right policies in place will require difficult decisions and political will. While businesses clamor for qualified skilled workers, they still have the easy option of hiring cheap labor from abroad whose work ethics are not hampered by custom and other cultural obligations. Politically, it is necessary to emphasize vocational readiness but the economic and social irony is that the status quo will persist for some time in view of the current policies and economic circumstances.

In addition, other issues seem to discourage successful implementation of vocational education. These include the perception that vocational education is important in order to replace cheap foreign workers, the need to support the private sector that generally pays lower than the government sector, and the tendency to view vocational education as the alternative to remedial education.

Models of success attributed to vocational education are few. Cheap foreign labor presents a self-perpetuating situation that does not lend itself to changing this image, a situation that also exists in other island nations in Micronesia with skilled labor shortage.

Emigration to places offering higher wages is another option that attracts many people in the FSM. The viability of vocational education in the region is an ongoing challenge under these circumstances.

Uncertainties: Language and Culture, and Evolution to 4-year Status

Language and Culture

The issue of language and culture and their role at the College generated much ambiguity. Language and culture are very close to home especially in a setting such as the FSM. The former separate entities of Yap, Kosrae, Pohnpei and Chuuk have enclosed cultural and language characteristics that are now merging with each other in a way never experienced in the past through the higher education process as well as the formation of the federation itself. The merging of language and culture could be viewed as a political necessity for a nation that is trying to establish its national identity. While culture and language are highly valued in each of the island groups, the all encompassing and equalizing aspects of Western style education are viewed as necessary for economic and even social survival in present day Micronesia. The islands are still wrestling with some of the conflicting implications of education and their respective cultures.

As a transmitter of culture and behavior, Western style education at times is in conflict with some aspects of island culture. The “liberation of the mind” described by a Micronesian author, Heine (1974), and the “false reality” presented by United States education system according to Micronesian scholar, Sweeter (1992), continue to haunt leaders and educators alike on how best to integrate island cultures and languages with the adopted educational system. This may partially explain the lack of clarity about the College’s role in this area.

It appears that the College has yet to convince leaders about its capability to teach language and culture. However, the College seems to be the most appropriate institution to teach certain aspects about language and culture in view of the maturity level of the students and the opportunity for the students with different cultural and linguistic background to interact at the national campus. Technology as a tool may eventually play an important role in transmission of cultural and language knowledge throughout the various campuses.

As the data revealed, a unique opportunity for nation building and formation of national pride and identity presents itself through the teaching of culture and languages at the college level in addition to the more subtle understanding and appreciation of cultures in general. How this is to be implemented will require considerable and sensitive political and educational discussions among the various political and cultural groups. The incentive to preserve and promote language and culture should be closely tied to a successful and meaningful life in the community, the state or even the nation, and the belief that they are important enough to be transmitted as part of a continuing heritage for the people. This will be a major challenge for the leadership as well as for educators in the years to come in view of the competing needs not only within each state and the nation but also in the global community.

4-Year Status

The study also revealed uncertainty with respect to the controversial move by the College to become a four-year institution. Ideally, all constituencies want the College to become a four-year institution. However, there is still a great deal of uncertainty whether this is feasible at this time. There were conflicting views in the community as to who

really initiated this idea to the level where it is now, and at what point, did the leadership endorse or made statements to that effect.

One clear consensus about this issue is that if the COM-FSM becomes a four-year institution, all the state campuses must follow suit and become community colleges at the very least. This may prove difficult in view of the recent development of the state campuses from extension centers and the fact that almost all the state campuses have more immediate concerns. However, if the trend to treat all the states equally for political reasons continues, then designation of state campuses into community colleges may not be far off.

Role of Campuses

Much of the data point to the nagging question about the role of the campuses that permeated across issues related to programs, quality, authority and relevance. Inferences were made related to equity of treatment and benefits for state campuses as compared with the national campus. These translate into the notion that all programs should be available in all the state campuses which brings up the question of funding and legal authority over the College System. Not a single state respondent indicated the desire to have control of the state campus; however, all of them expressed the desire for more programs that they perceive as relevant to the needs of the respective states.

The situation may lead to more demands by the states to meet obvious needs as well as for political reasons. The issue of equity is an ongoing political debate in the FSM. The decision to establish a campus in each state was partly a political as well as a historical issue; furthermore, it could have been a compromise in some respects. Even though the modern facility at the national campus is located in Pohnpei State, a state

campus in Pohnpei State was also deemed important. The data suggest that a state campus in Pohnpei was questionable but it was politically appropriate.

As a young institution, COM-FSM, is still trying to establish its institutional identity and culture while being bombarded in all directions to provide services at various levels ranging from schools, communities, and local and national governments. Taking stock to develop realistic objectives is important but problematic in this kind of environment. An added challenge is the adoption of United States college systems and practices including the standards for accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Responding to numerous pressures, attempting to maintain high standards, and protecting its eligibility for funding from various sources are just some of the difficult challenges that the College is facing particularly in this difficult period of its development and the FSM nation's development. The fact that the College has reached the level it has today is a credit to the board of directors, the staff and faculty, and the collective leadership of the nation.

Whether the College should decentralize most of its resources to the state campus or concentrate them at the national campus depends on how political leaders perceive the roles of the College, the national agenda, and perhaps more importantly, their respective state agendas. Ultimately, state influence may determine this issue in view of the loose federation concept and the powerful influence of the states. The data hints that this may already be happening. Recent policy decisions to allocate a higher percentage of the budget to the states with the added expectations for states to assume additional responsibility may also be another indicator.

The College has several competitors in the region including colleges in Palau, Northern Marianas, the Marshall Islands, Guam, as well as the University of Guam and the universities in Hawaii. The Northern Marianas College recently announced that students from FSM as well as Palau and the Marshalls would be charged resident tuition rates and invited students to come to the CNMI to obtain their bachelors in education. Palau Community College regularly sends recruiting teams to the FSM. Other U.S. based universities and foreign universities offer incentives for potential applicants such as scholarships and related support.

Political developments such as the ongoing separation talk within Chuuk State could be another challenge. Municipalities within each state make their own demands known. Education, whether elementary, secondary or college level, will surely be a priority for municipalities, some of which are located in outlying islands. Some of these municipalities are facing greater social, economic and education related problems than those located in the main islands.

In sum, the roles of the campuses will continue to be debated in the context of numerous priorities at several levels of constituencies and political pressures. Political leaders are facing this issue along with other major issues. Political expediency, economic reality, and rhetoric will continue to influence the roles of the College for some time to come.

Community Colleges, Politics, and History

Evolution in U.S. and COM-FSM Colleges

There are overriding issues associated with the roles of COM-FSM that this study did not cover but are still pertinent in order to understand some of the information

generated by the data. These issues could be inferred from the review of the literature in Chapter Two that described how the roles of community colleges evolved through a series of economic, social and even political developments in the United States. As needs became evident, the roles of community colleges changed to meet those needs, and to respond to political pressures as well as pressures from within the educational community itself, technological advancement, and now, globalization (Townsend & Twombly, Eds., 2001; Geiger, 1999; Cohen, 1998; O'Banion, 1997; Baker, 1994; Tsechechtelin, 1994; Diener, 1986; and Gleazer, 1968).

To a certain extent, COM-FSM's development parallels development of U.S. community colleges, but in a much more punctuated manner due to external influences as much as internal ones. Although Western style education was established in the centers by the time the Japanese administration ruled the islands, the United States introduced the formal postsecondary education program on a much more systematic and wider scale. In effect, the postsecondary education system became vulnerable to events in the United States that affected community colleges there. However, the island colleges were more reactive than proactive and thus were at a great disadvantage. Where once, the island colleges were considered a responsibility of the United States, independence replaced this responsibility with a set of agreements in the Compact of Free Association and its subsequent amendments that delineated financial and associated arrangements with respect to education including postsecondary education. The bulk of the assistance occurred during the first fifteen years of the Compact of Free Association (COFA) that included funding for the construction of the national campus in Pohnpei State.

Influence of National and State Political Leaders

At present, political leaders at the national government level have direct influence on the College and therefore, they influence the roles and priorities of the College much more than state political leaders who are more engrossed in the public elementary and secondary schools. The national level leadership approves the budget for the College and could easily influence the College's other funding sources such as federal grants and foreign assistance. The nation's president and the congress appoint the board of regents as well. Some of the first groups of U.S. educated Micronesians who recognize the importance of education including college education are now the leaders in the FSM. These leaders are constantly bombarded by education initiatives from the United States, funding directives that drive other education initiatives, the reality of local needs, and the multitude of expectations from the public including the business community. With limited funding base, it takes political skill to maneuver around these demands and expectations and yet legitimize the existing roles and purposes of the College through the budget process.

However, while political leaders do have a strong influence on the College, their involvement appear to be mainly toward improving the nation's economy similar to Zusman's (1999) view that a challenge for higher education in the U.S. is that it is viewed as the engine for the nation's economic growth. An example is the strong emphasis on vocational education as well as the revival of the marine program, now an institute under the College. There is then a strong possibility that due to pressure from many interest groups including political leaders, the College might spend much of its resources and focus its role in this direction, not by choice but by necessity in order to survive.

Perceptions and College Roles in FSM's Development

FSM has some of the most comprehensive and informative planning documents in the region. Almost all of these documents were in response to external demands tied to funding and technical assistance. Foreign consultants with their own sense of values, motives, experiences, and loyalty are bound to complete the task of developing a plan within a given timeframe that, at times, might not allow for in-depth understanding of the islands and its people. While local officials are given the opportunity to participate in the process, it is not certain whether many do. Plans, in many ways, are viewed as a temporary means to an end—outside funding. Since many planning documents cannot fully anticipate political and social environments during some critical points of implementation, politicians are frequently caught in a dilemma and resort to the most expedient solution based on existing information, and public perceptions and desires. Politicians are criticized if they set low goals; by aiming for higher goals, they open themselves to potential failure.

The rate of change in the islands may be either too slow or rapid in some instances. As a result, adequate planning based on unstable funding becomes problematic. This dilemma encourages broad objectives that are difficult to quantify or qualify but would satisfy most people for the time being. Broad statements also allow for broad interpretations and opportunities for selective program implementation by those in power. The broad goals of the College are a reflection of the uncertainty of its potential and its limitations while attempting to respond to multiple pressures. The extent of the broad statements certainly could be viewed as encompassing the state campuses as well. However, in the minds of many, the roles of the state campuses in particular, are still very vague. Defining the roles of the campuses is an ongoing discourse among many leaders

including College officials themselves. In the absence of specific roles for the state campuses, the broad goal statements may be viewed as the only possible response for the time being.

Future Expectations

Although state leaders do not exercise strong influence on the College and its campuses, state leaders echo the need to develop their respective economic standing. Furthermore, in the future, it is very likely that state leaders will have a profound influence on how the state campuses are managed as state enrollments increase and as the campuses begin to develop confidence and independence. The political structure and representation favor the states in many respects; thus, there may be a possibility that the state campuses, through political influence, will begin to assume more responsibilities as well as receive direct assistance from the national government as the FSM government matures and if funding support continues from the United States and other foreign sources.

Issues generated from the data related to campus roles, quality, sense of ownership and belonging, high expectations and optimism about the College, and limited resources, are related to the ongoing social, political and economic development of the FSM. As the people become more educated, as the world becomes more integrated, and as events impact and influence people much more rapidly, leaders will have to cope and find ways to prepare the nation's citizens. The College would be expected to bring the people to a higher level of understanding and preparedness as well as to fill the social, educational and economic gaps facing the nation.

Unexpected Findings

There were several unexpected findings in this study. The degree of agreement between the national and state levels in terms of the broad purposes and priorities of the College were understandable in view of the common perception about colleges and the shared history and experience in education particularly during the U.S. administration. What was unexpected is that teacher training remains a critical need despite the extensive effort dedicated to this program for many years. The other unanticipated finding is the ambiguity surrounding the role of the College with respect to language and culture of the different ethnic groups. The researcher expected to find this as one of the most important roles of the College in view of the implications language and culture has on nation-building, and the need to instill the spirit of unity and understanding among a group of islands that were historically independent from each other politically. Furthermore, the rush to modernize or catch up with the rest of the world call for measures to protect the languages and cultures from jeopardy. Although cultural programs take place in the schools, the College may have a much deeper role in the preservation, promotion and protection of languages and cultures. Finally, the perceptions related to the four-year status was confounding to the researcher having anticipated that this would be a major constraint financially, and a politically uncertain move in view of the conditions of some of the state campuses, and the already ongoing collaboration with other institutions for advanced degree programs. However, in retrospect, the opportunity to implement the program has presented itself and must be taken. There are very few such opportunities particularly in the island nations.

Conclusions

The goals and priorities of COM-FSM as perceived by political leaders at the national and state levels are consistent with the stated goals and priorities of COM-FSM at a very broad level. The areas where perceptions are highly consistent with stated goals and priorities of COM-FSM are in the promotion of self-reliance and self-sufficiency. Self-reliance and self-sufficiency in turn are viewed as the key to nation-building. Nation-building means having an educated and trained population based on modern standards of economic and social development consistent with the cultures of the nation. The study showed that while nation-building is a constant in almost any high-level discussions dealing with human resource preparation, perceptions as to how nation-building is to be accomplished vary among the respondents. The degrees of emphases for two programs viewed as important were difficult to generalize across the participants at both levels.

The College is a key player in national planning activities and is a member in all major human resource development related committees. As such, the College has intimate knowledge and understanding of the processes leading to the recommendations and expectations from various interest groups. The responses to these expectations are broad statements of missions and goals. This explains the general consistency between the stated purposes and priorities of the College and the leaders' perceptions.

The next section presents specific conclusions related to the two important perceived roles, teacher training and vocational education; the ambiguity and uncertainty surrounding the role of the College related to language and culture; and evolution to a 4-year status. The role of campuses discusses the underlying issues and challenges that

appear to permeate through certain perceptions. The topic about community colleges, politics and history attempts to describe how political leaders in Micronesia compare with the literature findings about community colleges and political leaders.

Perceived Roles and Problems

There are variations of perceptions between and within the levels of government related to program emphases as well as where these programs are to be conducted. Tied to these perceptions is the recognition of limitations of resources, geography, levels of economic development and to some extent, the diversity of culture and language. However, much more evident in the study is the push for state improvement and how best to accomplish this while also supporting the concept of nation-building. State and national leaders see their needs as immediate and urgent. State leaders for the most part, see the College as the institution that should address local needs since that is where the people live; therefore, the state campuses are viewed as the logical places for those programs. The sense of place in relation to the College tend to define the roles and responsibilities of the College *vis a vis* the states.

On the other hand, national leaders referred mostly to the national needs and the states' role in addressing these needs. Advanced level courses, setting of standards and monitoring of quality are viewed as the roles of the national campus. They also recognized the limitations imposed by the circumstances of the times and the physical and social conditions of the nation.

Both the national and state levels have high expectations from COM-FSM. COM-FSM is perceived as the training institution to prepare the people of the FSM to cope in the modern world. The College is also expected to play a major role as a unifying agent

and a source of pride as the sole postsecondary institution of the FSM. In addition, national and state respondents expect the College to serve as the preparatory institution for students who plan to transfer to other postsecondary institutions.

National and state respondents hold different, mixed perceptions related to the College's stated goals on the issue of culture and language in the FSM. The stated goal implies that culture and language will be part of the program if the goal is to "instill and maintain pride in the unique heritage of linguistic and cultural diversity in Micronesia" (COM-FSM Catalog: 2001-2003, p. 5). Several respondents perceived the teaching of FSM's cultures and languages as a good role for the College; however, they also felt that this role belongs to the family, community, and the schools rather than the College.

Implied in some of the statements is the need for a national policy on language. This was also highly encouraged in the education planning documents. Once this policy is endorsed by the National Government, the role of the respective levels of education and other related agencies with regard to language may be further clarified. For the program to become viable, it is critical for the government to endorse the program and to support it financially.

The respondents at both levels also perceived the issues of quality, equity between state and national, and relevance of programs in different ways. State respondents perceive the need for better instructors and programs at the state levels as well as more relevant and more comprehensive programs. National and state respondents in general felt that there is still a need to improve the quality of the programs overall. Almost every respondent felt that the College has made good progress in its development of COM-FSM particularly during the former president's term.

A few of the state respondents made both direct and indirect references to the need for more autonomy at the state levels in order to facilitate things and this also prompted other comments that were generally along the line of needing improvements at the state levels ranging from facilities to program quality. Several respondents from the state level also questioned the need for a state campus in Pohnpei, as the national campus is also located in Pohnpei State.

Regarding the four-year institution status for the College, the perceptions of respondents at both levels ranged from enthusiasm and even more pride about this possibility, to one of caution. All respondents would like to have a four-year institution that could offer more courses. Should this plan materialize, the state respondents expect to follow suit and raise the status of the state campuses to two-year degree granting colleges. Not all respondents commented on the feasibility of a four-year institution in the context of funding and accreditation requirements. A few perceived this as an added expense that the FSM could not afford at this time in view of the uncertainties surrounding PELL grants and the COFA renegotiation (Note: As of this writing, the COFA renegotiation has been concluded and is now pending at the U.S. Congress for adoption), and in view of the urgent need to upgrade state level campus facilities. For many respondents, they emphasized that COM-FSM should stick with what it can do best for now. This is easier said than done when community and political pressures tend to tell the College to do more.

As an update, the College has announced that the four-year program in education will be offered during fall semester of 2003. Seed funding for the program was made

possible through a grant. The program is expected to become a regular program for the College after the grant ends (Personal communication, March 2003).

Remedial programs at the College generated varying perceptions related to the roles and priorities of the College. As expected, there was a consensus that this could be avoided if the schools and the teacher qualifications are upgraded. It was also the perception at all levels that someone has to address this need in view of the large proportion of students who could not pass the College entrance examination. While this is not a stated goal of the College, nevertheless, it is a supporting role and a rather highly visible role at both state and national campuses. There are political, economic and even cultural factors that come into play and may be indirectly related to the ongoing need for remedial programs.

Respondents hope that the College will eventually be in a better position to prepare the FSM people to become economically, socially and politically well off individually and as members of the world community as reflected in the national plans, the various summits and conferences held by FSM government agencies.

COM-FSM is very much aware of its circumstances and while it has attempted to respond to the political, social and economic pressures since it became COM-FSM, the times under which these pressures occurred were conducive for the COM-FSM to respond as well as it did. What the future holds in terms of COM-FSM capability to respond to pressures depend very much on a shared understanding by not only the COM-FSM but also the leadership of the FSM with respect to the limitations and opportunities that may manifest themselves in the next few years.

While the survival of the COM-FSM as a system seems assured, the need to continue monitoring and understanding the underlying currents affecting the relationships between the national and the state with all their economic, political and cultural ramifications, must be fully recognized by all key players at both national and state levels. In view of declining revenue, opportunities exist for the state governments to play a more direct role in supporting the College system. There are also opportunities to reassess external standards in order to organize and adopt policies that best meet the needs of the region while accommodating more global expectations and participation by FSM citizens.

Finally, as one respondent stated, the College must be realistic and concentrate on what it can do best. Long-range plans are available but short-term solutions due to economic uncertainties and other limiting circumstances are the reality in most cases. Leadership expectation of the College tend to be idealistic for good reasons; however, it is up to the collected wisdom and experiences at the College to channel these expectations through a series of realistic, measurable objectives and timelines, accompanied by political and financial support from both the state and national governments.

Strengths and Weaknesses

With respect to the weaknesses and strengths of the COM-FSM, many respondents felt that the quality of programs and the states campus facilities need more attention. Other weaknesses as perceived, are the inequity between national and states, and even among states with regard to College services and opportunities, and the pressure upon the College from too many directions including state and national governments. A

major perceived weakness is the funding situation for the College. Other weaknesses that respondents perceived that are beyond anyone's control for the time being is the geographic isolation and how that impedes the College's program delivery and the full participation of key players in government and businesses to work closely together and to collaborate more. The need for better data to prioritize vocational training was also noted. Finally, remedial education is viewed as necessary but also depriving the College of its real purpose.

The strengths of the College in general are that the College belongs to FSM and that the members of the governing board are all Micronesians. Another strength is that FSM people have access to the programs and they could influence priorities and programs.

Hopes and Dreams

The various plans, summits and conferences are viewed as the tools for achieving the hopes and dreams for the College. Although the role of the College with respect to cultures and languages, as perceived, is unclear, the College is viewed as the institution that will help cultures and languages of the FSM survive into the future. Respondents hope that the College will eventually have more visibility in the region as well as beyond and that distance education will have a bigger role in the delivery of programs in the near future.

Some look toward the future of the College with faculty possessing more advanced degrees and as a four-year institution while others hope that whatever its status, the College will continue to serve as the beacon of hope and enlightenment for the FSM people. One individual sees the College as offering more opportunities for women to be

educated and to be leaders in the FSM. Finally, there is the dream that perhaps the College will one day graduate more students with degrees rather than certificates and produce “great thinkers and scientists among others.”

Summary

As stated in Chapter Four, the data indicated more similarities than dissimilarities of perceptions between the two government levels with respect to the roles and purposes of the College. The data also showed that these perceptions are generally in agreement with the stated purposes and priorities of the College as a whole. In responding to the research questions, the study produced an array of information that helped to give meaning and provide context to the perceptions of leaders. The study also generated more than a straightforward interpretation of these perceptions through a deeper examination of the context in which these perceptions may be situated.

Implications and Recommendations

Several implications and recommendations for policy makers, educators and leaders, could be derived from the study. Some were noted within the previous chapters but a few deserve more attention.

1. Quality, equity and relevance associated with the perceived roles and purposes of the College. Different levels of government perceive these issues in terms of local needs, political priorities and relationships among the various states and the nation itself. In addition, world events influence these perceptions to the extent that FSM, as a nation, and the FSM citizens might be affected. Developing policies on education should encompass a clear understanding and integration of the different levels of perceptions and local knowledge in order to be effective.

2. State government role in higher education. Again, this involves more than financial concerns; there are historical as well as political and social implications regarding this issue. As funding is reduced, areas such as 1-12 education, health, safety will receive priority attention. State governments do not have any control on funding for state campuses; however, state involvement may increase should funding for the College by the national government decline. This assumes that state governments see the need for a local college campus. For local support, state governments would expect more local involvement in terms of the roles and purposes of the local campus. State leaders and stakeholders must have more voice in the budgetary, programmatic and administration of their respective campuses. Defining the roles of the campuses may need to consider these possible developments.

3. Plans and available resources. Plans that have been developed to date were based on existing or anticipated resources. As new information and resources become available, the roles and purposes of the College would be redefined. A major consideration for the College's strategic planning would be to either refocus the roles and purposes to address the two major roles of teacher training and vocational education with a secondary focus on other program areas, or to provide as many programs as possible on a rotating basis across the campuses and not solely at the national campus.

4. Culture and Language issues need to be addressed. The nation will look upon the College to prevent the possible deterioration or loss of culture and language in the coming years. The College is in a unique position to establish specialized programs and research on culture and language change in a setting such as the FSM. Therefore, endorsement of the Culture and Language Institute by the governments, and the ongoing

monitoring of the state of the languages and cultures in the FSM are encouraged. In addition, FSM's quest for economic development could be better "informed by local histories and local traditions of economy" to quote Hanlon (1998, p. 235) in his discourse about the historical and cultural complexities of economic development in Micronesia. There is no better time than now for the College to dedicate a concerted effort and a special part of its mission and goals toward a deeper understanding, appreciation, and protection of the peoples' cultures and languages; and for the College to serve as the institution that will assist in the positive evolution of the various languages and cultures in a rapidly changing world.

5. Vocational education's image. The importance of vocational education could be further validated if it is tied to enhanced economic and social rewards and by not relegating the program to students who could not succeed academically. The leaders can make this happen through public awareness and personal involvement in these programs through promotions and recognition. Policy decisions that would enhance the status of graduates in vocational education and that would not defeat the programs' efforts are needed. Historical and traditional sense of values and worth must also be incorporated into the minds of the people. This is a major undertaking in terms of not only the psychological and social changes involved, but also the required infrastructure and allocation of financial and other resources. Policy issues to effectuate the importance of vocational education must be clearly tied to positive rewards.

6. Collaboration is necessary. As a developing nation with limited resources, the College, through its state campuses could provide the leadership for closer collaboration with the school systems. This is already happening in some states. Collaboration with the

business community should continue through sharing of resource personnel, tools, materials and facilities. A standing policy on collaboration tied to incentives to promote this should be considered.

7. Feasibility of open access. It may not be possible for the College to continue to accept every student that passes the entrance test in the event funding is reduced. The College may need to develop a quota system to accommodate the needs of the respective states and the national government. Matching funds with needs, based on research and reliable data, will be important to justify this policy consideration.

8. Ongoing concerns about remedial programs. The College might be encouraged to conduct a study on why many students graduate from high school but are not ready for employment or college. Knowledge gained from the study could be useful in the teacher training and vocational education programs, and development of more relevant and realistic programs for island students. Policy to fund this study is timely and critical.

9. Articulation with other institutions and distance education. The College cannot do everything but some of the courses that are not available in some states could now be made available as part of the College's ongoing distance learning programs. The College should offer mentoring and part-time instructors for some of the online courses available from other colleges and universities to accommodate students on island who wish to pursue higher degree programs. More support for technology to accommodate distance learning should be pursued.

10. Importance of clear role delineation among the educational institutions. The study suggests the need to reassess the structure of education as a whole and the purposes

and priorities attached to education from first grade to college. This assessment might reveal information that would be useful to clarify roles and authority on education at both levels and to identify attainable priorities based on stable funding resources. The roles of state governments with respect to the College state campuses deserve more consideration for political as well as for practical reasons. Transfer of authority and even certain financial obligations to state governments could be a positive process that could lead toward a stronger sense of ownership and promote more support for the state campuses as well as the system as whole.

11. Develop regional accreditation standards. Accreditation under WASC has many advantages in terms of transferability of credits and eligibility for federal grants. However, establishment of regional accreditation standards in conjunction with the Postsecondary Education Council that might gain acceptance and recognition at the international level—a model similar to the accrediting commission in the U.S.—with the associated benefits stemming from international sources as well as the U.S., would be an added benefit for COM-FSM. This will also prepare the COM-FSM as the credentialing institution for new higher education institutions that might be interested in serving the FSM.

12. Encourage foreign universities to open in the FSM. FSM will benefit if other postsecondary institutions that will complement COM-FSM's programs are encouraged to come to the FSM. While there may be possible competitions, which are also good, the College itself could benefit in many ways. Collaboration with specialized institutes and partnerships will assist COM-FSM address some of the needs that are difficult to meet at this time. Foreign institutions can expand limited program offerings at the College.

Sharing of expertise, new ideas, knowledge, and even facilities and technology would be of mutual benefit not only for the institutions but also for the students especially if foreign students also attend these institutions. A policy to entice foreign training institutes or higher education institutions that support the goals of the FSM will attract the attention of potential institutions.

13. The research methodology used in this study has implications for future research based on the findings. Future research to monitor changes, to validate findings under similar or different circumstances, and to develop other innovative strategies for data gathering within the unique political, social and cultural setting of the FSM may be worth doing if the results are to benefit the people of the FSM. Suggested areas for future research are the role of education in promoting language and culture; the role of the states in postsecondary education; the relationship between nation-building, demographics and education; and the financial viability of island colleges.

Limitations

Some of the limitations related to the methodology and the study itself are presented in Chapters One and Three. In addition, there are other limitation in terms of the study's generalizability due to the purposeful selection of the case, the characteristics of the respondents, the circumstances in which the study was undertaken, and the researcher as the instrument for the study. The researcher's overall conceptual approach to the study and the researcher's meaning development are a mixture of tacit, experiential, factual and interactive nuances that occurred within a certain timeframe. Donmoyer (1990) pointed out that generalizability, as that term has traditionally been defined, is problematic in single case studies for these reasons.

The respondents are limited-term political and administrative leaders whose perceptions are for the specific point in time when they were interviewed, and to a certain extent, for the duration of their political office. Implications related to the roles and priorities of the COM-FSM based on these perceptions will have to consider these transitions. It is possible, however, that even with new developments, the opinions of political leaders will stay the same and may become even more insistent at the state levels. Political maturity and emerging confidence among the states and the national government as a whole might encourage a clearer articulation of roles for the College and in particular, the state campuses.

Another limitation is that there are too many uncertainties surrounding the period in which the study was conducted and some of them are still ongoing. These uncertainties are significant enough to force aspects of tentativeness into the study such as the shifts in relationships and control of economic and social programs at the two government levels, national and state, and the push by the state leadership to develop at their level as much as possible, to name a few. Paradoxically, this made the study timely, as it will help anticipate how the new nation will fare when certain conditions become more stable.

Other limitations deal with the logistics in the region, the difficulty of accessing some information and individuals, and the interesting times surrounding the region with respect to global events as well as internal events in the FSM, all of these make it difficult to develop firm conclusions regarding the roles and priorities of COM-FSM.

There are also cultural and linguistic issues that may have affected this study such as the use of a second or third language in interviews, how respondents react to questions dealing with groups or individuals that they are connected with through family, clan, or

political affiliation, how different roles of respondents affect their responses, and whether a series of follow up interviews over time will produce other results and why.

Misinterpretation of articulated perceptions due to linguistic idiosyncrasy may be possible; however, the researcher controlled for this possibility through validation by the respondents directly and through triangulation techniques including both observations and review of documents.

The researcher cautions that the study does not suggest specific answers to particular issues or relevance to particular situations; rather, this study may serve as a tool for monitoring potential conflicts among groups, drastic or emerging developments of new priorities, and for studying underlying causes of priority conflicts. In addition, the study could serve as a guide for planning and appropriate decision-making purposes. The study might serve as a training guide to reveal certain dynamics and levels of understanding and awareness related to roles and priorities of institutions, and to better understand and avert the possible negative consequences of policy decisions that are not congruent with institutional goal structures and rationale.

Obtaining views on purposes and roles of the College is difficult, whether the views are elicited through quantitative or qualitative methodology, in view of the ambiguity surrounding the cognitive processes involved in rating or articulating purposes and priorities at any given time. The study is intended to present and interpret the perceptions of the respondents within the limited confines of the case study using the methods described in the study. Future research to develop better methodologies and instrumentation for specific groups such as leaders or policy makers in island nations might be mutually beneficial for the research community and the participating entity.

New knowledge that may be derived from this group could have significant implications and be useful in a world that is rapidly becoming desensitized to possible contributions and knowledge from small, non-mainstream groups. Similarly, distinct groups may gain better knowledge and understanding of the challenges facing similar groups in order to better prepare them for the so-called modern world. Finally, researchers' sensitivity to respondent needs and circumstance might be enhanced and lead to more tangible improvements in the respondents' communities.

Final Conclusion

Leaders in small island communities have traditionally been, and still are highly respected; their opinions and decisions are viewed as reflections of the wisdom gained through experience and privileged information. The new generation of leaders is straddling several different worldviews: the modern world influenced heavily by western European civilization, particularly, the United States, the emerging interactions with non-western countries, and the global society. An anchor for these leaders remains their cultural heritage as they are practiced today.

This study is one attempt to explore and interpret the perceptions of some of the leaders in the FSM regarding a non-traditional institution, the College of Micronesia-Federated States of Micronesia. The study aimed to identify how the new political hierarchy, the national government and the states, envision the purposes and priorities of the COM-FSM with respect to the two levels of government. Policy statements, goals and priorities of the College, and other instruments delineating processes and procedures tend to emulate policies and procedures that may not be realistic or appropriate under some situations in the islands, and may not have the necessary implementation tools and

resources. When stated too broadly, goals tend to be difficult to implement especially when the goals are ambitious as they generally are, and when strategic plans are not specific or available when needed. Funding in the FSM as in most other island groups in Micronesia is unstable and dependent on outside sources. This makes planning and setting of priorities difficult, and implementation of stated goals uncertain.

As an update, the president of the College decided not to renew her contract and a new president has been selected. Of interest will be how the existing priorities and purposes appeal to the new president and how the leaders will interact with the College under a different leadership. The former president played a key role in the formation of the College and its leadership from the start and even prior to becoming a national college. It is hoped that the new president will bring new ways and ideas into the College to complement ongoing efforts. This blending of perspectives and experiences will be a source of enrichment for the College and the community it serves.

On a final note, in doing this study, the process, and especially the conversations with the participants, has opened new perceptions as well as confirmed some of my previous views about the struggle to become politically and socially prepared. The study helped enhance my appreciation and respect for the accomplishments to date as well as the ongoing struggle to do better in education in the FSM. The challenge ahead for the FSM is indeed much more complex than in the other newly independent nations in Micronesia. Yet, the diversity of cultures, individual political history and the combined experiences also offer unique opportunities for the people of the FSM to prepare for these challenges. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to participate in this study with the

people at COM-FSM, with the respondents, and the individuals who expressed interest and support for the study.

The process of doing a doctoral dissertation in itself was a great opportunity to learn more about the rigors of research, and to appreciate the discipline and the patience that are required. I am grateful to the University of San Diego for this opportunity.

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Appendix A.List of Respondents

- I. FSM National Government
 - 1. President of the FSM
 - 2. Vice-Speaker and Member of the Education Committee
National FSM Congress
 - 3. Deputy Secretary of Education, FSM National Government
 - 4. Assistant Secretary of Education, FSM National Government

- II. State Governments
 - A. Governor of Chuuk State
Weno, Chuuk, FM 96942
 - B. Member, Health/Education Committee, Senate, Chuuk State
Legislature

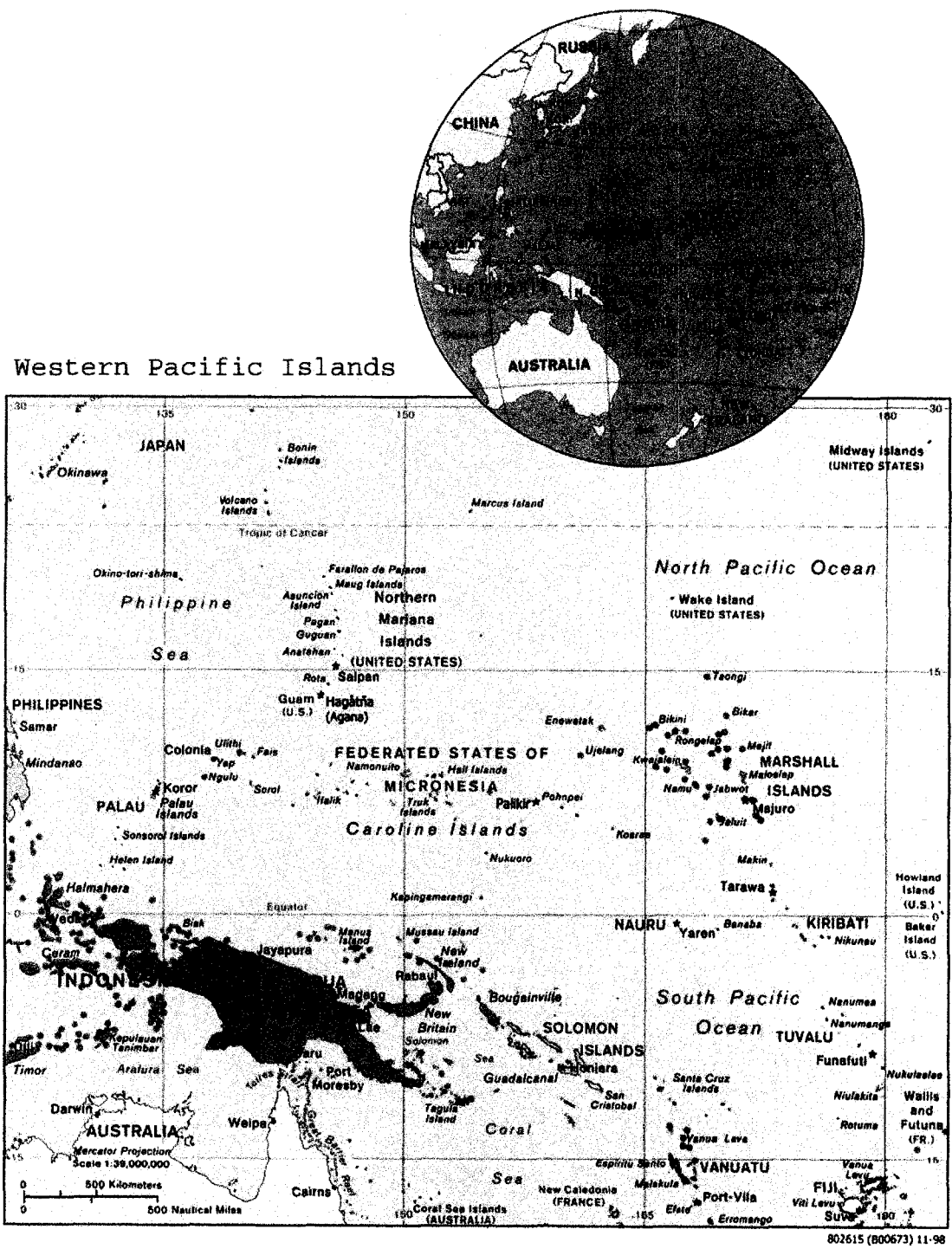
 - A. Lt. Governor of Pohnpei State
Kolonias, Pohnpei State, 96941
 - B. Health/Education Committee Chairman
Pohnpei State Legislature

 - A. Governor of Yap State
Box 39, Colonia, Yap State, 96943
 - B. Health/Education Committee Chairman
Yap State Legislature

 - A. Governor of Kosrae State
P.O. Box 187, Tofol, Kosrae, FM 96944
 - B. Health/Education Chairman
Kosrae State Legislature

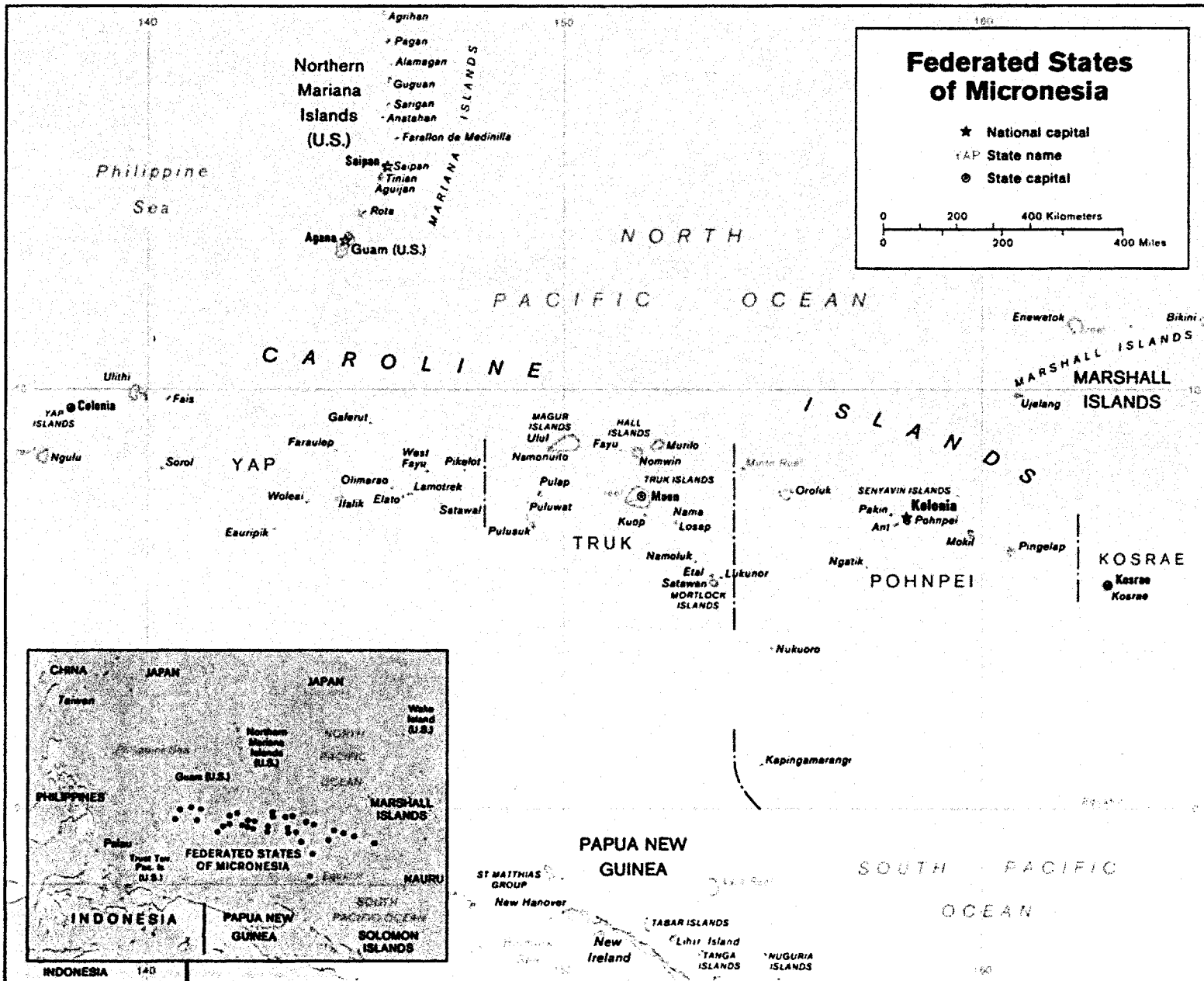
- III. COM-FSM
 - 1. President of the College
P.O. Box 159, Kolonia, Pohnpei, FM 96941
 - 2. Chairman, Board of Regents
COM-FSM
 - 3. College Program Director, COM-FSM

Appendix B 1



Source: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/PCL/Map_collection/islands_oceans_poles/Oceania_pol97.pdf. Accessed 12/29/00.

Source: www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/PCL/Map_collection/islands_oceans_poles/Oceania_pol_97.pdf.



Appendix C**Initial Inquiry Letter (Sample)**

Name, Title
Office
Address

Date

Dear (Respondent's title and name)

I am a graduate student in the School of Education at the University of San Diego, San Diego, California. I would like to invite you to participate in a study toward my dissertation. I am interested in studying the perception of leaders in the Federated States of Micronesia relating to the purposes and priorities of the College of Micronesia.

Your participation, if you agree, will be as a respondent to a set of open-ended interview questions relating to the purposes and priorities of the COM-FSM. I will conduct the interview that is expected to require at least 30 to 60 minutes of your time. A follow-up interview for clarification purposes may be conducted if necessary. You may terminate the interview at any time and you will be under no obligation to continue the interview. A consent form describing the general questions for the study, and the method that will be used for the interview accompanies this letter. An overview of the open-ended interview questions is also attached for your preliminary reference.

Due to the nature of the study and the high visibility of your position, you may be vulnerable and easily identified based on your responses. However, your responses will not be attributed to you individually and no name will be used throughout the study and in the findings. You will be provided with a copy of the interview report for your review and editing for accuracy should you desire to do so.

Your participation in this study will help me learn about the relationship between perception of leaders and the purposes of institutions of higher education in general, and how this information could be used for developing policy and for planning purposes.

The appropriate university professors including my dissertation committee at the University of San Diego will have access to this study. The dissertation that results from this study will be published in hard copy and microfiche and will be made available at the University of San Diego library.

I appreciate your time in reading this request and in responding to the enclosed consent form. Please use the enclosed stamped envelope to mail the response to me. You may also email me at elizabeth.rechebei@saipan.com. However, the university will require a signed document for record purposes. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please let me know. I look forward to your positive consideration.

Sincerely,

Appendix D

University of San Diego Consent to Participate in Research Study (Sample Form)

Elizabeth D. Rechebei, a doctoral student in the School of Education at the University of San Diego, is requesting your assistance to participate in a research study using open-ended interviews relating to the purposes and priorities of the College of Micronesia.

This is an agreement of the protection of your rights in this research study.

1. The purpose of the research is to gather information relating to the perception of certain leaders on the purposes and priorities of the College of Micronesia—Federated States of Micronesia. Specifically, the study will examine how national and state leaders perceive the purposes and priorities of (a) the COM-FSM National Campus, and (b) the respective State Campuses. The study will also analyze the similarities or dissimilarities of these perceptions.
2. A case study method will be used. Methodology includes interviews, observations and document reviews. As respondent, you will be given a list of open-ended interview questions in person by the researcher. Depending on your preference, your response may be tape-recorded or written as field notes by the researcher. You may be contacted again after the interview for clarification purposes, if needed.
3. If you so desire, a report of your interview will be prepared and sent to you for your review in order to give you the opportunity to edit the report to ensure its accuracy before it is included with the other data for analysis and included in the dissertation report.
4. All information will be confidential and every effort will be made that will not identify any respondent. However, it is understood that there may be some risk that you will be identified as a participant in this study depending on your title and the geography of the region.
5. Tape recorded interviews and interview notes will be kept in a locked filing cabinet for the duration of the research process and for another year after successful defense of the dissertation. Tape recorded interviews and interview notes will be destroyed one year after successful dissertation defense.
6. Participation is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time without risk or penalty.
7. There is no agreement, written or verbal, beyond that which is expressed on this consent form.

I, the undersigned, understand the above explanation and give consent to my voluntary participation in this research.

Signature of respondent: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name and Title: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Contact: Phone _____ Fax _____ email _____

Please use enclosed stamped envelope to mail to: Elizabeth D. Rechebei, P.O. Box 502493, Saipan MP 96950. An email version for immediate notification may also be sent to: elizabeth.rechebei@saipan.com. Thank you very much for your support.

Appendix E

Interview Guide

1. In your role as (state role here), what are your impressions of the COM-FSM and its respective state campuses in the context of nation building? What do you consider to be the key features in the mission of the college?
2. In view of the unique political structure in the FSM as a federation of four states, as a leader, how effective is the COM-FSM system in its ability to respond to the respective individual needs of the four states, and to the collective needs of the nation as a whole? What are the major strengths of the COM-FSM in responding to the different needs in the community, the respective states and the nation as a whole?
3. (Looking at the governance of the COM-FSM, as a leader, do you have any thoughts about the current structure of the Board of Regents?)
4. It has been proposed that students receiving the government scholarship should be required to attend COM-FSM first. Why was this proposed and what are your views about this proposal?
5. There is a growing debate nationally in the U.S. that remedial programs should not be the function of community colleges. What views do you have with respect to the remedial function of the COM-FSM and why is the remedial function placed at the state campuses? Would you consider placing this role with the secondary school system?
6. (Academic freedom is one of the cornerstones of colleges and universities. In your role as a leader, do you have any views with respect to the extent or degree of this freedom in the COM-FSM?)
7. (As the FSM moves toward sustainability of its public services including education, do you foresee the possibility of opening the COM-FSM to external clientele, e.g., Japan, China, Korea, to compensate for low enrollment should that happen?)
8. As a leader, do you see the FSM government as being open to the establishment of other nonpublic higher education institutions in the near future?
9. I understand that a significant number of students from Yap State are enrolled at Palau Community College. In your view, is this a trend that may continue and what impact will this have on the Yap Campus and the COM-FSM as a whole? Why is this happening?

10. We often hear about the urgent need to preserve and promote indigenous culture/language. In your view what do you see is the role of the COM-FSM in this effort? How would you rate this priority from 1 to 5 (5 = very high) in comparison with other priorities?
11. I understand that there is a move to establish vocational education at COM-FSM. In your view, will there be sufficient commitment on the part of key decision makers to support this program at the possible expense of other programs? How important is vocational education given the jobs that may be or are available? In your view, is the college the appropriate agency to manage vocational education?
12. In view of rising social costs and the renegotiation of the Compact of Free Association between the U.S. and FSM, in your opinion, what impact will this have on COM-FSM and its respective state campuses?
13. As a young nation, the FSM has to meet ever growing and changing social and economic needs with very meager resources. The COM-FSM, being the only higher education institution, has a unique role to play in addressing these needs. What, in your view as a leader, are these needs and how will you prioritize them in terms of the financial resources situation in the FSM?
14. The possibility of transforming the COM-FSM into a four-year institution is being discussed. In your view, how would this be supported at the national and the state levels? In your view, will this move restructure the intent of the state campuses?
15. In your view as a leader, what are the main strengths and weaknesses of the COM-FSM system with respect to governance, quality of programs, relevance, accessibility and financial resources?
16. As a final comment, in your experience as a public servant and a leader in (state role), what would you consider is the most important agenda for FSM's higher education for the next ten years? What are your dreams and hopes for higher education in the future for the FSM?
17. Any other thoughts on the COM-FSM? Thank you very much.

APPENDIX F (1 – 9)

1. Teacher Training (Page 178)
2. Vocational Education (P. 179)
3. Language and Culture (P. 180)
4. Becoming a 4-Year Institution (P. 181)
5. Quality, Relevance, and Standards (P. 183)
6. Funding (P. 185)
7. Nation Building (P. 187)
8. Equity and Roles (P. 188)
9. Government Control, Politics and Authority (P. 190)

APPENDIX F 1

Teacher Training Data/Themes

States

National to focus on Teacher Training
 Education is important
 Academic programs important
 Basic education priority
 Education to transfer abroad
 Origin as teacher training institution noted
 Emphasis on teacher training

National

Should focus on teacher training
 Nation depends on good teachers
 Training shows poor results
 State colleges to train teachers also
 State campuses offer teacher certifications
 Proper education foundation important
 Priority should be education (Teacher Training)
 Teacher education key to education improvement
 Importance of teacher training
 Educate more women
 Education is key role of college
 Mindful of origin as teacher training college
 Still important role of college
 If funding reduced, concentrate only on teacher training
 4-yr program good for teacher education only
 Teacher training most important role of college

Thematic explanation:

The college originated as a teacher training institution to improve elementary/secondary education instructions. Teacher training was viewed as the most important postsecondary education program then. Teacher training is still viewed as critical if nothing else is to be offered.

The key to quality education is quality teachers. Proper foundations in education require qualified teachers first of all.

The nation must have good teachers to prepare its people to be able to survive in the modern world.

If College is to become 4-year institution, it should be for teacher education only.

Alignment with College purposes and priorities: Historical significance noted as well as current importance of teacher training.

National and state levels share similar perceptions related to teacher training but state level perceptions focused more on the importance of quality teachers for the schools which happen to be under the jurisdiction of state governments.

APPENDIX F 2

Vocational Education Data/Themes

State

Training unrelated to jobs
 Students need work experience
 More indepth training needed
 Programs need to be consolidated
 Programs appropriate at state levels
 Needs in states
 Program inadequate at college
 Difficult to compete with skilled labor
 Jobs available/qualified people needed
 Need for better collaboration between
 businesses, schools, and college
 Career prep important
 States should do vocational education
 No voc ed in state campus
 Students should choose programs
 Voc Ed should be for remedial students
 Voc Ed stigma must be eliminated
 Voc Ed must have priority and funding
 Collaboration important with business
 Needed for jobs abroad
 Enough jobs for vocational ed students
 Voc Ed should meet state needs
 Voc Ed for new nation critical/skills
 must keep up with change

National

Does not reflect private sector needs
 Important training to manage resources
 States should offer vocational education
 and share facilities with businesses
 Voc ed and Academic both important
 Need to strengthen voc education
 Leaders view voc ed as important
 Enough jobs for graduates
 Locals lack skills/work ethics
 People are voc ed oriented traditionally
 Voc ed accommodates different capabilities of people
 Need to change attitude about voc ed
 Important for self-sufficiency; must be priority area
 Low salary a detriment; enough jobs available
 Voc education is important

Thematic explanation:

Vocational education is viewed as very important but should be relevant and not outdated. It should be offered at the state level to address state needs. Jobs are available for graduates but graduates do not apply what they learn.

It is difficult to compete with skilled foreign workers even though people in the islands are considered as vocationally oriented. There is a stigma about vocational education and inadvertently, people tend to view vocational education as fitting only for remedial students.

For vocational education to be successful, collaboration with schools and businesses is important. Vocational education is also important for jobs abroad.

There is a need to strengthen vocational education including work ethics. Important for self-sufficiency but low salary is a problem.

Consistent with stated purposes and priorities of the college.

National and state level perceptions highly similar. State level view voc ed as needed for jobs abroad as well. States see need for more relevant voc ed programs.

APPENDIX F 3

Language and Culture Data/Themes

States

Cultural sensitivity and orientation of
 Non Micronesian faculty an issue
 Not happening at the College
 Faculty not qualified to provide
 instructions in these areas
 Need to promote culture
 Very important
 Should be national government
 priority as well as local priority
 Presently taught in schools
 Should be done at the high school level
 Not really important at the college level
 Should start early and not at college
 Community and schools should teach these
 Need to protect diversity in culture
 Language and culture to promote unity
 and appreciation of diversity
 College doing a poor job on these
 Should be taught at state campuses

National

Should start early but also at college
 Questioned why college is not doing this
 Prepare people to use culture to identify self
 Culture and language very important for
 understanding each other
 Very important; pride as a people
 National College need to do this
 Important but not really at the college level
 Very important; unfair if not done
 Need more instructional materials
 Should be optional
 Need for language policy
 Leaders fear culture loss
 No action from leaders
 College does not prioritize this

Thematic explanation:

Language and culture are important; however, the college may not be the most appropriate place for these to be taught. Starting early is critical especially at the community level.

Leaders fear the loss of language and culture although they have not taken action to ensure against their loss as yet. The College is viewed as the institution to protect culture and language but it is not happening or the college is not doing a good job with it. State campuses are alternative sites.

Language and culture serve to promote unity while appreciating diversity.

Alignment with College: No consistent perception to determine alignment. Mixed views at each level reflect similarities between two.

APPENDIX F 4

Themes on the Issue of Becoming a Four-Year Institution

State

May be an answer to stop
 outmigration
 Less expensive than sending
 abroad
 Need for more funding to become
 4-yr institution
 Other institutions cheaper
 Costly to send students to national
 campus
 State campuses should be upgraded
 before thinking about 4-yr.
 4-yr is good but if others are cheaper
 students will go there
 Support it if practical; for now, 3 yr
 is ok
 Higher than AA degree desirable
 4 year will bring more qualified
 faculty
 4 yr will allow state campuses to
 become two-year colleges
 Why not have 4-yr colleges in states
 4-yr will mean better support for
 state campuses
 4-yr is good; so is state community
 colleges
 When ready; long term dream
 4-yr will bring better visibility for
 college and will attract more
 students
 Means more opportunities for people
 4-yr is reflection of nation's pride

Thematic explanation:

Four year status will allow college to offer quality programs. Teacher training will be comprehensive. If practical, it should be supported. Leaders want this but do not understand implications. 3rd year seems ok for now. 4-yr may still be costly to send students from a state; thus, will send students elsewhere if cheaper.

4-yr status means 2-yr college status for state campuses. A 4-yr status will bring better support for state campuses. This has been a long term dream of the pride for the nation. College will be more visible and attractive.

Needs to be considered carefully. Meet basics and priorities first; should not be rushed.

Not forced but encouraged to consider possibility.

National

Good but states should also become
 2-yr colleges
 National facilities better; can offer
 other courses as a 4-yr college
 Good but should not be rushed

Meet basics and priorities first and
 not only prestige
 Not pressured; only encouraged to consider
 the possibility
 Why not if able to be accredited and
 Will improve quality
 States can become community colleges also
 Leaders want 4-yr status
 4-yr means quality and better economy
 question about affordability
 States need money to become community
 Colleges
 Best to work with other institutions for now
 Cannot afford; address priority first
 Need to learn implications
 2-yr at states difficult; funding constraints
 Leaders want 4-yr; unclear about implications
 Having second thoughts about it
 States status not necessary to change status
 Distance ed possibility for delivery of
 Courses
 Joint programs possible after 4-yr attained
 Collaborate with outside institutions
 4-yr not appropriate except for teacher education
 Distance ed will eliminate need for 4-yr status

Alignment with College: Not relevant with stated purposes/priorities of the college;
 however, it is a reflection of what is actually happening at this time.
 State and National: Mixed views but in general both supportive especially the states who
 anticipate becoming community colleges themselves.

APPENDIX F 5

Quality/Relevance/Standards

States

Liberal arts is obsolete
 High tech more relevant
 Why some credits from college
 not accepted at U.S. colleges
 Wondered whether courses are
 watered down so students can
 pass
 Need for better schools
 Selection criteria need to be more
 stringent
 Sciences more important now
 Skills training, teacher training
 Important
 Poor facilities/no dorms
 Need better campus environments
 Accredited status is strength of College
 Make national campus more attractive
 College needs to improve
 Different needs in states
 College viewed as improving
 Faculty not as qualified at state as
 at national
 College can use more support
 State campus has ideal programs in place
 Technology can overcome logistics
 problems
 College deserves credit for improvements
 made
 State appear to only prepare students to
 go to the national campus
 State campus viewed as low level campus
 State should have same courses as national
 State campus need to improve
 State campus able to improve quickly
 Need for more graduates with degrees
 Need to improve standards

Thematic explanation:

Possible change in emphases of programs/courses. Quality being questioned by some but not all. Teacher training still important as well as voc ed.

Poor facilities a concern at state campuses as well as campus environment. States have different needs from each other; some see states have same needs.

College seems to be improving. A strength is its accredited status; yet, some credits are not accepted in U.S. institutions. Faculty at national appear to be better than at states. National needs to be attractive to students.

Logistics problem can be overcome with modern technology. State campuses has ideal programs in place. State role should not be only to prepare student to go to national. States should have same courses as national. State campuses are viewed as low-level campuses. State campuses must improve and it can do that quickly. Must maintain high standards at state level. Quality and not numbers should count. Need first class, dedicated faculty.

Credibility of college important. College doing good job. Need to define real campus. Open access is a strength of the college.

National

Need to maintain high standards in four
 states
 Quality should be a concern; not number of
 students

Need first class faculty/dedicated faculty
College has potential to offer relevant courses
Work hard to maintain standards
Programs comparable with other institutions
Staff quality need improvement
Need to upgrade the college
Access is college's strength
College plays part in planning
Need to define real campus
Satisfied with things
College may not have everything to
 get students back from Yap
Need to strengthen schools
Possible compromising of standards to accommodate poor students, compete for
 Funds
Attract students by improving programs
Credibility of college important
Retention of students a goal
Facility improvement a goal
More quality at the college needed
If funding reduced, focus on teacher training

Alignment: Consistent with expectations of the College in the broad sense.
National and state are also similar in their expectations; states want more programs at state level.
States see national as possibly taking too much resources.

APPENDIX F 6

Funding

States

4-year will be less expensive overall
 More funds needed
 Tuition at local campus adequate
 Funding for schools not problem
 U.S. federal grants important and sufficient
 Funding constraints
 Other college cheaper for students
 Costly to send students to national
 4-yr good but other colleges can also offer, then student will go there
 Reliance on national funding acknowledged
 Local funding inadequate
 Compact funding hopeful
 Compact prioritize health/education
 High dependency on PELL Grants
 National getting too much funding
 Funding inadequate
 Fundings should be based on population and needs
 College should generate own resources
 Compact will have effect in funding
 Need stability in funding
 Compact funding may be lower
 Poor fiscal foundation
 Overall funding support needed
 Vision needed to gain support

National

Financial support for campuses one at a time
 State campuses need funding
 State campuses minimize cost of sending to national
 There are duplication of effort

Thematic explanation:

Limits of funding realized as constraint for future development efforts. Reliance on national funding for college recognized. U.S. federal grants very important and helpful but also encourage more dependency.

For some, it is more costly to send students to the national college even if national becomes a four-year college. For others, tuition at local campus adequate. Still more funds are needed for everything else.

National government or College viewed as getting too much; funding should be based on population and need. States will have to support college as well.

College should generate its own resources through endowments. Compact may or may not affect College even when negotiators appreciate importance of college. Optimism related to the compact for the college.

College needs stability in funding. Vision needed to gain support. Support for campuses can be done one at a time. State campuses minimize cost of sending students to national. Acknowledged duplication of effort. In future, tuition may be main source of funding.

States must work within means. 4-year may be too costly at this time. College is fortunate to receive as much as it had.

Funding concerns
Compact will impact College
Federal funding needed
Compact will not really impact
on the College
Optimistic about renegotiation
College must generate other revenues
Tuition must be a source of funding
4-yr may not be affordable
In long run, states must contribute
Must work within resources
Lack of funding/faculty
So far, college fortunate with funding
support
Endowment effort ongoing
Uncertain about Compact; College ok
for time being
Weakness of college is limited funding
U.S. funds has negative aspect: dependence

Alignment: Alignment is present; college expects to have stable funding sources. National and state in general agreement with respect to funding situation. Funding continues to be a major problem.

APPENDIX F 7

Nation Building

Prevent out-migration	<p><i>Thematic Explanation:</i></p> <p><i>Institution that is the pride of the nation; it serves as a focus of national identity and a rallying point for the people. State campuses important because they offer a sense of being part of the nation and at the same time a sense of ownership.</i></p> <p><i>College is important for nation building. To build nation, people need to be educated, united, appreciate and learn from each other's cultures. Job skills are critical for local employment and work abroad. People need to learn to survive in the islands but at the same time also able to compete and survive in a global world.</i></p> <p><i>College will promote self-sufficiency and political independence. College will produce scientists, philosophers, etc., like other progressive nations.</i></p> <p><i>College stimulates economy and prepares people to deal with outside world.</i></p>
Global perspective needed as focus	
Unifying agent	
Educated population	
Critical/basic for national development	
College ready for national development	
Nation must have college	
Voc. Ed important for jobs	
Preparation for local and abroad	
Must survive in island	
Reduce dependency on foreign labor	
Awareness of global world	
Competition important, good	
Political independence	
Human resource development	
Self-sufficiency	
Competent population socially	
Unity in diversity/sharing in diversity	
Unique and admirable	
Prepare citizens	
Keep up with progress	
Potential for disunity	
FSM language important to encourage unity	
Culture emphasis for unity	
Emulate progressive nations	
Advances in sciences, philosophy	
Leadership supportive	
College role to develop nation	
Help in dealing with outside world	
Focus of national identity	
Build capacity	
Focal point for people, rallying point	
State campuses contribute to national development	
Local orientation needed in national development	
State campus sense of belonging and being part of nation at same time	
College stimulates economy	
College role to maintain unity of nation	
Voc. Ed needed in nation building	
Teach one FSM language to strengthen unity	
Produce scientists to conduct research to fit island needs	

Alignment with state College purposes and priorities on a broad level.

Similar perspectives between state and national on a broad level; states also concerned about out-migration.

APPENDIX F 8

Equity/Roles

States

States lack many things
 Too much competition at national
 National not paying attention to
 state campuses
 Perception of similar needs unfair
 National and state have different views
 Duplication at both levels
 College does address both needs
 College doing the right thing
 Pohnpei campus duplication of effort
 State campus must offer all courses
 needed; islands have different needs
 Voc ed needed at state level
 College does not offer adequate
 voc ed programs
 College should serve all students
 Roles differentiation difficult to
 see
 Culture best at schools and community
 College should work with schools
 State and national campus should be
 equal
 Weak coordination among programs
 Need for better collaboration
 Focus should be sciences/research
 College can do more
 Local needs as important as national
 needs
 College must respond to social needs
 College must provide more opportunities
 for two-year programs so that students
 can go abroad after two years
 National taking too much but state is where
 the action is
 Needs among states similar
 Roles unclear
 Emphasis on teacher training, then voc ed,
 nursing and business
 National overstaffed, takes too much resources,
 should limit hiring

Thematic explanation:

Differences of opinion regarding state needs. There should be equality at all campuses; there should be specialized programs in state campuses. There is duplication of programs at state and national. States need more support.

National is taking too much resources at expense of the states. National and state have different views about needs at the state level. Perceptions of similar needs unfair.

Main focus at states should be teacher training, followed by voc ed, nursing and business. Main focus should be sciences and research at state and national. College can do more. Roles difficult to pin down. College not doing enough in vocational education. College should concentrate on two-year programs so that students can transfer abroad.

National

Education is whole process; every level is important

Goals not clear
Roles still need to be defined
Education is key role
Roles of states include voc ed, remedial and inservice
More attention to states needed
Programs at state levels determined to meet state needs
All campuses should be equal in quality
Cannot afford duplication of effort
States should concentrate on special areas
Pohnpei campus questioned
Pohnpei getting most benefit
Possible to offer more courses at four states
Limit programs at state and do extension instead

Alignment with College: Unclear; process still evolving. Roles of campuses still being discussed.

National and State are very similar in their views about the roles and associated issues.

Appendix F 9

Government Control/Politics/Authority

State

Satisfied with governance
 Political interference acknowledged
 Legislature ready to help campuses
 Future funding from legislature foreseen
 Board representative/address priorities
 of nation
 Local governments provide assistance
 and support
 Need to balance support among education
 programs
 No choice given in college at state,
 by default
 State should do as it desires, no
 commitment to national college
 Similar arrangement with government
 system; mistake to be a part of the
 system; things move slowly
 Will send students where practical
 Politicians have individual interests
 Campus facilities improvements
 a priority
 Roles of campuses not clear
 Government supports college but
 government also intrudes
 More team effort between state
 and national government needed
 College is national gov. responsibility
 College system parallels FSM gov system
 National too powerful
 Board is good—Micronesian way
 Board tend to compete—look out after
 their own interests
 Need to change leaders with new ones
 National should improve state facilities
 State campuses are important
 Political stability in FSM—good for
 College

National

States must also support College
 State campuses address grassroots
 needs

Thematic explanation:

*The board of regents representation
 and decision making are satisfactory.
 This is the strength of the college.
 Decisions are balanced and respond
 to needs of the nation. Boardmembers
 sometimes look out for their
 respective state interests also.*

*Local legislature is willing to help
 and has been helping state campuses.
 State governments need to assist with
 funding college expenses. National
 government must prioritize facility
 improvement at state campuses.
 National government is responsible
 for the College system. More team
 effort needed.*

*Politicians have personal interests in
 dealing with the college. Need to
 change old leaders with new.
 Political environment conducive for
 college to thrive.*

*Roles of campuses are still unclear.
 States should be free to decide what
 kind of college it needs. State not
 obligated to send student to national
 campus. Bureaucracy cumbersome;
 states want to do things
 independently; states address
 grassroots needs.*

*System should stay as one. Locals
 should be given preference in hiring
 and should have voice in hiring.
 Distance ed will surmount access
 issues.*

Unique arrangement: education is state responsibility; College is national's
National/state need to work together
Not easy relationship
States are autonomous
Board structure good
Board representation appropriate
Board too political, non-representative
Loose federation allow for sense of independence from national campus
State campuses are important because they are close to the people
Loose federation is appropriate
States don't want interference
States should match cost of operating college
Locals should have preference in hiring
Governance good, decisions balanced, represents states well
Distance ed will address access issues
Importance of staying as one system
Strengths of college is its governance