



NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE

Regular Meeting of May 1, 2025

4:00p.m Board of Regents Conference Room
As Terlaje, Saipan

Minutes of the regular meeting of May 01, 2025

In compliance with the Commonwealth's Open Government Act, to fulfill this requirement of this regular meeting was provided as follows to all stakeholders:

- a) On April 28, 2025, advance written notice of this regular meeting was posted in the Marianas Variety News and Views.
- b) On April 29, 2025, a copy of this advance notice of the meeting was uploaded on the college's website at www.marianas.edu.
- c) On April 29, 2025, advance written notice of this meeting was emailed to the College campus.
- d) Any individuals who has requested notice of this meeting has been forwarded a copy of the notice of such meeting.

I. CALL TO ORDER

- a. Roll call

Board Members: Regent Charles Cepeda (Chairman); Regent Elaine Hocog Orilla (Vice-Chair); Regent Jesse Tudela (Member); Regent Zenie Mafnas (Member); Regent Michelle Sablan (Member); Regent William (Bill) Cing (Member).

NMC Staff: Galvin Deleon Guerrero, EdD, President; Frankie Eliptico, Vice-President of Administration and Advancement; Kevin Bautista; Dean Charlotte Cepeda (Student Support Services); Dean Lorraine Maui (Interim Academic Programs & Services); Lupe Camacho (Staff Senate President); Polly Masga (HRO Director); Helen Camacho (Executive Board Secretary) (Recorder).

Via Zoom: Lisa Hasckaylo (OIE); Erynn Sakisat (Student Support Services); Janson Sullivan (SMHA Administrative Manager); Vilma Reyes (OIE Director); Rachel Fusco (CIP Director); Maria Aguon (Executive Director Tinian Center);

b. Review and Adoption of Agenda

Board Action: Regent Orilla motioned to adopt the agenda, seconded by Regent Sablan. All members voted yes, the motion passed.

c. Review and Adoption of Minutes

1. December 11, 2024 Regular Meeting

Board Action: Regent Orilla motioned to adopt the December 11, 2024 meeting minutes, seconded by Regent Cing. All members voted yes, the motion passed.

2. February 27, 2025 Special Meeting

Regent Sablan motioned to adopt the February 27, 2025 meeting minutes, seconded by Regent Orilla. All members voted yes, the motion passed.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

a. Individuals may testify on items on this agenda during this period. Written testimony is also accepted. Individuals are requested to limit their testimony to five (5) minutes.

Chairman Cepeda confirmed that no comments were received or voiced during the meeting.

III. REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

a. Finance Committee

Regent Mafnas, finance committee chair, provided updates, and indicated that the committee will be making its recommendation. There are two items discussed:

1. Tuition & Fees Policy - recommended for approval by the committee.
2. BOR Resolution 2025-01: Amendment to NMC's nonprofit charter; recommended for approval pending legal review.

b. Audit Committee – No report.

c. Human Resources Committee

Regent Cing, HR committee chair, provided updates, and the committee will be making its recommendation to the full board. There are two items discussed:

1. President's Evaluation - Due by July 1, 2025.
2. Organizational Chart Policy Change - A new policy initiative.

Committee Recommendation: Recommended both items be brought to the full Board of deliberation and potential approval.

d. Regent Nominating Committee

Regent Elaine Orilla, committee chair provided an update that the committee reviewed 2 regent applications and both applicants were forwarded to the Governor for consideration. She also noted that two regent seats will become vacant on May 29, 2025. The next steps will include an official announcement of the vacancies and encouraged current regents with expiring terms to consider continuing service.

e. Program Committee – No report.

f. Facilities Committee

Regent Tudela, Facilities committee chair provided some updates to include the weekly updates provided by President Dr.G.

1. Student Center: Targeted for completion by June 30, 2025.
2. Two other buildings have funding deadlines extended - one was set to expire at the end of 2025, the other in February 2026.

g. Ad Hoc Committee

Regent Orilla, Adhoc Committee Chair informed the board that the committee met and discussed two items.

i. Honorary Regent Policy:

- Returned to the Administration for further clarification and work.
- The college stated it's not a priority at the moment due to unresolved issues.

ii. Policy Review Schedule:

- Recognized the need for regular review of Board policies.

- The college will assist the Board in creating a review schedule.
- Target is to adopt a two-year policy review cycle.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

a. Tuition and Fees Policy

Board Action: Regent Mafnas motioned to adopt the tuition and fees policy Version 2.0, seconded by Regent Orilla. It was confirmed that Version 2.0 was included in the Board packet for reference. All members voted yes, the motion passed.

Policy Engagement Approach: A new model of policy review is being implemented: Policies are introduced to the Board simultaneously with internal review to allow for first readings and earlier engagement. This addresses past concerns where policies arrived at the Board after significant internal revision, creating pressure to approve without full participation.

Background on Policy Change: The last tuition increase occurred in 2016 (a 35% increase). The current proposal aims to avoid dramatic tuition hikes every decade by adopting a predictable, gradual increase model.

Core Proposal of Version 2.0: Board retains authority to suspend, reverse, or repeal tuition increases. However, the authority to implement incremental increases would be delegated to the college administration.

Administration would:

1. work with internal stakeholders (Budget and Finance Committee, students, faculty and staff).
2. Implement an automatic annual tuition increase between 2-5%, capped, and based on a set procedure.
3. Enable students to better forecast the total cost of their education.

Stakeholder Feedback:

1. Students want transparency - clarity on where fees go.
2. Faculty want assurance that fees reflect true institutional needs (e.g updated lab and tech fees).
3. General concern - Delegating tuition-setting authority is a significant step, requiring clear communication and accountability.

4. Noted that current tech fees are outdated (predate typhoons, pandemic, and digital transformation).

Community Engagement Commitment:

Regardless of whether the policy is passed:

1. The college will engage both internal and external stakeholders on tuition and fee matters.
2. Ensure all changes are well communicated in advance.

Conclusion and Motion:

After thorough discussion, the Regents **expressed satisfaction** with the policy language—pending the understood **intent and review process**.

A **motion was made** to approve and adopt **Policy 701.2: Tuition and Fees**, as presented. No further discussion was raised, and the motion was carried forward.

b. Organizational Chart Policy

The president presented the organizational chart policy.

Board Action: Regent Cing motioned to adopt the organizational chart policy, seconded by Regent Orilla. The board deliberated on the policy.

Discussion Summary: Policy 2004 – Organizational Chart

Motion and Context:

- The Board began **deliberating Policy 2004**, which relates to the **organizational chart** of the college.
- This policy was previously **presented last year** for first reading.
- The current version includes **updates based on stakeholder feedback**.
- A motion to approve the policy was made and seconded, opening the floor for discussion.

Key Points of Discussion:

Concern about Presidential Authority:

- A regent expressed concern that the policy **grants too much authority** to the President by allowing them to **unilaterally update the organizational chart**.
- The concern centered around future Presidents who may not be as communicative or collaborative with the Board.

- The regent noted the risk that **changes could be implemented** and **staff placed in positions** before the Board reviews or reacts, possibly appearing to target individuals.

Counterpoint on Administrative Practice:

- Another regent clarified that it is **standard practice in institutions** for the **CEO/President to develop the organizational structure**, with the Board **reviewing it as part of the budget process**.
- The organizational chart is tied to **budget planning**—any changes in roles or structure impact budget allocations.
- The policy aims to formalize an existing **collaborative process** where the President works with the Board, not bypasses it.

Clarification of Oversight vs. Management:

- The discussion implicitly highlighted the **distinction between governance (Board role) and management (President's role)**.
- While the President handles daily operations, including updating the org chart, the Board retains **oversight through budget approvals** and strategic review.

In this segment of the meeting, the Board of Regents continues its discussion on **Policy 2004 regarding the organizational chart**. Here's a summary of key points raised:

Possible Next Steps:

- **Revise the Policy** to include language like: "The Board of Regents shall empower the President, after consultation with the Chair or the Full Board, to maintain and update an accurate organizational chart."
- This would satisfy both the need for **quick decision-making** by the President and **oversight** by the Board, allowing for more **flexibility** without compromising governance.

The dialogue includes suggestions to revisit the process for approving new positions created through grants and to refine policies on how the board engages with the administration regarding these matters.

Regent Cing withdrew the earlier motion, seconded by Regent Sablan.

Yes:

Regent Cing

Regent Mafnas

Regent Sablan

No:

Regent Tudela

Regent Orilla

Board Action: Policy is tabled for the next meeting.

c. BOR Policy Review Schedule

Regent Orilla, Adhoc Committee Chair informed the board that the committee met and deliberated on the policy. They also address the need to formalize the review schedule for board policies and include all relevant committees in that process, with particular attention to adding the nominating committee for regular reviews.

Board Action: Regent Orilla motioned to approve the policy review schedule, seconded by Regent Sablan. Add the Regen Nominating Committee to the policy. All members voted yes, the motion passed.

d. Honorary Regents

The key points from this portion include:

- Discussions around the honorary regents and honorary student regents, with some clarification about their roles.
- An amendment related to a regional nominating committee.

Tabled for next meeting.

V. NEW BUSINESS

a. Teach-Out Policy

The president presented the policy for first reading. Chairman Cepeda assigned this policy to the Program Committee for further review.

- Presentation of the teach-out policy to the board, which had been required for accreditation purposes but had not yet been adopted.
- A recommendation to assign the teach-out policy to a program committee for further review and discussion.

b. BOR Resolution No. 2025-01: Amendment to the Non-Profit Charter of Incorporation of Northern Marianas College

The president informed the board that the college has received its status to become a 501c 3 status.

- **Board of Regents Resolution 2025-01:** The board discusses the amendment to the nonprofit charter in light of the IRS 501(c)(3) designation. The IRS granted Northern Marianas College (NMC) the 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, which opens opportunities for NMC to receive donations and grants from national foundations and corporations. Legal review of the charter amendment is recommended before final approval.

Board Action: Regent Mafnas motioned to adopt the resolution, seconded by Regent Orilla. (International Grants) All members voted yes, the motion passed.

- a. BOR Resolution No. 2025-02: A Resolution Recognizing Gilbert Wong for His Exemplary Service and Contributions to Northern Marianas College

The president shared the resolution and gave some background information regarding Gilbert Wong to include numerous accomplishments.

- **Board Resolution 2025-02:** This resolution recognizes Mr. Wong for his exemplary service to NMC. He played a pivotal role in engaging with national organizations, including the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), and was instrumental in securing funding for institutions serving Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. He also helped bring the first-ever Governance Leadership Institute to the Western Pacific and paid his own way to attend the event. His continued support, even after stepping down from the board, was highly valued by the college.

Board Action: Regent Cing motioned to adopt the resolution, seconded by Regent Sablan. All members voted yes, the motion passed.

VI. COLLEGE EXECUTIVE REPORTS

- a. President's Report

- i. Facilities Update

The president informed the board that a report is in their folder and opened for questions. In response to Chairman Cepeda's question about the opening of the student center, VP Frankie provided an update. There are detailed reports on the progress of several buildings, including a student center and classroom buildings, with a focus on upcoming dates, design specifications, and funding.

Here's a quick summary:

1. **Groundbreaking and Construction:** Groundbreaking for new buildings, including classrooms, is planned for later this year (around August or September). The student center is on track for completion by June 30th, but furniture and infrastructure are still being finalized.
2. **Design Details:** For the classroom buildings, the design was downsized from a two-story building to a one-story building, but it allows for the possibility of adding a second story in the future if funds become available. The project is impacted by cost increases and shortages in materials and labor, likely due to global and geopolitical factors.
3. **Challenges:** Rising construction costs and the unpredictable availability of materials are concerns, as well as labor shortages that are affecting the overall timeline and cost of construction.

ii. Accreditation Update

The president and Dean Char provided accreditation updates and also shared a PowerPoint presentation with the Board. The team also shared the latest and good news that the college's request for an online BSBM is approved. The Interim report is **due November 1, 2025** and the Annual report opens May 1 and closes May 31, 2025.

iii. Finance Update

A copy of the financial report is in the boards folder. VP Frankie highlighted some details.

iv. Legislative Update

Kevin Bautista, Director of the President's Office provided some legislative updates. He noted some important legislations to include the Governor Palacios's proposal of \$6 million for the college in the FY2026 budget proposal, the US Department of Education released a "Dear Colleague Letter," targeting DEI programs and Strengthening Title VI Enforcement and as a proactive response to the letter, the College leadership drafted a standby letter affirming the College's compliance with Title VI. A copy of the report is also provided in the boards folder.

VII. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1) Election of Board Chairman

Nomination: Regent Sablan nominated Regent Tudela, seconded by Regent Cing to serve as BOR Chairman. By acclamation, Regent Tudela is the next BOR Chairman to be effective on May 24, 2025.

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

a. At any time during the scheduled meeting, the Board of Regents may be required to enter into executive session to discuss matters deemed privileged and confidential.

Board Action - Regent Sablan motioned to go into executive session, seconded by Regent Tudela. Motion to move out of executive session made by Sablan and seconded by Regent Mafnas at 6:15p.m. No action was taken.

VIII. UPCOMING BOARD ACTIVITIES AND MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS - None.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Board Action: Regent Sablan motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Regent Tudela, all members voted yes, the meeting ended at 6:30pm.