

January 26, 2023

Dr. Irene Taafaki  
President  
College of the Marshall Islands  
P. O. Box 1258  
Majuro, Marshall Islands 96960

Dear Dr. Taafaki:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting January 11-12, 2023, reviewed the Follow-Up Report and related evidentiary materials submitted by College of the Marshall Islands. The Commission also considered the Peer Review Team Follow-Up Report prepared by the follow-up team that visited the institution on October 17-18, 2022. The Commission appreciated your spoken remarks, as well as those of Dr. Elizabeth Switaj, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs/ALO and Mr. Stevenson Kotton, Vice President for Business and Administrative Affairs. The purpose of this review was to determine whether the College has addressed the deficiencies identified by the peer review team during the March 2021 comprehensive visit and demonstrated compliance with the Standards cited in the Commission's June 28, 2021, Action Letter.

Upon consideration of the information noted above, the Commission acted to **reaffirm accreditation for the remainder of the cycle**. The Commission finds that College of the Marshall Islands has addressed the compliance requirements, corrected deficiencies, and meets Standards III.D.5, III.D.7, III.D.8, and III.D.10. The Commission requires that you disseminate the Follow-Up Report, the Peer Review Team Report, and this letter to all campus constituencies and the public by placing copies on the College website within seven business days of your receipt. A final copy of the Peer Review Team Report is attached.

The next report from the College will be the Midterm Report<sup>1</sup> due on March 15, 2025. The institution's next comprehensive review will begin with Team ISER Review in the fall term of 2027 and conclude with a Focused Site Visit in the spring term of 2028.

On behalf of the Commission, we wish to express appreciation for the diligent work and thoughtful reflection that College of the Marshall Islands undertook to respond to these requirements. These efforts confirm that peer review can serve the multiple constituencies of higher education by both ensuring and encouraging institutional quality and effectiveness.

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<sup>1</sup> Institutions preparing and submitting Midterm Reports, Follow-up Reports, Special Reports, or Teach-out plans/agreements to the Commission should review *Guidelines for Preparing Institutional Reports to the Commission*, found on the ACCJC website at <https://accjc.org/guides-and-manuals/>.

If you have any questions about this letter or the Commission's action, please feel free to contact Dr. Mac Powell or the vice president assigned as liaison to your institution.

Sincerely,



Mac Powell, MBA, Ph.D.  
President



Lori Gaskin, Ph.D.  
Chair

cc: Dr. Elizabeth Switaj, Accreditation Liaison Officer

June 28, 2021

Dr. Irene Taafaki  
President  
College of the Marshall Islands  
P. O. Box 1258  
Majuro, Marshall Islands 96960

Dear Dr. Taafaki:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting June 9-11, 2021, reviewed the Institutional Self Evaluation Report (ISER) and evidentiary materials submitted by College of the Marshall Islands. The Commission also considered the Peer Review Team Report (Team Report) prepared by the peer review team that conducted its site visit to the College March 16-19, 2021. The Commission further considered the written response to the Team Report that you submitted prior to the Commission meeting.

The purpose of this review was to determine whether the College continues to meet ACCJC's Eligibility Requirements, Commission Policies, and Accreditation Standards (hereinafter, the Standards). Upon consideration of the written information noted above, the Commission acted to **Reaffirm Accreditation for 18 months and require a Follow-Up Report, due no later than October 1, 2022**, followed by a visit from a peer review team.

#### Commendations

The Commission recognizes the exemplary performance of College of the Marshall Islands in the following areas. Commendations signify institutional practices for which the Commission believes exceed Standards.

**Standard I.A.1, II.B.1, II.C.4, III.A.12, III.A.14, IV.B.1 (Commendation 1):** The Commission commends the College for its commitment to the fulfillment of its mission of being "a center for the study of Marshallese Culture." Embedded in this commitment is the belief "that quality education is essential to the well-being of individuals and to the wellbeing of the Marshallese people as a whole, now and in the future." The team found evidence of

academic programming, learning support, student services, staff development, and campus governance aligning with what is in the best interest of the Marshallese people.

**Standard III.A.14, III.C.2 (Commendation 2):** The Commission commends the College for ensuring equity of access to education for the entire nation across its islands and atolls by expanding educational programs and support through investment in technology and people.

### Compliance Requirements

The Commission also determined that the College must demonstrate compliance with the following Standards, as identified in the requirements below. This demonstration must be addressed in the required Follow-Up Report.

**Standard III.D.5, III.D.8, III.D.10 (College Requirement 1):** In order to meet the Standard(s), the Commission requires the College assure the financial integrity of the institution and responsible use of its financial resources by having an appropriate internal control structure that is widely disseminated and provides timely information for sound financial decision making, including the effective oversight and management of financial aid and grants, and regular evaluation and assessment of internal controls and financial systems.

**Standards III.D.7 (College Requirement 2):** In order to meet the Standard(s), the Commission requires the College respond to external audit findings, including findings relating to compliance and internal control deficiencies, in a timely manner.

In accordance with federal regulations and the *Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions*, compliance requirements must be addressed and the institution must demonstrate that it aligns with Standards within three years, by June 2024. If the institution cannot document that it has come into compliance within the designated period, the Commission will take adverse action.

### Modifications to Team Recommendations

In taking its action, the Commission added Standard III.D.5 to College Requirement 1.

### Recommendations for Improving Institutional Effectiveness

The Peer Review Team Report noted Recommendations 1, 2, and 3 for improving institutional effectiveness. These recommendations do not identify current areas of deficiency in institutional practice, but consistent with its mission to foster continuous improvement through the peer review process, the Commission encourages institutions to give serious consideration to these recommendations and the advice contained in the Peer Review Team Report. In the Midterm Report, the College will include actions taken in response to the improvement recommendations.

### Next Steps

The Peer Review Team Report provides details of the peer review team's findings. The guidance and recommendations contained in the Peer Review Team Report represent the best advice of the team at the time of the visit but may not describe all that is necessary for the college to come into compliance. A final copy of the Peer Review Team Report is attached.

The Commission requires that you disseminate the ISER, the Peer Review Team Report, and this letter to those who were signatories of the ISER, and that you make these documents available to all campus constituencies and the public by placing copies on the College website. Please note

that in response to public interest in accreditation, the Commission requires institutions to post current accreditation information on a Web page no more than one click from the institution's home page. In keeping with ACCJC policy, the Commission action will also be posted on the ACCJC website within 30 days of the date of the Commission's action.

On behalf of the Commission, we wish to express appreciation for the diligent work and thoughtful reflection that College of the Marshall Islands undertook to prepare for this review. These efforts confirm that peer review can serve well the multiple constituencies of higher education by both ensuring and encouraging institutional quality and effectiveness.

If you have any questions about this letter or the Commission's action, please feel free to contact Dr. Stephanie Droker or the vice president that has been assigned as liaison to your institution.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Droker, Ed.D.



Sonya Christian, Ed.D.

cc: Dr. Elizabeth Switaj, Accreditation Liaison Officer

Attachment