



COMMISSION ON DECOLONIZATION
Special Board Meeting Minutes
August 22, 2023 / 3:00 p.m.

I. Call to order at 3:02 p.m.

II. Roll Call

1. Hon. Lourdes Leon Guerrero (*excused*)
2. Hon. Therese Terlaje (*absent*)
3. Hon. Tina Muña-Barnes (*absent*)
4. Hon. Frank Blas (*absent*)
5. Hon. Jesse Alig
6. Hon. Eddie Duenas
7. Dr. Michael Bevacqua
8. Adrian Cruz (*absent*)
9. Dr. Mary Cruz
10. Dr. Kenneth Gofigan Kuper
11. Ty Whitaker
12. Victoria “Lola” Leon Guerrero (*absent*)
13. Dewey Huffer
14. Other
 1. Roque Eustaquio

III. Approval of Minutes - Regular Meeting July 11, 2023

1. *Motion to approve the meeting minutes by Dr. Mary Cruz.*
2. *Second by Dr. Kenneth G. Kuper.*
3. *Meeting minutes were approved by consensus.*

IV. New Business

a. Project Proposal: 2023 Fanhita Conference

1. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Introduced the project proposal for the 2023 Fanhita Conference, which is tentatively scheduled for late-October. Explained that the first Fanhita Conference was an academic engagement. However, it was not well attended by youth. In response, Fanhita Manhoben took a deliberate focus on youth (i.e. high school students) and used music, art, and poetry for engagement. Announced that for the third Fanhita Conference, COD plans to conduct a 3-day event incorporating both youth (day 1 & 2) and the larger community (day 3). For the first two days, COD will collaborate with local musicians and artists to explore the theme “Peace in the Pacific” while incorporating the concepts of Self-determination, decolonization, and sovereignty. Students will learn how these concepts play a role in Guam’s ability to pursue peace in the region. Day 3 will be an academic conference with panels focused on “Security in Guam.” COD would like to invite representatives from the Pacific Center for Island Security (PCIS) and the Department of Defense (DoD) to join as panelists that help to provide a critical dialogue. Also invited the Board members to suggest panelists. Then provided a general breakdown of conference activities. For days 1 & 2, students will be categorized into four break out groups (visual art, music & songwriting, poetry/ creative writing, and mobilization). The mobilization segment will assist students in creating a youth movement at the



school level. Additionally, COD plans to provide schools with repurposed stand-alone banners for their decolonization-related youth clubs. For day 3, COD will host 3 panels (*breakdown listed below*).

- Panel I will focus on the historic militarization of Guam's lands, waters, and minds.
- Panel II will center on Guam's genuine security in the New Missile Age and our place as a first strike community.
- Panel III will connect decolonization with demilitarization and forecasting sovereign futures under a fully self-governing status.

Informed the Board that the COD team is estimating 100 youth (day 1&2) and 300 community attendees (day 3). Added that the team would like to hold a community night on the third day to showcase the art and music created by the youth, invite partner organizations to highlight volunteer opportunities, and to help continue conversations. The cost to include a community night is pending. Then provided the budget breakdown (*please see project proposal PDF*). The estimated total is \$32,000. However, this price may increase with the inclusion of the community night. Noted that COD plans to hire a logistics coordinator, who will handle honorarium for artists/ panelists, conference branding and promotion, giveaways, decorations, and printed materials. COD does not anticipate paying for travel/ lodging for panelists.

2. **Dr. Mary Cruz:** Inquired if COD is planning to invite off-island panelists.
3. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Informed the Board that COD will focus on inviting local subject matter experts, such as representatives from PCIS. Announced that COD is partnering with the Office of the Governor, who will assist in inviting/ engaging representatives from the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Missile Defense Agency (MDA).
4. **Dr. Mary Cruz:** Inquired about the shift from the community to youth focus and having two days for the youth.
5. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Explained that COD is being deliberate in engaging the youth, especially as they pilot curriculum with GDOE. Many students during Fanhita Manhoben also asked for more contact time/ direct engagement. Additionally, during the first Fanhita Conference, participation on day 2 significantly decreased, which indicated that one day may be adequate for the academic portion of the conference.
6. **Dr. Mary Cruz:** Inquired about the likelihood of the federal government funding travel for panelists while COD is not.
7. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Informed the Board that COD aims to have local representatives from both sides. Noted that Governor Leon Guerrero has helped to engage the federal side and has relayed that Rear Admiral Huffman will ensure that there is participation from Joint Region Marianas (JRM). While having local panelists is preferred, COD will review the remaining budget for the fiscal year to see if funding travel is possible.
8. **Dr. Mary Cruz:** Suggested revisiting the conference agenda and the time allocated for the larger community as one day may not be sufficient.
9. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Commented that COD is open to revising the conference agenda to have two days of academic panels. Suggested having a four-day conference.
10. **Dr. Mary Cruz:** Discouraged having a four-day conference. Suggested incorporating the students into the community portion to invite youth voices into the larger conversations.



11. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Agreed that the students can be incorporated into the community portion of the conference, however one difficulty may be room occupancy. Suggested that for day 2, students a part of the visual arts, music, and poetry break out groups are offered a space to continue their work while students a part of the community mobilization group participate in the larger conference. Then have all students join the community conversations on day 3. Emphasized the need for the Board to decide whether they would like to shift the focus to the community conversation by allocating two days for academic panels.
12. **Dr. Kenneth Kuper:** Provided feedback on the panels. Suggested that for Panel II, Guam's current geopolitical situation not be tied to the missile defense issue because the conversation may not be as detailed. The conference may benefit from an expansion of those topics.
13. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Agreed that the COD team can refine the panels with guidance from the Board.
14. **Dr. Mary Cruz:** Advised that the Board come to an agreement on the budget and discuss the conference agenda in a separate meeting.
15. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Agreed with the suggestion. Reiterated that the conference budget is currently \$32,000 but it does not include the community night. Asked that if the Board approves the budget, they allow flexibility for the community night to be funded within a set threshold. Estimated that the community night would increase the venue cost by \$1,000 (currently: \$15,000).
 - Motion by Dr. Mary Cruz to approve the conference proposal with three days and an estimated budget of \$32,000 with the ability to go up to \$35,000.
 - Motion seconded by Mayor Jesse Alig.
 - Motion passed with consensus with Dr. Kenneth Kuper abstaining.
16. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Informed the Board that the COD team will obtain information on the cost of holding a community night. If it is over budget, the event will be removed from the program.
17. **Dr. Mary Cruz:** Suggested that the COD team provide information on the conference budget during the September Regular Monthly Board Meeting.
18. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Confirmed that the COD team will have the information ready by the next meeting and will begin the procurement process.

V. Open Floor

1. **Dr. Kenneth Kuper:** Inquired about the protocol for board members who would like to be involved in the programming.
2. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Informed the Board that members are welcome to provide input and the plan will be presented to the whole Board during the regular monthly board meetings.
3. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Added that the COD team will be providing updates on the status of the special board meeting to discuss the plebiscite. An invitation will be sent to the Attorney General's office and the Governor's Legal Counsel will participate.

VI. Adjournment

- a. Motion to adjourn by Dr. Mary Cruz.
- b. Motion seconded by Dr. Kenneth Kuper
- c. Motion passed by consensus.
- d. Meeting adjourned at 3:42 p.m.