August 3, 2011

To our collaborators and friends:

Peace of Christ!

A decision has been taken by the Society of Jesus in Micronesia to keep the Micronesian Seminar open, while at the same time conducting an external study of the research and pastoral functions. The outcome of the study is to develop plans for collaboration, sustainability and relevancy. The library, website, publications and archives of the MicSem will be reviewed in light of the recent personnel changes and the community needs in Micronesia, especially in the areas of technology, culture and faith.

The study will be part of an apostolic scenario planning process that will be conducted by consultants from the East Asian Pastoral Institute [EAPI] in Manila under the leadership of Fr. Arthur Leger S.J.

Fr. Joe Bilotti S.J. has been named interim Director and will primarily act as the local contact person for the initial phase of the study in Pohnpei. He will also ensure that the services of MicSem will continue to be provided by the present staff. Fr. Fran Hezel S.J. continues to be on sabbatical in the US and will assist in the study as one of main informants, especially in the areas of networking, project proposals, and research writing.

The team will make recommendations to the Regional Superior concerning the vision and scope of a MicSem, on the steps and timetable for implementing the changes, on the personnel required, the relationships and partnerships that will encourage the programs, the nature of the buildings and other physical resources needed, and on the costs and potential sources of financing of the future programs and resources offered by MicSem.

The study should take place within the next eight months. The team will present a preliminary report to the MicSem’s Board of Directors in September 2011. The study will end in February 2012 with the actions plans presented to the Jesuit Regional Superior of Micronesia for discussion and approval. We hope that the implementation will begin immediately after this meeting.
We sincerely thank all those who have expressed their concerns about the future of MicSem and invite you to continue to be part of this study so that we might continue to assist the people of Micronesia in reflecting on lives in their islands under the impact of change in recent years through critical reflection, research and community education.

We assure you the Jesuits will continue to serve the people of Micronesia and the Pacific through both formal and community education.

Yours sincerely,

Fr. John S. Hagileiram, S.J.
Regional Superior, Society of Jesus, Micronesia
Terms of Reference

for a

Apostolic Plan

for the

Micronesian Seminar

Introduction:
A decision has been taken to review and study the function and role of the Micronesian Seminar [MicSem]. The social, pastoral, educational and research foci of the MicSem will be reviewed in light of personnel changes and pastoral needs of the local churches and governments in Micronesia. Many decisions need to be made in planning for the new direction under a new leadership at MicSem. There are several possible ways to approach these. Either:

a. the Regional Superior can undertake these tasks himself, relying on the current leadership of MicSem and on his consultors, with the advice of the Jesuits of the Region, and/or

b. a Jesuit or other person (or a team) is recruited to lead the review process, and/or

c. an expert team is commissioned to examine the situation and to prepare plans for the Regional Superior’s approval concerning the vision and scope of MicSem, and the steps needed to implement it.

All three steps are necessary and have been in place since for some time now. The following draft Terms of Reference assume that a planning team will be assembled, but do not exclude the other options (bringing in temporary or part time personnel and the consultation among local Jesuits). EAPI is ready to help in assembling the preparatory team and share the costs of the study, mainly in consultants’ fees.

Background:
The official MicSem website has the following description
Micronesian Seminar, known popularly as MicSem, is a private non-profit, non-governmental organization that has been engaged in public education for thirty years. Micronesian Seminar (MicSem) is a research-pastoral institute founded by the Catholic Church in 1972. Its main mission is community education, although it has engaged in social and historical research. For 30 years, MicSem has served the people of what was once the Trust Territory of the Pacific--the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, the Marshall Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

MicSem was officially turned over to the Jesuits of Micronesia in 1992, and is currently registered as a non-profit organization in the Federated States of Micronesia. MicSem is governed by a Board of Directors that meets yearly.
MicSem's goal is to assist the people of Micronesia in reflecting on life in their islands under the impact of change in recent years. As it does this, MicSem reflects the church's desire to serve society even as it works to help islanders integrate their faith and culture.

As part of the mission, MicSem has produced hundreds of articles and several books, most written by Fran Hezel, SJ. It has become a one-of-a-kind resource center. The resources gathered are books and photos and music from the past, from which people can construct a more solid understanding of who they are and where they came from. The resources include: 23,500 library titles and a large collection of newsletters and bulletins related to the region; 60,000 photos, many of them of historical interest; 760 videos and films, all in digital formats; and 15,000 musical tracks of island chants, songs and hymns. MicSem offers access to these resources through the website as well as through direct visits to the office. Finally, the MicSem discussion forum continues to grow in popularity, as does our online collection of historical photo albums.

In short, MicSem today serves a dual function. It is a tool for community education, and also a valuable resource center for the region.

**Proposal:** An expert team should be assembled in order to make recommendations to the Regional Superior concerning the vision, mission and scope of MicSem, on the steps and timetable for implementing the changes, on the personnel required, the relationships and partnerships that will encourage the programs, the nature of the buildings and other physical resources needed, and on the costs and potential sources of financing of the future programs and resources offered by MicSem.

**Timetable:** The study should take place within the next nine months, ie not later than February 2012, and preferably within 2011.

**Background materials to be assembled:**

- The team will examine all the reports and proposals prepared thus far by Fr. Fran, the notes from the Jesuit Regional meeting in Saipan, the report of Fr. Joe and Fr. Jim especially the financial records and ongoing projects, and any other relevant recent correspondence.
- The team will independently study the five main units of MicSem: library, website, publications, media, photos and music archives.
- The team will examine reports on pastoral and public education and socio-political research in Asia/Pacific, notably Micronesia and any other study of relevance.
- There may be useful reports and studies undertaken by some universities and funding agencies, eg University of Guam and University of Hawaii, ADB.
- The team will review the recent documents of the Society of Jesus and the Church especially to issues of promotion of faith and justice in the area of community education.
People to meet:
1. It will be important that the team (or some of its members) interview in
depth all other relevant partners who are trying to serve the people of
Micronesia through community education and research.
2. It will be important to survey current and future island leaders about their
desires and plans for exploring social issues and carrying out the broader
educational mission of the church in the islands.

Discerning a major focus:
A major task of the team will be to examine the data and to make a
recommendation concerning the principle focus of the MicSem and the steps and
timetable to its implementation. Questions concerning the focus of of Mic Sem as
Jesuit research-pastoral thrust in Micronesia are listed below:

Questions to be answered:

1. Can MicSem be sustainable in the future with the present structure and
vision?
2. What should be the vision, scope, or mission statement given to MicSem
by the Jesuits?
3. Should it be a Jesuit project, clearly owned by the Society, while calling on
the collaboration of others?
4. Should be the governing structure change to reflect collaboration with
the local Bishop and the laity?
5. What relations should MicSem have with the government? How will
government policies affect the MicSem? Should it seek or receive funds
from the government?
6. What staffing will be required? What new staff with what qualifications
should be sought, from where?
7. Who do MicSem wish to serve?
8. What flexibility do we want to give to future planners?
9. What should be given priority, eg the library?
10. How much will the changes cost, at least in the first phases?
11. Where should we seek funding?
12. What further detailed planning will now be required and who should do
this?

Risks
The team should also name and consider risks, among which the following may be
included:
1. The multiplicity of ideas and plans for MicSem by people closely
associated with the organization.
2. The funding agencies may continue to determine the project content and
interest.
3. The security of the library collection and archives will have to seriously considered  
4. The fear that MicSem might lose the internationally known research function and move solely with a pastoral focus.  
5. The study may be responding to issues that personal and contextual, thus not allowing it to move to address social and faith issues on an international arena.

**Possible participants in the team:**
It will be important to establish first the skills and competences required in the planning mission and then to consider available persons.

1. From within the Society in Micronesia, one or two persons should be responsible for logistics and liaisons: setting up the team’s contacts; making sure that all the need data is gathered and available in advance; that the team’s report is clear and accessible.  
2. From EAPI, a person who is familiar with the Region and pastoral planning

**Funding for this study:**
EAPI and the MicSem will share the costs of the study. EAPI will pay for the consultants’ fees and stipend while MicSem will look after the travel costs.

**Steps from July 2011**

1. Fr John to review this proposal with his own advisors and decide how to go forward. If he accepts the proposal for a study and planning mission, he may appoint a person in Pohnpei as its liaison person.  
2. EAPI will seek the funds to mount the study and where useful to the liaison person, will contact agreed members and negotiate dates.

**MOU**
This document will serve as the memorandum of understanding between the EAPI and the Board of Directors of MicSem.

Date 26 July 2011

__________________________ Fr. Arthur Leger S.J.  
Director of EAPI  

__________________________ Fr. John Hagileiram S.J  
Chairman of MicSem Board of Directors