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MRA commemorates four years of the Center for Entrepreneurship

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The Micronesia Registration Advisors, Inc. (MRA) held a small ceremony at their Kolonia office to commemorate the Center for Entrepreneurship's (Center) four years of ongoing success. The Center operates within the College of Micronesia-FSM's (COM-FSM) National Campus. Its mission is to collaborate with motivated students who want to find innovative solutions to needs within their community.

The Center was established in 2014 after MRA provided a \$250,000 gift to COM-FSM over a five-year period. The ceremony coincided with MRA's delivery of its fourth funding installment. Although the Center has won several grants for its activities, MRA remains the program's primary benefactor. MRA also connected the Center with University of Hawaii's Pacific Asian Center for Entrepreneurship by bringing its former Executive Director, Susan Yamada, to Pohnpei in February of 2016 and provided an additional \$30,000 to allow the Center to hire an assistant.

All of this giving has added up in a big way. The Center has proudly worked alongside dozens of entrepreneurial students who have taken advantage of the Center's workshops, competitions, events, and even a small business incubator. In most cases, it is the students who drive the Center's projects by identifying community needs and finding unique solutions. Textbooks are too expensive? Students started a peer group textbook rental service. Imported produce is too expensive? Students have built hydroponic systems all over Pohnpei that can grow lettuce, tomato, and other crops. Need a website? Students have made websites for the FSM Post Office, Cliff Rainbow Hotel, and the National Fisheries Corporation. The Center was also a strong supporter of this year's Friday Food Fashion Festival (aka "F4"), which showcased dozens of student-operated businesses at the Spanish Wall baseball field in Kolonia.

MRA has said it is excited to see what COM-FSM's talented students will come up with next. The Center recently won a \$36,000 grant from the Department of Interior's Technical Assistance Program to build two greenhouses to try out hydroponics on a commercial level. The Center has already expanded its operations to Pohnpei Campus and hopes to support students on Yap, Chuuk, and Kosrae campuses as well. As Erika Billen, a co-founder of the student-operated business Hydroponics of the Pacific stated, "I always had ideas, but the Center for Entrepreneurship gave me the resources and encouragement I needed to make it a reality. My words are now actions."