
**FACULTY SENATE MEETING
Minutes of 8 May 2025**

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate was called to order at 5 p.m. on 8 May 2025, in room 2101 of Dunbar Hall by Amy Naugle, president.

Roll Call: There were 51 members and substitutes present, and four guests.

Members Present: Bryan Abendschein, Communications; Osama Abudayyeh, Representative-at-Large; Diane Anderson, Presidential Appointee, Prina Ari-Gur, Representative-at-Large; Onur Arugaslan, Finance and Commercial Law; Kimberly Buchholz, Executive Board Director; Jou-Chen Chen, Family and Consumer Sciences; David Code, Music; Scott Cowley, Marketing; Summer Davis (substitute for Marcia Feters), Teaching, Learning and Educational Studies; Lisa DeChano-Cook, Environment, Geography, and Sustainability; Anthony DeFulio, Psychology; Mine Dogan Diker, Geological and Environmental Sciences; Matthew Dumican, Speech Language and Hearing Sciences; Kieran Fogarty, Executive Board Director; Matthew Fries, Music; Kimberly Ganzevoort, Occupational Therapy; LuMarie Guth, Chair, Campus Planning and Finance Council; Wanda Hadley, Representative-at-Large; Janet Hahn, Interdisciplinary Health Programs; Trey Harris, Music; Britt Hartenberger, Intercultural and Anthropological Studies; Antonio Isea, Spanish; Vyascheslav Karpov, Sociology; Richard Katrovas, English; Jean Kimmel, Economics; Mary Lagerwey, Emeriti; Doug Lepisto, Management; Ramona Lewis (substitute for Wayne Stitt), Education Leadership Research and Technology; Geoffrey Lindenberg, Aviation; Hexu Liu, Civil and Construction Engineering; Robert Makin, Computer Science; James Martin, Philosophy; Mustafa Mirzeler, Representative-at-Large; Amy Naugle, Faculty Senate President; Glinda Rawls, Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology; Diane Riggs, Religions and Cultures; David Righter (substitute for Daniela Hernandez), Mathematics; Nicholas Rowe (substitute for Brian Jansen), Aviation; David Rudge, Biological Sciences; Daniela Schroeter, Public Affairs and Administration; Remzi Seker, Presidential Appointee; Larry Simon, History; C. Dennis Simpson, Faculty Senate Vice President; Scott Slawinski, English; Agatha Slupek (substitute for Yuan-kang Wang), Political Science; Julia Stachofsky, Business Information Systems; Marianne Swierenga, Libraries; Laura Teichert, Special Education and Literacy Studies; Janet Van Der Kley, Presidential Appointee; Lester Wright, Emeriti;

Members Absent: Elissa Allen, Nursing; Eric Archer, Education, Leadership Research and Technology; Todd Barkman, Biological Sciences; Patrick Bennett, Representative-at-Large; Clement Burns, Physics; Jessica Cataldo, Chair, Academic and Information Technology Council; Chris Cheatham, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs; William Cimbalik, Physician Assistant; Bradford Dennis, Chair, International Education Council; Mioara Diaconu, Social Work; Lofton Durham, Chair, Research and Creative Activities Council; Katharine Gross, Nursing; Peter Gustafson, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering; Decker Hains, Parliamentarian; Patrick Hanlin, Sindecuse; Bidyut Hazarika, Business Information Systems; John Jellies, Emeriti; Dean Johnson, Electrical and Computer Engineering; Jeffrey Jones, Teaching Learning and Educational Studies; Joyce Kubiski, Art; Adriane Little, Art; Thayma Lutz, Mathematics; Michael Miller, Human Performance and Health Education; Edward Montgomery, WMU President; Joshua Naranjo, Statistics; Alexandra Pekarovicova, Chemical and Paper Engineering; Troy Place, Industrial and Entrepreneurial Engineering; Sam Ramrattan, Engineering Design Manufacturing and Management Systems; Amanda Remo, Accountancy; Viviane Ruellot, World Languages and Literature; Thomas Scannell, Marketing; Kathryn Thomsen, Theatre; Andre Venter, Chemistry; Bret Wagner, Chair, Undergraduate Studies Council; Robert Wall Emerson, Blindness and Low Vision; Andrew Wyman, Representative-at-Large; Marcellis Zondag, Chair, Graduate Studies Council

Guests: Jeff Breneman, Vice President for Government Relations; Christine Byrd-Jacobs, Dean, Graduate College; Brian Childs, Senior Director of International Student and Scholar Services, Haenicke Institute for Global Education; Paula Davis, Associate Vice President for Strategic Communication, Marketing and Strategic Communications; Sara Nelson, Interim Vice Provost and Associate Vice President for Strategic Initiatives

Faculty Senate Staff Present: Sue Brodasky, Faculty Senate Administrator and Eriz Hughey, Administrative Assistant II

Quorum

A quorum was reached with 51 Senators and substitutes in attendance, of the 48 needed to establish quorum.

Agenda

It was moved by Rudge, seconded by DeChano-Cook, to accept the agenda as provided. The motion carried.

Minutes

It was moved by Rudge, seconded by (guy from English), to approve the 3 April 2025 minutes as provided. The motion carried.

Report of Officer

Faculty Senate President Amy Naugle

- Special recognition is extended to Sarah Summy upon completion of her service as Immediate Past President of the Faculty Senate. Appreciation is also expressed to David Szabla, who is stepping down from the Executive Board to begin a sabbatical. Additionally, Decker Hains will transition from Executive Board Director to the role of Faculty Senate Parliamentarian. While this new position maintains his required attendance and participation in all Executive Board and Senate meetings, it allows for a more focused scope of responsibilities. Gratitude is extended to each of these individuals for their dedicated service to the WMU Faculty Senate.
- Welcome three newly appointed Executive Board Directors:
 - Kimberly Buchholz, Fine Arts
 - Wanda Hadley, Education and Human Development
 - Laura Teichert, Education and Human Development
- In March, department Senators whose terms concluded on April 30, 2025, were formally acknowledged and thanked for their service. Please join in welcoming the newly elected and re-elected department Senators who began their terms on May 1, 2025:
 - Adriane Little, Art
 - David Rudge, Biology
 - Robert Wall Emerson, Blindness and Low Vision
 - Bidyut Hazarika, Business Information Systems
 - Liu Hexu, Civil and Construction Engineering
 - Bryan Abendschein, School of Communication
 - Jean Kimmel, Economics
 - Britt Hartenberger, Intercultural and Anthropology Studies
 - Douglas Lepisto, Management
 - Scott Cowley, Marketing
 - Thayma Lutz, Mathematics
 - David Code, Music
 - Katharine Gross, Nursing
 - Kimberly Ganzevoort, Occupational Therapy
 - William Cimbalik, Physician Assistant
 - Clement Burns, Physics
 - Yuan-kang Wang, Political Science
 - Patrick Hanlin, Sindecuse Health Center
 - Mioara Diaconu, Social Work
 - Joshua Naranjo, Statistics
 - Jeffery Jones, Teaching, Learning, Education Studies

Reports of Ex Officiis

Resolution in Honor of President Edward Montgomery

The Faculty Senate and the WMU Board of Trustees presented President Montgomery with an honorary Senate resolution.

WHEREAS, Dr. Edward B. Montgomery has served with distinction as the ninth president of Western Michigan University, providing visionary leadership and unwavering dedication to the University's mission of academic excellence, student success, and community engagement;

WHEREAS, during his tenure, Dr. Montgomery has overseen significant institutional milestones, including the successful implementation of the University's Strategic Plan, supported the design, development, and implementation of WMU Essential Studies, establishing a comprehensive, student-centered general education program that fosters critical thinking, intercultural competence, and lifelong learning, enhanced student support systems, strengthened partnerships with community stakeholders, and a renewed focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion;

WHEREAS, under his leadership, WMU achieved national recognition for its commitment to student-centered, experiential education and was reaffirmed as a Carnegie-classified institution for Community

Engagement, and he championed major capital initiatives, including the construction of new academic and residential facilities, which have contributed to a transformative campus environment;

WHEREAS, Dr. Montgomery provided steady leadership through unprecedented challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating compassion, adaptability, and resilience in guiding the University community through times of uncertainty, and he has been a tireless advocate for public higher education and for the students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of Western Michigan University;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, under the authority of the Western Michigan University Board of Trustees, the Faculty Senate of Western Michigan University, on this the 8th day of May 2025, does recognize, congratulate, and commend Dr. Edward B. Montgomery for his exemplary service, leadership, and lasting contributions toward shared governance at Western Michigan University.

Interim Vice Provost and Associate Vice President for Strategic Initiatives Sara Nelson

- Graduation represents a significant milestone for both students and the University community, symbolizing the culmination of years of effort, growth, and transformation. Western Michigan University recently conferred 2,100 degrees across four ceremonies, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. During one ceremony alone, President Montgomery personally greeted 500 graduates. These achievements reflect the dedication of faculty and staff who helped shape exceptional educational experiences. The upcoming summer commencement, scheduled for Saturday, June 28, will carry special significance as it marks President Montgomery's final commencement ceremony.
- Strategic Plan priorities—internationalization
 - Our goal is to provide extensive, renowned global learning opportunities to all community members to foster cross-cultural competence and equip our community to contribute meaningfully to a more peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. This work includes welcoming students and scholars to campus from around the world and creating opportunities for students to learn abroad. Currently, WMU enrolls 2,000 international students, studying here on campus and overseas.
 - Internationalization remains central to the University's North Star of holistic and experience-driven learning. A key metric in the Strategic Plan is increased student participation in study abroad programs, transformative experiential learning opportunities that enhance academic development and expand global cultural, historical, and societal understanding.
 - One notable example is the study abroad program in India led by Tim Palmer. In just one year, participation in this two-week immersion course grew from 18 to 30 students. Offered in partnership with Study Abroad, the Haworth College of Business, the College of Education and Human Development, and the College of Health and Human Services, this three-credit course introduces students to themes of social entrepreneurship, justice, and sustainable development. Students visited corporations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), exploring interdisciplinary collaboration across education, business, and social work to address the needs of a developing nation.
 - Data from the Haenicke Institute for Global Education (HIGE) demonstrates the impact of internationalization on student success. Students who study abroad are more likely to graduate on time and continue their studies. Among students who began in 2020, 56% of those who studied abroad graduated within four years, compared to 33% of those who did not. In 2023, 97% of first-year students who participated in a study abroad experience returned for the 2024–25 academic year, 16 percentage points higher than peers who did not.
 - Prestigious global scholarships and awards continue to support research, teaching, and professional development. Mackenzie Meyer, a master's student in English, was awarded a Fulbright U.S. Student Program grant to serve as an English Teaching Assistant in Spain for the 2024–25 academic year. Stephen Covell and Chien-Juh Gu earned Fulbright U.S. Scholar fellowships, while KC Chen and Jennifer Harrison were selected for Fulbright Specialist Program awards, further advancing global research and teaching visibility.
 - The University also celebrates a record 11 recipients of the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, which supports international learning for Pell-eligible students.
- Congratulations were offered to David Rudge upon receipt of the Nominee for the Michigan Association of State Universities' 2025 Distinguished Professor of the Year Award.
- Rosemary Max has accepted the position of Associate Vice President for the Haenicke Institute for Global Education, pending Board of Trustees approval. Her appointment will be effective July 14, 2025. Max brings over two decades of international education leadership and currently serves as the Executive Director of the Office of Global Engagement at Oakland University, where she led strategy, student and scholar services, study abroad, ESL, and over 100 partnerships across multiple continents. Her previous

roles reflect deep experience in global program oversight, risk management, and policy. Her international perspective is further informed by over ten years living and working in France, Switzerland, and Senegal. Appreciation is extended to the search committee, chaired by Satish Deshpande, for conducting a thorough national search, and to Ying Zeng for serving as Interim Associate Vice Provost during this leadership transition.

- Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project received a prestigious award from the State Historic Preservation Office and Governor Whitmer. This honor, presented during National Historic Preservation Month, acknowledges excellence in historic preservation. Commendations go to Erika Hartly, Tim Bober, and the entire team for this outstanding accomplishment.
- Congratulations to the recipients of the 2025 Artificial Intelligence (AI) Teaching Innovation Mini-Grants, sponsored by WMUx. These grants support board-appointed faculty in piloting AI-driven instructional innovations, selected from a competitive pool of 41 applicants. Projects will be implemented during summer or fall 2025, with results shared through campus workshops and conferences to strengthen the institutional community of practice around artificial intelligence in education. The grant recipients are:
 - Dustin Altschul
 - Marie Moreno
 - Wassnaa Al-Mawee
 - Rodrigo Aranda
 - W. Jason Beasley
 - Jessica Cataldo
 - Kate Connor
 - Scott Cowley
 - Robyn Edwards
 - Angela Groves
 - Eric Harvey
 - Rika Saito
- Kudos to Jianping Shen, professor of Educational Leadership and Co-Director of the Wallace Foundation Grant in Evaluation, Measurement and Research, who was recently honored with the 2025 American Educational Research Association's Division A-Excellence in Research Award. This national recognition highlights his exceptional contributions to the fields of pre-K–12 educational leadership and school improvement.
- Everyone is encouraged to visit newly renovated collaborative space on the second floor of the University Computing Center. Designed for use by faculty, students, and staff, the space features modern instructional technology and flexible furnishings. The renovation serves as an example of efforts to create environments that foster innovation and enrich the campus experience.

University Strategic Plan – Internationalization

Faculty Senate President Amy Naugle

The University Strategic Plan Internationalization goal states *“We provide extensive, renowned global learning opportunities to all community members that develop cross-cultural competence and enhance understanding of and contribution to a more peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world.”* I will be highlighting specific objectives of this goal and some relevant charges of the Faculty Senate Councils that emphasize these objectives.

One specific objective related to this Strategic Plan goal is to: *“Strengthen faculty, staff, and student opportunities to engage in collaborative global learning experiences.”*

The International Education Council was charged this past academic year with:

- Collaborating with the Graduate Studies Council and the Undergraduate Studies Council to provide recommendations on how to best support faculty in the area of global learning.
- Promote greater internationalization by developing and recommending mechanisms to encourage faculty to develop and/or participate in bringing global perspectives to teaching, scholarship, and research.

Another objective of the Internationalization goal is to *“Develop and refine faculty and staff global engagement programs and opportunities that bolster participation and international activities.”*

- The International Education Council regularly communicates and collaborates with all college-level international committees.

Together, these efforts demonstrate the University's ongoing commitment to embedding global perspectives across teaching, research, and service.

<https://wmich.edu/strategic>

<https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/attachments/u75/2022/Internationalization12092022.pdf>

Faculty Senate Council Reports

Chair Riggs introduced [MOA-25/03](#): *Revise the Undergraduate Catalog-Academic Policies-Glossary of Terms Experiential Learning Definition* as amended by the Undergraduate Studies Council.

Discussion included:

- A Senator encouraged a no vote on the MOA, stating it fails to clearly define or strengthen experiential learning at WMU. Instead, it introduces vague, overly broad criteria that could apply to nearly any course, making the term meaningless. The proposal rebrands existing practices, labs, studios, internships as something new, without offering real distinction or pedagogical improvement. It risks false equivalencies, such as equating brief projects with semester-long practicums, and creates administrative confusion due to unclear guidelines and subjective standards. Most critically, the MOA departs from national frameworks, potentially weakening the integrity of experiential learning rather than protecting its value.
- Seeking clarification, is the current vote solely on the proposed amendments, given that the MOA itself was already approved in March?
 - President Naugle affirmed that the original MOA was passed. These amendments were sent back for reconsideration and are now being voted on. If the vote is no, the MOA remains unchanged.

It was moved by Rudge, seconded by Slawinski, to approve amendments to MOA-25/03. With 39 in favor, five against, and three abstentions the motion carried.

On behalf of the Undergraduate Studies Council Curriculum Manager DeChano-Cook introduced [MOA-25/08](#): Establish Minimum Credits in an Undergraduate Major for a Minor Not to be Required Policy. The Undergraduate Studies Council recommends that a minimum of 70 credit hours be required in an undergraduate major in order for a minor not to be required toward graduation.

Discussion included:

- Seeking clarification on what qualifies as major credits specifically, whether required courses in areas like mathematics or physics for engineering students count toward the 70 credit hours for the major. Cognate requirements, which are essential to the degree but may also be used in another program such as a second major or minor, are included in the 70-hour total. This includes core, elective, and cognate coursework.
- Is there data on how many departments currently require a minor versus those that do not? Additionally, how many departments that prefer not to require a minor would be affected by this change?
 - DeChano-Cook noted that programs not requiring a minor range from 54 to 190 credit hours, covering approximately 20 programs, with most of the higher-credit programs in engineering. Around five programs would be impacted by this change; they would need to either require a minor or increase total credits to 70. It has been discussed expediting the process for programs choosing to increase credits, including waiving the upcoming fall deadline to allow implementation by the following fall.
- The main questions are: how many programs currently fall within the 54–60 credit hour range, and how many would actually need to increase their credit hours? If only one program is at 54 and the rest are closer to 68, the impact may be minimal. Clarification is needed on the motivation behind the change. Additionally, if the requirement is expected to be waived for affected programs, it's unclear why Fall 2025 is listed as the effective date.
 - DeChano-Cook clarified that the proposed change would take effect in Fall 2025, but programs needing to increase credit hours to 70 would have time to make adjustments beyond the summer. The initiative arose from proposals showing significant inconsistencies, one program was submitted with just 45 credit hours. Currently, no policy governs this, resulting in some majors requiring as few as 54 credit hours without a minor, while others require up to 119. Without consistent standards, students often take random courses simply to reach 122 credits, without considering their relevance or value. This inconsistency is part of the motivation for the change.
- How many credits are needed to meet the 70-credit threshold? The current lower graduation credit requirement supports recruitment and improves graduation and completion rates. With more transfer students, the situation becomes more complex. For example, if a student transfers in 62 credits, none of which count toward the major, they may need to complete 116 credits to meet the 122-credit graduation requirement. Adding a required 15-credit minor would raise the total to 131 credits, well above the required

122. This conflicts with goals related to student success and timely completion. Additionally, no process has been outlined, and it's unclear whether there has been consultation with the Transfer Credit Committee or academic advisors who work closely with these students.
- DeChano-Cook noted that transfer credits, whether accepted as departmental credits or equivalencies, count toward the 122 total credit hours required for graduation. While these credits may not apply to the major specifically, they can fulfill elective requirements for the major or minor. The impact of transfer credits may not be as significant as assumed, though it varies by program.
 - Many students take courses at community colleges before enrolling at Western to reduce costs. If transfer credits are not fully accepted, these students may face penalties, requiring additional time, credits, and expenses to complete their degrees.
 - DeChano-Cook noted that departments must reevaluate certain courses for them to count as department credit or direct equivalency; this process cannot be handled by the curriculum manager. If students report that transferred credits aren't being accepted, identify those courses and request departmental review to reduce the number of transfer credits that don't count. Per the 2024–25 catalog, majors require a minimum of 24 credit hours and minors 15, totaling around 39–40 hours. Adding WMU Essential Studies, which typically contributes around 40 hours, brings the total to about 80. This leaves roughly 42 credit hours, enough for a minor or even a second major. However, if a program requires 70 credit hours for the major, adding 40 from WMU Essential Studies totals 110, leaving only 12, insufficient for a 15-credit minor. That is the rationale for setting the minimum major at 70 credit hours if no minor is required. Minors are intended to enhance a student's academic profile and sometimes lead to employment opportunities, even from a single course.
 - A student entering without attending Western may still bring in significant AP or transfer credit, such as 16 Spanish credits. In such a case, even without declaring a Spanish major, the student could potentially complete an engineering degree more efficiently due to the incoming credit. This raises the question: do students with substantial incoming credits benefit by graduating earlier? However, it seems the opposite may be true in some cases. Not all programs require a minor, and not all colleges mandate one either.
 - DeChano-Cook stated that this policy standardizes that minors are not required across all colleges when specific criteria are met.
 - The question concerns professional programs such as nursing. After years of effort, pathways have been developed to transfer entire degrees, not just credits, into BSN programs. Has there been a thorough review of these arrangements? Students typically receive 30 credits upon passing the licensing exam, and significant effort has gone into establishing this process.
 - DeChano-Cook explained that the nursing program has been structured so incoming students receive major credit for prior coursework, such as associate degrees. These programs already exceed 70 credit hours at the undergraduate level. As a result, students in this group would not need to add a minor if the proposed policy passes, since the 30 credits from prior licensure are counted within the major.
 - The language does not clearly identify a specific problem the policy aims to address. It appears unnecessarily restrictive, and the stated rationale does not convincingly establish the need for the policy beyond noting that the current situation seems unusual.
 - DeChano-Cook clarified that the intent was to establish a consistent standard across colleges and departments, as practices varied widely. Multiple inquiries this semester (at least 15) have highlighted confusion about the minimum credit hours required for a major to be exempt from requiring a minor. Currently, no clear standard exists. Some view the variation as acceptable, while others see the allowance of no minor for both 54 and 119 credit hour majors as inequitable. The goal is to create a uniform policy to address these concerns. Ultimately, the policy can be rejected, and approval of a 54-credit-hour major without a minor is still possible, though not preferred.
 - Degree programs will not be identical or fully equitable across all fields and departments, as each has unique needs, standards, and professional expectations. Some disciplines may require more specialized credits within the major, while others may value a broader range of coursework. If a department determines that a 45-credit major without a minor best supports its students—perhaps to allow greater curricular flexibility—that approach should be respected. In cases where students change majors, complications can arise. For example, music majors may complete two years of coursework but be ineligible for a music minor due to course restrictions. Requiring a minor in such cases can place an undue burden on students who already hold substantial coursework in another area that does not officially count as a minor. Ultimately, departments should be trusted to design what they consider the most pedagogically sound curriculum.

Imposing arbitrary credit minimums or maximums can be counterproductive, as shown in previous situations where certificate programs were limited by artificial caps that conflicted with national standards. It was moved by Rudge, seconded by Fogarty, to approve MOA-25/08. With 15 in favor, 28 against, and four abstentions, the motion failed.

C. Dennis Simpson, Vice President, on behalf of the Professional Concerns Committee introduced [MOA-25/09](#): Revise Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs to Change Grade Appeal and Program Dismissal Appeal Committee to the Academic Appeal Review Committee. The Professional Concerns Committee recommends changing the name of the Grade Appeal and Program Dismissal Appeal Committee (GAPDAC) to the Academic Appeal Review Committee (AARC), based on a proposal by the University Ombuds. It was moved by Simpson, seconded by Rudge, to approve MOA-25/09. The motion carried.

University Reports

Haenicke Institute for Global Education's Senior Director of International Student and Scholar Services Brian Childs provided an update on student visa status. All impacted students whose SEVIS records were terminated have been returned to active status. SEVIS is a federal system used by educational institutions to report compliance of F-1 and J-1 visa holders to Homeland Security. This incident solely involved F-1 students. Around March 28, the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State began terminating records of students who had any interaction with law enforcement, regardless of the nature or outcome. This included minor infractions or cases where charges were dropped. Terminations occurred without warning to institutions or students, affecting thousands nationwide. Students affected received no prior notification, and institutions only became aware once the terminations appeared in the system. Legal assistance was arranged for affected students, with referrals to attorneys specializing in this specific legal area. The federal government has stated in court that a new termination process is under development, though no formal guidance has been released. While this issue is now resolved for those impacted, concern remains about long-term effects. Some international students have indicated plans to withdraw from U.S. programs due to the risks and costs associated with such actions by the government. Throughout this situation, extensive behind-the-scenes support was provided to affected students, with care taken to protect their privacy and dignity. This effort reflected a strong commitment to international student support at the institutional level.

Questions included:

- During summer, some international students may lack access to required courses and may wish to return home. However, some have been advised against travel due to potential reentry issues. What guidance does the university provide in these situations?
 - Childs explained that students are being advised to exercise caution and remain aware of individual circumstances. Those with valid visas, I-20 documents, and passports generally should not face issues reentering the U.S. However, final entry decisions rest with Customs and Border Protection (CBP). Students are encouraged to carry all necessary documents and ensure everything is in order. Caution is especially advised for individuals from countries rumored to face future travel restrictions, though no official policies have been announced. Travel is not prohibited, but careful preparation is strongly recommended.
- Were students required to pay when referred to Counsel?
 - Childs confirmed that the University did provide the initial legal counseling support for the students.

Jeff Breneman, Vice President for Government Relations provided a State Budget and WMU Advocacy presentation, which included monitoring of executive orders, history of state funding, importance of loss of state funding, government relations successes, government relations focus, current priorities, Governor's recommendation, Senate budget proposal, next steps, call to action, and grassroots advocacy.

<https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2025-05/202505085-governmentrelations.pdf>

Questions included:

- The current budget challenges, driven by broader economic pressures, raise concerns about federal decisions, such as changes to Medicare, shifting financial burdens onto states. As federal funding is reduced in key areas, states may be forced to reassess priorities. Please address this issue?
 - Breneman stated that the federal budget process is currently moving through budget reconciliation. This process is being used to implement government-wide cuts framed as tax reductions or budget tightening. These cuts are likely to impact Medicare, Medicaid, and various education-related programs. Graduate PLUS loans are at risk, affecting a program at Western with over 300

students. The future of TRIO, GEAR UP, and certain research grants remains uncertain, with some grants repeatedly canceled and reinstated. The reconciliation process may have broader implications, especially for university financial aid. The House recently released its reconciliation package, which addresses the projected Pell Grant shortfall for the next two years. However, this may come at the cost of reductions to graduate loan programs and federal loan guarantees.

- At the federal level, there is a proposal that plans to penalize universities for enrolling students who rely on loans and later have higher default rates. This would create a disincentive to admit students considered at risk, undermining efforts to expand access and opportunity, particularly at institutions like Western. A question remains regarding the potential role of engaging with the incoming administration on whether to support national initiatives and collective letters currently circulating. One such letter has already been signed by approximately 450 universities. Will the administration participate in these discussions?
 - Breneman noted that while monitoring ongoing developments is important, the volume of issues is too great to address individually. Visa delays will likely affect international students this fall, and even domestic students are facing slow processing for faster-track options. Regarding shared risk proposals tied to student loan defaults, the potential financial impact on Western Michigan University could reach \$7 million. Advocacy efforts have been ongoing, stressing that public access institutions should not be penalized for defaults at for-profit colleges. However, trade associations such as APLU have not made significant headway. The University may sign onto national letters without publicizing it widely, as a strategic choice.
- At what point does the university provide instructors with guidance based on federal actions? A specific concern involved a "Dear Colleague" letter from the Department of Education, primarily directed at K-12 but containing higher education implications. That letter criticized the teaching of institutional racism, which conflicted with the content recently covered in some university courses. The expectation was expressed that instructors would be informed if federal communications required changes in classroom content.
 - Breneman explained that in terms of public communications, as for the referenced "Dear Colleague" letter, it was reviewed and analyzed. Since it offered no actionable requirements, only a general enforcement direction, the University took no immediate action. Agencies later began targeting institutions like Columbia and the University of Michigan, but without issuing binding mandates. Any future communication from federal agencies containing specific guidance will be shared with the campus through appropriate administrative channels.

Professional and Academic Concerns

- Why is a Faculty Senate May meeting scheduled that requires service beyond the AAUP Agreement calendar?
 - President Naugle stated attendance at the May meeting is not required. The May meeting occurs because there is no September meeting, and the first meeting of the new academic year is in October. The May meeting allows for final business from councils and committees that conclude in April to be addressed.
- Given the encouragement for international students to remain on campus during summer, is there an increase in the budget for student employees and departments such as landscaping services that continue operations during this period?
 - Van Der Kley stated that hiring numerous student employees during summer, both international and domestic, is standard practice and essential to operations. This is already included in the budget process.

Adjournment

President Naugle adjourned the meeting at 6:30 p.m. Dates for meetings beginning in October will be published prior to the fall 2025 semester.

Approval

Submitted by Sue Brodasky, Faculty Senate Administrator.

Minutes approved on ____ 2025.