
**FACULTY SENATE MEETING
Minutes of 2 October 2025**

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate was called to order at 5:02 p.m. on 2 October 2025, in room the Student Center, ballroom A, by Amy Naugle, president.

Roll Call: There were 66 members and substitutes present, and 12 guests.

Members Present: Bryan Abendschein, Communications; Osama Abudayyeh, Representative-at-Large; Onur Arugaslan, Finance and Commercial Law; Patrick Bennett, Representative-at-Large; Jacob Berglin, Music; Kimberly Buchholz, Executive Board Director; Stephanie Burns, Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology; Jessica Cataldo, Chair, Academic and Information Technology Council; Christopher Cheatham, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs; Jou-Chen Chen, Family and Consumer Sciences; Scott Cowley, Marketing; William Davis, Art; Lisa DeChano-Cook, Environment, Geography, and Sustainability; Anthony DeFulio, Psychology; Mioara Diaconu, Social Work; Mine Dogan Diker, Geological and Environmental Sciences; Matthew Dumican, Speech Language and Hearing Sciences; Lofton Durham, (substitute for Kathryn Thomsen) Theatre; Marcia Feters, Teaching, Learning and Educational Studies; Kieran Fogarty, Executive Board Director; Peter Gustafson, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering; LuMarie Guth, Chair, Campus Planning and Finance Council; Wanda Hadley, Representative-at-Large; Janet Hahn, Interdisciplinary Health Programs; Decker Hains, Representative-at-Large and Parliamentarian; Patrick Hanlin, Sindecuse; Trey Harris, Music; Britt Hartenberger, Intercultural and Anthropological Studies; Bidyut Hazarika, Business Information Systems; Daniela Hernandez, Mathematics; David Huffman, (substitute for Andre Venter), Chemistry; Brian Jansen, Aviation; John Jellies, Emeriti; Dean Johnson, Electrical and Computer Engineering; Vyascheslav Karpov, Sociology; Richard Katrovas, English; Russ Kavalhuna, WMU President; Keith Kothman (substitute for Matthew Fries), Music; Mary Lagerwey, Emeriti; Geoffrey Lindenberg, Aviation; Hexu Liu, Civil and Construction Engineering; Robert Makin, Computer Science; James Martin, Philosophy; Mustafa Mirzeler, Representative-at-Large; Joshua Naranjo, Statistics; Amy Naugle, Faculty Senate President; Troy Place, Industrial and Entrepreneurial Engineering; Susan Pozo (substitute for Jean Kimmel), Economics; Sam Ramrattan, Engineering Design Manufacturing and Management Systems; Amanda Remo, Accountancy; Diane Riggs, Religions and Cultures; Shrabanti Roy (substitute for Pnina Ari-Gur), Representative-at-Large; David Rudge, Biological Sciences; Remzi Seker, Presidential Appointee; C. Dennis Simpson, Faculty Senate Vice President; Scott Slawinski, English; Julia Stachofsky, Business Information Systems; Wayne Stitt, Education Leadership Research and Technology; Marianne Swierenga, Libraries; Mercedes Tasende (substitute for Antonio Isea), Spanish; Laura Teichert, Special Education and Literacy Studies; Janet Van Der Kley, Presidential Appointee; Bret Wagner, (substitute for Thomas Scannell), Marketing; Yuan-kang Wang, Political Science; Daren Webb, Physical Therapy; Lester Wright, Emeriti;

Members Absent: Elissa Allen, Nursing; Diane Anderson, Presidential Appointee, Eric Archer, Education, Leadership Research and Technology; Todd Barkman, Biological Sciences; Clement Burns, Physics; William Cimbali, Physician Assistant; Bradford Dennis, Chair, International Education Council; Kimberly Ganzevoort, Occupational Therapy; Katharine Gross, Nursing; Jeffrey Jones, Teaching Learning and Educational Studies; Doug Lepisto, Management; Thayma Lutz, Mathematics; Michael Miller, Human Performance and Health Education; Alexandra Pekarovicova, Chemical and Paper Engineering; Viviane Ruellot, World Languages and Literature; Daniela Schroeter, Public Affairs and Administration; Larry Simon, History; Patricia Villalobos, Art; Robert Wall Emerson, Blindness and Low Vision; Andrew Wyman, Representative-at-Large; Marcellis Zondag, Chair, Graduate Studies Council

Guests: Whitney Biggs, BCBS of Michigan; Christine Byrd-Jacobs, Dean, Graduate College; Julie Garrison, Dean, Libraries; Josh Kohnert, Merze Tate; Carla Koretsky, Dean, Arts and Sciences; Kelly McDonnell, Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology; Matthew Mingus, Academic Labor Relations; Sara Nelson, Strategic Initiatives; Reetha Raveendran, Student Affairs; Cari Robertson, Health Promotion and Education; Lillian Smith, Dean, Health and Human Services; Chad Stirrett, Faculties Management; Luchara Wallace, Dean, Merze Tate

Faculty Senate Staff Present: Sue Brodasky, Faculty Senate Administrator and Magnolia Little, Administrative Assistant II

Quorum

A quorum was reached with 66 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 (behind Dinane), to approve the 8 May 2025 minutes as provided. The motion carried.

Report of Officer

Faculty Senate President Amy Naugle

- The Senate 101 presentation is designed to assist all Senators in understanding the structure of the Senate, the role and duties of Faculty Senators, and the general rules for Senate meetings.
<https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/attachments/u370/2021/Guide%20to%20the%20WMU%20Faculty%20Senate.pdf>
- The Faculty Senate will be distributing a request for faculty fees to all of the academic rank employees at WMU. These fees support the Board of Trustees-appointed shared governance work the Senate facilitates through its councils, committees, and subcommittees.
<https://wmufacultysenate.securepayments.cardpointe.com/pay>
- The Faculty Senate Executive Board updated its 2024-26 Action Plan, which includes objectives that focus on:
 - Faculty engagement – including:
 - New Senator orientation presentation
 - Outreach to departments or units at college level
 - Senate interactions with the Board of Trustees, such as:
 - A shared governance retreat scheduled in spring semester
 - University identity and direction, including:
 - Surveying faculty regarding these Faculty Senate objectives
 - Showcasing the University Strategic Plan at the monthly Senate meetings
 - Address the value of higher education, with:
 - Coordination with shared governance partners
- The Faculty Senate Executive Board continues to showcase the University Strategic Plan at the Faculty Senate meetings. Which includes identifying University Strategic Plan Core Values for incorporation into the monthly meetings as follows:
 - October: Well-being
 - November: Community Building
 - December: Internationalization
 - February: Research and Creative Scholarship
 - March: Academic Excellence
 - April 2: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
 - April 30: Sustainability
- The intention is to promote the focus areas throughout the entirety of the meeting, as much as possible. That includes messages from the administration, presentation from councils, and guest speaker remarks. Ultimately, each focus area will be related to shared governance and the actions of the Faculty Senate.

Reports of Ex Officios

University President Russ Kavalhuna

- Acknowledgement of WMU strong investment in shared governance.

Well-being:

- WMU being recognized as a great place to work is tied to campus wellness.
<https://wmich.edu/news/news/2025/08/top-ranking-forbes-best-state-employers-2025>
- Focus on wellbeing and developing students as whole human beings sets WMU apart. This generation cares about their quality of life.
- Reaching and sustaining high levels of achievement depends on intentionally supporting the well-being of the campus community.

Celebrations and Recognitions:

- Sleeping Giant Capital – founded by Doug Lepisto and Derrick McIver, launched a \$100 million fund to boost West Michigan businesses, plus it gifted \$20,000 to advance a new WMU initiative supporting students.
<https://wmich.edu/business/news/2025/10/sleeping-giant-capital-historic-fund>

- New Food Marketing Hub — made possible by a \$500 thousand gift from Meijer and overseen by Russell Zwanka.
<https://wmich.edu/business/news/2025/09/food-marketing-hub>
- First-ever all-digital gallery in Grand Rapids Art Prize's history – the gallery was co-curated by instructors Jacklyn Brickman and Eric Souther. Thanks to WMU-Grand Rapids and Office of Government Relations teammates.
<https://wmich.edu/news/news/2025/09/artprize-2025-internship-kinetic-imaging-resonant-gallery>
- WMU Day at the Capital — students, faculty, staff showcased WMU's impact under the direction of Vice President Breneman and the OGR team and all in the delegation.
- New Kalamazoo Event Center and Athletic Performance Center – broke ground and a celebration with Kalamazoo community.
<https://wmich.edu/news/news/2025/10/kalamazoo-event-center-athletic-performance-center-groundbreaking-event>
- CommUniverCity and Bronco football – were resounding successes, coming off an undefeated week in Bronco fall sports. The volleyball, football, and women's soccer teams all delivered big wins.
- Lee Honors College Congratulation – Dean Irma Lopez and her team signed an articulation agreement with Kellogg Community College, inking a commitment to creating a seamless pathway for KCC honors students to attend Western and graduate with a bachelor's degree.
<https://wmich.edu/news/news/2025/10/lee-honors-college-kellogg-community-college-sign-agreement>

Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Christopher Cheatham

Enrollment Updates:

- Undergraduate down 1.0%
- Graduate down 4.0%
- Total down 1.6%
- Total Headcount is 17,331
- First Time in Any College (FTIAC) down 6.5%
- International Students
 - Undergraduate down 6.0%
 - Graduate down 17.5%
 - Total down 12.3%
 - New international students (all levels) down 2.8%

Enrollment Challenges:

- Continuing impact of long-term demographic shifts in the number of high school graduates, and a softening in overall college-going rates.
- Flagship universities expanding classes some years ago is putting downward pressure on WMU enrollment.
- International students nationwide were predicted to be down 40%, but it has not been that steep, even though there still is a decline.
- WMU international student enrollment is down 7.7%.
 - Grand Valley State University declined 15% in this demographic, according to a news report.
 - WMU is not immune to the external forces impacting enrollment of this important population of students, but it is continuing to serve, support, and recruit international students.
 - In spite of WMU's modest overall decline, there is evidence that interventions are making a difference, particularly in retention.

Retention Highlights:

- 82.1% is the highest second-year retention rate on record for WMU.
- FTIAC retention rate for Black or African American students increased 3.8 percentage points.
- FTIAC retention rate for Hispanic students increased 1.3 percentage points.
- Retention for Under-Represented Minority (URM) students increased 2.4 percentage points with the equity gap improving by 1.5 percentage points.
- Pell-eligible and First-generation retention rates are points of concern.
- Retention is the best long-term indicator of student and institutional success and this success is directly tied to intentional investments the University has made in:
 - Academic advising
 - Student success initiatives
 - Financial aid dollars

- Faculty support
- Holistic support, including mental health, financial guidance and investment in co-curricular engagement.

Initiative Updates:

- WMUx was dissolved as an administrative unit
 - A financial analysis was conducted
 - All staff were retained and no reduction or loss of salary.
 - Units were allocated to other departments along with budget lines associated.
 - All services still exist on campus but may be located in different areas.
- Swain Student Success Center:
 - The name has yet to be confirmed.
 - Create a highly visible and accessible space in which student can have easy access to different support services, have a flexible space that can be used for various student related events or services, and offer a collaborative space for students.
 - Examples include the writing center, graduate college writing workshops, and financial aid services.
- Transfer Student Working Group
 - Randy Ott and Kristen Salomonson are co-leading the workgroup.
 - Structure is a small core-team that accesses areas of expertise as needed.
 - The goal is for WMU to be the most transfer friendly four-year public institution.
- Strategic Recourse Management Change:
 - The new graduate tuition rule will split tuition income based on 75% college of the major and 25% college of instruction in this first year. Over the next three years this will shift each year to eventually being based on 100% college of instruction.

Student and Faculty Accolades

- WMU student Jordan Moore received the Lions-Western Michigan University Service Award, a \$5,000 scholarship that recognizes extensive community service and leadership.
- Aidan Ralko, a School of Communications student, is one of just 12 undergraduates worldwide selected to attend the Pordenone Silent Film Festival in Italy. Aidan will present research on reconstructing a lost 1918 film and Kalamazoo's 1920s movie-going culture.
- Experience-Driven Learning Venture Grant Recipients:
 - Dustin Altschul, College of Fine Arts – Solar Decathlon 2026: Pioneering Affordable Net-Zero Housing Solutions
 - Emily Curiel, College of Education and Human Development –Empowering Pre-Service Teachers in Family-Centered Early Intervention
 - Azalia Gonzalez, College of Health and Human Services – YouBelong Here: Inclusive Care for All
 - Kate Martini, College of Arts and Sciences – Sustainability Practicum with the city of Kalamazoo.
- Fall Awards Celebration at 11 a.m. in Kirsch Auditorium inside the Fetzer Center.
 - Whitney DeCamp
 - Lori Wingate
 - Julie Apker
 - Daniela Schröter
 - Mohamed Sultan
 - Laiyin Zhu
 - Pnina Ari-Gur

<https://wmich.edu/news/news/2025/09/distinguished-service-award-2025-whitney-decamp-lori-wingate>

University Strategic Plan – Well-being Faculty Senate President Amy Naugle

The University Strategic Plan Well-being goal states *“We safeguard the overall health of our community by embedding well-being into all aspects of WMU’s culture, administration, operations, and academics by utilizing the social determinants of health and eight dimensions of wellness-physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, social, environmental, financial and occupational.”* President Naugle highlighting specific objectives and some relevant charges of the Faculty Senate Councils that emphasize the specific objective of *“Provide effective, equitable opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to build the personal capacity, health information fluency and life-enhancing skills they need to thrive in all aspects of the WMU Well-being Wheel, including social, financial, spiritual, environmental, physical, emotional, intellectual, and occupational wellness.”* Four of the Faculty Senate councils, Academic and Information Technology Council, Undergraduate Studies Council, Graduate Studies

Council, and the Research and Creative Scholarship Council are charged this academic year with Exploring opportunities, threats, and challenges with respect to Artificial Intelligence. The Campus Planning and Finance Council is charged this academic year with reviewing University efforts to positively impact recruitment and retention by focusing on reviewing Financial Aid budget packaging and guidelines. The International Education Council is charged with developing best practices for ensuring that international students as WMU are made to feel welcome and directly connected with US based students in real and meaningful ways.

<https://wmich.edu/strategic>

<https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2025-09/20251002-wellbeing.pdf>

Faculty Senate Council Reports

The Academic and Informational Technology Council report was provided by the chair Jessica Cataldo, which included the prior academic year wrap-up, course delivery definitions, current focuses, and cross-council and committee collaboration.

<https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2025-10/20251002.aipc .pdf>

University Reports

Josh Kohnert, Program Manager for Peer2Peer eMentoring and Student Employment Development in the Office of Student Transitions provided the WMU Well-being Playbook which included what student should be doing during each academic year, creation of the playbook and connecting it to the well-being wheel, social well-being, emotional well-being, and every academic year-at-a-glance view and a snapshot view of the playbook.

<https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2025-10/20251002.well-beingplaybook.pdf>

Cari Robertson, Director of Health Promotion and Education along with Lillian Smith, Dean of the College of Health and Human Services provided the WMU Well-being of People, Places, and Planet, which included foundations and strategic plan, foundational work, well-being wheel, the Okanagan Charter, strategic plan objectives, key metric, collective progress and call to action, milestones, infrastructure, campus movement, and resources.

<https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2025-10/20251002.welbeingpeopleplace.pdf>

www.wmich.edu/well-being/resources

Whitney Briggs, Regional Sales Director for Blue Cross, Blue Shield of Michigan presented well-being programs Teledoc Health and Hinge, which included virtual care, condition management, and virtual muscle and joint health program.

<https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2025-10/20251002.teledochinge.pdf>

Professional and Academic Concerns

Discussion included:

- This week the prior Banner course lookup tool was replaced with a Banner report rather than being updated to Banner 9. The new Banner report tool is clumsy in terms of looked up and reporting. Several examples of experienced difficulties were shared. And while there is a cost for updating that is much more preferred.
 - Cheatham stated that he is unsure of the issue at hand but will look into it.

Adjournment

President Naugle adjourned the meeting at 6:30 p.m. The next Faculty Senate meeting will be 6 November 2025 in ballroom A of the Student Center at 5 p.m. and streamed live on Mediasite.

Approval

Submitted by Sue Brodasky, Faculty Senate Administrator.

Minutes approved on ____ 2025.