
**FACULTY SENATE MEETING
Minutes of 6 November 2025**

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate was called to order at 5:01 p.m. on 6 November 2025, in room the Student Center, ballroom A, by Amy Naugle, president.

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

Members Present: Members Present: Bryan Abendschein, Communications; Osama Abudayyeh, Representative-at-Large; Diane Anderson, Presidential Appointee, Pnina Ari-Gur, Representative-at-Large; Patrick Bennett, Representative-at-Large; Jacob Berglin, Music; Kimberly Buchholz, Executive Board Director; Stephanie Burns, Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology; Chris Cheatham, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs; Jou-Chen Chen, Family and Consumer Sciences; William Cimbali, Physician Assistant; Summer Davis (substitute for Marcia Fettes), Teaching, Learning and Educational Studies; William Davis, Art; Lisa DeChano-Cook, Environment, Geography, and Sustainability; Anthony DeFulio, Psychology; Bradford Dennis, Chair, International Education Council; Mioara Diaconu, Social Work; Mine Dogan Diker, Geological and Environmental Sciences; Matthew Dumican, Speech Language and Hearing Sciences; Kieran Fogarty, Executive Board Director; Matthew Fries, Music; 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, Parliamentarian; Patrick Hanlin, Sindecuse; Trey Harris, Music; Robert Harrison (substitute for Scott Cowley), Marketing; Bidyut Hazarika, Business Information Systems; Daniela Hernandez, Mathematics; David Huffman (substitute for Andre Venter), Chemistry; Brian Jansen, Aviation; Dean Johnson, Electrical and Computer Engineering; Vyascheslav Karpov, Sociology; Richard Katrovas, English; Russ Kavalhuna, WMU President; Jean Kimmel, Economics; Mary Lagerwey, Emeriti; Doug Lepisto, Management; Ramona Lewis (substitute for Eric Archer), Education, Leadership Research and Technology; Geoffrey Lindenberg, Aviation; Hexu Liu, Civil and Construction Engineering; Thayma Lutz, Mathematics; Jonathan Milgrim (substitute for James Martin), Philosophy; Joshua Naranjo, Statistics; Amy Naugle, Faculty Senate President; Troy Place, Industrial and Entrepreneurial Engineering; Amanda Remo, Accountancy; Diane Riggs, Religions and Cultures; David Rudge, Biological Sciences; Thomas Scannell, Marketing; Remzi Seker, Presidential Appointee; Larry Simon, History; 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; Patricia Villalobos, Art; Robert Wall Emerson, Blindness and Low Vision; Yuan-kang Wang, Political Science

Members Absent: Elissa Allen, Nursing; Onur Arugaslan, Finance and Commercial Law; Todd Barkman, Biological Sciences; Clement Burns, Physics; Jessica Cataldo, Chair, Academic and Information Technology Council; Lofton Durham, Chair, Research and Creative Activities Council; Kimberly Ganzevoort, Occupational Therapy; Katharine Gross, Nursing; Britt Hartenberger, Intercultural and Anthropological Studies; John Jellies, Emeriti; Jeffrey Jones, Teaching Learning and Educational Studies; Robert Makin, Computer Science; Michael Miller, Human Performance and Health Education; Mustafa Mirzeler, Representative-at-Large; Alexandra Pekarovicova, Chemical and Paper Engineering; Sam Ramrattan, Engineering Design Manufacturing and Management Systems; Viviane Ruellot, World Languages and Literature; Daniela Schroeter, Public Affairs and Administration; Kathryn Thomsen, Theatre; Bret Wagner, Chair, Undergraduate Studies Council; Daren Webb, Physical Therapy; Lester Wright, Emeriti; Andrew Wyman, Representative-at-Large; Marcellis Zondag, Chair, Graduate Studies Council

Guests: Christina Byrd-Jacobs, Dean, Graduate College; Lisa Garcia, Director, Government Affairs; Keith Hahn, General Counsel, Legal Affairs; Kelly Reed, Advancement; Heather Stanley, Director, Advancement; Chad Stirrett, Facilities Management; Cheng Kidd Sun, Government Affairs

Faculty Senate Staff Present: Sue Brodasky, Faculty Senate Administrator

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 Katrovas, to accept the agenda as provided. The motion carried.

Minutes

It was moved by Rudge, seconded by DeChano-Cook, to approve the 2 October 2025 minutes as provided.
The motion carried.

Report of Officer

Faculty Senate President Amy Naugle

At its last Executive Board meeting, the Board confirmed that term-faculty should have access to initiate curriculum proposals via the University's electronic method.

Board of Trustees Chair Edgerton and Faculty Senate President Naugle co-led nine presidential listening sessions as part of President Kavalhuna's transition process. These sessions brought together faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community partners to share perspectives about WMU's strengths, opportunities, and aspirations for the future. Across these conversations, several themes emerged consistently:

- A deep commitment to student success. Participants voiced pride in the university's student-centered mission and a desire to strengthen mentoring, belonging, and support structures across all colleges.
- A call for improved communication and transparency, particularly around decision-making and resource allocation.
- Renewed interest in collaboration and community connection, both across campus units and with Kalamazoo and regional partners.
- A shared optimism about the university's direction under new leadership, paired with a readiness to engage in shaping WMU's next chapter.

A comprehensive report from the listening sessions will be forthcoming.

<https://wmich.edu/president/listening-tour>

Senators and all academic rank employees at WMU were encouraged to consider providing a voluntary faculty fee. These fees support the Board of Trustees-appointed shared governance work the Senate facilitates through its councils, committees, and subcommittees. Please take just a moment to make that donation today.

<https://wmufacultysenate.securepayments.cardpointe.com/pay>

Reports of Ex Officiis

University President Russ Kavalhuna

- The final presidential listening session will be held tomorrow at 10:30 a.m. in Dunbar Hall. Attendance and input are encouraged from all members of the campus community.
- The partnership with Sleeping Giant Capital continues to strengthen ties between Western Michigan University and the broader Kalamazoo community. A new, free shuttle service for WMU students expands access to the city's cultural and civic spaces. Appreciation is extended to Doug Lepisto, Associate Professor of Business and Co-Founder of Sleeping Giant Capital, for leadership on this initiative.
<https://wmich.edu/news/2022/05/68153>
- The strategic plan serves as a guiding framework for advancing Western's core values. Tonight's focus is on the Community Building pillar, which fosters collaboration among the business community, local organizations, and campus partners.
- WMU maintains a longstanding tradition of community engagement. The current United Way of South-Central Michigan campaign exemplifies this commitment, helping strengthen local support systems. Donations close Monday, Nov. 10.
<https://wmich.edu/government/unitedway>
- The Office of Government Relations and External Partnerships continues to expand relationships with regional leaders, including the Kalamazoo Literacy Council, Rotary, Southwest Michigan First, and Midlink Business Park, enhancing experience-driven learning and employment opportunities.
<https://wmich.edu/government>
- Campus and Faculty Accolades:
 - Efforts to build on-campus community includes athletic events, Living Learning Communities, and programs such as the Alpha Scholars' speed networking event, which fosters faculty and student connections.
 - The annual Turkey Trot, which has been celebrated for over 70 years, remains a hallmark community tradition supporting charitable causes.
 - Congratulations to Brittani Jackson, Assistant Professor of Accountancy, recipient of the 2025 Women to Watch Emerging Leader award from the Michigan Association of Certified Public Accountants, recognizing her leadership in developing student pathways to accounting careers.

- At the WMU Grand Rapids ArtPrize reception, both the Resonant and Prismatic galleries were recognized with awards, including a \$10,000 Juried Visibility Award. Appreciation is extended to faculty members Jacklyn Brickman and Eric Souther for their leadership in Kinetic Imaging and Experience-Driven Learning.

Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Christopher Cheatham

- Community building occurs across all areas of the University and extends regionally, nationally, and globally. Faculty play a pivotal role in this success by fostering students' sense of belonging through meaningful classroom engagement, mentoring, and enhanced experience-driven learning opportunities.
- WMU is celebrating International Education Week, which highlights the strength of international programs. This fall, 275 new international students joined campus, bringing the total to over 1,800. The Haenicke Institute for Global Education continues a legacy of engagement dating back to WMU's first international student in 1910 and the first study abroad program in 1945.
<https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2025-11/20251106.alumni-engagement.pdf>
- In October, the Seita Scholars President's Welcome to Western celebrated the incoming fall 2025 cohort and recognized returning scholars for academic excellence and leadership.
- The Board of Trustees unanimously approved the standardized Prior Learning Assessment Fee, allowing students to earn affordable credit for professional, military, and experiential learning. Appreciation is extended to the Faculty Senate for its foundational work on the 2020 MOA and to Laura Dinehart, Lisa DeChano-Cook, and Registrar Carrie Cumming for their contributions.
https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2025-10/12_prior_learning_assessment_fee_10.30.25.pdf
- Enrollment Updates (Spring 2026) Priority registration concluded November 4:
 - Undergraduates are up 2.4%
 - Graduates are down 0.3%
 - Total is up 1.9%
 - International are down 10.8%
 - Retention rates improved across all undergraduate levels, with a 4.7-point increase among freshmen. Undergraduate beginner applications rose between 11%.
- Campus and Faculty Accolades:
 - Faculty and students in the Occupational Therapy program showcased WMU excellence at the Michigan Occupational Therapy Association Fall Conference. Gratitude is extended to faculty leaders Sara Clark, Michelle Suarez, Nancy Hock, Holly Grieves, Kim Ganzevoort, and Susan Frisbie-Yu.
 - Professor Lori Sims, School of Music, received the 2025 *Steinway & Sons Teacher of the Year* award for her exceptional teaching and dedication to musical excellence.
 - Congratulations to alumna Tara Becker-Utess (Secondary Education), named Michigan's 2026 High School Assistant Principal of the Year by the Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals.

University Strategic Plan – Community Building

The University Strategic Community Building goal states *“As a Carnegie Community Engagement Classification institution, we strengthen our relationships with those we serve by cultivating a campus culture grounded in communication, collaboration, and engagement that fosters a sense of belonging, safety, and support for all.”* There is one objective of this goal that I will be highlighting as it is relevant to the charges of the Faculty Senate Council that emphasize this objective. The objective related to this Strategic Plan goal is to *“Provide robust, accessible opportunities across campus and at all levels that cultivate a collaborative campus culture and advance reputation as an institution of choice.”* Part of the Campus Planning and Finance Council Role Statement includes *“Review plans for the University’s physical facilities, including on and off campus, and how they impact safety, security, aesthetics, finances, and the surrounding environment.”* In addition, the Campus Planning and Finance Council is charged this academic year with Reviewing and providing input on the downtown Kalamazoo arena project with a focus on security, liability, and accessibility to WMU. Also, in community building the Undergraduate Studies Council is charged with making recommendations for Experiential-Learning in collaboration with the Office of Marketing and Strategic Communications.

<https://wmich.edu/strategic>

<https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/attachments/u75/2022/CommunityBuilding12092022.pdf>

Action Item

Parliamentarian Decker Hains provided the first reading of the proposed Senate Bylaw Amendments. There will be

a motion, and support, to approve the bylaw amendments at this meeting. Definitive action on the motion, including discussion, is reserved for consideration until the December meeting. No subsidiary motions such as amendments will not be accepted at this time; rather this is notice of the formal action proposed so that Senators and others are made aware of this initiative. Questions, comments, and requests for clarification are welcome by contacting the Faculty Senate office. In December, this same proposal will be presented for debate, discussion, and action.

The Faculty Senate Executive Board is proposing three amendments to the Faculty Senate Bylaws.

1. Allow for accommodations resulting from valid and evaluated circumstances.
2. Create reasonable and justified procedures to remove an official of a council or committee.
3. Aligns consistency with the newly ratified PIO agreement terminology of professional instructors.

It was moved by Rudge, seconded by DeCHano-Cook, to accept the bylaw amendments as presented. The motion carried.

https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2025-10/amendments.bylaws.2025_0.pdf

University Reports

Lisa Garcia, Associate Vice President for External Partnerships and Cheng Kidd Sun, Manager for External Partnerships provided a WMU External Partnerships report, which included external partnership advocates, corporate engagement, community partnerships, professional development, unit's mission and values, five step engagement process, Kalamazoo Literacy Council, bringing the city and WMU constituents together on issues affection both, community nonprofit organizations that partner with WMU, Discover Kalamazoo Visitor Center in Student Center, west gateway plan, students volunteer portal with community nonprofit partners, and professional development.

<https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2025-11/20251106.community-presentation.pdf>

Heather Stanley, Senior Director for Alumni Engagement provided an update, which included Broncopalooza which is an alumni homecoming tailgating event that included a college row representing each academic college, alumni roadmap that is a three-year strategic plan that guides alumni engagement efforts, the units newly revised values, vision and mission, and upcoming priorities.

<https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2025-11/20251106.alumni-engagement.pdf>

University General Counsel Hahn presented on scholarship administration, with principles that extend to program compliance, employee resource groups, and admissions practices. A federal civil-rights complaint alleged that several scholarships contained preferential criteria. In response, a comprehensive review of scholarship programs and related operations is underway to ensure alignment with legal requirements and institutional mission. The goal is to balance donor intent with compliance under federal and state law. Federal civil-rights statutes prohibit discrimination based on race, color, national origin, and sex in federally funded education. State constitutional provisions in some jurisdictions also ban preferential treatment based on these protected characteristics. Recent court decisions have further narrowed the permissible use of race-conscious criteria in educational settings, while agency guidance continues to evolve. As a result, scholarship policies must remain race-neutral, national-origin-neutral, and gender-neutral unless a specific legal exception applies. Compliance analysis can be understood through a three-tier system. Criteria explicitly based on race, ethnicity, national origin, or gender receive a red-light designation and must be removed or restructured. Acceptable factors such as academic merit, financial need, first-generation status, field of study, or community involvement fall under a green-light designation. Ambiguous criteria, including references to underrepresentation, commitment to diversity, or geographic targeting, receive a yellow-light designation and require further evaluation. Facially neutral language may still be unlawful if it serves as a proxy for protected characteristics. Legacy scholarships and donor agreements are being reviewed to remove or disregard clearly unlawful terms through established legal mechanisms. Risk analyses are conducted for yellow-light criteria, and decisions are documented for transparency. New or revised scholarships should employ neutral criteria and maintain documentation that clearly articulates the lawful purpose of eligibility factors. Periodic audits and centralized records will ensure consistency and preserve institutional knowledge.

University General Counsel Hahn stated that he became aware that discussions are continuing regarding immigration enforcement (ICE) in the classroom. He is committed to a re-evaluation of the federal guidance webpage, particularly in the area of classrooms, to clarify existing guidance. It is important to consider proactive measures that can better position the university in the unlikely event that an enforcement action occurs on campus, within a building, or at the threshold of a classroom. It has been asked why the institution's guidance differs from that of other universities. Some institutions adopted a subjective interpretation, designating classrooms as private spaces, while WMU employed an objective framework based on Fourth Amendment analysis and judicial precedent concerning potential arrests, whether of the enforcement target or an intervening individual. The focus remains on minimizing risk and maintaining safety for faculty, staff, and students while ensuring that interactions are limited to

law enforcement and designated administrative officials. Additionally, it should be distinguished between judicial and administrative warrants. A judicial warrant is issued by a United States District Court and explicitly labeled as an Arrest Warrant or Search Warrant, bearing the signature of a judge or magistrate. An administrative warrant, by contrast, originates from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and is labeled as a Warrant for Arrest of Alien. It authorizes an immigration officer to arrest and detain an individual for removal proceedings under the Immigration and Nationality Act. Finally, the institution addresses safeguarding the rights of faculty, staff, and students, referencing areas such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), freedom of expression, and institutional support. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is legally entitled to access information from the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), which includes data on active nonimmigrant students and exchange visitors. Regarding freedom of expression and institutional support in connection with immigration enforcement, additional context is required to respond comprehensively. Support was extended when SEVIS status was revoked for certain students, as the issue directly involved the institution's SEVIS responsibilities. In hypothetical cases involving faculty or staff arrests arising from interference with enforcement actions, responses would depend on the specific facts and applicable law.

Questions included:

- Is there any change in the university's position about whether students have a reasonable expectation of privacy when they are in a classroom?
 - General Counsel Hahn stated that he is conducting an evaluation of the WMU statement already published that will address this question. There are things that can be done. For example, factors such as propped doors, lack of access restriction signage, and open campus policies weaken the argument that privacy is presumed. The issue is further complicated by questions of consent, specifically, who has the authority to permit entry, whether it be a faculty member or a student. Institutional definitions of "private space" also vary, with some universities asserting privacy from federal officers but not from campus police. Overall, this remains a complex and fluid area requiring collaboration between faculty and administration to define and maintain appropriate privacy expectations.
- It was further questioned if ICE officers come to a classroom door, can faculty refuse entry? You gave many possible scenarios of what might be legal and what might not be legal. So can faculty refuse to let ICE officers enter a classroom.
 - General Counsel Hahn reiterated what WMU's guidance has been it is recommended to contact the campus police who will come to the scene. It is advised faculty be careful in refusing entry. It has to be determined if ICE is demanding entry or rather asking for entry. If it is truly a demand then faculty should step aside and let them come in. However, if they are asking for entry, faculty should indicate that the University procedures are to contact the police and wait for them to arrive. It is not likely that this will happen at WMU. There have not been any enforcement actions happening in a classroom setting, specifically at any university setting. ICE is not going to know where specific students are at any given moment. If ICE goes to the Registrar office asking where a student is, that is protected information and staff are not going to provide that without a proper subpoena, search warrant, etc. Further discussion was held.
 - President Kavalhuna acknowledged the unsettled and sometimes fearful reality faculty face. The individuals assisting in decision-making understand and share these concerns. Despite these challenges, he remains optimistic that faculty, administration, and the broader community can continue working together constructively. Ongoing dialogue and mutual understanding are essential to addressing the complexities of this work. He asked for continued patience and trust as WMU navigates these difficult issues. The institution is operating at the forefront of constitutional interpretation, where precedent evolves over time. While this legal process is uncertain, there is value for patience and professionalism. The administration respects and appreciates the thoughtful questions raised and strives to provide the most reasoned responses possible. If concerns arise or better solutions are proposed, they will always receive a fair and respectful hearing.

Professional and Academic Concerns

Discussion included:

- It appears that in the event of a cybersecurity emergency occurring after 7 p.m., there is no available assistance until 8 a.m. the following day which creates a 13-hour window in which significant damage could occur to institutional systems, including student records and financial data. Could administration clarify if there is oversight and cybersecurity response coverage during those hours and whether there are plans to address this vulnerability?

- Vice President Seker clarified that the University's intrusion detection systems, firewalls, and related cybersecurity infrastructure are highly advanced and continuously monitored. It was further noted that emergency alerts are automatically generated for critical incidents, and the head of IT is among the first to receive such notifications. Depending on the severity of the situation, immediate action would be taken to mitigate the threat rather than waiting until normal business hours.
- Interim Provost Cheatham confirmed that the University's automated detection systems actively monitor for potential cybersecurity threats and trigger alerts when incidents occur. These systems have successfully identified and responded to security events on multiple occasions in recent years. When an alert is issued, IT staff are immediately notified and take prompt action. Critical issues are addressed as soon as they arise, with many systems allowing remote access for rapid intervention. In cases requiring on-site response, staff arrive as necessary to resolve the issue. This process ensures continuous protection and timely mitigation of any cybersecurity threats, regardless of when they occur.
- Clarification was asked for regarding the standardized Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) fee, listed as \$150 for undergraduate and \$250 for graduate, is it a one-time application fee or assessed per course? Additionally, is there a limit to the number of courses for which an individual may apply under this fee structure, and would any additional fees apply beyond that limit?
 - Interim Provost Cheatham clarified that the fee applies per course. The Memorandum of Action (MOA) also establishes the maximum allowable PLA credits. However, participation in the PLA process is not mandatory for all programs. Each program must independently determine whether to accept PLA credits and under what conditions.

Adjournment

President Naugle adjourned the meeting at 6:50 p.m. The next Faculty Senate meeting will be 4 December 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.