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**FACULTY SENATE MEETING  
Minutes of 4 December 2025**

**Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate was called to order at 5:02 p.m. on 4 December 2025, in room the Student Center, ballroom A, by Amy Naugle, president.

**Roll Call:** There were 64 members and substitutes present, and six guests.

**Members Present:** Bryan Abendschein, Communications; Osama Abudayyeh, Representative-at-Large; Elissa Allen, Nursing; Diane Anderson, Presidential Appointee, Prina Ari-Gur, Representative-at-Large; Onur Arugaslan, Finance and Commercial Law; Patrick Bennett, Representative-at-Large; Jacob Berglin, Music; 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; Scott Cowley, Marketing; 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; Kieran Fogarty, Executive Board Director; Matthew Fries, Music; Tom Gorczyca (substitute for Clement Burns), Physics; Holly Grieves (substitute for Kimberly Ganzevoort), Occupational Therapy; 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; Daniela Hernandez, Mathematics; David Huffman (substitute for Andre Venter), Chemistry; Brian Jansen, Aviation; John Jellies, Emeriti; Vyascheslav Karpov, Sociology; Richard Katrovas, English; Russ Kavalhuna, WMU President; Jean Kimmel, Economics; Sandun Kuruppu (substitute for Dean Johnson), Electrical and Computer Engineering; Doug Lepisto, Management; Ramona Lewis (substitute for Eric Archer), Education, Leadership Research and Technology; Hexu Liu, Civil and Construction Engineering; James Martin, Philosophy; Amy Naugle, Faculty Senate President; Sam Ramrattan, Engineering Design Manufacturing and Management Systems; Amanda Remo, Accountancy; Carter Rice (substitute for Trey Harris), Music; Diane Riggs, Religions and Cultures; Nic Rowe (substitute for Geoffrey Lindenberg), Aviation; 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; Ying Thaviphoke (substitute for Troy Place), Industrial and Entrepreneurial Engineering; Janet Van Der Kley, Presidential Appointee; Yuan-kang Wang, Political Science; Daren Webb, Physical Therapy; Lester Wright, Emeriti;

**Members Absent:** Todd Barkman, Biological Sciences; Kimberly Buchholz, Executive Board Director; Jessica Cataldo, Chair, Academic and Information Technology Council; Matthew Dumican, Speech Language and Hearing Sciences; Lofton Durham, Chair, Research and Creative Activities Council; Marcia Feters, Teaching, Learning and Educational Studies; Katharine Gross, Nursing; Britt Hartenberger, Intercultural and Anthropological Studies; Bidyut Hazarika, Business Information Systems; Jeffrey Jones, Teaching Learning and Educational Studies; Mary Lagerwey, Emeriti; Thayma Lutz, Mathematics; Robert Makin, Computer Science; Michael Miller, Human Performance and Health Education; Mustafa Mirzeler, Representative-at-Large; Joshua Naranjo, Statistics; Alexandra Pekarovicova, Chemical and Paper Engineering; Viviane Ruellot, World Languages and Literature; Daniela Schroeter, Public Affairs and Administration; Kathryn Thomsen, Theatre; Patricia Villalobos, Art; 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:** Steve Butt, Dean, College of Engineering and Applied Sciences; Brian Childs, Haenicke Institute for Global Education; Annette Cummings, Haenicke Institute for Global Education; Joe Milostan, Haenicke Institute for Global Education; Sara Nelson, Interim Vice Provost, Office of the Provost; Chad Stirrett, Associate Vice President, Facilities Management

**Faculty Senate Staff Present:** Sue Brodasky, Faculty Senate Administrator

**Quorum**

A quorum was reached with 64 Senators and substitutes in attendance, of the 48 needed to establish quorum.

## **Agenda**

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

## **Minutes**

A correction was made regarding the action item such that a vote was not concluded.

It was moved by DeFulio, seconded by DeChano-Cook, to approve the 6 November 2025 minutes as amended. With two abstentions the motion carried.

## **Report of Officer**

### **Faculty Senate President Amy Naugle**

The Faculty Senate is launching its bi-annual general election to seat its next president and vice president who will take office as of 1 May 2026. On 5 December communication will be distributed to all WMU faculty inviting them to participate in the election process. Nominations for President and Vice President will be due on 23 January 2026.

Several of the Faculty Senate councils and committees are crafting Memoranda of Action that will be coming forward early next semester. Some of those topics include revision of course delivery definitions, updating the global learning outcomes, creating student deadlines within the academic appeal processes, and establishing a policy regarding cross-listed courses.

The Executive Board has begun to investigate an inquiry that was raised to allow students to have access to course syllabi prior to course registration in order for students to make informed decisions in course selection. More to come next calendar year.

The Faculty Senate will soon solicit departments to submit their chosen Presidential Scholar student's name for the March 20 event to be held in the WMU Student Center from 4 to 6 p.m. The Presidential Scholar is a recognition bestowed upon outstanding undergraduate senior level students on the basis of academic and artistic excellence in their major program, as well as their overall promise of success.

The Faculty Senate was notified of the death of Robert (Bob) Beam who served at WMU for 45 years and 25 of those years as Vice-President of Business and Finance. Bob was an active member of the Campus Planning and Finance Council and an administrative appointee to the Faculty Senate. Bob seldom, if ever missed a meeting of either the council or Senate. Bob was not only the prime cause of enacting the CPFC recommendations but was also the person who caused the Senate to have its first budget allocation from WMU. At his retirement Bob was, by the Faculty Senate made an Honorary member of the WMU faculty. He is the only administrator not having faculty appointment to have received this honor. A moment of silence was observed.

## **Reports of Ex Officios**

### **University President Russ Kavalhuna**

The President opened remarks by acknowledging the conclusion of the academic semester. He noted that the upcoming commencement would mark his first in the presidential role. He expressed enthusiasm for the ceremony and announced an important enhancement to the program of Faculty Senate President Naugle serving in a featured role as Master of Ceremonies. This inclusion is a meaningful affirmation of shared governance and faculty leadership.

President Kavalhuna reported that the listening tour, coordinated with Faculty Senate President Naugle and Board of Trustees Chair Edgerton, has concluded after five months. A preliminary summary of findings and institutional response steps was presented earlier to the Board of Trustees. A comprehensive written report will be circulated in January, with a campus-wide email summary to follow within the next day.

President Kavalhuna emphasized that while many operational and strategic issues are being addressed administratively, any analysis of academic programming must occur collaboratively through shared governance structures. He concluded with congratulations to the Faculty Senate President on her induction to the 25-year Club.

### **Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Christopher Cheatham**

Interim Provost Cheatham stated that there is a reason internationalization is one of the pillars of WMU's Strategic Plan, students' lives are transformed through their international experiences, such as through study abroad programs at Western.

One student's story that meaningfully illustrates the power of global learning is Shelby Vaughn, a senior majoring in health care services and sciences from Saginaw. Vaughn recently spent nearly two weeks in Tanzania on a WMU Study Abroad program, an experience she describes as one of the most transformative of her years at Western. Vaughn says that what struck her the most was the resilience of the people she met. She immersed herself in the culture by listening to local stories, learning traditional dances and songs, and engaging with communities whose strength and spirit left a lasting impression on her. Vaughn also said studying abroad has given her exposure to global medical practices designed to aid in addressing health care disparities around the globe. She added that it shaped her into a more well-rounded and conscious student and future physician assistant. Her story is one example of what thousands of Broncos have experienced over the years through the robust global engagement initiatives offered through the Haenicke Institute for Global Education. Vaughn's story reminds us that internationalization is a life-changing pathway that prepares students for what is promised they will receive with a WMU education, holistic, Experience-Driven Learning leading to meaningful careers and fulfilled lives.

Interim Provost Cheatham provided a spring 2026 enrollment update:

- Undergraduate down 1.2% (-0.2%)
- Graduate down 8.0% (-7.6%)
- Total down 2.5% (-1.0%)
- International Students
  - Undergraduate down 7.4% (-5.1%)
  - Graduate down 35.8% (-35.4%)
  - Total down 21.9% (-14.9%)
- Overall headcount decrease would only be 1.0% if international students were flat
- FTIAC in fall 2024 was 87.5% and for fall 2025 is 88.5%
  - Freshmen for fall 2024 was 82.2% and for fall 2025 is 83.4%
  - Sophomore for fall 2024 was 86.9% and for fall 2025 is 85.9%
  - Junior for fall 2024 was 88.5% and for fall 2025 is 88.1%
  - Senior for fall 2024 was 85.1% and for fall 2025 is 88.6%
- Undergraduate beginner applications are up 5.7%
- Master applications are up 54%
- Doctoral applications are up 20.8%

Interim Provost Cheatham provided details of the Parent Plus and Grad Plus loans and professional programs:

- The Grad PLUS loan program will be eliminated effective 1 July 2026.
- Current Grad PLUS loan students will be grandfathered but will have new loan limits:
  - "Traditional" graduate programs will be \$20,500 per year with a \$100K aggregate limit
  - "Professional" graduate programs will be \$50 thousand per year with a \$200 thousand aggregate limit
  - There is a "Lifetime" cap of \$257,500 (Parent Plus loans excluded)
- Changes to Parent PLUS loan limits:
  - \$20 thousand per year per dependent with a \$65 thousand aggregate limit per dependent
  - Prorated loans for students who are less than full-time.
- The Only WMU program defined as "Professional" by the Department of Education is Clinical Psychology.

Three notable events were held on campus in November that supported a broader strategy to capture the attention of young students and generate enthusiasm for attending Western.

- The Bronco Buds program welcomed first-year high school students from Kalamazoo Public Schools
- The Math Carnival engaged approximately 400 K to 8<sup>th</sup> grade students from 60 schools across the Kalamazoo area
- The College of Engineering and Applied Sciences hosted its inaugural high school programming contest, bringing together more than 100 high school students for a three-hour coding challenge.

Campus visits are widely recognized as creating early and potentially lasting experiences. These opportunities are essential to planting the seeds for future enrollment and making the value of higher education, particularly at Western, tangible and accessible.

The Transfer Working Group submitted its recommendations several weeks ago. Appreciation is extended to all individuals who served on the group, with special recognition to Kristen Salomonson and Randy Ott for their leadership as co-chairs. The recommendations are currently being prioritized, and several proposals are in development for immediate consideration.

Accolades:

- Congratulations to Marketing faculty specialist II Mary Nielsen and her students, who earned cash prizes from the virtual Steel City Sales Challenge hosted by Duquesne University. Senior Drew Gassman placed first in the elevator pitch competition, claiming a \$1,500 prize and senior Josh Major placed second in the role-play competition, earning a \$2,500 prize.
- Congratulations to Kelly Schultz, director of the Academically Talented Youth Program in the Office of Precollege Programming, who received the inaugural Leadership Program Excellence Award at the 2025 Michigan Pre-College & Youth Outreach Conference. This award recognizes a practitioner who has demonstrated outstanding leadership and initiative as well as operational excellence, contributing to the success of the program. Schultz has led the AYTP program since 2012 and has dedicated her career to advancing gifted education in Michigan.

### University Strategic Plan – Internationalization

The University Strategic 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.”* 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 *“Advance an institutional culture of internationalization and global engagement by removing barriers through policies, strategy, and programing.”* The Faculty Senate International Education Council Role Statement includes *“The IEC serves in an advisory capacity to initiate, review, and recommend policies dealing with the international aspects of the University’s mission and goals. The council serves to advocate the continued internationalization of the University and to maintain review of the University’s various administrative arrangements, policies, and procedures for the conduct of international programs and activities. The council’s oversight includes internationalization activities on campus including, but not limited to, internationalization of the curriculum and enrichment of the international development and experience of faculty, staff, and students, as well as the University’s presence in other countries and territories.”* These shared commitments underscore the central role of the International Education Council plays in advancing the University’s internationalization goals. With this framework in mind, we can now move to the next item of business.

<https://wmich.edu/strategic>

<https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2025-11/20251204-internationalization.pdf>

### Action Item

At the 6 November Faculty Senate meeting the amendments to the Faculty Senate bylaws were introduced. President Naugle opened discussion.

Discussion included:

- A concern was raised regarding the second of three proposed items, noting that while the first and third appeared unproblematic, the second would benefit from substantially clearer and more precise language. That as currently written, the proposal could unintentionally draw the Senate into procedural conflicts. It was emphasized that the Executive Board already holds both the authority and responsibility to ensure that councils and committees operate effectively, including the authority to remove or recommend removal of officers who fail to fulfill their duties. The proposed process relies on a majority vote of a council to initiate action, which may be impractical when the underlying issue involves failure to meet or convene meetings. While affirming strong support for establishing a formal, fair process for addressing officer accountability, there was advocacy for a simpler, clearer approach that preserves due process while avoiding procedural ambiguity.

Based on the comments provided President Naugle opted to separate the vote of each amendment individually. It was moved by Hains, seconded by Rudge, to approve the first amendment as proposed. With one abstention the motion carried.

It was moved by Fogarty, seconded by Rudge, to approve the second amendment as proposed. With 23 votes in favor, 19 votes against, and 10 abstentions, the motion carried.

It was moved by Rudge, seconded by Simpson, to approve the third amendment as proposed. With one abstention, the motion carried.

[https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2025-10/amendments.bylaws.2025\\_0.pdf](https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2025-10/amendments.bylaws.2025_0.pdf)

## Faculty Senate Council Reports

Bradford Dennis, Chair, International Education Council provided the council report, that included specifics and proposed actions either already taken or yet to be taken this academic year regarding the nine 2025-26 IEC charges.

<https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2025-12/20251204-iec.pdf>

## University Reports

Brian Childs, Senior Director of International Student and Scholar Services, Annette Cummins, Assistant Director of Global Education and Budget Manager, and Joe Milostan, Director of Study Abroad and Faculty Enrichment provided a Global Engagement update, which included:

- Overview of HIGE initiatives
- Three-year recruiting plan
- Barriers experienced by international students at WMU
- Study abroad
- Campus internationalization
- WMUs international presence
- HIGE budget strategies

<https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2025-11/20251204-hige.pdf>

Questions included:

- It was questioned how many students on average from engineering study abroad?
  - Milostan explained that while he is unaware of the exact number, it is low. It is probably the lowest at the University. There is definitely room for growth. With that knowledge the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences is one of the areas being targeted to engage more in depth with faculty and the dean.

Jonathan Bush, WMU Essential Studies Faculty Director and Elissa Allen, Chair, WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee provided an WMU Essential Studies Update, which included:

- Insights, assessments, and future directions
- Results of the 2024-25 comprehensive review
- Review report
- Review process
- Key findings and outcomes
- Improvement initiatives
- Next review planning and processes

<https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2025-12/20251204-wes.pdf>

Questions included:

- Given that this initiative is on track to reach its second phase of completion concurrently with the upcoming Higher Learning Commission (HLC) review, how is the administration formally coordinating and communicating this timing with senior institutional leadership to ensure alignment with accreditation expectations? Additionally, can clarification be provided on how and where this work is being formally incorporated into institutional planning and documentation?
  - Bush stated that the implementation timeline has been advanced to align with HLC preparedness, including the establishment of a two-year review cycle designed specifically to support accreditation readiness.
- First, is there any consideration being given to reducing the number of required individual SLO-based WMU Essential Studies assessments per student per course? In some instructional contexts, particularly in low-enrollment or writing-intensive courses, faculty are generating four or more individual scores per student, which raises concerns about workload equity and rubric consistency. Second, I seek clarification regarding the broader intent of the WMU Essential Studies requirement. Historically, the goal of General Education was to expose students to disciplinary content outside their major and even outside their home college. Is there data, or plans to collect data, on the extent to which students are currently fulfilling WMU Essential Studies requirements within their own departments or colleges rather than exploring other academic areas?
  - Bush indicated that with respect to student course selection, the University currently limits students to no more than three courses under any single course prefix. While this does require engagement across prefixes, we acknowledge that departments with multiple prefixes may still have structural advantages. At present, data on WMU Essential Studies course enrollment patterns by department

or college were not collected for this review cycle, but this is a reasonable area for future analysis. Regarding SLO assessment, the learning outcomes themselves will remain unchanged. However, the rubrics associated with those outcomes vary widely in scope and level of detail. Substantial intellectual work will be required to improve alignment and comparability across rubrics. The assessment system itself will not be altered, nor will rubric interpretation be centrally standardized at this time.

### **Professional and Academic Concerns**

Discussion included:

- Currently most of the budget allocations for Gas/Tas/Das is part of the subvention component of SRM, not part of the SRM allocation to each college. The current allocation of GA/TA/DA subvention budget (80% to 90%) is provided to a singular college, with the small remainder being spread across all other colleges (\$9,000,000 to one college and \$400,000 to each of the other colleges). Is there consideration being given, or a plan, to change this inequitable and unfair allocation of subvention GA/TA/DA budget allocation to colleges, or to include all funding for GA/TA/DA within a revised (non-subvention) SRM allocation in the current allocation to colleges?
  - Interim Provost Cheatham replied that the assertion that GA/TA/DA budget allocations are a component of the Strategic Resource Model (SRM) is not accurate. GA/TA/DA funding is not part of the SRM but rather it is the General Fund Model for Allocations and Distribution budget framework and was not altered as a result of the University's transition to the present SRM budget model. Historically, GA/TA/DA funding resided centrally within the Graduate College, which annually distributed allocations to the colleges. While the original distribution formula predates 2014, it is known that in 2014 then Provost Green convened a working group of four deans to review and propose recommendations regarding the allocation process; however, those recommendations were not implemented. When the University transitioned to the current SRM budget model, the only change was administrative: the central Graduate College funding function was removed, and existing GA/TA/DA allocations were transferred directly into each college's permanent base budget. Consequently, SRM does not allocate GA/TA/DA funding. However, SRM does permit deans, when exceeding revenue targets and carrying forward significant balances, to independently elect to fund additional GAs/TAs/DAs. Again historically, the College of Arts and Sciences has held the largest share of GA/TA/DA positions, all of which are graduate teaching assistants rather than research appointments. It should also be noted that during the COVID-19 related budget reductions, some colleges permanently reduced their GA/TA/DA budgets, contributing to present-day disparities. At this time, there is no active plan to comprehensively rebalance these allocations, though the issue has emerged periodically. The administration is willing to examine the historical record further, including the 2014 recommendations, to provide additional context and clarification.

### **Adjournment**

President Naugle adjourned the meeting at 6:27 p.m. The next Faculty Senate meeting will be 5 February 2026 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.