
**FACULTY SENATE MEETING
Minutes of 5 February 2026**

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate was called to order at 5 p.m. on 5 February 2026, in room the Student Center, ballroom A, by Amy Naugle, president.

Roll Call: There were 67 members and substitutes present, and 12 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; Jessica Cataldo, Chair, Academic and Information Technology Council; 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; Mioara Diaconu, Social Work; Mine Dogan Diker, Geological and Environmental Sciences; Matthew Dumican, Speech Language and Hearing Sciences; Lofton Durham, Chair, Research and Creative Activities Council; Marcia Feters, Teaching, Learning and Educational Studies; Kieran Fogarty, Executive Board Director; Matthew Fries, Music; Kimberly Ganzevoort, Occupational Therapy; Katharine Gross, Nursing; 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; Britt Hartenberger, Intercultural and Anthropological Studies; Daniela Hernandez, Mathematics; David Huffman, (substitute for Andre Venter), Chemistry; Antonio Isea, Spanish; Brian Jansen, Aviation; Dean Johnson, Electrical and Computer Engineering; Vyascheslav Karpov, Sociology; Richard Katrovas, English; Russ Kavalhuna, WMU President; 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; Joshua Naranjo, Statistics; Amy Naugle, Faculty Senate President; Paul Pancella, (substitute for Clement Burns), Physics; Troy Place, Industrial and Entrepreneurial Engineering; Amanda Remo, Accountancy; Diane Riggs, Religions and Cultures; 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; Julia Stachofsky, Business Information Systems; Marianne Swierenga, Libraries; David Szabla (substitute for Wayne Stitt), Education Leadership Research and Technology; Laura Teichert, Special Education and Literacy Studies; Kathryn Thomsen, Theatre; Janet Van Der Kley, Presidential Appointee; Robert Wall Emerson, Blindness and Low Vision; Daren Webb, Physical Therapy; Lester Wright, Emeriti;

Members Absent: Todd Barkman, Biological Sciences; Kimberly Buchholz, Executive Board Director; Bradford Dennis, Chair, International Education Council; Bidyut Hazarika, Business Information Systems; John Jellies, Emeriti; Jeffrey Jones, Teaching Learning and Educational Studies; Jean Kimmel, Economics; Thayma Lutz, Mathematics; Robert Makin, Computer Science; James Martin, Philosophy; Michael Miller, Human Performance and Health Education; Mustafa Mirzeler, Representative-at-Large; Thayma Lutz, Mathematics; Robert Makin, Computer Science; James Martin, Philosophy; 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; Thomas Scannell, Marketing; Patricia Villalobos, Art; Bret Wagner, Chair, Undergraduate Studies Council; Yuan-kang Wang, Political Science; Andrew Wyman, Representative-at-Large; Marcellis Zondag, Chair, Graduate Studies Council

Guests: Sarah Beuker, Assistant General Counsel; Christine Bryd-Jacobs, Dean, Graduate College; Kimberly Carroll, Institutional Equity; Paula Davis, Associate Vice President for Strategic Communication; Julie Garrison, Dean, University Libraries; Keith Hahn, General Counsel; Cara Junghans, Provost Office; Carla Koretsky, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences; Eric McConnell, University Ombuds; Matthew Mingus, Provost Office; Adrienne Redding, English; Luchara Wallace, Dean, Merze Tate College

Faculty Senate Staff Present: Sue Brodasky, Faculty Senate Administrator

Quorum

A quorum was reached with 67 Senators and substitutes in attendance, of the 48 needed to establish quorum.

Agenda

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

Minutes

It was moved by Rudge, seconded by Szabla, to approve the 6 November 2025 minutes as provided. The motion carried.

Report of Officer

Faculty Senate President Amy Naugle

According to Article III, Sec. 1 of the Senate Bylaws Election of officers: During its February meeting, the Senate shall select nominees for president and vice president. Two candidates who have submitted petitions containing the signatures of five members from at least three colleges, of the present or two immediate past Senates shall be selected for each position. There has been one verified petition submitted for president and one for vice president. The nominee for President is Janet Hahn, Director of Healthcare Services and Sciences and Master Faculty Specialist in the School of Interdisciplinary Health Programs of the College of Health and Human Services. The nominee for Vice President is David Rudge, Professor of Biological Sciences in the College of Arts and Sciences.

On Monday, 9 February the Faculty Senate election begins with the launch of the electronic ballots for President, Vice President, Representative-at-Large Senators, Department Senators, and the council and committee members. Members were asked to vote when they receive the notice. Voting will close at 5 p.m. on Friday, 20 February 2026.

To further commitment of collaborative governance, the Faculty Senate, the Western Student Association, the Graduate Student Association, the University administration, and the WMU Board of Trustees will convene on 13 February for a Shared Governance Retreat. This retreat will provide an opportunity for dialogue, alignment, and strategic discussion among the University's shared governance partners, reinforcing a collective commitment to inclusive decision-making and institutional effectiveness.

The Research and Creative Scholars Council recently became aware of an update to *Memorandum of Action-19/08: Creation of the Eligibility to Serve as WMU Principal Investigators on Sponsored Projects Policy* that was implemented over the summer by the Office of Research and Innovation. The specific language change regarding emeriti and retired faculty are noteworthy. The original MOA-19/08 states "*Emeritus (retired) Faculty as PI: some faculty members wish to continuing research programs after retirement from the University. It may be possible for Emeriti to serve as the PI on a submitted proposal with the approval of the department chair to assure University related considerations are taken into account, including the space and other resources necessary to conduct the project are available.*" The change in language is found in the revised policy at 4.3.1 "*Retired Faculty as PI: some faculty members wish to continue research programs after retirement from the University. It may be possible for Retired Faculty to serve as the PI on submitted proposal with the approval as set forth:*

- *Retired Faculty must maintain a formal relationship with the University*
- *Retired Faculty PI/Co-PI status must be approved prior to submission of a proposal by the department chair, college dean, and the Office of Research and Innovation. Approval is contingent on demonstrated capacity to manage the project and meet deliverables, availability of necessary university resources, and a clear plan for oversight and project management."*

Tonight, continues the showcase on the University Strategic Plan with a focus on the goal of Research and Creative Scholarship. There will be presentations from university leadership and the Faculty Senate Research and Creative Scholarship Council later in the meeting.

Reports of Ex Officios

Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Christopher Cheatham

Interim Provost Cheatham explained that his academic background is in exercise and environmental physiology. As a faculty researcher, he examined how the human body responds to extreme environmental stress, with applications to safety, performance, and military readiness. That work shaped his career, but more importantly, it grounded his belief in the value of hands-on, student-engaged research. As a student, he entered this field through a cardiovascular physiology course that emphasized experiential learning. The research itself was not intended to change the world, but it changed students. By asking questions, collecting data, and engaging directly with inquiry, he discovered a professional path. That experience led him to graduate study, doctoral training, and ultimately to Western Michigan University, an institution where research and teaching are not competing priorities, but

complementary ones. This integration is central to WMU's mission as a regional public university. Research and scholarship at Western matter not because of rankings alone, but because they drive student success and community impact. This work is connected to place, workforce needs, and real-world challenges, providing experience-driven learning that builds confidence, purpose, and persistence. Faculty scholarship is foundational to this model. Through mentorship, creativity, and sustained inquiry, faculty shape knowledge, elevate students, and extend Western's impact beyond campus. That is why research and scholarship are essential, not as an abstract ideal, but as a strategic investment in students, communities, and the public good.

Schedule changes and weather-related closure days, delayed the census date. When examining overall trends from spring 2025 through spring 2026, headcount declined by 1.6%, while student credit hours decreased by only 0.5%. This modest decline was anticipated, given the enrollment softness observed in the prior fall term. Importantly, approximately 52% of the headcount decrease is attributable to a reduction in returning international students, with the impact even more pronounced at the graduate level, reflecting broader global and geopolitical dynamics beyond institutional control. In contrast, the application pipeline remains strong. Undergraduate applications are up approximately 4%, and while the bulk of the application cycle has passed, volumes are expected to remain stable. The focus now shifts to yield, successfully converting admitted students to enrollment through orientation and fall matriculation. Retention data, specifically fall-to-spring rates, show a slight decline of roughly one percentage point. While some fluctuation is expected, this trend warrants attention. In collaboration with Institutional Research further analysis is underway to determine whether financial-aid or other structural factors are contributing to this pattern, as part of a broader effort to optimize institutional impact and student success. Financial aid remains a critical component of enrollment and student success strategy. Last week, financial aid packages were released to newly admitted prospective students, considerably earlier than in the past two years, which were impacted by FAFSA related delays. This year, WMU met its goal of issuing awards by the end of January, and actively working toward an even earlier target of late December next cycle, recognizing that earlier notification improves competitiveness and supports informed student decision-making. Notably, this year also marked the implementation of a redesigned financial aid packaging model that emphasizes a more individualized, data-informed approach to allocating limited resources. While the institution strives to maximize support for all students, fiscal constraints require that aid be deployed where it is most likely to influence enrollment decisions and affordability. The new model incorporates multiple student-specific characteristics to ensure strategic use of funds that align with both access and yield goals. In addition, continued investment in the REAP program, focused on re-enrolling students who previously stopped out, has demonstrated strong results. This spring, 108 new REAP students enrolled, bringing total spring participation to 411 students, representing a 46% increase from spring 2025. These outcomes underscore meaningful progress in degree completion and in supporting students returning to finish their education.

From 2 April through 10 April, will be the Research, Innovation, and Creative Celebration Week providing undergraduate and graduate students from across the University with opportunities to showcase research, creative work, and scholarly inquiry through poster sessions, exhibitions, and presentations, serving as strong examples of experience-driven learning in practice. Appreciation is extended to the Haworth College of Business for hosting the Michigan DECA District 3 Conference, which brought more than 700 high school student competitors to campus and offered meaningful engagement for both visiting students and the institution. Support for the event included participation by 27 Western Michigan University students representing eight student organizations. Additional recognition is directed to Broncos Rising for hosting an upcoming Fulbright reception celebrating the 2025-26 recipients. Congratulations are also extended to the Haenicke Institute for Global Education's 2025 Timothy Light Center for Chinese Studies Research Grant recipients, whose projects include a documentary or biography and a multimedia online Chinese language studies platform.

Discussion included:

- It was asked which programs and disciplines have been most directly impacted by the decline in international student enrollment?
 - Interim Provost Cheatham replied that the decline in international student enrollment has disproportionately affected graduate programs compared to undergraduate programs. Among the academic units, the College of Engineering has experienced the most significant impact, reflecting its historically high reliance on international graduate enrollment. While specific program-level data would need to be reviewed to provide precise figures, the overall pattern indicates that enrollment losses within engineering have been a primary driver of the observed decline. This trend underscores the vulnerability of certain graduate-intensive and internationally oriented disciplines

to global enrollment fluctuations and highlights the need for targeted mitigation and recruitment strategies moving forward.

University Strategic Plan – Research and Creative Scholarship

The University Strategic Research and Creative Scholarship goal states “As a doctoral university with high research activity (R2), and growing recognition of our high-caliber research and creative scholarship, we advance our institution by having a diverse portfolio of research and creative scholarship that engages students, benefits the planet, expands the frontiers of knowledge and elevates the human condition.” 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 “Increase research and creative scholarship activity by cultivating a supportive environment that ensures faculty, staff, and students have equitable access to resources needed to participate in state-of-the-art inquiry, analysis, and creativity.” The Research and Creative Scholarship Council is charged with reviewing the guidelines, policies, and eligibility of the Faculty Research, and Creative Activities Support Fund (FRACASF) and the comprised programs with the goal of increasing their utilization by faculty, across all disciplines. The RCSC is also charged with investigating ways by which faculty who are currently in administrative roles, but still research active, can be supported either by allowing them to compete in the FRACASF programs, or through a separate mechanism. And, as it is every year, the RCSC is charged to continue to collaborate with the Office of Research and Innovation in developing strategies to support faculty to advance research and creative scholarship. These shared commitments underscore the central role the RCSC plays in advancing the University’s research 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/2026-01/research.pdf>

Action Items

Jessica Cataldo, Chair of the Academic and Information Technology Council introduced MOA-25/11: *Revision of Recommendation of Course Delivery Definitions for Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs*. The Academic and Information Technology Council recommends course delivery definitions be amended for clarification in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs.

It was moved by Simpson, seconded by Fogarty, to approve MOA-25/11 as presented. With one abstention, the motion carried.

<https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2026-01/20260205.moa2511-revision-course-definitions.pdf>

Lisa DeChano-Cook, Curriculum Manager on behalf of the Undergraduate Studies Council introduced MOA-25/12: *Establish Cross-Listed Courses Policy*. According to the course catalog, cross-listed courses are defined as “...two or more courses offered by different departments that share identical content and student learning experiences. Cross-listed courses are considered equivalent, and students may receive credit only for the most recent enrollment.” Courses that are cross-listed include a notation in the catalog indicating the cross-listing. Students may not receive credit for both courses. However, students often experience confusion when enrolling in cross-listed courses, as the associated course titles, descriptions, and prerequisite or corequisite requirements are not always identical. The establishment of this policy provides clear and consistent guidelines for cross-listed courses, thereby reducing confusion and ensuring accurate credit allocation. The Undergraduate Studies Council recommends the establishment of a cross-listing of courses policy to ensure clear identification of such courses and to minimize confusion among academic advisors and students.

Discussion included:

- It was questioned how cross-listing affect course scheduling and student access?
 - DeChano-Cook replied that when a course is cross-listed, it must be offered in the same semester under all corresponding prefixes. One section cannot be removed independently because the listings represent the same course. In practice, these sections are typically taught by the same faculty member, and there is rarely more than one instructor assigned. Maintaining both prefixes is particularly important for students who prefer or are required to enroll in courses offered under their home department’s prefix and may not register if the course appears only under another unit. Offering the course concurrently under both prefixes ensures equitable access, supports enrollment across departments, and avoids unnecessary barriers for students planning degree completion.
- Is it current practice for cross-listed courses to have the same prerequisite requirements, and what concerns arise when they do not?

- It is not consistently current practice for cross-listed courses to carry identical prerequisite requirements, and this inconsistency presents a significant concern. In some instances, an engineering course may include specific prerequisites while the same cross-listed course under another prefix does not. When prerequisites are not aligned, the courses are no longer equivalent in practice, even if they share the same course number and content designation. Students enrolling without the required preparatory coursework may lack foundational knowledge that other students have, creating inequities in preparedness and potentially affecting learning outcomes. Additionally, inconsistent prerequisites can impede timely degree progress, particularly for students attempting to optimize credit completion or navigate interdisciplinary pathways. Aligning prerequisite requirements across cross-listed courses is therefore essential to maintain academic integrity, ensure equitable student preparation, and support coherent curriculum design.

It was moved by Pancella, seconded by Rudge, to approve MOA-25/12 as presented. With two opposed and one abstention, the motion carried.

<https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2026-01/20260205.moa-2512.cross-listed-courses.pdf>

Reports of Ex Officiis, Cont.

University President Russ Kavalhuna

Apologies were offered for President Kavalhuna's delayed arrival, which was due to his participation in a regional conference hosted by Southwest Michigan First, where candidates seeking gubernatorial nominations were introduced and interviewed. That engagement underscored the increasing visibility of higher education in public discourse, as all candidates referenced education and higher education priorities. Over the coming months, institutions such as Western Michigan University can expect heightened scrutiny, alongside opportunities to articulate value, relevance, and public impact. Recent efforts to foster transparency and dialogue included an open forum held last month to discuss operational decisions and insights gathered through the Presidential Listening Tour, which proved to be a constructive space for community engagement and shared reflection. Additional communication will soon outline the role of the Huron Consulting Group in evaluating operational efficiencies, with clear affirmation that any consideration of academic programs will occur through established shared governance processes. Anticipation remains strong for the upcoming shared governance retreat and the Board of Trustees' visit next week. Awareness was also acknowledged regarding concerns related to federal immigration enforcement, and continued openness to feedback on that and other critical issues remains a priority. Despite the complex national context, confidence persists in the institution's trajectory, with ongoing engagement across campus viewed as essential to navigating current challenges and advancing a distinctive and compelling future.

Action Items, Cont.

University Ombuds Eric McConnel on behalf of the Professional Concerns Committee introduced MOA-25/13: *Revise Academic Appeals Review Process to Include Student Deadlines*. While other phases of the appeals process include defined timelines for student actions, no established deadline currently exists for the evidence submission phase. The absence of such a deadline has resulted in extended delays between the initial submission of an appeal and its subsequent review by the Academic Appeals Review Committee. The Professional Concerns Committee recommends implementing a specific deadline for students to submit supporting evidence during the Academic Appeals Review processes.

Discussion included:

- It was asked what are the key deadlines and steps in the course grade appeal process, and how does it differ from hardship withdrawals?
 - Ombuds McConnel noted that the only current deadline in the course grade appeal process requires students to contact the department chair or program director within 20 business days of the end of the semester. This deadline applies solely to initiating contact and scheduling a meeting; it is not a deadline for submitting materials or completing the appeal. Course grade appeals are distinct from hardship and non-attendance withdrawals. Evidence collection for course grade appeals begins only after students complete preliminary steps, including required forms, identification of applicable appeal criteria, and submission of syllabi. This staged process ensures that only appeals meeting established criteria move forward, preserves faculty time, and maintains procedural fairness.

It was moved by Simpson, seconded by Rudge, to approve MOA-25/13 as presented. The motion carried.

<https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2026-01/20260205.moa2513-revise-aarc-deadline.pdf>

Jessica Cataldo, Chair of the Academic and Information Technology Council introduced MOA-25/14: *Revision of*

WMU Syllabus Requirements to Include Artificial Intelligence Statement. The Academic and Informational Technology Council and the Professional Concerns Committee recommend the required inclusion of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Statement on all WMU syllabi. The councils met with university stakeholders and received feedback on sample statements from other universities. Through this feedback and research, the subcommittee aligned with the approach to require faculty to explicitly state how AI can and cannot be used in the classroom without dictating the specifics of that statement.

Discussion included:

- It was asked how the proposed syllabus AI statement address academic integrity concerns given the widespread integration of AI into common technologies?
 - Chair Cataldo stated that the proposed syllabus statement is designed to ensure clarity by requiring instructors to explicitly define expectations for AI use in their courses. Students have raised valid concerns about complete AI prohibitions, as many commonly used tools, such as Grammarly, Google applications, and Adobe products, now embed AI features by default. In response, the subcommittee that drafted the statement shifted away from presuming AI is prohibited and instead emphasized instructor-defined parameters for authorized and unauthorized use. Clear syllabus language is essential in the context of student conduct, as the Code of Conduct frames cheating as the unauthorized use of technology. Explicit policies establish enforceable boundaries without requiring exhaustive or frequently revised rules, allowing flexibility as AI tools evolve. The goal is to balance academic integrity, fairness, and instructor autonomy while providing students with transparent, written expectations.

It was moved by Fogarty, seconded by Simpson, to approve MOA-25/14 as presented. With two opposed and two abstentions, the motion carried.

<https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2026-01/20260205.moa2514.revision-syllabus-requirements.pdf>

Lisa DeChano-Cook, Curriculum Manager on behalf of the Undergraduate Studies Council introduced MOA-26/01: *Revise Faculty-Driven Prior Learning Assessment Opportunities for Undergraduate Programs* and its counterpart from the Graduate Studies Council MOA-26/03: *Revise Faculty-Driven Prior Learning Assessment Opportunities for Graduate Programs*. The Undergraduate Studies Council recommends revisions to the existing catalog language to include an undeniable definition of Prior Learning Assessment, what can and cannot be included in a PLA plan for credit, and clarify responsible parties for each part of the PLA process. And, in addition, The Graduate Studies Council recommends revisions to the existing catalog language to include an undeniable definition Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), what can and cannot be included in a PLA plan for credit, and clarify responsible parties for each part of the PLA process.

Discussion included:

- There was a question specifically regarding MOA-26/03 around faculty participation, timing, and the definition of eligible work for Prior Learning Assessment (PLA). It can create workload and staffing challenges, particularly during the summer when limited faculty are on contract in smaller or 4+1 programs.
 - DeChano-Cook noted that there are three primary issues identified. MOA-26/03 prohibits department chairs from serving as one of the two faculty reviewers for PLA. Clarification was provided that any learning completed as part of a course, whether termed “coursework” or “course product”, is considered traditional academic credit and is not eligible for PLA; PLA applies only to learning acquired outside the classroom. While the undergraduate policy allows limited exceptions for coursework-based PLA through Faculty Senate Undergraduate Studies Council approval to meet external accreditation requirements, no comparable provision exists at the graduate level. Faculty workload concerns may be partially addressed through PLA fee distributions that compensate reviewers when structured accordingly.

It was moved by Pancella, seconded by Rudge, to approve MOA-26/01 as presented. With one abstention, the motion carried.

It was moved by Rudge, seconded by Teichert, to approve MOA-26/03 as presented. With one abstention, the motion carried.

<https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2026-01/20260205.moa2601-ug-pla-modification.pdf>

<https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2026-01/20260205.moa2603.grad-pla-modification.pdf>

Faculty Senate Council Reports

Lofton Durham, Chair, Research and Creative Scholars Council provided the council report, that included academic year 2025-26 scope of work, three subcommittees with focus areas and achievements, and annual business. <https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2026-02/20260205-rcsc.pdf>

University Reports

Remzi Seker, Vice President for the Office of Research and Innovation provided a presentation, which included:

- Mission and Vision
- Research and Innovation Creative Scholars
- Strategic Plan
- Intellectual Property
- Expenditures
- Canceled Awards
- F and A Challenges
- What to Do
- Resilience

<https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2026-02/20260205-ori.pdf>

Questions included:

- How does the university address maintenance and replacement of equipment purchase with research grant funds?
 - Vice President Seker stated that when equipment is acquired through research grant funding, expectations related to maintenance, replacement, and long-term ownership are addressed as part of the proposal and award process. This includes discussion and documentation of cost-sharing arrangements, development of a management plan, and acknowledgment of ongoing costs associated with ownership. These post-award responsibilities may include securing additional funding, pursuing supplemental proposals, or establishing service contracts to ensure continued functionality of the equipment. Consideration of the full cost of ownership is therefore integrated into both planning and compliance processes.

Updates and Initiatives from the Office of Faculty Development was presented by Director Ramona Lewis and Faculty Fellow Adrienne Redding. The report included how OFD works, how OFD supports faculty, what that looks like, and faculty-led work and student success.

<https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2026-02/20260205-ofd.pdf>

Ed Eckel, chair of University Libraries presented strategic choices: building sustainable access, which included sustainable access to essential resources, a fragile partnership, researcher contributions, scholarly publishing changes, collaboration with departments, leveraging open access, and partnering with the University Library.

<https://files.wmich.edu/s3fs-public/2026-02/20260205-libraries.pdf>

Questions included:

- It was asked if there are limits on how much can be requested through interlibrary loan from the same journal?
 - Eckel acknowledged there are. Copyright law limits the use of interlibrary loan so it cannot substitute for a journal subscription. If requests exceed the allowable threshold, the library may pay a copyright fee for individual articles. Usage is tracked, and journals with high interlibrary loan demand are often added to subscriptions in subsequent years.
- How are new faculty supported when research needs differ from existing library collections?
 - While budgets are constrained, new faculty are encouraged to consult with subject librarians. The library can adjust allocations to better support emerging research areas, balancing new needs against existing resources.
- What counts as “use” when evaluating library resources?
 - Use includes database searches, abstract views, PDF downloads, and HTML article views. Vendors provide detailed usage statistics, though tracking is currently aggregated rather than fully department-specific.
- Does assigning articles to students help demonstrate resource use?

- Eckel said yes, linking or assigning articles, either via PDFs or direct links, supports documented usage and helps justify subscriptions. Integrating resources into coursework is one of the most effective ways to sustain library collections.

Professional and Academic Concerns

Discussion included:

- Interim Provost Cheatham was asked if there is a plan to transition traditionally ranked faculty positions to faculty specialist positions, and what is driving these changes?
 - He stated there is no directive or strategic plan from the Office of the Provost to shift positions away from traditionally ranked faculty roles. Decisions regarding the type of faculty position to be filled are made at the college level, through department chairs and deans, and are submitted with justifications for review. When examining overall staffing patterns over the past two years, the ratio of traditionally ranked faculty to faculty specialists has remained largely stable, shifting only slightly from 3.8:1 to 3.7:1. This indicates no significant structural change in faculty composition at the institutional level. Questions about specific hiring decisions are best addressed within individual colleges, where those determinations are made.

Adjournment

President Naugle adjourned the meeting at 7 p.m. The next Faculty Senate meeting will be 5 March 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.

DRAFT