
**WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee
Minutes of 25 February 2025**

Call to Order

A special meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee was called to order at 1:30 p.m. on 25 February 2025, via Webex video conferencing, by Brian Tripp, chair.

Members in Attendance: Lindsay Jeffers, Brenda Srof, Brian Tripp, Kathryn Wagner

Members Absent: Elissa Allen, Elizabeth Isidro, Lei Meng, Jessica Parker

Advisory Members Present: Jonathan Bush, Carrie Cumming, Lisa DeChano-Cook

Advisory Members Absent: Luchara Wallace

Ex Officio Present: Decker Hains

Guest: Diana Blouin, Director of Academic Advising, College of Arts and Sciences

Quorum

A quorum was present with six members in attendance, of whom six needed to establish a quorum.

Chair Tripp mentioned that a new chair and vice chair for the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee will be needed for fall 2026. This is being considered now to find people who are willing before electing those positions later in the spring. The chair position requires chairing meetings, preparing and submitting meeting agendas, preparing an annual written year-end review, and other paperwork.

New Business

DeChano-Cook and Blouin discussed a new time-sensitive issue that involves the WMU Essential Studies Level 1 Foundation Writing requirement. Graduation audits for Spring 2025 indicated that 49 undergraduate students in various WMU colleges had the WMU Essential Studies Level 1 Foundation Writing requirement waived, or “force completed” by advisors. Most of these students are enrolled in the College of Fine Arts or the College of Arts and Sciences. A summary of all affected students was provided in an MS-Excel spreadsheet by Blouin.

Currently, WMU undergraduate students who earn an Advanced Placement (AP) test score of 3 while previously enrolled in high school can get credit for the course ENGL 1050, which is a WMU Essential Studies course in the Level 1 Writing category. If a student earns a score of 4 or 5 on the AP exam, they have a choice of getting credit for either ENGL 1050 or ENGL 1100, which is a WMU Essential Studies course in the Level 2 category, Artistic Theory and Practice. Advisors previously gave students credit for ENGL 1100 and the writing area in the General Education program requirements.

Following the implementation of the WMU Essential Studies program, advisors have continued to give students Advanced Placement credit for the WMU Essential Studies Level 1 writing requirement. This practice was recently flagged during graduation audits because one course is being used to satisfy two areas of WMU Essential Studies. The WMU English Department chair, Dr. Todd Kuchta, has indicated that he approves allowing students to get credit for both the ENGL 1050 and ENGL 1100 courses with an AP score of 4 or 5. However, Dr. Kuchta indicated that he needed additional time to discuss this policy with the English Department faculty and verify that the AP exam correctly evaluates proficiency in both courses. If the WMU English Department approves, the AP course substitution policy would officially start in Fall 2025. Dr. Kuchta also agrees with the policy of giving students credit for both courses in WMU Essential Studies, using ENGL 1100 for both.

Following the discussion, it was decided that Bush and Blouin will jointly prepare a draft policy document that would provide guidance to advisors on how to substitute other writing-intensive courses for the current WMU Essential Studies requirements. This guidance policy will include a decision tree with multiple tiers of course substitution protocols for the two required English courses under different circumstances. This draft policy will be submitted to the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee for review before the next scheduled meeting of this committee.

Adjournment

Chair Tripp adjourned the meeting at 2:20 p.m. The WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee will meet next on 11 March 2025 at 1 p.m. via Webex.

Approval

Submitted by Lindsay Jeffers, Secretary

Minutes approved on 11 March 2025.