
**WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee
Minutes of 11 March 2025**

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee was called to order at 1:05 p.m. on 11 March 2025, via Webex video conferencing, by Brian Tripp, chair.

Members in Attendance: Elissa Allen, Elizabeth Isidro, Jessica Parker, Brenda Srof, Brian Tripp, Kathryn Wagner

Members Absent: Lindsay Jeffers, Lei Meng, Luchara Wallace

Advisory Members Present: Carrie Cumming, Lisa DeChano-Cook, Randy Ott (substituting for Jonathan Bush)

Ex Officio Present: Decker Hains

Quorum

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

Agenda

[MOTION] It was moved by Srof, seconded by DeChano-Cook, to accept the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Srof, seconded by DeChano-Cook, to approve the 11 February 2025 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

[MOTION] It was moved by Srof, seconded by DeChano-Cook, to approve the 25 February 2025 minutes with the modification of removing Allen's name from the list of attendees. With three abstentions, the motion carried.

Reports of Officers

Chair Tripp discussed Parker's membership on the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee. The most recent agenda indicated that Parker has been changed to an advisory board-appointed member and is no longer a voting member. Tripp will contact Amy Naugle, Faculty Senate President, to clarify Parker's position as a voting member and advocate for retaining a position for an advisor on the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee.

Chair Tripp attended the 10 March 2025 meeting of the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee. The WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee is currently working on identifying examples of good WMU Essential Studies course proposals to share with faculty who are submitting proposals for WMU Essential Studies approval. Members of the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee are expected to have identified several exemplary proposals by April 2025.

Ex Officio Hains did not provide a report.

Reports of University Representatives

Ott, answered questions about a written progress report submitted by Bush, as follows:

1. In response to the AP Literature issue, an interim guidance for advisors for affected students has been developed. This guidance provides a series of scaffolded decisions for providing alternatives in DegreeWorks, in preferred order. The fourth option includes WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory consultation, although it is not anticipated that any cases will need to use that option. The English Department has already revised

the policy, and no more students should be affected by this issue. This guidance only applies to current students. The full document can be viewed here: [Memorandum for WMU EA - Writing.docx](#)

2. The WMU Essential Studies Comprehensive Review is proceeding well. All four committees are currently adding information to slides and preparing for the WMU Essential Studies review event on 23 April.
 - a. WMU Faculty Senate and Merze Tate College invite the WMU community to a special event, “Advancing WES: Insights, Assessments, and Future Directions,” on 23 April from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS) room 1010. WMU Essential Studies Review Committees will present initial results from the 2024-25 WMU Essential Studies Comprehensive Review. This academic year, over 60 WMU community members (faculty, staff, and students) contributed to the review. The event will include updates on ongoing WMU Essential Studies improvement initiatives from the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee, the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee, and initial reports from each of the following committees:
 - i. WMU Essential Studies Course Review Committee
 - ii. WMU Essential Studies Student Learning Outcome Data Review Committee
 - iii. WMU Essential Studies Systems and Processes Review Committee
 - iv. WMU Essential Studies Student Perspective Committee

Note that the event will be in-person, but it will also include a Webex link and a recording for later review.

3. The final report is due to the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee and the Faculty Senate by 30 June. The report will be a revised PowerPoint Presentation from the event and links to primary and explanatory documents in relevant folders, and will also be publicly documented on WMU’s WMU Essential Studies website.
4. Additional items:
 - a. A preliminary report will be submitted to the Faculty Senate Executive Board on 28 March
 - b. WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee is currently piloting new WMU Essential Studies Assessment plan forms for each level and creating models of successful plans. These templates are much improved from the previous one in both usability and focus, and also provide a much more flexible understanding of assessment. These templates will improve WMU Essential Studies course approvals significantly and will be in place by the end of the spring semester.

The announcement of the WMU Essential Studies Faculty Fellow for 2025-26 will be made soon. The project will be revamping faculty resources and communication, including a new and improved comprehensive set of web resources.

It is encouraged for WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee members to attend the review on 23 April. All four of the fourth-year review committees will present reports, and Chair Tripp and Bush will give a global review of the process. The final year-end report is due on 30 June. The Faculty Senate Executive Board will receive a verbal report on 25 March.

DeChano-Cook asked how the WMU Essential Studies Faculty Fellow opportunity was announced to faculty who may want to apply. Ott will relay this question to Bush for consideration.

DeChano-Cook indicated that the planned fall 2025 rollout for the revised WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee approval process is progressing as planned.

Unfinished Business

A Memorandum for Advisors Describing a Guideline and Process for Assigning WMU Essential Studies Level 1 Writing Courses was revised.

[MOTION] It was moved by DeChano-Cook, seconded by Tripp, to approve A Memorandum for Advisors Describing a Guideline and Process for Assigning WMU Essential Studies Level 1 Writing Courses as revised. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Tripp announced that a secretary for the 2025-26 WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee is needed. There were no volunteers. This vacancy will be addressed at the April meeting.

Updates on Two Ad-Hoc Joint Committees - WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory and WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committees:

1. The Student Learning Outcomes Review Model is forthcoming as the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee identifies and shares examples of exemplary proposals to share with faculty interested in submitting WMU Essential Studies courses.
2. Assessment Plan Model – Chair Tripp shared a Word document that combined all 17 WMU Essential Studies Student Learning Outcome descriptions and a spreadsheet analysis with a summary of word counts for the criteria, and complete text descriptions of each student learning outcome were shared for review.

New Business

[MOTION] It was moved by Tripp, seconded by Isidro, to approve WFED 3050 Career and Employability Skills WMU Essential Studies Level 2: Course Change. Changes to the course are not WMU Essential Studies related. The motion carried unanimously.

Announcements

The WMU Essential Studies Program Conference results from 2024-25 WMU Essential Studies Comprehensive Fourth-Year Review, “Advancing WES: Insights, Assessments, and Future Directions,” is scheduled for 23 April from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Adjournment

Chair Tripp adjourned the meeting at 2:02 p.m. The WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee will meet next on 8 April 2025 at 1 p.m. via Webex.

Approval

Submitted by Elissa Allen, Vice Chair

Minutes approved on 8 April 2025.