
**Research and Creative Scholarship Council
Minutes of 4 December 2025****Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Research and Creative Scholarship Council was called to order at 2:33 p.m. on 4 December 2025 at Walwood Hall-Connable Room-112E by Lofty Durham, chair.

Members in Attendance: Onur Arugaslan, Upul Attanayake, Carrie Barrett, Amy Bocko, Christopher Cheatham, Lofty Durham, Beixi Li, Gellert Mezei, Selim Ozyurek, Remzi Seker, Jesse Smith, German Zarate-Sandez

Members Absent: Benjamin Brady, Christine Byrd-Jacobs, Angela Groves, Bilinda Straight, Rohullah Wahidi

Ex Officio in Attendance: Andre Venter

Ex Officio Absent: Anthony DeFulio

Quorum

A quorum was present with 13 members in attendance, of the 10 needed to establish quorum.

Agenda

[MOTION] It was moved by Miller, seconded by Ozyurek, to accept the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Bocko, seconded by Miller, to approve the 13 November 2025 meeting minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

Chair Durham did not provide a report.

Ex Officio DeFulio was not in attendance and did not provide a report.

Reports of University Representatives

Vice President Seker reported:

- For Fiscal-year reporting of FRACASF – there is a total budget of \$440,000. There have so far been 100 FRTF awards and 16 PPP&E awards granted. SFSA and FRACAA have not yet been awarded. This leaves a total remaining award balance of \$316,108.88.
- Seker introduced Melinda Brakenberry, Associate Vice President from the Office of Research and Innovation. He noted she is assisting with compliance and other administrative issues.

Graduate College Dean Byrd-Jacobs was not in attendance and did not provide a report.

Interim Provost Cheatham reported:

- Overview of the status of Graduate and Parent Plus loans and the implications of this for graduate education. As a result of new federal guidelines, and the government's changing definitions and restrictions regarding professional programs, Graduate Plus loans will be eliminated as of July 2026, and Parent Plus loans will also see new restrictions. He noted that current graduate students will be grandfathered in, but there will be new budgetary limits.
- WMU's administration is working to strategize and meet the challenges posed by the changing rules given new constraints and hopefully the university can develop new scholarships to help out. It was mentioned that this would affect how WMU relates to its donors.
- Discussion was held regarding implications of the new rules and what the federal government considers a "professional program."

Reports of Council/Committee Standing Committees

Miller reported the Research Screening Committee Support for Faculty Scholars Award/ Faculty Research and Creative Actives Award. FRACCA applications are available on InfoReady, and there is an informational webinar being held 5 December for interested faculty.

German Zarate-Sandez entered the meeting at 2:44 p.m.

Chair Durham provided the Subcommittee One report. The draft proposal that came from its meeting has been distributed. It was noted the committee coordinated with ORI staff, so that this process didn't create undue workload. The committee decided against developing an MOA because the discussion and proposal do not pertain to policy. Highlights from the proposal are that FRACCA will be now open and awarded in fall semester, and that SFSA will now open and be awarded in spring semester. Both processes will be complete (applications reviewed and awarded) before the next cycle begins. This will eliminate the potential for faculty "double dipping" both awards. If faculty are unsuccessful with FRACCA, they can still apply for SFSA. The new process is scheduled to launch fall 2026. Discussion was held regarding the role of backstops in this new process, to which Seker commented that there are no backstops. It was mentioned this will be clarified in any documents sent to the Faculty Senate. There was discussion about the proposed timeline and if there could be a conflict with Tenure and Promotion deadlines. Chair Durham will inquire with ORI staff about any need to adjust deadlines and report back.

Upal Attanayake entered the meeting at 2:46 p.m.

Bocko provided the Subcommittee Two report. A meeting time could not be identified for all members. Instead, members have been asked to review the Faculty Senate document on AI policy to generate ideas, and then a committee meeting will be scheduled in spring.

Barrett provided the Subcommittee Three report. The committee has established a shared Teams folder and is on target with meeting its goals. It will likely be able to report more details and progress at the January RCSC meeting.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by Arugaslan, seconded by Ozyurek, to adjourn the meeting at 2:56 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The Research and Creative Scholarship Council will meet next on 15 January 2026 at 2:30 p.m. in-person in Walwood Hall-Connable Room-112E.

Approval

Submitted by Jesse M. Smith, Secretary

Minutes were approved 15 January 2026.