
UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES COUNCIL

Minutes of 11 October

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Undergraduate Studies Council was called to order at 3:04 p.m. on 11 October 2022 via Webex video conferencing by Diane Riggs, chair.

Members in Attendance: Jessica Birnbaum, Carrie Cumming, Kristy Eisenhardt (substitute for Clifton Ealy), Lori Gray, Carly Hagins, Sam Longlet, Dawn Mason, Susan Piazza, Jill Rowe, Diane Riggs, Bruna Louise Silva, Scott Slawinski, Sue Steuer

Member Absent: Irma Lopez, Nicolas Witschi

Advisory Members Present: Edwin Martini, Colleen Stano

Ex Officio: Lisa DeChano-Cook

Guest(s): John Miller, Ad Hoc Syllabus Template Committee

Quorum

A quorum was present.

Agenda

Chair Riggs amended the agenda to include guest John Miller to introduce Memorandum of Action-20/03.

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

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by DeChano-Cook, seconded by Gray, to approve the 13 September 2022 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

Chair Riggs did not provide a report.

Ex Officio DeChano-Cook did not provide a report.

New Business

Chair Riggs introduced a rubric that she is proposing for use by council members when reviewing curriculum proposals. Columns include proposal numbers, criteria, market analysis, student learning outcomes, etc. A grading system of +/- was suggested for each measurable criterion. Additional space is available for comments. It was questioned how an incomplete proposal should be managed, to which Ex Officio DeChano-Cook noted that the proposal will be denied and returned to the initiating faculty member with specific comments for resubmission. Discussion was held.

Miller introduced MOA-20/03: Syllabus Template. He noted that the template was created by a Faculty Senate ad hoc committee to address necessary content to be included in syllabi. The template is intended to be made available electronically in Elearning for all faculty to locate it. The ad hoc committee produced the template based on best practices literature; however, it is not intended to preclude academic flexibility, but rather to ensure requirements and promote student success. Miller explained the concept of accessibility and offered examples regarding accommodations for visual issues. He noted that the Ally Accessibility tool in Elearning helps identify accessibility issues. Ex Officio DeChano-Cook questioned why a template was created versus a list of required and/or recommended items. Additional questions were raised, and a discussion was held. It was suggested that the finalized template be housed in Elearning. Miller, when asked, stated that USC is being asked to approve the MOA in addition to the Graduate Studies Council. The council will offer edits and vote on the MOA at the next meeting.

Reports of University Representatives

Due to Witschi's absence, the Curriculum Manager's report was not provided.

Martini reported that WMUx is in the midst of a major expansion of platforms. Admissions use Salesforce. Another tool is Marketing Cloud, which is used to communicate efficiently with stakeholders such as staff, faculty, and students. Relative to USC, the most relevant tool is Student Success Hub, which is Salesforce student success software. It is used by all advisors, student success offices, and marketing. Martini hopes it will improve communication with students. Discussion was held. Martini will provide a demo to USC once the software is available.

Reports of Council/Committee Standing Committees

Chair Riggs provided a history of the Intellectual Skills Program Advisory Committee. Given Merz Tate College's new charge with related issues to the ISPAC, it has led to the conversation about whether ISPAC is still viable or should be discontinued. It was noted that ENGL-1050 has been redesigned to include a new tool for students to self-assess and choose a placement. Piazza shared that LS-1040 has been redesigned so that it supports intellectual and cognitive skills in literacy, reading, and research/study skills, and so that it counts toward graduation and is a WMU Essential Studies course. Eisenhardt explained that MATH requires a remedial approach. It has been found that students are not enrolled in MATH-1050 when there are other courses available, but those courses do not have the same support structures. Discussion was held. It was suggested that ISPAC be eliminated and a new MATH/Quantitative Literacy Committee be formed. However, it was noted that such a new committee would be most helpful in this transition; it may be necessary for there to be a committee to review incoming freshman success issues. Martini will confer with Witschi on how to move the issue forward. DeChano-Cook will draft charges for review at the next meeting.

Chair Riggs shared the 2021-22 Service-Learning Committee charges. Discussion was held.

[MOTION] It was moved by Slawinski, seconded by DeChano-Cook, to approve the charges as provided. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Riggs shared the proposed 2022-23 Transfer of Credit Committee charges. It was stated that Randy Ott at Merze Tate College is working on articulation agreements that tie into the work of the committee. It was questioned whether the committee coordinates its efforts with other offices on campus that have responsibilities in this area.

[MOTION] It was moved by DeChano-Cook, seconded by Birnbaum, to approve the TCC charges as provided. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Riggs postponed the appointment of USC liaisons to ISPAC, Service Learning, and TCC.

Unfinished Business

None.

Announcements

None.

Adjournment

Chair Riggs adjourned the meeting at 4:53 p.m. The Undergraduate Studies Council will meet next on 8 November 2022 via Webex.

Approval

Submitted by Susan V. Piazza, secretary

Minutes approved on 8 November 2022.