
Undergraduate Studies Council
Minutes of 13 February 2024**Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Undergraduate Studies Council was called to order at 3:02 p.m. on 13 February 2024 via Webex video conferencing by Diane Riggs, chair.

Members in Attendance: Carrie Cumming, Lisa DeChano-Cook, Lori Gray, Dave Karowe, Dawn Mason, Susan Piazza, Diane Riggs, Jill Rowe, Scott Slawinski, Sue Steuer, Yuanling Sun

Members Absent: Jessica Birnbaum, Jordan Dunn, Tomika Griffin-Brown, Leah Latumaerissa, Irma Lopez, Abdus Salam

Advisory Member in Attendance: Colleen Stano

Ex Officio Absent: Bret Wagner

Guests: Christopher Cheatham, Office of the Provost; Melinda Holohan, Transfer of Credit Committee Chair

Quorum

A quorum was present with 11 members in attendance, of the 10 needed to establish quorum.

Agenda

[MOTION] It was moved by DeChano-Cook, seconded by Karowe, to accept the 13 February agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by DeChano-Cook, seconded by Karowe, to approve the 9 January 2024 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

Chair Riggs reported on the Memorandum of Action (MOA) 23/02 *Drop/Withdrawal Extension* discussed at the 9 February 2024 Faculty Senate meeting. There were objections to the policy related to graduate programs. It was decided that MOA 23/02 as written is not suitable, therefore, MOA 23/02 did not pass.

Due to his absence, Ex Officio Wagner did not provide a report.

Reports of University Representatives

DeChano-Cook did not provide a report.

Stano reported the following on Academic Advising, Merze Tate College:

1. Students received emails from Student Success Hub with information encouraging appointments, reminders for registration, and support messages.
2. Summer 2024 registration is open and fall schedule is viewable as of 11 March.
3. [Now accepting advising award nominations](#) Students, faculty, and staff may nominate advisors at this link.
4. Students do not need to consent for faculty to make counseling or resource recommendations, but possibly a conversation with faculty before doing so.

Holohan reported on the Transfer of Credit Committee (TCC) membership. TCC began creating a 2023-24 guide to serve faculty and staff for transfer credit work. TCC are working on a glossary of terms, best practices, FAQs, and workflow for different groups/constituents (i.e., military, early college, etc.). There is an MOA in development that USC may view later in the spring. Transfer review policies, timeframes, practices, and WMU Essential Studies transfers were discussed and will be addressed in the forthcoming guide and MOA. DeChano-Cook will determine if USC votes on the MOA before it is submitted to WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee for review.

Rowe left the meeting at 3:27 p.m.

Cheatham joined the meeting at 3:48 p.m.

Two discussion points related to USC work were addressed:

1. WMU's focus on undergraduate programming "so that all may learn".
2. The tendency for colleges to "silo" their programs into self-sufficient units, how will this affect WMU in the future?

Cheatham addressed the second question above. He recognizes the concern and the potential to concentrate credits/courses within a college or program area. Data was pulled and analyzed the percentage of courses students take outside college. This ranges from 6.9% to 20%, and upward movement has occurred in the last few years. The role of USC in examining proposals for duplications across the university was discussed. Cheatham encouraged USC to ask questions and explore concerns while also understanding USC may not have the full context of each proposal.

A major question that guides the provost-level review of proposals is to think about what is best for students. Cheatham asked if curriculum proposals address budgetary or enrollment changes for other programs, departments, and colleges. There was discussion about how to deal with these kinds of imbalances. Is there assistance that can help proposal initiators gather information so that those questions can be better answered? The Institutional Research Office may be able to assist.

Discussion of Topic #1: "so that all may learn." This phrase is from the past but is now part of WMU narrative. It is WMU's identity as an access-oriented institution. WMU lives up to that in some ways but still strive in others. There are support services and tools to help all students gain access being built. For example, scheduling for working professionals is not consistent across WMU. Not all online education is appropriately supportive for contemporary students. Discussion about how faculty want to serve their students well and how that will look differently across all settings. There was a question about fall break and if it is intended to assist struggling students. Cheatham links student success and retention to success in the fall semesters and shared that the data should be available to examine this question.

Slawinski left the meeting at 4:47 p.m.

Unfinished Business

Chair Riggs noted that USC no longer have a quorum at this meeting. The Audiology Preparation Concentration Health Services and Sciences will be postponed until next month's USC meeting.

New Business

None.

Announcements

None.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by Karowe, seconded by Sun, to adjourn the meeting at 4:50 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The Undergraduate Studies Council will meet next on 12 March 2024 at 3 p.m. via Webex.

Approval

Submitted by Susan Piazza, Secretary

Minutes approved on 12 March 2024.