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**Undergraduate Studies Council**  
Minutes of 8 October 2024**Call to Order**

A meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Undergraduate Studies Council was called to order at 3:02 p.m. on 8 October 2024 via Webex video conferencing by Diane Riggs, chair.

**Members in Attendance:** Jennifer Bott (substitute for Bret Wagner), Lucy Clark, Lisa DeChano-Cook, Tomika Griffin-Brown, Dave Karowe, Irma Lopez, Dylan McGlothlin, Diane Riggs, Priyanka Sharma, Scott Slawinski, Katherine Suender, Yuanling Sun

**Members Absent:** Jessica Birnbaum, Carrie Cumming

**Advisory Member in Attendance:** Colleen Stano

**Ex Officio:** David Rudge

**Guests:** Amy Brimmer, Director Compensation and Benefits, Human Resources; Evan Heiser, Senior Director Career and Experiential Education; Sara Nelson, Assistant Vice President Strategic Initiatives, Provost and Academic Affairs; Tony Proudfoot, Vice President Marketing/Strategic; Wendy Swalla, Instructional Designer Senior, WMUx

**Quorum**

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

**Agenda**

**[MOTION]** It was moved by Slawinski, seconded by Lopez, to accept the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

**Minutes**

**[MOTION]** It was moved by DeChano-Cook, seconded by McGlothlin, to accept the 10 September 2024 minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

**Reports of Officers**

Chair Riggs reported that USC is tasked with reviewing how experiential learning is understood at WMU. Chair Riggs has researched definitions of experiential learning online and reviewed the 2018 USC Memorandum of Action (MOA). USC will need to examine how various WMU programs incorporate experiential learning and consider potential changes to its definition. Shawn Tenney, Director of Service Learning, will present at the next USC meeting.

Ex Officio Rudge reported that he informed the Faculty Senate Executive Board about USC's discussions on experiential learning. USC may also be tasked with resolving transfer credit issues for students in study abroad programs.

**Reports of University Representatives**

DeChano-Cook reported the definition of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) needs to be established. Additional USC members are needed to join the committee working with the Graduate Studies Council (GSC);

WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Board will seek input from USC on whether students pursuing a second bachelor's degree at WMU, after attending other institutions, should be required to take WMU Essential Studies courses.

Griffin-Brown reported that since 30 August, academic advisors have held 4,722 advising appointments; Spring class registration will begin on 21 October. Marketing Cloud is effective in encouraging students to schedule advising appointments, positively impacting student retention. Comparing the period from 26 September to 8 October, advising appointments increased from 1,003 last year to 1,666 this year. Additionally, navigators and peer navigators at Merze Tate College conducted over 52,000 phone calls to students during the last academic year.

Suender joined the meeting at 3:18 p.m.

### **Unfinished Business**

None.

### **New Business**

Experiential Learning Program topics were discussed:

1. Accelerator Grants and Incubator Grants were introduced last year to implement the Experiential Learning Program.
2. Relationship of Experiential Learning to other programs at WMU: Heiser discussed the relationship between experience-driven learning, the WMU Signature program, and the WMU Essential Studies program, emphasizing how these initiatives build upon one another. Most experiential learning is already embedded within various departments and units through their curricula.
3. Defining Terms: Nelson reported that a working group is currently refining the definition of Experiential Learning. Service learning could be considered a component of Experiential Learning.
4. Discussion: While service learning involves community outreach and is a subset of experiential learning, not all experiential learning activities are necessarily tied to community outreach. Having a common definition of experiential learning would help clarify learning goals and assessment
5. The assessment component is missing from the definition document that the Experiential Learning team is currently developing.
6. Purpose: Is the primary purpose of the Experiential Learning Program focuses more on benefiting students or contribute to the community? The goal is primarily to serve students, helping WMU become more competitive.
7. Question: Should non-course-related experiences, such as student ambassador roles, be considered part of Experiential Learning?
8. Time to degree: Does the experiential learning program potentially increase the amount of time needed to complete graduation for students?
9. Faculty involvement in the development of the program: noting that it could potentially become a requirement for faculty. Heiser pointed out that, even without a requirement, many faculty members are already incorporating service learning and experiential learning into their courses to benefit students, and the Experiential Learning team aims to build on this existing energy and ensure the experience is accessible to all students. Proudfoot noted that 97% of WMU students graduate with some form of experiential education, and the Experiential Learning team is working to enhance as many of these activities as possible.
10. Input from USC: The Experiential Learning team is interested in receiving guidelines or suggestions from USC regarding assessment or other topics. One or two USC members could serve as liaisons to collaborate with the Experiential Learning team.

Slawinski left the meeting at 4:16 p.m.

Proposal: Deletion of Sustainable Brewing: Operations Concentration (SBOJ)

**[MOTION]** It was moved by Karowe, seconded by Suender, to approve the Sustainable Brewing: Operations Concentration (SBOJ). The motion carried unanimously.

### **Adjournment**

**[MOTION]** It was moved by Bott, seconded by Lopez, to adjourn the meeting at 4:42 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The Undergraduate Studies Council will next meet on 12 November 2024 at 3 p.m. via Webex.

### **Approval**

Submitted by Yuanliang Sun, Secretary

Minutes approved on 12 November 2024.