
Professional Concerns Committee

Minutes of 15 January 2025

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Professional Concerns Committee was called to order at 12:31 p.m. on 15 January 2025, via Webex conferencing by Michael Kahwaji, chair.

Members Present: Michael Kahwaji, Mariana Levin, John Miller, Richard Meyer, Marian Triplett, Rena VanDerwall, Amy Zufelt

Members Absent: Tom Gorczyca

Advisory Member Present: Eric McConnell, Joseph Erskine (substitute for Sarah Meiser)

Ex Officio: Dennis Simpson

Quorum

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

Agenda

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

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Triplett, seconded by Simpson, to approve the 11 December 2024 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

Chair Kahwaji discussed the invitation from the Faculty Senate Executive Board to discuss the hardship withdrawal policy and procedures. Chair Kahwaji emphasized the utility of coordinating discussions of Artificial Intelligence (AI) with the Academic and Information Technology Council (AITC) and other university committees.

Ex Officio Simpson discussed scheduling the meeting for the hardship withdrawal discussion.

Reports of University Representatives

Erskine reported that the Office of Student Conduct is busy finalizing cases from the fall semester. There are more instructor hearings and fewer panel hearings as a result of procedural changes in the academic integrity process. The recent changes to the student code regarding technology are working as intended. Erskine will be attending a national conference and will investigate how other institutions are responding to the challenges of students' AI use and plan to bring an AI best-practices summary to the PCC February meeting.

McConnell discussed the following:

1. Ombuds' office needs to be involved in the Faculty Senate Executive Board's hardship withdrawal discussion;
2. The increase in traffic to the Ombuds' Office is likely in part a result of better outreach. The graduate assistant appointment has been increased to include all academic sessions.
3. The Ombuds and other student-serving staff, e.g., the Writing Center or academic offices, often interact with students with unresolved mental health issues. McConnell is investigating mechanisms to direct the students and affected to appropriate resources.

Unfinished Business

Charge 1, coordinate and disseminate professional development materials to instructors, will be

discussed at the February meeting to be led by Miller.

New Business

None.

Announcements

None.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by Miller, seconded by Levin, to adjourn the meeting at 1:13 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The Professional Concerns Committee will next meet on 19 February 2025 via Webex.

Approval

Submitted by John Miller, Secretary

Minutes approved on 19 February 2025.