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**Undergraduate Studies Council**  
Minutes of 11 February 2025**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 11 February 2025 via Webex video conferencing by Diane Riggs, chair.

**Members in Attendance:** Jessica Birnbaum, Carrie Cumming, Lisa DeChano-Cook, Dave Karowe, Irma Lopez, Dylan McGlothlin, Diane Riggs, Priyanka Sharma, Scott Slawinski, Katherine Suender, Yuanling Sun, Bret Wagner

**Members Absent:** Tomika Griffin-Brown, Lucy Clark

**Advisory Member in Attendance:** Colleen Stano

**Ex Officio:** David Rudge

**Guests:** Paul Clements, Professor of Political Science

**Quorum**

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

**Agenda**

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

**Minutes**

**[MOTION]** It was moved by Rudge, seconded by McGlothlin, to approve the 14 January 2025 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

**Reports of Officers**

Chair Riggs reported the following:

1. A draft Memorandum of Action (MOA) 25/03 on the updated definition of Experiential Learning has been created for review and discussion. Any suggestions will be brought to the Experience-Driven Learning Working group on 17 February. An MOA assessment on Experiential Learning will be developed thereafter.
2. MOA 25/02: *Revise the Undergraduate Catalog-Requirements for Earning a Second Bachelor's Degree* and MOA 25/04: *Revise the Undergraduate Catalog to Allow Credit/No Credit for Courses Taken at Approved International Institutions* will be discussed today. The USC plans to present these two MOAs at the Faculty Senate March meeting and the Experiential Learning MOA at the Faculty Senate April meeting.
3. An election for the USC officers: chair, vice chair, and secretary, will be held at USC's April meeting.

Ex Officio Rudge reported that Faculty Senate President Amy Naugle has been informed of USC's plan to present the three MOAs at upcoming Faculty Senate meetings. Rudge also suggested considering the USC end-of-year report, as it may lead to charges for USC in the next year.

**Reports of University Representatives**

Stano reported the following:

1. Summer registration is open. Graduation auditors will cancel audits for summer graduates who have not registered for their remaining requirements. This should encourage them to enroll or update their graduation term. Audits can be easily reopened once registration is complete.
2. Fall courses will be available for viewing on 24 February and registration will begin on 11 March. Students will receive notifications with their registration date and time. Those who miss their priority window will get a reminder email and information on resolving any holds preventing registration.
3. The Office of Advising will host a training course for all academic advisors on 12 February. Topics will include academic standards and readmission, academic forgiveness and GPA revision, dual degrees, the current process for adding a second bachelor's degree, and how cognates work.

4. Nominations for the 2025 Advising Awards are open until 21 March. There are four categories: Excellence in Academic Advising, Outstanding New Advisor, Service in Academic Advising, and the Students' Choice Award.

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

Wagner reported on the progress of the Transfer Credit for Study Abroad MOA, including a meeting with Carrie Cumming, Joe Milostan, and Alison Sprague to discuss where to include this update in the catalog, credit/no credit options, and availability for WMU Essential Studies courses and non-major courses. The group also discussed adding language about the need for Study Abroad Office approval for courses taken at international institutions. A draft MOA has been prepared for further discussion, and the subcommittee plans to present it at the next USC meeting.

DeChano-Cook presented the WMU Essential Studies Waiver for Transfer Students with Undergraduate Degree Memorandum of Action, which exempts students from WMU Essential Studies requirements if the students have already earned a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution and are pursuing an additional bachelor's degree at WMU. It was followed by discussions including:

1. The use of the term "WMU General Education Program," which was requested by the Faculty Senate office to replace "WMU Essential Studies."
2. Whether there should be a time limit for students who have completed their bachelor's degree at WMU or another institution and attend WMU for a second bachelor's degree to be exempt from the general education or WMU Essential Studies requirements. Currently, there is no time limit regarding this issue.
3. The potential impact on the assessment of WMU Essential Studies courses if data is not collected on students who do not take them.
4. Based on an inquiry from the Michigan registrars, the majority of Michigan universities do not require students pursuing a second bachelor's degree to complete general education requirements.

A parenthetical stating "currently WMU Essential Studies" and a catalog language will be added to the 25/02 MOA text.

**[MOTION]** It was moved by Rudge, seconded by Slawinski, to approve MOA 25/02, Additional Bachelor's Degree Waiver of WMU General Education, with the amendments. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Riggs reported on the progress of developing an MOA to define Experiential Learning at WMU in collaboration with the Experience-Driven Learning (EDL) working group. Chair Riggs explained that the purpose of the MOA is to realign the definition of Experiential Learning in the upcoming undergraduate catalog to reflect current practices at WMU. The new definition is intended to expand previous definitions in MOA 18/09 and 14/05, providing clarity for undergraduate students, parents, academic advisors, college deans, faculty members, and other relevant stakeholders. Chair Riggs also noted that the draft MOA has been sent to Shawn Tenney and Evan Heiser, who indicated that Service Learning is structured differently from volunteerism and co-curricular activities. Volunteerism fits within this context, but Service Learning aligns well with Experience-Driven Learning. The subcommittee is seeking suggestions and comments from USC members and will meet with the EDL working group on 17 February to further refine the MOA. The following were discussed:

1. The new MOA will provide the catalog language for the definition of Experiential Learning in the 2025-2026 undergraduate catalog, but it will not replace MOA 18/09 and 14/05.
2. An MOA for assessing Experiential Learning will eventually be developed based on this new definition once it is established.
3. The title of the MOA should accurately reflect its content—should it use "definition" or "description?" The content will be included in the catalog glossary.
4. Clarifying the high-impact experiences students should have and the overall goal of Experiential Learning would improve the MOA.
5. "Encourages" is suggested to replace "inspires" in the Definition of Experiential Learning for the Undergraduate Catalog. A list of criteria could also help define what qualifies as an Experiential Learning event.

6. The word "definition" should be removed from the MOA title. It could refer to the glossary definition of Experiential Learning in the undergraduate catalog.
7. The MOA should guide faculty in determining whether in- and out-of-class experiences qualify as Experiential Learning while ensuring documentation for accreditation, highlighting a uniquely WMU approach as emphasized in the strategic plan.
8. Experiential Learning at WMU will remain an opportunity, not a graduation requirement.
9. The Service Learning managed by the Career and Student Employment Services Department should be a good model for Experiential Learning.
10. Additional suggestions for improvements should be sent to the subcommittee by 17 February in the morning.

Lopez joined the meeting at 3:42 p.m.

#### **Unfinished Business**

None.

#### **New Business**

Curriculum Proposal: Concentrations Converting to Majors

Clements presented the Accelerated Degree (MIDA) in International Development Administration proposal.

**[MOTION]** It was moved by Karowe, seconded by DeChano-Cook, to approve the Accelerated Degree (MIDA) in International Development Administration proposal as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **Announcement**

None.

#### **Adjournment**

**[MOTION]** It was moved by Suender, seconded by Rudge, to adjourn the meeting at 4:18 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The Undergraduate Studies Council will next meet on 11 March 2025 at 3 p.m. via Webex.

#### **Approval**

Submitted by Yuanliang Sun, Secretary

Minutes approved on 11 March 2025.