

Undergraduate Studies Council

Minutes of 11 March 2025

Call to Order

A meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Undergraduate Studies Council was called to order at 3:01 p.m. on 11 March 2025 via Webex video conferencing by Diane Riggs, chair.

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

Members Absent: Tomika Griffin-Brown, Lucy Clark

Advisory Member in Attendance: Alyshia Garrett (substitute for Colleen Stano)

Ex Officio: David Rudge

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 DeChano-Cook, to accept the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Suender, seconded by Rudge, to approve the 11 February 2025 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

Chair Riggs reported the following:

1. There were three Memoranda of Actions (MOA) moving forward to the Faculty Senate for a vote. All were approved with a few revisions by the Faculty Senate Executive Board. The revisions did not significantly change the MOAs.
2. Feedback received from Dr. Brian Gogan, Professor of the English Department, on the MOA regarding experiential learning will be discussed at this meeting.

Ex Officio Rudge announced that elections for USC 2025-26 officers will be held at the April meeting. The chair position must be held by a faculty member, while a professional staff member can serve as vice chair or secretary.

Birnbaum joined the meeting at 3:07 p.m.

Reports of University Representatives

None.

Unfinished Business

Chair Riggs reported that the Faculty Senate Executive Board suggested two changes to the MOA regarding the Undergraduate Catalog Definition of Experiential Learning: one related to layout and the other to the removal of the last paragraph on assessment, as the MOA does not actually address assessment. Chair Riggs also shared the suggestions from Dr. Gogan regarding further adjustments to the MOA. The following were discussed:

1. The term "Experiential Learning" has been used in the WMU Strategic Plan. The term "Experience-Driven Learning" was created by the marketing team and is a major component of the grant program, extending to WMU marketing materials. Since these approaches were developed ahead of the faculty, the differences between the two terms can be confusing to the faculty.
2. Dr. Gogan's points about how those outside the university view WMU could have benefited our early discussions on experiential learning. His suggestions regarding terminology changes—such as replacing 'Service Learning' with 'Curricular Community-Engaged Learning,' adding 'Co-

Curricular Community-Engaged Learning,' and addressing 'community-identified needs with a respectful, reciprocal, and asset-based approach'—have not been proposed by Shawn Tenney, who is in charge of Service Learning, and the new terms would need to be clarified.

3. Since the Faculty Senate Executive Board has already approved the MOA, the Executive Board needs to give USC a new charge to revisit the MOA. A suggestion was made to leave the current MOA on the Faculty Senate agenda, with senators from the English Department bringing Dr. Gogan's suggestions to the Senate floor during the meeting on 13 March. If the MOA is voted down, the Faculty Senate can inform USC to amend it and resubmit the proposal.
4. No one objects to Dr. Rudge informing the Faculty Senate Executive Board that USC members agree on the current MOA moving ahead to the Faculty Senate meeting on 13 March.

New Business

DeChano-Cook presented MOA 25/01 *Revision of Military Initial Entry Training Credit Policy* and explained that MOA 17/03 had the Creation of the Block Transfer of Military Credit Policy, which included 'general education' language and did not specify any courses. The Military Science and Leadership Program has since revised its minor and added some new WMU Essential Studies courses. The proposed MOA clarifies the equivalencies for military initial entry credit.

The revised MOA allows military-connected students who have completed their initial entry training to receive 14 credit hours toward a bachelor's degree. Both lower and upper division courses (1,000-4,000 levels) are recognized as coming from a four-year institution. The proposed MOA also includes a list of courses worth 14 credit hours, some of which count toward the Military Science and Leadership Minor requirements, such as:

1. MSL 1010 – Introduction to Critical Thinking (now a two-credit-hour class and approved as a WMU Essential Studies course).
2. MSL 2050 – Military Health and Fitness (a new course, also approved as a WMU Essential Studies course).
3. A three-credit geography course for Land Navigation and Map Reading.

A parenthetical stating "currently WMU Essential Studies" will be included in the text of the MOA 25/01. **[MOTION]** It was moved by Karowe, seconded by Rudge, to approve MOA 25/01, *Revision of Military Initial Entry Training Credit Policy*, with the amendment. The motion carried unanimously.

Announcement

None.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by Suender, seconded by Wagner, to adjourn the meeting at 3:42 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The Undergraduate Studies Council will next meet on 8 April 2025 at 3 p.m. via Webex.

Approval

Submitted by Yuanliang Sun, Secretary

Minutes approved on 8 April 2025.