
RESEARCH POLICIES COUNCIL

Minutes of 10 April 2025

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Research Policies Council was called to order at 2:34 p.m. on 10 April 2025 in Walwood Commons Room 111W by Andre Venter, chair.

Members in Attendance: Hellen Agbevey, Onur Arugaslan, Mert Atilhan, Carrie Barrett, Patrick Bennett, Amy Bocko, Benjamin Bradley, Christine Byrd-Jacobs, Lofton Durham, Angela Groves, Wanda Hadley, Deirdre Nieves (substitute for Bilinda Straight), Selim Ozyurek, Jesse Smith, Christine Stamper (substitute for Remzi Seker), Andre Venter, German Zarate-Sandez

Members Absent: Christopher Cheatham, Michael Osei

Ex Officio in Attendance: Anthony DeFulio

Quorum

A quorum was present with 18 members in attendance, of the 11 needed to establish a quorum.

Agenda

An amendment was made to remove Items 7d under New Business and 8a under Unfinished Business.

[MOTION] It was moved by Arugaslan, seconded by Ozyurek, to accept the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Ozyurek, seconded by Arugaslan, to approve the 13 March 2025 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

Chair Venter reported that Memorandum of Action (MOA) 25/07; *Renaming the Faculty and Research and Creative Activities Support Fund (FRCAF)*, was approved at the 3 April Faculty Senate meeting.

Ex Officio DeFulio did not provide a report.

Reports of University Representatives

Stamper reported on the Faculty Research and Creative Activities Support Fund (FRCAF) fiscal year 2025. There are 148 total awards, minus the Faculty Research and Creative Activities Award (FRACCA), which has not yet been awarded. There are 122 awards for the Faculty Research Travel Fund (FRTF) totaling \$95,563. There are 16 awards for Preparation and Publication of Papers and Exhibition (PPP&E) totaling \$8,110.00 and 10 for Support for Faculty Scholars Award (SFSA) totaling \$19,839.19. Of the total \$300,000 budget, there is \$176,488 remaining.

Byrd-Jacobs reported on the Eighteenth Annual Graduate Student Poster Day and thanked RPC members who participated as judges. There were 30 graduate student participants, of whom 14 received cash awards. The top-scoring student was awarded \$300, and 12 students received \$200 each. The event demonstrated the breadth and depth of graduate student research at WMU. An all-university graduate student award competition will be held in the week of 14 April. Each department can nominate one doctoral student and one master's student. The Graduate Studies Council will review the nominations and select the winners. Two PhD and four master's students won the research awards. Three PhD and one master's students have already been awarded the teaching awards.

Ex Officio DeFulio joined the meeting at 2:42 p.m.

Byrd-Jacobs read a statement from Governor Gretchen Whitmer declaring 7 April as Graduate Student Appreciation Week. Byrd-Jacobs commented that Governor Gretchen Whitmer demonstrated support for graduate students across the state of Michigan.

Reports of Council/Committee Standing Committees

Chair Venter reported on the Research Screening Committee. Forty-two applications were received, ten of which were awarded funding. This is a 23% acceptance rate. Nine panels were created with four to six proposals each to review. Each panel consisted of three to four members. Applications were decided at 1:30 p.m. today, so winners have not yet been notified. Winners will be notified sometime next week. For FRACAA, there was a 20-30% success rate for proposals across research areas and methodological orientations, which is commendable and equitable. Chair Venter commented that more funds would be appreciated. There were many other worthy proposals that were denied. Chair Venter commented that 17 FRACCA proposals were outstanding and were recommended without reservation. This shows there are not enough funds to meet the need. Ex Officio DeFulio agreed and would raise this issue at the next Faculty Senate meeting. Chair Venter reported that one applicant was selected for both the SFSA and FRACCA award, which is inconsistent with policy. The applicant paused on accepting the SFSA in order to remain eligible for the FRACCA. The applicant had not yet been notified that they were awarded the FRACCA. Once the applicant accepts the FRACCA, this means that one spot will become available for the SFSA award. It was asked if RPC would be provided with the list of winners of the FRACCA awards, to which Stamper provided those names.

[MOTION] It was moved by Durham, seconded by Bocko, that for the SFSA award, the 11th-ranked applicant should now become the 10th winner of the award. With one abstention, the motion carried.

There was discussion about why some applicants don't apply for the full \$10 thousand award amount. It was suggested that this could be encouraged among applicants in the future. Venter will include language in the recommendations for changes in the FRACCA application materials and include this in the year-end report.

New Business

Ex Officio DeFulio announced the 2025-26 election of RPC officers, explained the process, and commented that RPC may hold a secret ballot if necessary. No secret ballot was necessary since there was only one nominee for each position. The election was conducted, and the results were as follows:

1. Durham as Chair
2. Bocko as Vice Chair
3. Smith as Secretary

[MOTION] It was moved by Ozyurek, seconded by Arugaslan, to elect the slate as defined. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Venter distributed a corrected draft of the RPC year-end report. Once the full FRACAA report is received, it will be added to the year-end report. Chair Venter reviewed the highlights on the first page. The final version of the RPC year-end report will be submitted along with the April meeting minutes.

Chair Venter announced that RPC will become the Research and Creative Scholarship Council (RCSC).

There was a discussion of undergraduate student representation at the RPC and a request for guidance to be made to the Faculty Senate Executive Board on how to select the representative.

Chair Venter mentioned that most of the RPC charges are standing charges and run year-to-year, briefly reviewed each of the charges, and asked if there were any questions, concerns, or additions.

Ex Officio DeFulio commented that RPC should not be reviewing policies that only concern compliance issues within the purview of federal regulatory agencies and policies. Ex Officio DeFulio made a suggestion for additional language to this effect, which Chair Venter added to the year-end document.

Arugaslan left the meeting at 3:16 p.m.

Chair Venter suggested discussing future charges for the 2025-26 year, even though the charges do not have to be finalized at the present meeting. There was discussion about the charge regarding the review of policies and the usefulness of reviewing MOAs versus the policies that are described within the MOA. There was general discussion about what policies are, or should be, under the RPC's purview.

[MOTION] It was moved by Bocko and seconded by Atilhan to approve the year-end report. The motion carried unanimously.

Stamper and DeFulio raised a discussion regarding the budget for Research Innovation Scholarship Expenditures (RISE) programs. The consensus was that it should be kept the same as in previous years, based on the assumption that the total allocation would be the same.

[MOTION] It was moved by DeFulio, seconded by Groves, that the RPC adopt the same budget as last year. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Venter raised the issue of meeting modality for the 2025-26 academic year. After a brief discussion, it was agreed by RPC members that meetings are to be continued in-person in Walwood Commons Bertha Davis Room 111W.

[MOTION] It was moved by Atilhan, seconded by Durham, that RPC will meet in person at Walwood Hall for the 2025-26 year. The motion carried unanimously.

Byrd-Jacobs will investigate securing a projector for the 2025-26 meetings, as it would be useful for sharing information.

Unfinished Business

None.

Announcements

None.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by DeFulio, seconded by Smith, to adjourn the meeting at 3:39 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The date of the next meeting of the Research Policies Council will be determined over the summer.

Approval

Submitted by Jesse Smith, Secretary

Minutes approved on 11 September 2025.