
Undergraduate Studies Council

Minutes of 9 September 2025

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Undergraduate Studies Council was called to order at 3:04 p.m. on 9 September via Webex video conferencing by Bret Wagner, chair.

Members Present: Jessica Birnbaum, Carrie Cumming, Lisa DeChano-Cook, Dave Karowe, Dylan McGlothlin, Diane Riggs, Priyanka Sharma, Bret Wagner

Members Absent: Mert Atilhan, Jessica Cataldo, Kerry Hegele, Natalio Ohanna, Irma Lopez, Yuanliang Sun

Advisory Members Present: Tomika Griffin-Brown, Coleen Stano

Ex Officio Present: David Rudge

Guest: Amy Naugle, WMU Faculty Senate President

Quorum

A quorum was present with nine members in attendance, of the six needed to establish quorum.

Agenda

An amendment was made to add election of a vice chair.

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

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Rudge, seconded by Riggs, to approve the 8 April 2025 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

President Naugle charged Undergraduate Studies Council for 2025-26.

Discussion was held regarding the following:

- Charge 3: “Create and Ad Hoc Committee charged with updating WMU’s definitions of experiential learning and experience driven learning if necessary.”
 - It was clarified that USC’s responsibility is to gather information, not necessarily make a determination or Memorandum of Action, but rather to make a recommendation prior to the end of this academic year.
 - This charge was created in response to the Artificial Intelligence ad hoc committee’s work.
- Charge 4: “Review and consider reducing credit hours to graduation from 122 to 120.”
 - In response to the Western Student Association reporting that other Michigan institutions have lower minimum credit requirements.
 - WMU calculated 122 from a historical physical education requirement.
 - No program requirements would need to be changed to allow for this adjustment.
 - The USC decided to make this change to the minimum credit hour requirement toward graduation.

[MOTION] A motion was made by Wagner, seconded by Rudge, to add a charge to review GPA requirements stated in MOA-18/05: Creation of Undergraduate GPA Revision Policy. The motion carried unanimously.

Santo left the meeting at 3:26 p.m.

Naugle left the meeting at 3:28 p.m.

Karowe self-nominated for the USC Vice Chair and it was affirmed by acclamation.

Chair Wagner's report included study abroad credit transfers; Transfer of Credit Committee and Service-Learning Course Approval Committees; continued work defining and tracking experiential learning, experience driven learning, and service learning.

Discussion was held regarding the following:

- Study abroad credits can be taken as Credit/No Credit, but those credits cannot be counted towards a minor program. Wagner will work with Cumming and the Transfer of Credit Committee to draft a new MOA on this topic.
- The Transfer of Credit Committee is established and active. They are awaiting office elections and charges provided by the USC to hold their first meeting of the academic year.
- The Service-Learning Course Approval Committee has not been active since COVID. Its duties are being fulfilled by Shawn Tenney, who is unable to act as chair of a Faculty Senate committee as a staff member.
- Wagner noted to add the reactivation or elimination of the Service-Learning Course Approval Committee and further discuss of the various learning definitions and tracking of those activities at USC's next meeting.

Ex Officio Rudge reported continued discussion on the role and reporting of activities of the Transfer of Credit Committee and the Service-Learning Course Approval Committee. Rudge will confirm the process for USC's committee and subcommittee annual report submission.

Reports of University Representatives

Curriculum Manager DeChano-Cook did not provide a report.

Griffin-Browns reported a student satisfaction survey that showed 94% were satisfied or very satisfied with their advising appointments, compared to only 77% prior to the implementation of the Student Success Hub. The survey also showed that 89% of students agreed or strongly agreed that their advisor communicated in a calm and respectful manner, compared to only 66% previously. Currently, 95% of all undergraduate students have registered for this semester and have a plan to degree. Last academic year, there were 17,000 advising appointments. There were 14,000 advising alerts with no degree plan, change major program, academic probation or dismissal, or low grades. There is a 97% closure rate on those alerts.

New Business

[MOTION] It was moved by Rudge, seconded by Riggs, to approve the curriculum proposal for the African American and African Studies certificate in Racial Justice. The motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by Rudge, seconded by Karowe, to adjourn the meeting at 4:02 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The Undergraduate Studies Council will meet next on 14 October 2025 via Webex at 3 p.m.

Approval

Submitted by Dylan McGlothlin, Secretary

Minutes were approved on 14 October 2025.