

WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee

Minutes of 9 September 2025

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee was called to order at 1:03 p.m. on 9 September 2025, via Webex video conferencing by Elissa Allen, chair.

Members in Attendance: Elissa Allen, Dana Hammond, Elizabeth Isidro, Jessica Parker, Brian Tripp, Luchara Wallace

Advisory Members Present: Jonathan Bush, Carrie Cumming, Lisa DeChano-Cook

Ex Officio: Janet Hahn

Guest(s): Karen Schiemann

Quorum

After recognizing there are two additional vacancies (Lindsay Jeffers and Kathryn Wagner are unable to attend Fall 2025 meetings), a quorum was present with 6 voting members present.

Agenda

[MOTION] It was moved by Isidro, seconded by Tripp, to accept the agenda with two modifications: 1. Under New Business, add the ENGL 1080 course deletion item, which has been approved by CRAC and forwarded to us. 2. Add approval of the Course Review and Approval Committee charges, which were presented by Dr. Bush. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Tripp, seconded by Isidro, to approve the 8 April 2025 minutes as circulated. With one abstention, the motion carried.

Reports of Officers

Hahn presented the 2025-26 WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee charges.

These charges include:

1. Revisit MOA-17/04 for conflicts with transfer/advisors' best practices and determine modifications of the MOA or best practices to ensure standard operating procedures for transfer credits. Conclude the initiative by producing a report to the Executive Board or a Memorandum of Action.
2. Recruit faculty and staff representatives from all colleges as needed to serve on the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee.
3. Develop and deliver charges for the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee for the 2025-26 academic year.
4. Coordinate with the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee for the ongoing course review and approval process. Include a summary of the results and best practices within the committee's year-end report.
5. Continue to improve and update the online WES manual and other resources for the faculty WES course application process. This includes the following three initiatives:
 - a. Perform final review and approval of revisions of WES faculty application resources, including assessment plan templates, assessment plan procedures, and processes, that are currently being developed by the WES Course Review and Approval Committee.
 - b. Prepare revisions of 17 existing WES student learning outcome rubrics and work with Faculty to address current issues involving discrepancies in these rubrics to simplify and standardize them.
 - c. Collaborate with the Merz Tate College in the process of improving faculty communication, including oversight and review of a comprehensive communication plan

and infrastructure for all instructors, to be developed by a 2025-2026 WES Faculty Fellow.

The proposed communication plan will include the development of a new user-friendly faculty

A dashboard website that will include all WES faculty and advisor information in one place location.

6. Work with departments and colleges to increase the number of online/distance learning WMU Essential Studies course offerings, which are in high demand.
7. Continue to improve and streamline the process of approving transfer credits for WMU Essential Studies requirements as needed for transfer students and new programs. Conclude the initiative by producing a report to the Executive Board or a Memorandum of Action.
8. Preview and prepare recommendations for changes in the next Fourth year review process, based on lessons learned with this first Fourth year review. Conclude the initiative by producing a report to the Executive Board or a Memorandum of Action.
9. Review the scope and description of the committee's role statement and assess the effectiveness of the committee's practices.
10. At the annual April WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee meeting, the committee members must review the draft year-end report to include annual objectives and outcomes, to be submitted to the Faculty Senate office, by the committee chair no later than May 30.
11. Address any continuing or outstanding issues or initiatives as directed by the Faculty Senate Executive Board, members of the committee, faculty, and/or academic administrators. Conclude the initiative by producing a report to the Executive Board or a Memorandum of Action. Tripp (former WES EA Chair) inquired about the 2024-25 year-end report if the Executive Board received it. No confirmation was available.

Chair Allen report included a welcome to the committee.

Ex Officio Hahn did not report.

Reports of University Representatives

WMU Essential Studies Faculty Director Jonathan Bush shared a link to the [WMU Essential Studies](#) and provided a report that included a recap of the big presentation from spring. Overall, there were a few courses reviewed that were recommended for removal. As for students, it was noted that students took classes in the intended order (first took level 1 courses, then level 2, followed by level 3). Students value WES and understand the intended scaffolding.

It is evident that there is a desperate need for SLO rubric review. This task aligns with WES EA charges for this year. The Course Review and Approval Committee will be charged with reviewing rubrics so that they align and all incongruities are removed.

Working with CRAC to revise the Course Assessment plan. Lots of issues with how we are reviewing courses. Big initiative this year.

The comprehensive review also found that deans, chairs, etc., are not familiar with their rights and responsibilities with WES programming. The handbook is not enough to aid in understanding. As faculty fellow, Beth Ernst will be charged with creating a comprehensive WES faculty website. This website will have a section for instructors (obligations and roles) and departments (proposing, revising, etc.)

Transfer credits: WES is not tied to departments, which creates unique challenges. Bush is working on CRAC to change how classes are reviewed when they come in.

In upcoming tasks, the committee was made aware that the First Year Experience team (FYE 2100) is working toward changing its courses to meet WES Level 1 Inquiry and Engagement outcomes. This may become an issue because other colleges and departments rely on Level 1 credit revenue. This proposal is coming.

Bush will present the cyclic review findings to the Faculty Senate later this semester. Cyclic review to start in 26-27 and go through 27-28. This will occur over 2 years instead of 3. CRAC will not have any cyclic review this year (i.e., this year is the implementation year). This will help them work on procedures for revising and reviewing courses.

DeChano-Cook did not provide a report.

Unfinished Business

None.

New Business

Allen called to postpone nominations for WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee Secretary due to the multiple member vacancies. This item will be postponed until the October 2025 meeting.

Bush called to postpone the discussion of the WES Transfer Credit Evaluation Process and Progress until the October 2025 meeting.

[MOTION] WES Faculty Fellow (Beth Ernst) Project: Creation of a Comprehensive Faculty Communication Portal. Tripp moved that the Faculty Fellow's role this year would be to create a comprehensive website for WES for faculty. Isidro seconded. The motion carried.

[MOTION] ENGL 1080 course deletion item, which has been approved by CRAC and forwarded to us.

The following charges for the Course Review and Approval Committee were presented by Bush:

1. Complete all incoming and ongoing reviews for new and revised WMU Essential Studies courses following the schedule and deadlines established in Memorandum of Action 23/01: *Recommended Revisions of General Principles of Curriculum Change*.
2. Review and revise the WMU Essential Studies course revision and approval processes and provide suggestions for improvement for WES Executive Advisory consideration
3. Identify current examples of good assessment plans and compile them into a set of faculty guidelines to be incorporated into the WMU Essential Studies faculty resources page.
4. (Noting that Cyclic Review will not begin until Fall 2026 and that cyclic reviews will occur over two academic years, rather than the previous three academic years) Review and revise WMU Essential Studies Cyclic Review processes and provide suggestions for improvement for WES Executive Advisory consideration
5. At the annual March WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee meeting, review the draft year-end report to be submitted to the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee, by the committee chair no later than two weeks prior to WES EA's final meeting.
6. Participate in an Ad hoc subcommittee with leadership by the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee and develop suggested revisions for Student Learning Outcome assessment rubrics that have been determined by the relevant supporting departments or institutes in need of improvement.

[MOTION] It was moved by Parker and seconded by Isidro to approve the Course Review and Approval Committee charges as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Wallace left at 1:32 p.m.

Schiemann joined at 1:35 p.m.

Bush and Allen presented the RN-to-BSN WES Requirement Proposal. The Bronson School of Nursing has proposed a Nurse Transfer Agreement (NTA) to streamline entry into the RN to BSN program. Under this agreement, graduates of accredited Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) programs who pass the NCLEX-RN would be granted credit for WES Levels I and II, requiring completion of only Level III at WMU. This change aligns with state and national initiatives to increase the number of BSN-prepared nurses, addresses barriers that have contributed to declining enrollment in the program, and brings WMU in line with transfer practices at peer institutions. Supporting documents, including a proposal passed through curriculum, demonstrate how NCLEX competencies correspond to WES Level I and II outcomes.

Isidro left at 1:55 p.m.

The committee discussed the Nurse Transfer Agreement proposal for the RN to BSN program. A vote did not occur because a quorum was lost. During the discussion, questions were raised regarding the direct equivalency of NCLEX competencies to WES Level I and II outcomes. These concerns were addressed by the end of the discussion with reference to the NCLEX competency map that will be shared with all committee members prior to the next meeting. This proposal is postponed until the 14 October 2025 meeting.

Announcements

None.

Adjournment

Quorum was no longer present, and Allen called for adjournment at 2:16 p.m. The WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee will meet next on 14 October 2025 via Webex.

Approval

Submitted by Elissa Allen, Chair

Minutes approved on 14 October 2025.