
**Research and Creative Scholarship Council
Minutes of 11 September 2025**

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Research and Creative Scholarship Council was called to order at 3 p.m. on 11 September 2025 in Walwood Hall, Bertha Davis room (111W), by Lofton Durham, chair.

Members Present: Onur Arugaslan, Upul Attanayake, Carrie Barrett, Patrick Bennett, Amy Bocko, Christine Byrd-Jacobs, Lofton Durham, Angela Groves, Beixi Li, Gellert Mezei, Selim Ozyurek, Jesse Smith, Bilinda Straight, Remzi Seker, Rohullah Wahidi, German Zarate-Sandez

Members Absent: Benjamin Brady, Christopher Cheatham, Nofisat Eletu

Ex Officio Present: Anthony DeFulio, John Miller (substitute for Andre Venter)

Guest: Amy Naugle, Faculty Senate President

Quorum

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

Agenda

Chair Durham recommended that the Research and Creative Scholarship Council amend the meeting agenda to have Remzi give his report first because he had to leave the meeting early.

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

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by DeFulio, and seconded by Straight, to approve the 10 April 2025 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

Chair Durham commented that the Research and Creative Scholarship Council meetings begin at 2:30 p.m. as communicated in an email earlier in the week.

Ex Officio DeFulio asked if the meeting space will be big enough for the number of people attending Research and Creative Scholarship Council this year. Byrd-Jacobs stated that she will inquire about getting a larger room.

DeFulio inquired about the Research and Creative Scholarship Council 's student representative positions. Discussion was held regarding the number of undergraduate and graduate representatives that are members of the council. It was established that there are currently two graduate representatives, but that the undergraduate representative position remains vacant. Council members were asked to encourage an interested undergraduate to fill this vacancy.

DeFulio encouraged council members to remind their respective departments that travel awards this year are based on a first-come, first-serve basis, and faculty should put in their requests as soon as they are confident, they will be traveling. He commented that there will be a maximum of 270 travel grants that can be awarded based on the current budget. He also stated the general rules and process for securing conference travel funding.

President Naugle charged the RCSC, and discussion was held regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the necessity of all councils and committees keeping AI related issues in the forefront. The council needs to be clear about each of the charges, what is within RCSC's remit, and to communicate effectively with Executive Board when there are questions or concerns.

DeFulio led discussion regarding the RCSC 2025-26 charges. Some of the RSCS charges could be combined into perhaps three different charges rather than listed as independent charges.

Reports of University Representatives

Seker provided the Office of Research and Innovation report, which included:

- Faculty Research and Creative Activities Support Fund (FRCASF) set with initial funds of \$300,000 as determined by the RCSC at its 11 April 2025 meeting, but has since had an additional \$140,000 allocated to the fund (FRTF), bringing the total 2025-26 budget \$440,000. There have so far been 31 FRTF awards and three Publication of Papers and Exhibition (PPP&E) awards. No FRACAA or SFSA funds have yet been awarded. This leaves a remaining balance of \$382,158.85.
- Despite much uncertainty nationally, and the fact that some grants were canceled in recent months, WMU's annual report regarding awards essentially remained flat. Discussion was held regarding funds that were previously approved but then eliminated. It was stated there is some confusion and uncertainty about research funding, not just at WMU, but at research universities across the nation. Compliance is taking up an estimated 80% of the Office of Research and Innovation (ORI) activities. In addition, the F&A is also unclear.
- There was a question about whether community donors could help fill research funding gaps, Discussion was held regarding motivate of donors, the challenges that the institution faces, and the efforts that ORI is making to encourage giving to the University.
- WMU has recently had the highest number of patents in the University's history. Undergraduate students played a significant role on many of these patents, and ORI will work to increase the role of graduate students.

Groves joined the meeting at 3:10 p.m.

Seker left the meeting at 3:14 p.m.

Byrd-Jacobs provided the Graduate College report which included:

- Graduate students are encouraged to seek out the available travel funding opportunities the graduate college and University provides. The first due date for funding is 7 October 2025 and there has been an increase in applications along with the budget increase. There has been approximately a 65% success rate on awarded grants.
- The Graduate Student Association is organizing the three-minute thesis competitions this year. This is where graduate students provide a presentation of their research. There will be both a fall and spring event, with the first one scheduled on 18 November 2025. She noted that WMU President Kavalhuna will be a judge at this event.

Due to his absence Cheatham did not provide a report.

New Business

It was suggested that Chair Durham email soliciting council members to serve on various subcommittees, and any remaining vacant seats could be assigned. Teams will be used to organize subcommittees and try to make the work equitable. Some members expressed skepticism of the interdisciplinary charge, because it has never been clear what exactly RCSC is being asked to do, or what resources the council has available to work on this charge. There was discussion about funding and resources related to the interdisciplinary charge

Unfinished Business

German asked about the process for FRTF funding from last year. He found there were no funds available for a second trip when he applied and wanted more information. It was stated that, last year, first requests were prioritized over second requests. That is not the case for the current funding cycle. It was reiterated that it is a first-come, first-serve process, and that there is a personal cap of \$1,200 per faculty member regardless of whether they take one or more trips. Funding is not assured if every faculty member happened to apply. Discussion was held regarding travel funding in general and the timeline for applying. It was also noted that the funding process for the FRTF is no longer under the remit of Research and Creative Scholarship Council.

Announcements

None.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by DeFulio, seconded by Straight, to adjourn the meeting at 4:03pm. The motion carried unanimously. The Research and Creative Scholarship Council will meet next on 9 October 2025, at 2:30 p.m. in-person in Walwood Hall.

Approval

Submitted by Jesse M. Smith, Secretary

Minutes were approved on 9 October 2025.