
WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee

Minutes of 14 October 2025

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee was called to order on 14 October 2025 at 1:01 p.m. via Webex video conferencing by Elissa Allen, Chair.

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

Member Absent: Beth Ernst, Lindsay Jeffers, Kathryn Wagner, Luchara Wallace

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

Ex Officio: Janet Hahn

Guest: Lisa Singleterry, Director of the Bronson School of Nursing

Quorum

A quorum was present with six members in attendance, of the five required to establish a quorum.

Recording Notice

Chair Allen announced that the meeting was being recorded solely for the purpose of taking accurate minutes, due to the absence of a committee secretary. The recording will be deleted following approval of the minutes.

Agenda

Chair Allen proposed moving the RN-to-BSN / Nurse Transfer Agreement Proposal, originally listed under Unfinished Business, to immediately follow approval of the minutes to accommodate guest Singleterry. It was also noted that the remaining items under Unfinished Business and New Business all referred to the same topic, WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory transfer and competency mapping.

[MOTION] It was moved by DeChano-Cook, seconded by Tripp, to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Parker, seconded by Isidro, to approve the 9 September 2025 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Unfinished Business

Chair Allen led a discussion regarding the RN-to-BSN Nurse Transfer Agreement proposal, noting it had been discussed at the previous meeting but was postponed due to the loss of quorum. The proposal would allow graduates of accredited Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) programs who pass the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) to receive WMU Essential Studies Level I and Level II credit, requiring completion of Level III at WMU.

Discussion was held:

- Bush commended the nursing faculty for clearly mapping NCLEX competencies to WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory outcomes and noted the proposal aligns with the Michigan Transfer Agreement's spirit, though it is a distinct process.
- Bush clarified that the purpose of the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory action was to record support for the proposal, which had already advanced through Curriculum, ensuring WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory endorsement accompanies the final catalog entry.

[MOTION] It was moved by Parker, seconded by Tripp, to approve the RN-to-BSN Nurse Transfer Agreement Proposal. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

Chair Allend reported on the committee membership that Jeffers and Wagner are unable to serve during the fall semester and would be listed as vacant seats. It was clarified that there is one additional vacancy for an unaffiliated member. It was noted that the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee currently has multiple faculty vacancies and emphasized the need to maintain over 50% faculty representation on the committee. Members discussed potential recruitment strategies, including outreach through associate deans and department chairs. Hahn and Allen agreed to coordinate recruitment efforts.

Ex Officio Report Hahn reported that she is also serving as liaison to the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee.

Election of Secretary

Chair Allen opened nominations for secretary. No nominations were made. Allen will continue recording meetings until the position is filled. Bush and Isidro offered assistance with minute preparation.

Reports of University Representatives

Bush reported:

- Chair Allen and Bush will present the results of the WMU Essential Studies fourth-year comprehensive review to the Faculty Senate on 6 November. The brief report will summarize findings, highlight key contributors, and outline plans for the next review cycle.
- WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee is scheduled for Monday with 16 course proposals to review. Processes have been streamlined so that the committee votes internally, but only the chair records the official Curriculog vote, expediting workflow.
- No cyclic reviews will occur in 2025–26. The next comprehensive review will take place over two years, beginning in 2026–27.
- Work continues on faculty communication and education through a comprehensive WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory website under development by Faculty Fellow Beth Ernst, designed as a one-stop resource for instructors, departments, and course proposers.
- A new WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Transfer Credit Flowchart was developed with advising directors to clarify transfer decisions under MOA-17/04. The process empowers advising directors to make initial transfer determinations, with WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee maintaining final oversight to ensure consistency and integrity.
- Advising directors have reviewed and approved the flowchart, expressing strong support. Bush recommended WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee formally adopt the process as a clarification of existing policy.
- Bush noted that any needed revisions or conflicts will return to the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee for review and approval.

A discussion was held regarding the process of periodic review of transfer decisions. DeChano-Cook suggested monthly reviews to avoid delays for students; Bush agreed to incorporate that recommendation.

DeChano-Cook reported on potential issues arising when courses change WMU Essential Studies levels or categories. She explained that catalog year rules can misalign SLOs for students completing older requirements, potentially requiring faculty to teach to both sets of SLOs for up to ten years. She recommended continued discussion to establish a formal policy or an MOA addressing this issue.

Unfinished Business

The WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Transfer Credit Evaluation Flowchart is intended as a clarification of existing procedures under MOA-17/04, empowering advising directors to implement the outlined process.

[MOTION] It was moved by Isidro, seconded by Parker, to approve the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Transfer Credit Evaluation Flowchart as amended. With one abstention, the motion carried unanimously.

New Business

None.

Announcements

DeChano-Cook announced that the December meeting will be held as scheduled to approve the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee's November actions. The WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee will meet weekly in November as needed to review pending proposals.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by DeChano-Cook, and seconded by Tripp, to adjourn the meeting at 2:22 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The next meeting of the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee will be held on 12 November 2025 via Webex at 10 a.m.

Approval

Submitted by Elissa Allen, Chair

Minutes approved on 11 November 2025.