
WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee

Minutes of 11 November 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 11 November 2025 at 1 p.m. via Webex video conferencing by Elissa Allen, chair.

Members in Attendance: Elissa Allen, Dana Hammond, Antonio Isea (substitute for Lindsay Jeffers), Elizabeth Isidro, Jessica Parker, Brian Tripp

Member Absent: Beth Ernst, Kathryn Wagner, Luchara Wallace

Advisory Members Present: Jonathan Bush, Lisa DeChano-Cook

Advisory Member Absent: Carrie Cumming

Ex Officio: Janet Hahn

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 secretary. The recording will be deleted following approval of the minutes.

Agenda

The agenda was distributed before the meeting. Chair Allen proposed adding two items: (1) additional courses approved by the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee included in the block vote for new business, and (2) under New Business, an item titled "Review of WMU Essential Studies Course Tracker Courses" related to WMU Essential Studies transfer credit approvals.

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

Minutes

The 14 October 2025 minutes were distributed before the meeting.

[MOTION] It was moved by Parker, seconded by Isidro, to approve the minutes. Chair Allen noted two minor spelling corrections in the minutes and corrections incorporated; the motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

Chair Allen reported that serving on the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee has provided insight into the substantial work of the committee and expressed appreciation for the committee's efforts.

Ex Officio Hahn recognized Katherine Suender for stepping into the role of WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee chair. WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee currently has open seats for the College of Health and Human Services and the College of Arts and Sciences. Ex Officio Hahn and Chair Allen will follow up with deans and associate deans regarding vacancies. Bush noted an additional recent resignation from Arts and Sciences.

Reports of University Representatives

Bush reported the following updates:

- WMU Essential Studies is in a strong operational position with effective collaboration among committees.

- Bush will continue as Faculty Director for an additional year;
- A new comprehensive WMU Essential Studies communication website is under development, with a beta version expected in January.
- WMU Essential Studies Transfer Credit Protocol is fully in place, empowering advising directors to make initial decisions while the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee provides long-term oversight;
- WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee operations have been streamlined with new review categories and improved processes.
- WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee and WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee will present comprehensive review findings to the Faculty Senate on 6 December.
- Bush introduced an exploratory proposal for future discussion regarding potential one-time experimental WMU Essential Studies courses; and planning continues for the 2026–28 WMU Essential Studies cyclic review, which will focus on brevity- the process is a "check-in," not a comprehensive evaluation.

Ernst is collaborating with Bonnie Pflugst, Merze Tate College, to put together a single source for all faculty/staff information for the Faculty and Staff Communication project. It will include information for the following groups:

- Instructors: before, during, and after-semester responsibilities
- Administrators and departments: Management information, including assessment plans, cyclic reviews, and responsibilities for maintaining a course
- Proposers/Initiators: Curriculog information, SLO rubrics, templates for course descriptions, syllabi, and assessment plans, and all procedures for new and revised courses.
- Advisors and Transfer/Admissions. Transfer credit processes, advising information.

WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee Process Revisions:

Katherine Suender is the new chair of the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee. New procedures are being considered for the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee, including modified criteria for review under Memorandum of Action (MOA) 18/04. WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee is proceeding smoothly with a much better success rate, using accept/hold & contact/reject protocol. The WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee's role is to occasionally review the list and approve/reject. Approval moves courses to permanent Transferology.

Bush and Chair Allen are scheduled to present the WMU Essential Studies review results to the Faculty Senate on 4 December.

Bush is contacted occasionally by departments seeking a one-time opportunity to present an experimental WMU Essential Studies course (one section, one semester) as a test. WMU Essential Studies does not currently have a protocol in place for this scenario. Bush has confirmed that the Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) level III LNP can be added for one section. Bush can send a note advising directors of the granting authority for credit. Bush would like to send it to the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee for review and a vote for the next meeting, along with a more specific protocol.

DeChano-Cook reported continued progress in processing proposals. She noted that some WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee approvals may require action from Bush, depending on proposal form versions. DeChano-Cook shared that the University Transfer Committee is evaluating long-term protocols for reviewing transfer equivalencies.

Unfinished Business

Chair Allen opened nominations for secretary. No nominations were made. Chair Allen will continue recording meetings until the position is filled.

New Business

Approval of WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee Recommendations
Allen presented 23 WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee reviewed proposals for approval by the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee.

[MOTION] It was moved by Hammond, seconded by Parker, to approve all 23 proposals as a block. The motion carried unanimously.

Review of WMU Essential Studies Course Tracker Courses (Transfer Credit Review Process) -
Bush and Chair Allen explained the next phase of the WMU Essential Studies transfer credit workflow. The WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee will periodically receive batches of transfer-credit decisions for review and potential permanent approval in Transferology. Chair Allen will circulate a list when courses are ready for December review. Bush will also consult with Transfer Admissions regarding monitoring future changes to external courses.

Announcements

None.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by Tripp, and seconded by Isidro, to adjourn the meeting at 1:27 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The next meeting of the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee will be held on 9 December 2025 via Webex at 10 a.m.

Approval

Submitted by Elissa Allen, Chair

Minutes approved on 9 December 2025.