
Undergraduate Studies Council

Minutes of 13 January 2026

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Undergraduate Studies Council was called to order at 3:02 pm on 13 January via Webex video conferencing by Bret Wagner, chair.

Members Present: Jessica Birnbaum, Jessica Cataldo, Carrie Cumming, Lisa DeChano-Cook, Kerry Hegele, Dave Karowe, Irma Lopez, Dylan McGlothlin, Natalio Ohanna, Diane Riggs, Priyanka Sharma, Bret Wagner

Members Absent: Mert Atilhan, Yuanliang Sun

Advisory Members Present: Tomika Griffin-Brown, Coleen Stano

Ex Officio Absent: David Rudge

Guest: LuMarie Guth, Chair, Campus Planning and Finance Council (CPFC)

Quorum

A quorum was present with 12 members in attendance, of the eight needed to establish quorum.

Agenda

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

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Karowe, seconded by Cataldo, to approve the 9 December 2025 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

Chair Wagner's report eight of the 16 positions on the Experiential Learning Committee have been filled. Rudge will serve as the liaison from USC. The first meeting will be in February.

Reports of University Representatives

Curriculum Manager DeChano-Cook's did not provide a report.

Academic Advising Tomika Griffin-Brown reported:

- There have been over 15,000 advising appointments in the 2025-26 academic year so far, and over 8,000 advising alerts, with an 80.8% closure rate.
- [Academic Advisors Awards Ceremony](#) will be held on Thursday, 5 March, from 3:30 to 5 p.m. at the College of Health and Human Services, room 4010. The USC is invited to nominate an advisor for an award by Friday, 3 February.
- Advising is focusing this semester on alignment by reviewing current practices to ensure they match documentation and various requirements. An action plan is being finalized for the unit's strategic plan.

Lopez joined at 3:09 pm

Reports of Standing Committees

Transfer Credit Committee representative Cataldo did not provide a report due to the committee having not met since the last USC meeting.

New Business

Discussion of the MOA regarding Drop/Withdrawal Extension included the following discussion:

- The MOA had been previously tabled in 2014.

- In the previous MOA the drop/withdrawal date was extended later into the semester during COVID, which appeared to assist in retention. However, instead of retaining the COVID extension to one week before finals, this prior MOA recommended extending the date to two weeks before finals for both the fall and spring semesters and one week before finals for both summer semesters.
- The newest consideration for revision is in response to competing priorities for instructors in October, including tenure and promotion, PARs, and fall break.
- Instructors have not collected enough student work to submit a midterm grade that accurately reflects student work in which a student can make an informed decision to drop/withdraw from a course.
- Such a revision would bring WMU in alignment with other state institutions.
- Peer navigators contact advisors at the time of midterm grades when there is an academic concern.
- It is not expected to impact on student financial aid as packages are based on student status at the time of census.
- Noted
 - Drop does not appear on student transcripts or affect GPA
 - W does not affect GPA, but is included on student transcripts
 - Students attended class and received an E, affects GPA
 - Student stops attending class but does not formally drop or withdraw and receives an X, affects GPA
- A conflict with fall holidays may affect the midterm grade submission date and the ability for peer navigators to contact students

Guth was instructed to strike the bullet point regarding midterm grade submission and will return the MOA to GSC and CPFC for further review.

[MOTION] It was moved by Ohanna, seconded by Hegele, to approve the MOA as amended. The motion carried.

DeChano-Cook joined at 3:20 p.m.

Stano joined at 3:34 p.m.

Discussion was held regarding *USC Charge 5: Explore opportunities, threats, and challenges with respect to Artificial Intelligence as it relates to USC*. An MOA is currently being drafted by AITC and PCC for inclusion of an AI statement to be required in syllabi. It was noted that it is very difficult to prove or disprove AI usage accurately. Chair Wagner will contact AITC to determine what information has been gathered to date.

Unfinished Business

Chair Wagner will draft an MOA regarding the reduction of required credits for an undergraduate degree from 122 to 120, for the next meeting.

Review of MOA-18/05: *Creation of a GPA Revision Policy* included possibilities that the MOA could be revised, including:

- expand access to students who are in exploratory advising and have not chosen a major
- increase the number of courses that are eligible, and not limit to the first three semesters

Cumming, Stano, and Wagner were tasked to draft revisions.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by DeChano-Cook, seconded by Riggs, to adjourn the meeting at 4:26 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The Undergraduate Studies Council will meet next on 10 February 2026 via WebEx at 3 p.m.

Approval

Submitted by Dylan McGlothlin, Secretary

Minutes were approved on 10 February 2026.