
**Research and Creative Scholarship Council
Minutes of 15 January 2026**

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Research and Creative Scholarship Council was called to order at 2:32 p.m. on 15 January 2026 at Walwood Hall-Connable Room 112E by Lofty Durham, chair.

Members in Attendance: Onur Arugaslan, Upul Attanayake, Amy Bocko, Benjamin Brady, Melinda Brakenberry (substitute for Remzi Seker), Christine Byrd-Jacobs, Christopher Cheatham, Lofty Durham, Angela Groves, Beixi Li, Selim Ozyurek, Katelyn Preston (substitute for Carrie Barrett), Jesse Smith, Bilinda Straight, Rohullah Wahidi, German Zarate-Sandez

Member Absent: Gellert Mezei

Ex Officious in Attendance: Anthony DeFulio, John Miller (substitute for Andre Venter),

Quorum

A quorum was present with 18 members in attendance, of the 10 needed to establish quorum.

Agenda

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

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Bocko, seconded by Miller, to approve the 4 December 2025 meeting minutes as presented. With one abstention, the motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

Chair Durham did not provide a report.

Ex Officio DeFulio discussed with the Executive Board the tasks and purview of the RCSC with regard to Memorandum of Actions (MOA) and policies. MOAs are associated with specific university polices, while others are not, and there is no clear articulation of why this is the case across all Faculty Senate councils and committees. Ex Officio DeFulio sought clarification and was instructed to refer to the policies outlined on the Office of Research and Innovation (ORI) website and information provided by the committee on policies. There are still unanswered questions and RCSC should further explore.

Reports of University Representatives

Brakenberry reported:

- WMU research expenditures grew 37% over the last year. WMU ranking increase among Mid-American Conference schools and listed various institutions that now rank behind WMU.
- Fiscal-year reporting of Faculty Research and Creative Activities Support Fund (FRCASF) – total budget of \$440,000. There have so far been 117 Faculty Research Travel Fund (FRTF) awards \$131,758.94 (of \$300,000) and 21 Publication of Papers and Exhibition (PPP&E) awards totaling \$14,215.17 (of \$20,000). Support for Faculty Scholars Award (SFSA) (\$20,000) and Faculty Research and Creative Activities Award (FRACAA) (\$100,000) have not yet been awarded. This leaves a total remaining award balance of \$294,025.89.

Byrd-Jacobs reported all research and travel related graduate applications are open for students to apply, and all are due mid-February. The Graduate College will be sending an updated list to graduate students with information about various awards and funding opportunities. The Graduate College will also be seeking applications for the all-university graduate awards in the next several weeks.

Cheatham reported that the deans of colleges that are producing revenue will begin meetings starting 27 January to discuss the university's new budget model. Cheatham will report to RCSC what is learned from those meetings.

There was a question about release time policy for faculty and the incentive structure. It was asked if there has been a change in the process or if the percentages regarding time and compensation have changed. The reply was that there has been an attempt to standardize the process and there are still incentives built in to release time. Cheatham requested a write-up of the specific situation and will need to do some research on this question in order to address it more completely.

Brakenberry left the meeting at 2:543 pm.

Reports of Council/Committee Standing Committees

Miller reported Research Screening Committee Support for Faculty Scholars Award/Faculty Research and Creative Actives Award applications have started to come in, though some are in draft mode and not yet formally submitted. The deadline for completed applications is 9 February and expect that more applications will be submitted in the coming weeks. There are 15 faculty that have committed to review applications, and seven that declined. There are 19 invited reviewers that have not yet responded to the request.

There was a question if there exists a standard and complete single resource across the university regarding student compensation under FRACCA grants, and for paid student work in general. It was mentioned that graduate assistant compensation varies by department and unit across campus, depending on their resources. One member mentioned there are some general guidelines about student compensation at Career and Student Employment Services that list minimum compensation requirements and pay ranges. It was suggested that a link to the [CSES website](#) be provided to faculty and that we consider integrating this and possibly other information about student compensation policy in the FRACCA application process.

There was additional discussion about the process for paying students for hourly work and how much students are compensated.

There was discussion about the recruitment of reviewers for FRACCA and how to make the review process clearer. There was also discussion about how many reviewers are needed so those who do agree to review applications are not overloaded with work.

Durham reported on Subcommittee One and distributed an updated document on recommended procedures for FRACCA and SFSA applications that involves changing deadlines to align better with the review and acceptance processes. The intent is to avoid confusion about timing, eligibility, and overlap of these awards.

[MOTION] It was moved by Bocko, seconded by Straight to accept the revised draft of the recommended procedures for FRACCA and SFSA applications. The motion carried unanimously.

Bocko reported that Subcommittee Two is in the process of scheduling a meeting that works for all members, but it is proving challenging given the number of members on this subcommittee. Bocko commented that the subcommittee may need to split up into two different groups for meetings, and then compare and consolidates notes afterward. Bocko also requested that any RCSC members are encouraged to send her questions or concerns about Artificial Intelligence (AI) for the subcommittee's consideration.

A question arose about the process for dealing with AI plagiarism and AI fake publications. For instance, how to retract AI fabricated articles and the legal implications of this?

Ex Officio DeFulio reported on Subcommittee Three and commented on his recent research regarding all the MOAs written in the last 25 years at WMU. Ex Officio DeFulio created a document to compare and contrast two different sources of information. The document is available in Teams for all RSCS members to review and contribute thoughts and questions. There are 27 posted policies with no associated MOAs. This means these were implemented by staff without clear Faculty Senate oversight or shared governance. There are also 13 MOAs with no clear ORI connection or associated policies. Ex Officio DeFulio asked RCSC to consider whether RCSC should create MOAs around these existing policies.

There are also MOAs that do not have all required signatures. Examples of strange and confusing published MOAs were given and questioned if RCSC could move to remove some of these, or recognize them as “historical documents” that have bearing on current procedure and policy.

Ex Officio DeFulio commented that some of the policies that were ask to be reviewed are not a good use of RCSC’s time. The policies involve federal mandates and there is nothing for RCSC to actually comment on since RCSC is not allowed to make any changes to those mandates. Such policy reviews are only about compliance. Ex Officio DeFulio suggested the RCSC should state to the Faculty Senate Executive Board that RCSC do not wish to regularly review such policies in the future since RCSC feedback is not relevant. A suggestion was made for RCSC to work with ORI on these issues, and that by next month, there should be some clarification on how to move forward on these issues. Ex Officio DeFulio requested that RCSC members leave feedback on this issue either in Teams or in the document itself.

Zarate-Sandez left the meeting at 3:21 p.m.

New Business

None.

Unfinished Business

None.

Announcements

Byrd-Jacobs announced that about an upcoming jazz concert that is connected to a WMU graduate student’s dissertation work and encouraged RCSC to attend.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by Bocko, seconded by Ozyurek, to adjourn the meeting at 3:57 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The RCSC will meet next on 12 February 2026 at 2:30 p.m. in-person in Walwood Hall-Connable Room-112E.

Approval

Submitted by Jesse M. Smith, Secretary

Minutes were approved on 12 February 2026.