
**RESEARCH AND CREATIVE SCHOLARSHIP COUNCIL
Minutes of 12 February 2026****Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Research and Creative Scholarship Council was called to order at 3:01pm on 12 February 2026 at Walwood Connable Room 112E, by Lofty Durham, chair.

Members in Attendance: Onur Arugaslan, Upul Attanayake, Patrick Bennett, Benjamin Brady, Melinda Brakenberry, Christopher Cheatham, Lofty Durham, Angela Groves, Gellert Mezei, John Miller (substitute for Andre Venter), Regina Mitchell (substitute for Beixi Li), Jesse Smith, Bilinda Straight, Rohullah Wahidi, German Zarate-Sandez

Members Absent: Amy Bocko, Christine Byrd-Jacobs, Carrie Barrett, Nofisat Eletu, Selim Ozyurek, Remzi Seker

Ex Officio in Attendance: Anthony DeFulio

Quorum

A quorum was present with 16 members in attendance, of the 10 needed to establish quorum.

Agenda

[MOTION] It was moved by Miller, seconded by Zarate-Sandez, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by DeFulio, seconded by Miller to approve the 17 January 2026 meeting minutes as presented. With one abstention, the motion carried.

Reports of Officers

Chair Durham did not provide a report.

Ex Officio DeFulio noted that the shared governance partners have an upcoming retreat scheduled and he offered to relay any questions or comments from RCSC members to the University leadership.

Action Items

Chair Durham reported that the SFSA reviewers have completed their work and are recommending award outcomes for approval by the RCSC members.

[MOTION] It was moved by Arugaslan, seconded by Attanayake, to approve the SFSA award decisions as recommended. With two abstentions, the motion carried.

Reports of University Representatives

Melinda Brakenberry did not provide an Office of Research and Innovation report, but noted an earlier distributed email from Christine Stamper which stated the following:

The FY 2026 Faculty Research and Creative Activities Support Fund (FRACASF) there is a total budget of \$440,000. There have been 132 Faculty Research Travel Fund (FRTF) awards of \$300,00 totaling \$148,724.21 and 23 Publication of Papers and Exhibition of Creative Works (PPP&E) awards of \$20,000 totaling \$15,665.17. From the Support for Faculty Scholars Award (SFSA) budget of \$20,000 and Faculty Research and Creative Actives Award (FRACAA) budget of \$100,000 there is a total remaining award balance of \$275,610.62. It was noted that SFSA was recently awarded, but was not reflected in this report. (FRACAA) has not yet been awarded.

Due to her absence Graduate College Dean Byrd-Jacobs did not provide a report.

Interim Provost Cheatham commented regarding recent classification changes reported by *U.S. News and World Report* that affect several universities in Michigan. He explained that these changes are informed by Carnegie classifications, including distinctions between regional and national universities. Chatham noted that while some Michigan institutions experienced a shift from national to regional classification, WMU has maintained its designation as a national university. He emphasized that this continued classification reflects institutional positioning and alignment with criteria used to evaluate research activity, academic offerings, and institutional scope.

Reports of Council/Committee Standing Committees

Miller provided the Research Screening Committee Support for Faculty Scholars Award/Faculty Research and Creative Actives Award report, which included: the submission deadline has passed, with a total of 17 applications received. Of these, 14 proposals focused on quantitative research, two on creative arts research, and one on qualitative research. Miller noted that the total number of submissions represent a decrease compared to the previous year. Discussion was held regarding transparency in the review process, specifically whether applicants are informed of reviewer identities. One suggestion included compiling and making available a list of individuals who have previously served in the reviewer pool, allowing faculty to reference potential reviewers. Another recommendation proposed including reviewer acknowledgments in the form of “thank you” letters sent to award recipients. Discussion was held regarding the need to preserve balancing transparency with the integrity and impartiality of the review process, noting that any changes should be implemented in alignment with best practices for faculty research evaluation.

Chair Durham reported that the actions of Subcommittee One is largely completed.

Chair Durham provided Subcommittee Two’s report in Bocko’s absence, which included that committee members are reviewing information through Teams and are still unable to identify a meeting time.

Ex Officio DeFulio provided the Subcommittee Three report. He noted ongoing communication with the Office of Research and Innovation to clarify which policies listed on the ORI website are federally mandated and to determine which Memoranda of Action fall within the scope of the Research and Creative Scholarship Council. Based on a discussion with Seker, DeFulio highlighted the importance of understanding federal requirements as they relate to institutional policy development and review processes. It was noted that the distinction between federally mandated policies and those subject to institutional governance will inform the appropriate role of the committee in reviewing MOA. DeFulio indicated that, pending further clarification from ORI, the committee should defer action on related items. RCSC members agreed that additional guidance is necessary to ensure alignment with federal compliance expectations and institutional responsibilities before proceeding.

Mitchell joined the meeting at 3:11pm.

New Business

None.

Announcements

None.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by Groves, seconded by DeFulio, to adjourn the meeting at 3:17 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The Research and Creative Scholarship Council will meet next on 19 March 2026 at 2:30 p.m. in-person in Walwood Connable Room, 112E.

Approval

Submitted by Jesse M. Smith, Secretary

Minutes were approved on 16 April 2026