
Undergraduate Studies Council

Minutes of 9 November 2021

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate, Undergraduate Studies Council was called to order at 3:03 p.m. on 11 November 2021, via virtual Webex by Clifton Ealy Jr., chair.

Members in Attendance: Jessica Birnbaum, Deanna Bush, Carrie Cumming, Clifton Ealy, Steven Eberth, Kristal Ehrhardt, Lori Grey, Irma Lopez, Colin MacCreery, Dawn Mason, Diane Riggs, Mary-Louise Totton, Nicolas Witschi

Members Absent: Ashlynn Jackson, Kelly Wittenberg

Advisory Members Present: Edwin Martini

Advisory Members Absent: Betsy Drummer

Ex Officio Present: Scott Slawinski

Guest(s): Karen Blaisure, Family and Consumer Sciences; Elisha Ewing, Undergraduate Student; Melinda Holohan, Family and Consumer Sciences; Marilyn Kritzman, President, Faculty Senate

Quorum

A quorum was present.

Agenda

The agenda was amended to allow for the participation of Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Jennifer Bott.

[MOTION] It was moved by Birnbaum, seconded by Cumming, to accept the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Birnbaum, seconded by Mason, to approve the 12 October 2021 minutes as presented. With two abstentions, the motion carried.

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Jennifer Bott thanked the council members for their work, care, and consideration regarding curriculum processing. She recognized Witschi and others for their work on Curriculog to improve curriculum processing. Bott replied to a variety of questions regarding artificial intelligence and the use of predictive modeling, interdisciplinarity, use of pronouns, modalities for spring classes, and photos of students in DegreeWorks.

Reports of Officers

Chair Ealy reported that the Academic Information and Technology Council is looking at artificial intelligence and the use of electronic avatars in the classroom. The Faculty Senate meeting was productive, and WMU is third in the state for endowments.

Ex Officio Slawinski reported that Provost Bott had previously presented at the Executive Board and provided an update on actions being taken at the University.

Riggs joined the meeting at 3:34 p.m.

Reports of Council/Committee Standing Committees

Cumming reported that the Transfer of Credit Committee had not met in October.

Eisenhart reported by email that the Intellectual Skills Program Advisory Committee had not met.

Bush provided the report of the Service Learning Committee. Topics included the committee's desire for the committee to continue. Questions were raised regarding next steps due to outdated charges and what is expected from the committee. The committee will meet again in a couple of weeks, and Bush asked USC to develop charges that he could take to the committee. Ealy stated he would create charges for review at the next USC meeting.

Reports of University Representatives

Martini did not provide a report.

Witschi, Administrative Representative, provided a report that included course review or meta-assessment, which is an informal assessment of teaching WES courses. The middle of December is the cutoff for instructors to upload syllabi. Mason raised a concern about measuring across the same courses to assess outcomes. Witschi stated there are open-ended questions that seek to determine gaps in the system to improve the teaching of courses. The data is not intended to identify individual instructors, but to improve the WES program offering. Slawinski articulated the type of brief responses needed to the questions, which Witschi validated.

Unfinished Business

Ealy stated that the report of the charges to the Service Learning and Transfer Credit Committee is in process and will be available at the next meeting in December.

Riggs provided the report of the Decision Tree – The Council wishes to have this to help make decisions in an even-handed versus subjective fashion. Members wish to consider all the competing interests at the university in making fair decisions. Eberth created a document to collect ideas for decisions, and Riggs asked all to add their thoughts to the document so we can begin to create a flow chart.

MacCreery left the meeting at 3:54 p.m.

Bush left the meeting at 4:01 p.m.

New Business

Holohan reported the proposed new programs are organized around three concentrations to be in compliance with the state and grade banding. Birth to Kindergarten teaching certificate. This is to create a clear path to graduation and concentrations and certificates.

CEHD 1163, 1164, & 1165 – Holohan provided an update.

[MOTION] It was moved by Cumming, and seconded by Riggs, to approve the proposed programs.

Riggs asked if the new program is a B.S. or a B.A., and Holohan stated it is likely to be a B.S., and Witschi validated this and raised the question about the need for a proposal major. Concentration is the major or should be considered three distinct majors.

[MOTION] The motion passed unanimously.

CEHD 1166, 1167, 1168 – Holohan three deletions.

[MOTION] It was moved by Kritzman and seconded by Riggs. The motion passed unanimously.

CEHD 1169, 1170 – Holohan updated on the two new minors within the program to improve interdisciplinary experiences. These options allow the students more customization of their learning experience. Kritzman offered suggestions regarding addressing costs and the need to do so to cover the needs of a new program and courses offered. A minor is not a non-cost program and needs to include specific resources needed.

[MOTION] It was moved by Riggs, and seconded by Birnbaum, to approve the two new minors with the expectations of edits to item #8 would be provided and reviewed again by leadership of the council. The motion passed unanimously.

USC_CFA52021_MUS_New-MinorJazzStudies.Fall2022 – Rice was not present, and the item was deferred to the next meeting after ensuring the representative is invited by the chair or vice chair to answer questions.

Announcements

Ealy announced a desire for Provost Bott to return in May for the last USC meeting to wrap up our year.

Ealy announced a desire to request Witschi as WES Director to provide a wrap-up summary for the year.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by Witschi, seconded by Slawinski, to adjourn the meeting at 4:54 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The Undergraduate Studies Council will meet next on 14 December 2021 virtual Webex at 3:00 pm.

Approval

Submitted by Steven D. Eberth, Secretary

Minutes approved on 7 December 2021.