
EXECUTIVE BOARD**Minutes of 12 September 2025****Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Executive Board was called to order at 10:38 a.m. on 12 September 2025, in Ellsworth Hall room 3201 and via Webex, by Amy Naugle, president.

Roll Call

Members in Attendance: Osama Abudayyeh, Kimberly Buchholz, Anthony DeFulio, Kieran Fogarty, Wanda Hadley, Janet Hahn, Amy Naugle, David Rudge, C. Dennis Simpson, Laura Teichert

Parliamentarian in Attendance: Decker Hains

Guest: Christopher Cheatham, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Recording Secretary in Attendance: Sue Brodasky, Administrator

Quorum

A quorum was present with ten members in attendance, of the six needed to establish quorum.

Agenda

Several items were added to the agenda, in New Business Hains added a bylaws amendment for professional instructors, and in Unfinished Business President Naugle has an update regarding the Shared Governance Retreat and MOA-25/07.

[MOTION] It was moved by Simpson, seconded by Rudge, to accept the agenda as amended. The motion carried.

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Rudge, seconded by Teichert, to approve the 22 August 2025 minutes as provided. The motion carried.

Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Cheatham reported:

- Enrollment Update:
 - WMU is reporting a 1.6% decline in overall headcount. This decline aligns closely with the forecasted 1.7% decrease. Despite this marginal difference, revenue declined by 1.8%, which may be attributed to varying tuition rates across different student categories.
 - Undergraduate and international student enrollments both declined, prompting concern. However, a notable increase occurred in both enrollment and retention rates among underrepresented minority students, indicating progress in equity-based recruitment and student success efforts.
 - Retention rates were further discussed, with a new research initiative being launched to examine the phenomenon of senior-level students not persisting through graduation. This effort suggests a focus on better understanding barriers to completion near the end of academic careers.
 - Despite enrollment challenges, the institution reported achieving the highest six-year graduation rate in its history, signaling continued progress in long-term student success outcomes. The state budget allocation remains unknown, though projections currently indicate zero additional funding.
- Transfer Student Workgroup:
 - The workgroup is being convened to address the decline in transfer student enrollment. The institution aspires to become the most transfer-friendly university in the region. A small task force, led by Randy Ott, has been formed to gather insights and develop actionable recommendations by 1 November.

- Current transfer enrollment trends indicate that the overall student pool is shrinking. To improve performance in this area, the institution must increase its market share of available transfer students. Data collection efforts are underway to support strategic planning.
- When questioned about resource allocation for this initiative, Cheatham confirmed that additional support will be available. However, the final set of recommendations is expected to include both cost-incurring and cost-neutral strategies. Notably, the University is not currently competitive in offering transfer scholarships, which remains a significant barrier. Discussion was held,
- Administrative Curriculum Review Timeline:
 - Curriculum processing timelines have improved at the college level since the implementation of Curriculog, with most proposals advancing within 60 days. However, a significant delay persists at the institutional level, with full implementation taking approximately 10 to 11 months. This lag is attributed primarily to processing bottlenecks within offices reporting to the Provost, including the Registrar's Office and academic advising.
 - Registrar constraints appear to center on catalog year restrictions. According to Cheatham, curriculum changes that alter degree pathways cannot be implemented mid-year, as students are bound to the catalog in effect at the time of admission. However, minor or non-substantive revisions may be eligible for mid-year implementation. Cheatham will investigate these barriers further.
- A concern was raised regarding the limited 15-minute transition period between classes, which creates logistical challenges when a new class arrives immediately after another concludes. It was suggested that this issue be directed the Registrar' office, who oversees room scheduling. Cheatham indicated there are plans to review classroom utilization to ensure room assignments are aligned with actual student enrollment numbers.
- Cheatham requested that centralized advising be allowed to present at an upcoming Faculty Senate meeting.

Reports of Officers

President Naugle reported:

- Provost Council Update:
 - The University's compensation policy will undergo review.
 - A budget reduction is anticipated for Fiscal-Year 2027.
 - Enrollment trends were discussed, including a decline in Pell-eligible students; further analysis is planned.
 - WMU's international enrollment is above national projections.
 - Director of Academic Labor Relations Matthew Mingus, presented on the ratification of the PIO contract, noting the cordial nature of recent negotiations.
 - Interim Vice Provost Sara Nelson, reported that campus space reorganization efforts are underway in coordination with WMUx restructuring. A formal announcement is expected.
- President Meeting Update: discussion was held regarding the contract extension for Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics Dan Bartholomae.
- The invitation from AAUP leadership was discussed. Naugle and Simpson have existing conflicts but the Executive Board members were encouraged to attend.

Vice President Simpson reported on his meeting with Interim Provost Cheatham:

- There has not been a meeting with Interim Provost Cheatham.
- Reported to the Sindecuse Advisory Board, on campus COVID cases have risen from 10 to 30 cases in the first three weeks of semester. Discussion was held.

New Business

President Naugle gave a debriefing on the WMU President Listening Sessions. Discussion was held regarding the issues raised pertaining to Disability Student Services.

Hains raised the issue of a necessary Bylaws change for “part-time instructors” to be changed to “professional instructors.” Hains and Brodasky will draft an amendment for review at the next meeting. DeFulio requested that the issue of council/committee chairs removal be added to the amendment proposal.

Unfinished Business

President Naugle reviewed the Executive Board 2024-26 Action plan.

[MOTION] It was moved by Simpson, seconded by Buchholz, to approve as presented. The motion carried.

Rudge left the meeting at 11:59 a.m.

President Naugle postponed the discussion regarding experiential learning.

DeFulio questioned the status of MOA-25/07: Renaming the Faculty Research and Creative Activities Support Fund and Comprised Programs. President Naugle stated that it has been put on hold and she is following up with Mingus regarding the need for a signature from AAUP leadership.

Reports of Councils and Committees

Hahn provided the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee report via email, which included:

- WMU Essential Studies Faculty Director Jonathon Bush, reported that WMU Essential Studies Faculty Fellow Beth Ernst will assist in enhancing faculty communication regarding the WMU Essential Studies program.
- Updates were shared concerning efforts to improve processes related to transfer credit articulation.
- Bush indicated that a forthcoming proposal will recommend designating FYE-2100 as a three-credit WMU Essential Studies course. The current comprehensive review of WMU Essential Studies is expected to conclude this year, with the next full review scheduled for the 2029–30 academic year.

- Committee membership vacancies were noted.
- The committee reviewed a proposal from the Bronson School of Nursing to exempt RN-to-BSN students from completing WMU Essential Studies Levels I and II. A detailed crosswalk was presented, demonstrating that required WMU Essential Studies competencies are addressed through nationally standardized nursing curricula and examinations. However, a vote on the proposal could not proceed due to the absence of a quorum.

Rudge provided the Undergraduate Studies Council report via email, which included:

- Faculty Senate President Naugle charged the council, including creation of an ad hoc committee on experiential and experience driven learning, as well as recommendations regarding opportunities threats and challenges posed by artificial intelligence relevant to the work of the council.
- Karowe was elected as vice chair.
- The WSA requested that the council consider reducing the minimum credit requirement for graduation from 122 to 120.
- Chair Wagner's report included:
 - Suggested review of MOA-18/05: Creation of Undergraduate GPA Revision Policy.
 - Suggested review of MOA-25/04: Revise the Undergraduate Catalog to Allow Credit/No Credit for International Institutions.
 - The subcommittees for USC need to be reviewed to improve connections.
- Griffin-Brown provided an academic advising report that students are responding well to centralized advising.

Buchholz provided the Centers and Institutes Committee report via email, which included:

- Committee members expressed criticism regarding the lack of communication about their desire for clearer definitions of centers and institutes. It is unclear whether a formal motion or vote occurred with that request.

- The current definitions are believed to be adequate for the majority of centers and institutes. Overemphasis on refining definitions may inadvertently undermine the extensive efforts of the committee that authored the original MOA. It is suggested that, rather than investing time in rewording definitions, the committee might consider establishing a process, such as a vote or a small review panel, to determine how to categorize cases.
- The priority remains the systematic cataloging of centers and institutes. Excessive focus on semantics may hinder progress. To facilitate this work, the suggestion was raised to remove the self-definition requirement from the curriculum form, as this point has caused confusion among committee members. Entities could instead be directed to proceed if they believe they align with the broad definitions already approved.

Discussion was held.

DeFulio provided the Research Policies Council report via email, which included:

- Remzi reported on the volume of applications submitted to the four research funding programs and summarized recent research outcomes, including dollar amounts and patent activity. The Office of Research and Innovation is advancing a student patent pathway initiative, which is beginning to yield results. Initial efforts have targeted undergraduate students, with plans to expand to graduate-level participation. Approximately 15% of travel funds have already been allocated.
- Byrd-Jacobs reviewed graduate student grants awarded in the prior year and promoted participation in the upcoming Three-Minute Thesis (3MT) competition. President Kavalhuna is scheduled to serve as a judge for the event.
- The council agreed to divide its charges among working groups to manage the workload. Members also discussed reordering the charges to better align with workflow priorities.
- There was consensus to revert to the original names of the four research funds in committee documents.

Announcements

President Naugle stated that the Shared Governance Retreat is scheduled for 13 Feb. from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Heritage Hall ballroom.

Adjournment

President Naugle adjourned the meeting at 12:03 p.m. The Executive Board will meet next on September 2025 at 10:30 a.m. in Ellsworth Hall, room 3201 and via Webex.

Approval

Submitted Sue Brodasky, Faculty Senate Administrator

Minutes were approved 26 September 2025.