EXECUTIVE BOARD

Minutes of 27 February 2026

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Executive Board was called to order at 10:31 a.m. on 27 February 2026, at Ellsworth Hall, room 3201 and via Webex, by Amy Naugle, president.

Roll Call

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

Members Absent: Kimberly Buchholz

Parliamentarian Present: Decker Hains

Guests Steven Bertman, Chair, Sustainability Committee; Lisa DeChano-Cook, Curriculum Manager, Matthew Mingus, Director of Academic Labor Relations

Recording Secretary in Attendance: Sue Brodasky, Administrator

Quorum

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

Agenda

President Naugle amended the agenda to allow Mingus additional time.

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

Approval of Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Rudge, seconded by DeFulio, to approve the Executive Board Minutes of 13 February 2026 as presented. With one abstention the motion carried.

Action Items

Curriculum Manager Lisa DeChano-Cook presented Memorandum of Action (MOA)-26/04: Revise the Undergraduate Catalog, Graduation Requirement, General Requirement for Earning a Bachelor's Degree, on behalf of the Undergraduate Studies Council. The proposed revision aligns WMU with peer institutions across Michigan. Academic departments that maintain higher credit hour requirements will not be required to modify their existing standards.

[MOTION] It was moved by DeFulio, seconded by Simpson, to place MOA-26/04 on the 5 March Faculty Senate agenda as presented. The motion carried.

Sustainability and Climate Change

Bertman, representing the Sustainability Subcommittee of the Campus Planning and Finance Council, provided a presentation on climate change. He identified two primary objectives: to update the Executive Board on the University's current status and to reiterate the previously adopted Executive Board resolution addressing climate change. Additionally, he referenced relevant goals within the University Strategic Plan. Although the resolution encourages administrative engagement, he noted that limited action has occurred to date. Data were presented outlining Western Michigan University's greenhouse gas emissions and related metrics. Bertman recently shared the same emissions data with the Board of Trustees. He expressed concern that the Faculty Senate may not be regarded as a collaborative partner in climate-related decision-making. President Naugle emphasized the role of councils and committees in advancing the conversation and invited the Sustainability Committee to propose specific recommendations for Executive Board consideration. Bertman recommended incorporating climate change issues into the WMU Essential Studies program and encouraged formal dialogue between the Executive Board and senior administration.

President Naugle requested written input for the 2026-27 Sustainability Committee charges and affirmed that the existing resolution will guide those priorities. She further committed to raising the issue with the WMU President and Interim Provost during regularly scheduled meetings. Discussion was held.

Academic Labor Relations

Mingus led a discussion regarding upcoming American Association of University Professors (AAUP) negotiations, specifically regarding the Executive Board's recommendation that Faculty Senate language be removed from the collective bargaining agreement. He noted ongoing confusion and perceived overlap between AAUP and Faculty Senate functions and invited the Faculty Senate to submit recommendations to the negotiation team by April. Mingus reviewed specific contract articles containing references to the Faculty Senate to frame the discussion. It was stated that the Executive Board supports removing Article 24 in its entirety and eliminating all references to the Faculty Senate within Article 34. Clarification was provided on the rationale for this position, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a clear distinction between collectively bargained matters and academic governance responsibilities. It was underscored that preserving separate domains for labor representation and shared governance strengthens institutional clarity and effectiveness. Discussion was held. Staff was instructed to distribute the subcommittee summary report to all Executive Board members for discussion at the next meeting.

Reports of Officers

President Naugle reported on her recent meeting with President Kavalhuna, which included a debrief of the 13 February Executive Board meeting. President Kavalhuna encouraged the Executive Board to adopt a more solution-oriented approach in its deliberations, emphasizing constructive engagement over expressions of concern without proposed pathways forward. Discussion also addressed recent concerns regarding U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) participation at a university job fair. President Kavalhuna clarified that the administration did not extend an invitation to ICE; rather, the agency independently withdrew from the event. President Kavalhuna asked that the Executive Board assist in disseminating accurate information to address and correct misinformation circulating among faculty. Discussion was held.

Vice President Simpson reported that there has been discussion regarding the earlier release of academic calendars to support improved planning and operational efficiency. He further noted that Interim Provost Cheatham has contemplated engaging the Executive Board in a collaborative process to define and articulate institutional academic values.

New Business

President Naugle introduced the proposed agenda for the March 5 Faculty Senate meeting.

[MOTION] It was moved by Simpson, seconded by Hahn, to approve the 5 March Faculty Senate agenda as presented. The motion carried.

President Naugle postponed the Undergraduate Studies Council's Experience Learning subcommittee agenda item until next meeting.

Unfinished Business

President Naugle led review of the Shared Governance Retreat.

Council and Committee Reports

Fogarty provided the Academic and Information Technology Council (AITC) report via email, which included

- Chair Cataldo noted the Faculty Senate's approval of two MOAs at the February Senate meeting.
- Ex Officio Fogarty emphasized the need for preliminary discussions to build upon the Council's existing initiatives and to inform future Academic and Information Technology Council charges.
- Interim Provost Cheatham reported that WMU has made limited progress on several artificial intelligence related matters and will review current AI initiatives

to determine next steps. A brief discussion on Artificial Intelligence (AI) priorities followed.

- Holmes provided the Office of Information Technology report, highlighting the University's Digital Accessibility federal compliance. An external audit of Elearning accessibility will be conducted. A second wave of cybersecurity training for faculty will launch this month, followed by student training.

- Classroom technology lifecycle replacements are limited to Registrar-controlled classrooms, and are underway, with 25 classrooms completed and an additional 25 scheduled to begin 24 April 2026.
- Carnell reported that WMUx is evaluating campus wide captioning services and will remove videos not viewed in four years beginning fall 2026, following faculty notification and a one-year grace period. Faculty accessibility training opportunities were also shared.
- Glock reported that student notifications regarding account holds are now live.

Vice President Simpson, on behalf of Hahn, provided the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee report via email, which included:

- First-Year Experience (FYE) intends to seek WMU Essential Studies level designation for its course. Bush previously met with the Executive Board, which raised several questions regarding the proposal. Efforts are underway to standardize and revise the course, including development of a detailed crosswalk. FYE anticipates submitting the proposal to WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee yet this semester, with a projected implementation in 2027-28. Bush remains committed to advancing the proposal.
- WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee reported a period of limited activity, having approved all WMU Essential Studies course proposals in fall 2025. WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee is developing a best practice guideline for WMU Essential Studies course design and proposal development. WMU Essential Studies Executive

Advisory Committee will review course outcome rubrics for standardization purposes; no changes to student learning outcomes (SLOs) are anticipated.

- Additional updates included development of a WMU Essential Studies One-Stop website, forthcoming to WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee and the Executive Board this semester; a temporary two-year cycle for program reviews to align with the Higher Learning Commission self-study timeline; and full enforcement of the policy limiting WMU Essential Studies exceptions to advisers or their designees.
- Bush has been called up to active military duty and will return 1 September 2026.
- WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee will conduct a month-long SLO rubric review, with recommendations due at the March meeting.

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

- Chair Wagner reported that efforts continue to finalize the meeting schedule for the Experiential Learning Committee, tentatively proposed for the third Thursday of each month, beginning 19 February, from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Committee membership remains in development.
- Ex Officio Rudge reported that the Experience-Driven Learning Workgroup is planning a retreat for 19 March. Wallace and Bush intend to advance a proposal to designate select FYE courses as WMU Essential Studies Level 1: Inquiry and Engagement through the Unaffiliated Units Curriculum Committee, followed by review of by WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee and the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee. While the proposal could proceed through the Undergraduate Studies Council if justified, concerns were raised regarding sections not taught by faculty and the fact that, with limited exceptions, the course has not been required of all students. Nelson is aware of these concerns, and involvement from the Provost's Office may be possible. It is expected that the council will invite Wallace and Bush to present at a future meeting.

- DeChano-Cook reported that the cross-listing and prior learning MOA passed. Additional proposals, including new minors, are forthcoming.
- Stano noted that fall priority registration begins 2 March and that advising appointments have increased since census. Discussion was held regarding the academic calendar structure.
- The Transfer Credit Committee did not meet due to WMU weather closures.
- USC discussed a potential MOA regarding transfer and study abroad credits and whether a minimum University standard should apply to credits counting toward a major.
- The MOA reducing the minimum graduation credits from 122 to 120, effective with the next catalog, passed.
- MOA-18/05: Creation of a GPA Revision Policy was reviewed, with continued discussion anticipated.
- Charge 5 directs the Council to explore artificial intelligence and related opportunities, threats, and challenges and communicate findings to AITC and the Executive Board.

DeFulio provided the Research and Creative Scholarships Council (RCSC) report via email, which included

- Interim Provost Cheatham referenced recent developments related to *U.S. News & World Report* college rankings, noting that Grand Valley State University is now categorized as a regional university.
- Support for Faculty Scholars Award (SFSA) applications were reviewed, with ten proposals fully funded and one partially funded. The Faculty Research and Creative Activities Award (FRACAA) competition has closed with only seventeen applicants, a substantially lower number than typical. Notably, there were only two creative activity submissions and one qualitative research proposal, both representing a marked decline from prior years.
- The Council discussed the issue of reviewer anonymity within the FRACAA process. There was no support for publishing an annual roster of reviewers or

identifying reviewers associated with specific proposals; however, broader transparency approaches remain under consideration.

Teichert provided the Graduate Studies Council report via email, which included

- Ex Officio Teichert reported a synopsis of the 13 February Shared Governance Retreat and conveyed the Executive Board's request that faculty be meaningfully included in any future university identity and/or strategic planning initiatives. She also summarized the MOAs approved at the most recent Senate meeting.
- Dean Byrd-Jacobs reported
    - All-University award nominations have been forwarded to subcommittees for review by 18 March.
    - The Graduate College will host a reception for award recipients, including presentation of plaques and graduation honor cords.
    - Recruitment for a new Doctoral Scholar is underway, with the application deadline extended to 27 February.
    - Submissions for the Thurgood-Marshall Award and Research and Travel Grants are under review.
    - Graduate Research Day is scheduled for 9 April, and faculty are encouraged to serve as judges.
- Graduate Student Association (GSA) representatives Binford and Olvera reported
    - GSA allocated $15,000 in one funding cycle, with increased application volume.
    - GSA participated in the Shared Governance Retreat and attended a campus activities conference in Columbus, Ohio.
    - The Gala is scheduled for 17 April at the Fetzer Center.
    - The recipients of the Three-Minute Thesis (3MT) competition were announced.
- DeChano-Cook provided an overview of 5000-level courses, which enroll both undergraduate and graduate students and vary in instructional differentiation. Graduate students must complete at least 50% of credits at the 6000-level to

comply with Higher Learning Commission requirements. The recently approved cross-listed courses MOA affects this issue. Options discussed included clarifying 5000-level standards, eliminating the level, or offering concurrently taught courses at distinct levels. Consideration must also be given to faculty load, college impact, and approved course formats. Cummings was asked to compile data on courses with mixed enrollment so that the GSC can develop a strategy to assess the scope of the issue. Dean Byrd-Jacobs will share a 2016 comparative document with the Council.

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

- DeChano-Cook provided a presentation to preview the digital draft of the application and approval process for new centers and institutes within Curriculog. The draft is currently located under "*New Proposals → Others → New Centers or Institutes Draft – Do Not Use*"
- The committee engaged in substantial discussion regarding the appropriate level of detail required in the form, as well as the timing and scope of dean-level engagement within the review process. Particular attention was given to ensuring procedural clarity, transparency, and alignment with existing governance structures, while avoiding unnecessary administrative burden.
- DeChano-Cook will revise the draft based on the feedback provided. She noted that the Curriculog draft remains viewable to all interested parties and indicated that revisions would be completed by the end of the day.

Abudayyeh provided the Campus Planning and Finance Council (CPFC) report via email, which included

- Chair Guth reported that revisions continue on the MOA addressing the registrar's proposed deadline for course withdrawals. She is collaborating with the Undergraduate Studies Council (USC) and the Graduate Studies Council (GSC) to jointly sponsor the measure. Feedback will be solicited from the Graduate Student Association, the Western Student Association, and the

University Ombuds. The intent is to place the MOA on the March Faculty Senate agenda.

- VanderVeen provided an update on the five-year Capital Outlay and Project Request in response to Charge 4, and the scope of deferred maintenance across all University buildings and campuses.
- Scarff reported that Van Der Kley is otherwise engaged with work of the consultant developing the new budget model. The Governor's higher education budget recommendation includes no increase to the base appropriation, resulting in a flat projected budget for the upcoming fiscal year. Tuition restraint is set at 4% for the 2026-27 academic year.
- Spoelstra provided an update regarding funded student proposals and projects.

Vice President Simpson provided the Professional Concerns Committee (PCC) report via email, which included

- An announcement that the MOA establishing a deadline for students to submit supporting documentation in appeals related to grades or program dismissal was approved by the Faculty Senate. Additionally, the jointly sponsored MOA with the Academic and Information Technology Council requiring an Artificial Intelligence syllabus statement was approved by the Senate.
- The PCC Chair will prepare an initial draft of the 2025-26 annual report and present it to the committee for review and discussion at the March meeting.

Hadley did not provide an International Education Council report.

Announcements

Brodasky reported the recent inquiry from the International Student Council soliciting support of the Faculty Senate International Education Council for its bid to become a partner in shared governance.

Brodasky provided an update on the office staffing situation.

Simpson noted Jonathan Bush's return to active military services. President Naugle indicated that Interim Provost Cheatham is aware that an interim Faculty Director for WMU Essential Studies should be identified.

Adjournment

President Naugle adjourned the meeting at 10:54 a.m. The Executive Board will meet next on 27 March 2026 at 10:30 a.m. in Ellsworth Hall, room 3201 and via Webex.

Approval

Submitted Sue Brodasky, Faculty Senate Administrator

Minutes were approved 27 March 2026.