
EXECUTIVE BOARD
Minutes of 10 July 2026**Call to Order**

The meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Executive Board was called to order at 8:39 a.m. on 10 July 2026, at The Colonel's Kitchen, 330 N. Drake Rd, and via Webex, by Janet Hahn, president.

Roll Call

Members in Attendance: Matthew Dumican, Wanda Hadley, Janet Hahn, Decker Hains, Amy Naugle, David Rudge, Daniela Schroeter, David Szabla, Laura Teichert, Andre Venter

Members Absent: Lofton Durham

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

Recording Secretary in Attendance: Sue Brodasky, Administrator

Quorum

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

Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes

Correction was noted for the date of the retreat to 10 July.

[MOTION] It was moved by Rudge, seconded by Naugle, to approve the 26 June, 2026 meeting minutes as amended. The motion carried.

Council and Committee 2026-27 Charges

Executive Board directors reviewed proposed 2026-27 charges for Faculty Senate councils and committees. Recommendations will be compiled by staff for approval at the next Executive Board meeting.

Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Interim Provost Cheatham reported on fall enrollment projections and responded to questions regarding nonresident tuition.

President Hahn asked how faculty could assist with enrollment efforts. Interim Provost Cheatham encouraged faculty participation in recruitment events and meetings with prospective students, noting that faculty interaction can positively influence enrollment decisions. Interim Provost Cheatham identified graduate recruitment as an area for improvement, citing inconsistent admissions processes, numerous application deadlines, and delays in departmental review. He reported that the University is working to standardize processes, improve responsiveness, and reduce international application processing to five days.

Discussion was held regarding graduate enrollment, assistantship funding, and faculty capacity. It was noted that assistantship availability influences enrollment in some disciplines, while professional programs may rely less on graduate assistants. Interim Provost Cheatham reported that WMU invests more institutional funding in graduate assistantships than many peer institutions but encouraged greater use of grant funding to support additional assistantships. Deans have been asked to submit proposals by July 15 identifying initiatives that could increase enrollment and demonstrate a measurable return on investment. Concerns were expressed that higher tuition rates for nonresident and international graduate assistants may discourage their hiring. Interim Provost Cheatham acknowledged the equity.

It was asked why admitted students choose other institutions. Interim Provost Cheatham reported that a study is underway comparing students who choose Grand Valley State University over WMU. He identified academic reputation as a key factor, while noting that tuition costs are generally competitive. Discussion was held regarding strengthening WMU's institutional identity by emphasizing academic quality, student success, experiential learning, and faculty engagement. Concerns were raised regarding the number of online courses available to residential students. Interim Provost Cheatham stated that course modality should be based on student needs and that courses scheduled as in-person should remain in-person.

Discussion also focused on how WMU should present its anticipated Research 1 designation. The designation should be framed in a manner that demonstrates benefits to undergraduate and graduate students. Interim Provost Cheatham suggested positioning WMU as a student-success-focused R1 institution that maintains a strong commitment to teaching and undergraduate education.

Concerns were raised regarding delays in filling faculty positions. Interim Provost Cheatham acknowledged that the current Cabinet review process has created significant delays and anticipates changes to improve the process. He suggested limiting centralized review to positions common across the University rather than specialized faculty positions supported by department chairs and deans.

Interim Provost Cheatham reported that the Huron recommendations focus on consolidating administrative services and not academic programs or departments. Potential areas include marketing, communications, and other shared services. He clarified that Huron did not evaluate academic advising.

President Hahn asked about a possible academic review, including its methods and timeline. Interim Provost Cheatham reported that no formal process has been established, but discussions are underway regarding a collaborative review of the University's academic portfolio. The review will focus on aligning programs with student

demand, workforce needs, and institutional priorities while identifying opportunities for investment, redesign, and growth. Interim Provost Cheatham anticipated forming a representative planning group during the fall semester, including Faculty Senate participation, with the review expected to begin in the spring. All academic programs would likely participate, and the process is intended to be collaborative, transparent, and informed by institutional data.

Discussion was held regarding potential federal requirements linking graduate earnings to continued Title IV financial aid eligibility. Interim Provost Cheatham noted that such measures could disproportionately affect programs in the fine arts and humanities. He emphasized the importance of monitoring federal requirements while recognizing the broader educational value of academic programs.

President Hahn asked for areas where the Faculty Senate could provide assistance. Interim Provost Cheatham suggested that the Senate consider the potential use of reduced-credit bachelor's degrees where appropriate, noting that such programs would not be suitable for all disciplines. Discussion was held regarding whether to develop review criteria before receiving a proposal or wait until a specific proposal is submitted. Further discussion was postponed to a future meeting. The Executive Board requested comparative data on general education requirements at peer institutions.

President Hahn informed Interim Provost Cheatham that, should he continue serving as provost through spring 2027, the Faculty Senate would likely conduct a routine, non-cause, Faculty Senate assessment. Interim Provost Cheatham stated that discussions regarding the future of the provost position were ongoing but that no decision or search process had been initiated.

Faculty Senate Meetings Focus Topics

President Hahn led discussion regarding planning for focus topics for each of the 2026-27 Faculty Senate meetings. Staff will initiate invitations for the proposed speakers for

October, November, and December. Additionally, staff will coordinate council and committee reports for each month.

Announcements

None.

Adjournment

President Hahn adjourned the meeting at 11:42 p.m. The Executive Board will meet next on 24 July 2026 at 10:30 a.m. at Ellsworth Hall, room 3201 and via Webex.

Approval

Submitted Sue Brodasky, Faculty Senate Administrator

Minutes were approved 24 July 2026.