



Senate Snapshot

Faculty Senate

Prior Learning Assessment (MOA:20/01 and MOA:20/02)

Two Memoranda of Action (MOA's) were passed by the Faculty Senate in February and signed by the administration in May that allow for the **option** to revise and/or to create faculty- driven Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

The MOA's revise existing undergraduate and graduate catalog language to allow the creation of **voluntary** faculty-driven prior learning assessment (PLA) opportunities for programs, beyond the current forms of allowable PLAs (e.g., Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) credit; College Level Examination Program (CLEP); credit by examination). These revisions involve a decentralized program-level process for PLA decision-making, with some centralized data reporting. The two MOA's include revised policy that outlines a process and specific requirements for proposing and approving such PLA procedures.

PLA is a process for evaluating prior learning, as acquired through previous work experience, training, course products, or other learning experiences, and awarding college credit when those experiences align with specific requirements and learning outcomes in undergraduate programs (majors, minors, core curricula). The process of evaluating prior learning often involves development, by the applicant, of a comprehensive portfolio and a procedure for portfolio review.

PLA is not a new idea, and WMU already has several types of PLA available to students, including awarding university credit for AP and IB courses taken while in high

school. While PLA is not new to WMU, there are several factors currently providing incentive for expansion of PLA options. These include the significant number of non-traditional students seeking degrees after time in the workforce or military. While many WMU programs have successfully developed schedules that support working professionals, WMU's limited PLA options have prevented its programs from awarding significant academic credit for prior learning.

For some time, WMU faculty have worked diligently to establish measurable learning outcomes for courses and programs. This work makes it more feasible for faculty to evaluate prior learning through portfolios or other methods that document work, training, and learning experiences. For more detailed information, please refer to [MOA 20/01](#) and [MOA 20/02](#).

Stay safe and be well.

Marilyn S. Kritzman, President
WMU Faculty Senate