

**Unaffiliated Units Curriculum Committee
Minutes of 26 January 2026**

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Unaffiliated Units Curriculum Committee was called to order at 2 p.m. on 26 January 2026, via Webex, by Amy Naugle, ex officio.

Members Present: Michele Behr, Jennifer Bott, Christine Byrd-Jacobs, Elyse Connors, Lisa DeChano-Cook, Anthony Helms, Greg Jasperse, Staci Perryman-Clark, Shrabanti Roy, Luchara Wallace.

Members Absent: None.

Ex Officio: Amy Naugle, Faculty Senate President

Quorum

A quorum was present with ten members in attendance, of the six members needed for a quorum.

Agenda

[MOTION] It was moved by DeChano-Cook, seconded by Behr, to accept the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by DeChano-Cook, seconded by Perryman-Clark, to approve the 24 November 2025 meeting minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

Chair Bott provided no report.

Ex Officio Naugle provided no report.

New Business

Helms requested feedback regarding challenges facing Lee Honors College (LHC) in relation to anticipated federal financial aid changes associated with Course Program of Study (CPoS) requirements. Helms provided a detailed overview to support discussion. He emphasized that the honors thesis remains a central component of honors education and requires substantial faculty mentorship, noting an increasing demand for faculty participation. He further reported that honors and CA students represent among the fastest-growing student populations at the University, underscoring the need for strategic planning related to retention and completion support. Currently, honors students enroll in HNRS 4980 (How and Why to Write an Honors Thesis) and HNRS 4990 (Honors College Thesis). However, forthcoming CPoS requirements may restrict the use of federal financial aid for these courses if they do not fulfill degree requirements. Helms noted that many academic departments already offer courses that could satisfy similar requirements. To address these concerns, the LHC proposed that departments either identify or develop discipline-specific research or thesis courses to replace HNRS 4980 and HNRS 4990, thereby retaining associated credit hours for faculty mentorship, or submit curriculum proposals allowing HNRS 4990 to count toward major elective credit. Discussion highlighted the benefit of departments utilizing existing courses to preserve credit hour allocation. Concerns were raised regarding the recognition of faculty workload associated with thesis supervision. It was suggested that a cross-college meeting be convened to solicit feedback and explore workload solutions. Helms indicated plans to distribute a Qualtrics survey to department chairs and directors to identify potential course substitutions or encourage curriculum revisions.

Announcements

Byrd-Jacobs reported that efforts are underway to standardize course descriptions for graduate-level independent study and thesis courses across the University. She noted that current descriptions vary significantly across colleges, departments, and programs, with some using the official Graduate College language, others directing readers to “see Graduate College,” and still others including program-specific descriptions. To address

these inconsistencies, a recommendation has been developed to adopt a uniform approach by using the phrase “see Graduate College” across all relevant course descriptions. This standardization is intended to streamline future updates by ensuring that any changes to Graduate College descriptions are reflected universally without requiring individual program revisions. Byrd-Jacobs indicated that the proposal will be presented to graduate advisors at their early February meeting for feedback and preliminary approval. Pending support from that group, the proposal will then be advanced to the committee for formal consideration.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by Helms, seconded by DeChano-Cook, to adjourn the meeting at 2:43 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval

Submitted by Elyse Connors, Secretary

Minutes were approved on 14 September 2026.