International Education Council
Minutes of 16 April 2026

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate International Education Council was called to order at 3:01 p.m. on 16 April 2026, via Webex, by Bradford Dennis, chair.

Members Present: Stephen Covell, Bradford Dennis, Dyanne Foskey, Tarun Gupta, Vanessa Hills, Rosemary Max, Shannon McMorrow, Joseph Milostan, Anna Popkova, Nayab Tufail, Xiaodan (Abby) Wang
Members Absent: Lucius Hallett, Anne Kairu, Elena Lisovskaya, Michelle Metro-Roland, Aishi Dhar Puja, Yuanliang Sun, Tate Wierda
Advisory Members Absent: Brian Childs, Reetha Raveendran
Ex Officio Present: Wanda Hadley

Quorum

A quorum was present with 12 members in attendance, of the 11 members needed to establish a quorum.

Agenda

Chair Dennis suggested reordering the agenda.

[MOTION] It was moved by Gupta, seconded by McMorrow, to accept the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes

[*MOTION]* It was moved by Gupta, seconded by Hills, to approve the 26 February 2026 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Unfinished Business

Chair Dennis reviewed the revisions to MOA-26/02: *Revision of University-wide Global Learning Outcomes and the related feedback*. Covell proposed retaining the existing version and focusing on distributing it to faculty

[MOTION] It was moved by Covell, seconded by Gupta, to approve MOA-26/02 as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

Milostan provided the Experiential Learning Committee report, which included:

- The focus of the meeting was to (re)define service learning, with attention to three areas: global learning, service learning, and experience-driven learning.
- The committee concluded its work for the semester.

Popkova gave an overview of the new international funding initiatives:

- Discussion regarding two new funding opportunities through the Haenicke for Global Education (HIGE) International Education Development Fund (IEFDF) and its availability for the next academic year. It was noted that if the new funding opportunities do not continue, the primary concern is the short application timeline. Max provided background indicating that the IEFDF allocation (originally $40,000) was doubled this year due to additional funds, which enabled these two new opportunities; however, such funding is unlikely to be available next year in the same format. It was clarified that if an applicant is approved and travel occurs in summer 2027, funds will still be honored.
- A question was raised regarding funding for developing new partnerships. No specific initiatives are currently available; however, it was suggested to consult Metro-Roland about potential future opportunities. Milostan requested volunteers to review applications, and Gupta volunteered.

Chair Dennis provided an overview of Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings. Wang shared observations that some Chinese students have chosen not to attend Western Michigan University due to the university's lower QS ranking. Gupta noted that in certain countries, eligibility for educational loans is tied to institutional rankings. Covell acknowledged

that improving rankings is a significant undertaking, but necessary.
Max reported ongoing engagement with QS representatives, noting that the university performs well in most areas except academic reputation and employer reputation. A target ranking of 500 was mentioned. She also emphasized the need to improve internal processes, particularly application turnaround times for international students.

Tufail highlighted that, based on student interactions, internal operational issues, especially application processing times, should be prioritized. It was also noted that research efforts, particularly graduate student involvement, require greater attention. Discussion was held regarding WMU achieving Very High Research Activity (R1) status, which prompted mixed responses and a need for verification. Discussion followed regarding the responsibility and coordination of QS ranking. Chair Dennis asked about the role of the IEC in the process. Tufail indicated that responsibility largely falls to individual colleges. Kairu suggested coordination through HIGE supported by IEC and the college international committees. Gupta recommended forming an IEC subcommittee to monitor rankings-related efforts. Covell reiterated that rankings are only one aspect, noting that application turnaround challenges may be linked to funding constraints and could require collaboration between the University Chairs Council and HIGE. McMorrow proposed forming a broader working group to address rankings alongside internal process improvements. Max indicated she will consult with the Provost, with further consideration needed regarding associated costs and timelines.

New Business
Chair Dennis opened leadership nominations

[MOTION] It was moved by Gupta, seconded by Dennis, to nominate Popkova as chair. The motion carried unanimously.

[MOTION] It was moved by Gupta, seconded by Dennis, to nominate McMorrow as vice chair. The motion carried unanimously.

[MOTION] It was moved by Gupta, seconded by Dennis, to nominate Hills for secretary. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Dennis outlined the new Senate policy regarding the timing of elections. Concerns were raised by Gupta regarding the efficiency and continuity of fall elections, while McMorrow and Kairu noted workload and equity considerations.

The Council discussed moving to virtual meetings this upcoming year. Based on survey feedback, a majority preferred a virtual format.

[MOTION] It was moved by Gupta, seconded by Foskey, to hold meetings virtually for the next year. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Dennis presented the IEC roster for the next academic year, ranked in order of

[MOTION] It was moved by Hills, seconded by Wang, to accept the speaker roster as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Dennis presented the proposed 2026-27 IEC charges 2, 8, and 9 were presented with no recommended changes and no discussion.

[MOTION] It was moved by Gupta, seconded by Covell, to approve charges 2, 8, and 9 as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

In response to a question from Tufail regarding tracking progress on charges, Chair Dennis noted that supporting documents are maintained in the Teams folder. Charges with minor changes were reviewed:

- Charge 1: Revision to continue contact instead of “increase.”

[MOTION] It was moved by Gupta, seconded by Foskey, to recommend the revision to Charge 1. The motion carried unanimously.

- Charge 4: Revision to include Study Abroad and students in addition to faculty.

[MOTION] It was moved by Gupta, seconded by Milostan, to recommend the revision to Charge 4. The motion carried unanimously.

[MOTION] It was moved by Gupta, seconded by Hills, to recommend Charge 6 with minor changes. The motion carried unanimously.

- Charge 7: Determined that it cannot be removed and will remain unchanged.
- Charge 3 was presented with major proposed changes. Following the discussion, the majority opposed the revisions.

Chair Dennis introduced the Year-end Report draft to council members for review. Feedback was provided, and additional details will be incorporated following the meeting.

Reports of Officers
Chair Dennis did not provide a report

Ex Officio Hadley did not provide a report.

Reports of University Representatives
Max provided the HIGE report, including an update regarding a planned trip to Bangalore in February to meet with a long-standing partner of 30 years. It was noted that a significant anniversary will take place in March of the following year. Individuals interested in participating or learning more were invited to reach out with inquiries.

Meetings were held with various Western Michigan University colleges regarding the international student recruitment plan. A new Director of Recruiting has been hired and is scheduled to begin on 11 May 2026.

Significant time has been dedicated to communicating with international students and providing support, considering current global developments, including evolving travel restrictions and geopolitical events affecting countries such as Iran. Efforts are underway to renew health insurance plans for international students. An upcoming trip to China and Japan is planned for June. Activities will include renewing agreements with Guizhou University of Finance and Economics (GUFE) in China and hosting an alumni event in Japan.

Reports of Councils Standing Committees

Due to time constraints, all standing committee reports will be submitted via email to Chair Dennis, who will ask the Faculty Senate office staff to disseminate those to the council members.

Announcements

None.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by Tarun, seconded by Joe, to adjourn the meeting at 5:18 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval

Submitted by Anna Popkova

Minutes were approved 3 September 2026