
RESEARCH AND CREATIVE SCHOLARSHIP COUNCIL**Minutes of 16 April 2026****Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Research and Creative Scholarship Council was called to order at 2:23 p.m. on 16 April 2026, at the Walwood Connable Room, 112 E by Lofty Durham, chair.

Members in Attendance: Onur Arugaslan, Carrie Barrett, Benjamin Brady, Christine Byrd-Jacobs, Lofton Durham, Angela Groves, Beixi Li, Selim Ozyurek, Jesse Smith, Bilinda Straight, Remzi Seker, Rohullah Wahidi

Members Absent: Upul Attanayake, Amy Bocko, Melinda Brakenberry, Chris Cheatham, Nofisat Eletu, Frederick Stull, Andre Venter, German Zarate-Sandez

Ex Officio in Attendance: Anthony DeFulio, John Miller (substitute for Andre Venter)

Quorum

A quorum was present with 14 members in attendance, of the 10 members needed to establish a quorum.

Agenda

[MOTION] It was moved by Straight, seconded by Barrett, to accept the agenda as presented. With one abstention, the motion carried.

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Byrd-Jacobs, seconded by Miller, to approve the 12 February 2026 meeting minutes as presented. With one abstention, the motion carried.

Reports of Officers

Chair Durham did not provide a report.

Ex Officio DeFulio reported that this is the final meeting of the term and that no RCSC business will be conducted over the summer. He outlined recent changes to the RCSC reelection process, noting that elections will now take place at the beginning of the first meeting of the academic year. Several members' terms are expiring, and DeFulio indicated that he has reached his Executive Board term limit and will be stepping down. A new liaison will be determined at a future Executive Board meeting. He also confirmed that there will be no RCSC meetings in May.

Reports of University Representatives

Vice President Seker provided the Office of Research and Innovation report, noting Faculty Research and Creative Activities Support Fund (FRACASF) funding for fiscal year 2026:

- The total FRACASF budget was \$440,000. To date, 176 Faculty Research Travel Fund (FRTF) awards have been distributed totaling \$193,279.83 (of \$300,000), 30 Publication of Papers and Exhibition of Creative Works (PPP&E) awards totaling \$22,287.46 (of \$20,000), 11 Support for Faculty Scholars Award (SFSA) totaling \$20,000 (of \$20,000), and 10 Faculty Research and Creative Activities Award (FRACAA) totaling \$99,961.50 (of \$100,000). The remaining award balance is \$104,471.21.
- The PPP&E category exceeded its allocated budget; however, additional requests for publication costs will still be supported due to remaining funds within the overall FRACASF budget.
- There was strong attendance at the recent scholarship and awards events, and noted the increased student involvement in research, innovation, and creative scholarship.
- There have been recent staff changes within the Office of Research and Innovation (ORI) due to evolving needs and increasing compliance requirements.
- Strong performance in patent filings and the ongoing efforts by the office to commercialize those patents.
- Information Technology systems used by the ORI require improvement, and the office is seeking to hire additional personnel to support these efforts.
- Seker acknowledged fundraising efforts, multidisciplinary research initiatives, and

ongoing efforts to promote research and creative activity at the university.

Discussion was held regarding multidisciplinary methods for tracking improvement and growth in these areas.

A question was raised regarding the submission of National Institute of Health Research Enhancement Awards (R15) grants, considering recent federal grant policy changes affecting healthcare professional schools.

Byrd-Jacobs provided the Graduate College report

- Governor Gretchen Whitmer issued a recent proclamation recognizing Graduate Student Appreciation Week.
- 21 graduate student research grants and 45 travel grants have been awarded.
- Strong student engagement in grant writing and presenting research at professional conferences.
- The Graduate College has been awarded six dissertation completion fellowships.
- For the Thurgood Marshall Award, six applicants received awards, along with six additional recruitment-focused awards aimed at attracting graduate students to Western Michigan University.
- The all-university awards celebration was successful and highlighted the positive impact these awards have on graduate students.
- Successful Graduate Poster Day, with 32 students presenting. This marked the 19th year of the event.
- Upcoming events include the logo contest and May commencement ceremony

Reports of Council Standing Committees

Miller provided the Research Screening Committee report that application numbers were 50% lower than the previous year. Of the 17 applications received, 10 were awarded.

There were relatively few submissions from the creative arts. Miller noted that the small sample size makes it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions about success rates and trends. He emphasized the importance of being mindful of potential disciplinary bias in award decisions. Discussion followed, including a suggestion to review historical FRACCA award data to better assess any patterns of bias. Miller read into record an email from

Andre Venter regarding the possibility of disclosing reviewer identities (in aggregate) for these awards. Discussion was held regarding the challenges associated with this approach, including reviewer recruitment, transparency considerations, the potential role of artificial intelligence, and broader ethical issues related to the review and award process. A suggestion was made to require past FRACCA awardees to serve as reviewers before becoming eligible to apply again. It was agreed that this topic warrants further discussion and may require a dedicated charge to examine the review process and potential procedural changes.

Barrett left the meeting at 3:24 p.m.

Chair Durham reported that there were no additional updates from Subcommittee One, as the work of the committee has been completed and previously distributed to members.

Subcommittee Two reported that a document has been developed and shared via Teams outlining Western Michigan University's values and guidance on the use of artificial intelligence (AI). A question was raised about the use of AI in the peer review process and whether it is addressed in the document. The committee indicated that this topic is not yet fully covered but will be added, along with guidance related to copyright and intellectual property. The committee will continue its work into the next academic year. There was general agreement on the need for consistency across university units in approaches to AI usage.

Ex Officio DeFulio provided the Subcommittee Three report noting a crosswalk document has been created and shared in Teams for review. He explained that ORI policies related to federal compliance fall outside the purview of the RCSC and therefore should not be addressed by this body. DeFulio suggested that any remaining externally mandated MOAs are also not the responsibility of the RCSC and recommended that the Council formally abdicate this responsibility. Discussion was held regarding the challenges of articulating policies across different agencies and the changing nature of federal laws.

[MOTION] It was moved by DeFulio, seconded by Straight, that the RCSC formally abdicate responsibility for federal, externally mandated policies, as it is outside this body's

purview. The motion carried unanimously.

New Business

Chair Durham inquired about any proposed changes to the Year-end Report that had been distributed with the agenda. Members identified a few minor typographical errors; otherwise, there was general agreement that the report was accurate and acceptable. Chair Durham indicated that he would make the corrections and redistribute the revised report to the council.

[MOTION] It was moved by DeFulio, seconded by Miller, to provisionally accept the report as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Durham suggested that the FRACAA base budget for the next fiscal year should remain the same as this fiscal year, and the WMU President's Office be encouraged to continue additional funding for faculty travel with a cap of \$140,000.

[MOTION] It was moved by DeFulio, seconded by Seker, that the RCSC retain the budgeted amount for the next academic year. The motion carried unanimously.

Announcements

None.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by Defulio, seconded by Ozyurek, to adjourn the meeting at 3:47 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval

Submitted by Jesse M. Smith, Secretary

Minutes were approved on 3 September 2026