
EXECUTIVE BOARD**Minutes of 28 August 2026****Call to Order**

The meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Executive Board was called to order at 10:30 a.m. on 28 August 2026, at Ellsworth Hall, room 3201, by Janet Hahn, president.

Roll Call

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

Member Absent: Andre Venter

Guests: Christopher Cheatham, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs; Keith Hahn, General Counsel; Andrew Holmes, Chief Information Officer; Tony Proudfoot, Vice President for Marketing and Strategic Communications; Jan Van Der Kley, Vice President for Business and Finance

Recording Secretary in Attendance: Sue Brodasky, Administrator

Quorum

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

Agenda

A request for recommendations to the Public Safety Oversight committee was added to new business.

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

Approval of Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Hains, seconded by Naugle, to approve the 14 August, 2026 meeting minutes as presented. The motion carried.

WMU's Administrative Redesign Collaborative Conversations

Interim Provost Cheatham, General Counsel Hahn, and Vice President Van Der Kley provided an overview of the Financial and Administrative Operations Assessment. Approximately 224 employees are participating in the Huron-supported assessment of administrative functions. The project includes a five-week assessment phase, eight-week design phase, and approximately four-month implementation phase beginning in 2027. Cheatham emphasized that no predetermined organizational structure has been established and that faculty engagement will continue. A question was raised regarding how effectiveness will be assessed following implementation. Van Der Kley and Cheatham indicated that process and outcome measures and periodic evaluations are anticipated. It was questioned whether ongoing updates would be provided to the Campus Planning and Finance Council, particularly given upcoming leadership retirements. Van Der Kley confirmed that appropriate representatives would continue providing updates. A question was raised regarding consideration of future-focused organizational models. Van Der Kley explained that the design phase will consider multiple organizational structures and hybrid approaches informed by Huron's experience with comparable institutions.

Interim Provost Cheatham, General Counsel Hahn, and Vice President Van Der Kley provided an update on the Strategic Space Utilization initiative, which seeks to improve classroom utilization and learning environments. Cheatham explained that course caps should reflect pedagogy and enrollment history to support appropriate classroom assignments, with an industry utilization benchmark of approximately 70%. A question was raised regarding whether improved utilization could result in underutilized buildings being taken offline. Cheatham indicated that consolidation could reduce operating costs while concentrating resources in higher-quality instructional spaces. It was questioned how HyFlex courses and specialized technology needs would be incorporated into

scheduling. Cheatham acknowledged the need to better identify instructional modalities and classroom capabilities. A concern was raised that classroom assignments must account for pedagogical needs, particularly collaborative and active-learning courses. Cheatham agreed that assignments should reflect pedagogy rather than simply maximize occupancy. It was suggested that the initiative be presented to the Faculty Senate for broader faculty input.

General Counsel Hahn and Vice President Van Der Kley provided an overview of the Strategic Sourcing and Non-Personnel Spending initiative, which seeks to improve purchasing consistency, leverage institutional purchasing power, and streamline procurement. The initiative includes risk-based contract review, electronic procurement, and expanded preferred-vendor catalogs. Hahn reported that contracts under \$25,000 generally would not require legal review unless risk factors are identified or assistance is requested. Van Der Kley explained that procurement systems and preferred vendors will help integrate purchasing and payment processes and standardize common purchases. It was questioned whether the initiative would apply to grant-funded research and specialized scientific purchases. Van Der Kley clarified that applicability would be based primarily on the item purchased rather than the funding source. Common goods purchased with grant funds would generally follow standardized purchasing processes, while specialized research equipment, materials, and other low-frequency purchases would likely remain outside preferred-vendor catalogs while potentially using streamlined procurement and payment processes.

Chief Information Officer Holmes provided an update on the Information Technology Organizational Design initiative, currently in the discovery phase. Information is being gathered regarding unit responsibilities, technical needs, budgets, contracts, and specialized requirements while IT practices are being standardized. Holmes reported that University-wide service-level expectations will establish baseline services, with service-level agreements addressing specialized needs. A unified service desk is also being developed to provide a single point of support for students, faculty, and staff. It was questioned how instructional technology support would be integrated into the

model. Holmes explained that the redesign is intended to eliminate the need for users to determine which IT unit should address an issue. Additional priorities include centralized documentation, local IT support, digital fluency and training, and coordinated software support. It was suggested that the Academic and Information Technology Council charges include participation in the IT Organizational Design process.

Vice President Proudfoot provided an update on the Marketing and Communications Organizational Design initiative, which seeks to unify currently distributed marketing functions and develop specialized expertise. The discovery phase will continue through October and includes surveys and interviews with marketing staff and users. The redesign is intended to strengthen enrollment, institutional branding, and undergraduate, graduate, and international marketing. It was questioned how academic departments would be supported with recruitment and retention. Proudfoot indicated that colleges and departments would be connected with specialized marketing professionals. A question was raised regarding how faculty would participate in developing the University's identity and brand. Proudfoot explained that a separate University-wide brand strategy process is underway and will include broader engagement. When questioned about anticipated areas of specialization, Proudfoot identified creative services, strategic communications, digital marketing, research, analytics, and strategic planning.

Reports of Officers

President Hahn reported on her meeting with President Kavalhuna which included discussion of reduced-credit-hour degree programs. She had subsequent discussions with Lisa DeChano-Cook, Curriculum Manager and Adriana Cardoso Reyes, regarding Higher Learning Commission compliance. If approved by existing governing bodies WMU may initially submit only two reduced-credit degree proposals to the HLC, requiring the University to establish a process for reviewing and selecting proposals. Discussion was held regarding the broader academic implications, including whether WMU should pursue 90-credit bachelor's degrees and the potential need to reassess

WMU Essential Studies requirements. Rudge suggested holding a Faculty Senate discussion to inform faculty and solicit input before proceeding.

The council and committee first fall meetings start next week and include leadership training, officer elections, and 2026-27 charges. Liaisons are expected to oversee elections. Discussion was held regarding the first meetings.

Vice President Rudge reported meeting with representatives of the Western Association of Retired Faculty and Emeriti Council. Both organizations experience challenges maintaining contact with retired faculty, similar to challenges maintaining connections with alumni. Rudge has requested assistance in addressing the issue and is working to increase campus awareness of both organizations. He has also communicated these concerns to the provost.

New Business

President Hahn, Naugle, and Szabla presented a proposal to establish an Ad Hoc Academic Innovation and Foresight Committee (AdHoc-AIFC). Discussion was held regarding the committee's relationship with existing councils and workgroups. It was recommended that a liaison from the Undergraduate Studies Council's Experience-Driven Learning Committee serve on or otherwise maintain formal communication with the ad hoc committee to coordinate related work. Szabla clarified that the committee would focus on strategic foresight, including supporting institutional efforts to define and communicate WMU's distinctiveness. Discussion was held regarding membership and coordination among related groups.

[MOTION] It was moved by Rudge, seconded by Hains, to approve the committee creation recommendation. The motion carried.

President Hahn led discussion regarding faculty representation on the Public Safety Oversight Committee, due 11 September. Hains agreed to continue as a representative, and a second representative is needed. President Hahn will make a request seeking a volunteer from the Campus Planning and Finance Council as was suggested.

Unfinished Business

Review of the proposed 2026-27 charges for the Academic and Information Technology Council, Campus Planning and Finance Council, and the Research and Creative Scholarship Council.

[MOTION] It was moved by Rudge, seconded by Szabla, to approve the AITC 2026-67 charges as presented. The motion carried.

[MOTION] It was moved by Schroeter, seconded by Naugle, to approve the CPFC 2026-67 charges as presented. The motion carried.

[MOTION] It was moved by Rudge, seconded by Schroeter, to approve the RCSC 2026-67 charges as presented. The motion carried.

University Committee Reports

Hadley provided the Digital Accessibility Committee report that the committee continues to meet weekly and is a very large committee with a generous amount of work to be completed.

Naugle reported on current discussions regarding Experience-Driven Learning and strategic program review. Discussion was held regarding Senate involvement.

Announcements

Hains reported that the Ask a Bronco initiative seeks to expand alumni mentorship and requested opportunities to present to the Executive Board and Faculty Senate to increase faculty awareness and promotion of the program. It was questioned whether emeriti faculty could participate as alumni, and Decker confirmed they could.

Naugle reported that Experience-Driven Learning venture grant opportunities will be announced soon.

Adjournment

President Hahn adjourned the meeting at 12:12 p.m. The Executive Board will meet next on 11 September 2026 at 10:30 a.m. at Ellsworth Hall, room 3201 and via Webex.

Approval

Submitted Sue Brodasky, Faculty Senate Administrator

Minutes were approved 11 September 2026.