
EXECUTIVE BOARD**Minutes of 11 September 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 11 September 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, Andre Venter

Guest: Remzi Seker, Vice President for Research and Innovation

Recording Secretary in Attendance: Sue Brodasky, Administrator

Quorum

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

Agenda

[MOTION] It was moved by Schroeter, seconded by Szabla, to accept the agenda as presented. The motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Rudge, seconded by Schroeter, to approve the 28 August, 2026 meeting minutes as presented. With one abstention, the motion carried.

Western Michigan University Research 1 Designation

Vice President for Research and Innovation Remzi Seker discussed Western Michigan University's movement toward Research 1 (R1) status and responded to questions submitted by the Executive Board. He emphasized that WMU has not deliberately pursued R1 designation but is positioned to achieve it based on existing research activity and changes in classification criteria. When asked about the anticipated timing, Seker stated that WMU's R1 status is expected in spring 2028.

Discussion focused on sustaining R1 status while maintaining WMU's student-centered mission. Seker stated that research should directly support student success through undergraduate and graduate research opportunities, interdisciplinary experiences, and externally funded projects. Questions were raised regarding additional internal research funding, infrastructure, shared resources, and the potential impact of increased research expectations on faculty workload. Seker acknowledged resource limitations and cultural barriers to sharing existing equipment and services across colleges and emphasized the need for greater coordination and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Discussion was held regarding balancing research growth with enrollment challenges and student needs. A question was raised regarding whether adding employment-oriented skills and credentials could move WMU toward a vocational model. Seker stated that such opportunities should supplement, rather than replace, disciplinary education and critical-thinking development.

Also, it was questioned about interdisciplinary and undergraduate research and their relationship to Experience-Driven Learning. Seker identified inconsistent college-level research structures and limited staffing within the Office of Research and Innovation as barriers to greater coordination. He expressed support for a stronger role for the Research and Scholarship Council/Committee and noted the need for greater multidisciplinary research collaboration.

Discussion was held regarding equitable distribution of research resources. Seker requested clarification equity and how it should be applied, equal funding, baseline

support across disciplines, strategic investment, or recognition of demonstrated success. A question was also raised regarding whether the Office of Research and Innovation could more proactively connect faculty with external funding opportunities. Seker stated that additional research-development capacity and improved information about faculty expertise would be needed.

A question was raised regarding the need for a shared institutional vision for R1. Seker stated that the Faculty Senate, as a shared governance partner, should play a significant role in defining what WMU intends to become as a research university. Sustaining research growth will require continued investment, cultural change, interdisciplinary collaboration, and ongoing engagement among faculty and University leadership.

Hains joined the meeting at 11:23 a.m.

Reports of Officers

President Hahn reported on her attendance at the University's matriculation ceremony for incoming undergraduate students. While the event was well attended, faculty participation was limited. Discussion was held regarding encouraging greater faculty involvement in future matriculation activities to strengthen students' introduction to the academic community.

President Hahn referenced information previously distributed regarding Higher Learning Commission requirements and reduced-credit bachelor's degrees. Discussion was held regarding the governance process for establishing programs requiring fewer than 120 credit hours. Because an existing Memorandum of Action establishes the 120-credit-hour requirement, it was noted that a new or revised MOA may be necessary. The Ad Hoc Academic Innovation and Strategic Foresight Committee has been charged with examining reduced-credit bachelor's degrees.

President Hahn reported that Interim Provost Christopher Cheatham has been named Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, more clearly establishing the position's leadership role within the University administration. Hahn also reported on the appointment of Vice President for Business and Finance and Chief Financial Officers Carlos Rodriguez, who will begin transitioning into his new administrative role October 1.

Vice President Rudge did not provide a report.

New Business

Hains and Brodasky explained a recent request of the Faculty Senate to provide disability accommodations for a departmental Senator. Hains explained the parliamentary expectation and acceptable accommodation. It was noted that a volunteer was needed to serve as the Senator's intermediary. Immediate Past President Naugle volunteered.

President Hahn raised the topic of timelines for the Faculty Senate Appraisal of President Kavalhuna and Provost Cheatham. Discussion was held with several recommendations for the timing of the provost's appraisal. She also noted the need for revision of the appraisal instrument, and asked for volunteers to serve on an ad hoc committee to complete the work. Sazbla, Hains, Schroder, and Brodasky volunteered. Staff will organize a first meeting.

President Hahn informed about a request for a volunteer to serve bi-weekly during fall 2026 on the HLC Quality Improvement committee. It was suggested that President Hahn fill the committee seat.

Unfinished Business

Review of the proposed membership and 2026-27 charges for the Academic Innovation and Foresight Committee. It was suggested that Vice President for Research and

Innovation, or their designee, be added as a non-voting advisory role. Debated followed to which it was agreed.

[MOTION] It was moved by Naugle, seconded by Rudge, to approve the AdHoc-AIFC charges as amended. The motion carried.

University Committee Reports

None.

Council and Committee Reports

Venter provided the Centers and Institutes Committee report via email, which included:

- President Hahn, Hains, and Brodasky attended and provided officer training.
- Election of officers
 - Chair: Eric Archer
 - Vice Chair: Jana Schulman
 - Secretary: Lee Wells
- Ex Officio reported that following the meeting he reached out to administration regarding the comprehensive list of centers and institutes that the CIC have requested, to which he was informed that the list has gone to the academic deans as of today.

Szabla provided the Professional Concerns Committee report via email, which included:

- Hains facilitated the meeting in President Hahn's absence.
- The meeting focused primarily on organizational matters. Committee training and procedures were reviewed.
- Election of officers
 - Chair: Michael Kahwaji
 - Vice Chair: Amy Zufelt
 - Secretary: Marian Tripplett

Hadley provided the International Education Council report via email, which included:

- President Hahn facilitated the meeting, which focused on organizational matters. Parliamentary procedures, committee responsibilities, and training.
- Election of officers
 - Chair: Anna Popkova
 - Vice Chair: Shannon McMorrow
 - Secretary: Vanessa Hills

Hains provided the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee report, which included:

- The newly elected chair contacted him regarding development of 2026-27 charges for the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee.

Rudge provided the Undergraduate Studies Council report via email, which included:

- President Hahn facilitated the meeting, which focused primarily on organizational matters. Committee training and procedures were reviewed.
- Election of officers
 - Chair: Jessica Cataldo
 - Vice Chair: Bret Wagner
 - Secretary: Dylan McGlothlin

Naugle provided the Campus Planning and Finance Council report via email, which included:

- President Hahn facilitated the meeting, which focused primarily on organizational matters. Parliamentary procedures were reviewed by Hains and committee training and procedures were presented by Brodasky.
- Election of officers
 - Chair: Todd Barkman
 - Vice Chair: Kim Ganzevoort
 - Secretary: Lynn Heasley
- President Hahn presented the council charges and brief discussion was held.

Teichert provided the Graduate Studies Council report via email, which included:

- President Hahn and Brodasky attended and provided officer training.
- Election of officers
 - Chair: Michael Harnar
 - Vice Chair: Marcellis Zondag
 - Secretary: Jennifer Fiore

Announcements

Naugle reported that a request for Faculty Senate participation in an upcoming University initiative is anticipated. Discussion was held regarding identifying potential faculty representatives in advance to ensure sufficient candidates are available. The initiative's steering committee will determine the formal name and scope of the process. Suggested representatives are to be forwarded to President Hahn for consideration.

Adjournment

President Hahn adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m. The Executive Board will meet next on 25 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 25 September 2026.