
**WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee
Minutes of 5 December 2023**

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee was called to order at 1:01 p.m. on 5 December 2023, via Webex video conferencing, by Brian Tripp, chair.

Roll Call

Members in Attendance: Elissa Allen, Elizabeth Isidro, Lindsay Jeffers, Lois Lemon, Lei Meng, Jessica Parker, Brenda Srof, Brian Tripp, Kathryn Wagner

Advisory Members Present: Jonathan Bush, Carrie Cumming, Lisa DeChano-Cook, Randy Ott

Ex Officio Present: Decker Hains

Guest: Brian Carnell, Associate Director Educational Technology, Online Education

Quorum

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

Lemon joined the meeting at 1:12 p.m.

Agenda

It was moved by Jeffers, seconded by Parker, to accept the agenda as presented. The motion was carried unanimously.

Minutes

It was moved by Allen, seconded by Wagner, to approve the 14 November 2023 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

Chair Tripp reported 25 courses were recently approved by the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee and are ready for review and approval by the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee.

Ex Officio Hains did not have a report.

Reports of University Representatives

Bush reported that the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee review of course applications is complete with 77 courses reviewed and 30 approved. Some initially rejected courses were later approved with minor changes. A goal is to bring this ratio up, the 47 courses rejected cannot be approved until 2024. A new process will be created in Curriculog, pending approval by the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee and the Faculty Senate. The process should be different for minor versus major changes and encourage WMU Essential Studies courses to change from four to three credit hours. Bush is requesting a second process, with one process in Curriculog for a revision, and another process for new courses. If WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee wants to encourage departments to move from four credit hours to three credit hours, the process needs to be easier to make that change. There is currently one WMU Essential Studies course submission deadline, 31 October, followed by approval by the WMU Registrar by December, to be included in the following academic year catalog.

The WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee would like to have review sessions for new and revised courses submitted for inclusion in the WMU Essential Studies Program, with the option for an initial review to be submitted in March. This committee will review the course in April and it may be approved or rejected, but rejected courses can be resubmitted in October. A preliminary submission deadline will be added in April and a final deadline in October, which gives an opportunity to review and revise. Bush will prepare a proposal that the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee can review and approve in January.

Bush reported that new WMU Essential Studies course proposals are more problematic; most course proposals are rejected because of their assessment plans. Bush is working to create a document to advise instructor applicants on components of good assessment plans. Bush also plans to educate departments about WMU Essential Studies course requirements during the 2024 spring semester to provide more information about what makes a good WMU Essential Studies course proposal. It is also intended that more new WMU Essential Studies course applications will be rejected at the department and college level before being submitted for review by the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee.

Bush also discussed the cyclic review of WMU Essential Studies courses. This year, there will be more feedback provided for courses undergoing cyclic review. The four areas reviewed are Global Perspectives, Artistic Theory and Practice, Personal Wellness, and Quantitative Literacy. Department chairs will receive emails in December with instructions and one faculty member will be responsible for each course review. This cyclic review process is intended to be informational not punitive.

Bush discussed the comprehensive fourth-year review process for all WMU Essential Studies courses. This process is always a four-year cycle. There will be committees and subcommittees dedicated to different aspects of the process. The process will require many faculty members to serve on these committees. This will be the major task for both the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee and the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee for the 2024-25 academic year and will require participation by approximately 60 faculty and staff.

Unfinished Business

Tripp reported on several vacancies on the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee. Representatives are still needed from the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Fine Arts.

Ott reported that the recruitment of members for the new Ad-Hoc WMU Essential Studies Transfer of Credit Committee system and structure is in process. Robert Bensley from the College of Health and Human Services has agreed to chair this committee, and seven to eight members have been identified to serve on the committee. The goal is to meet for the first time in January and work through a draft proposal within two to three meetings. Tripp has agreed to serve on the committee.

New Business

Tripp reported that Anne-Marie Guidy-Oulai from the Haworth College of Business has requested to serve on the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee.

It was moved by Allen, seconded by Srof, to approve Anne Marie Guidy-Oulai as a new representative-at-large on the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee.

Tripp reported that the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee needs to approve 25 courses approved by WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee in December. A discussion was held about the list of courses, including new versus revised courses, credit hour requirements, prerequisites, and Level 2 versus Level 3 categories.

It was moved by Isidro, seconded by Parker, to approve the 25 courses. The motion carried unanimously.

Announcements

None.

Adjournment

Chair Tripp adjourned the meeting at 1:50 p.m. The WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee will meet next on 9 January 2024 via Webex.

Approval

Submitted by Lindsay Jeffers, Secretary

Minutes approved 9 January 2024.