

**WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY**  
**FACULTY SENATE**  
**WMU ESSENTIAL STUDIES EXECUTIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes of 16 October 2018**

**Members Present:** Leigh Ford, Yvonne Ford, Decker Hains, Kevin Knutson, Staci Perryman-Clark, Elke Schoffers, Sarah Summy, Delores Walcott

**Members Absent:** Ed Martini

**Ex Officio Member Present:** Suzan Ayers

**Advisory Members Present:** Mervyn Elliott, Marilyn Duke, Matt Provenzale, Dave Reinhold

**Advisory Members Absent:** Jeanne Baron, Carrie Cumming

Committee Chair Sarah Summy called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

**PROCEDURAL ITEMS**

*Acceptance of the Agenda*

A motion was made by L. Ford, seconded by Hains, to accept the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

*Approval of the 2 October 2018 minutes*

A motion was made by Hains, seconded by Knutson, to approve the 2 October minutes as provided. Motion carried.

*Chair's Remarks*

Summy's comments included:

- Ayers had discussed the baccalaureate-writing requirement with the Faculty Senate Executive Board again at its last meeting. It was confirmed that baccalaureate writing is not part of WMU Essential Studies and if asked committee members should continue to respond as such. Departments/programs should determine individually whether baccalaureate writing is included in their curriculum.
- The most recent Navigating WMU Essential Studies workshop had approximately 20 participants, so in total approximately 100 faculty have attended.
- A letter was received from the College of Arts and Sciences International Committee asking for exceptions to the WMU Essential Studies guidelines. The same request was made to the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee.

*WMU Essential Studies Director's Remarks*

Elliott's comments included:

- A revised draft of the Scientific Literacy rubric was distributed. Elliott met with non-laboratory sciences faculty to revise the rubric based on concerns regarding measuring outcomes for non-laboratory science. Hains noted that the same outcome applies to both Science and Technology and Science with a Lab. The revised rubric will be adopted for both course categories and faculty will be required to choose the appropriate criteria for their course. Elliott will notify chairs of this change.
- Questions from the workshops were reviewed:
  - When asked who would receive credit if a course is team taught, it

was noted that the WMU Essential Studies program does not affect workload assignments or calculations.

- Faculty are expected to examine the course outcomes and student learning outcomes to identify the best fit for the courses when trying to determine how to select one course category when a course seems to fit into several.
- It was noted that the College of Arts and Sciences faculty have asked for a way to differentiate WMU Essential Studies course submissions from other course submissions. Provenzale will code the submission process such that WMU Essential Studies courses are identified by their title in the workflow.
- The Course Review and Approval Checklist was tested and feedback has been received. L. Ford asked if the checklist could be distributed and named as such to not include "approval". Hains will revise the form and also include the version date, as well as the notation that it is subject to change.
- The College of Arts and Sciences has asked to withhold course submissions in order to gain a perspective of the college's course offerings prior to submission; therefore, it is anticipated that CAS course submissions will arrive late in the process.
- L. Ford also asked if the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee would require a syllabus from each faculty member teaching a specific course. Hains stated that it would not unless there are differences in the syllabi such as readings and/or assignments. In such cases, the faculty submitting the course is asked to identify those differences.
- Elliott continues to meet with faculty on an individual basis to answer questions and address issues.

*WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee Chair's Remarks*

Hains comments included:

- At the recent meeting, the committee approved a General Education course submission.
- Committee members identified areas of expertise and interest for assignments to subcommittees and the final assignments will be made at the next meeting.
- It was determined that submissions will be modified to a single PDF file in order to simplify attached documents for reviewers.
- The committee reviewed several topics regarding acceptable justifications for deviation from standards, such as:
  - **Course Frequency:** particularly applicable to study abroad courses, since preparation and logistics for such courses is time intensive. There are reasonable rationale for offering the course only every other year. Reinhold pointed out that study abroad is a high impact practice, which is correlated with student success. Summy was asked to inform the CAS International Committee that exceptions for study abroad courses will be allowed and courses not being offered every year can be submitted for inclusion in WMU Essential Studies. This exception will be for study abroad courses only and variable topics courses will not be allowed. Also, all

courses, including study abroad, must be reviewed and have a designated Level, Category, and student learning outcomes which will be assessed.

**Credit Hour Requirements:** Perryman-Clark noted that writing intensive English courses are four credits, to reflect the amount of feedback and individual student meetings required to meet the course outcomes. Summy pointed out that this is an example of an adequate rationale for credit hour requirements.

- **Enrollment Caps:** caps have been established in Level-III at 25 to 30 students. Faculty must provide clear and reasonable rationale as to why the course should have an enrollment greater than 30; such rationale must include details of the faculty's ability to adequately evaluate the student learning outcomes.

### **DISCUSSION/INFORMATION ITEMS**

#### *Substitutions/Equivalencies*

At a previous meeting, Elliott had distributed a draft of guidelines for substitutions, which included a proposition for keeping those courses only visible to the students in the majors. It was noted that this might be problematic for students who decide to switch majors, as they may need to see what the requirements and equivalencies are for their intended majors. Elliott suggests that the programs who need substitutions/equivalencies be required to submit a curriculum mapping prior to the finalization of the guidelines.

#### *Feedback and Questions*

Topic was postponed to the next meeting.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee will meet next on 30 October 2018 from 1 to 2:30 p.m., in the Bernhard Center, room 205. Chair Sarah Summy adjourned the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

Submitted by: Yvonne Ford, Secretary