

**WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE
WMU ESSENTIAL STUDIES EXECUTIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes of 5 February 2019**

Members Present: Leigh Ford, Yvonne Ford, Decker Hains, Staci Perryman-Clark, Sarah Summy

Members Absent: Kevin Knutson, Ed Martini, Elke Schoffers, Delores Walcott

Ex Officio Member Present: Suzan Ayers

Advisory Members Present: Carrie Cumming, Mervyn Elliott, Matt Provenzale, Dave Reinhold

Advisory Members Absent: Jeanne Baron, Marilyn Duke

Committee Chair Sarah Summy called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m.

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

Acceptance of the Agenda

A motion was made by Ayers, seconded by Hains, to accept the agenda as provided.

Motion carried.

Approval of the Minutes – 22 January 2019

A motion was made by Hains, seconded by L. Ford, to approve the minutes of 22 January as provided. Motion carried.

Chair's Remarks – Summy

Summy's comments included:

- The Brightspace contract has been approved. Brightspace will add the functionality to D2L needed in order to track learning outcomes. Discussion was held regarding the role of D2L staff, WMU staff, and faculty for the product rollout.
- Summy reported on the course approval retreat held on 25 January.
 - participants were engaged and focused
 - demonstrated a true peer review process
 - committee members were thorough in reviewing the proposal documents
 - committee members were complimentary of their peers' submitted courses, and noted that they were getting ideas for learning assessments for their own courses
 - 66 courses reviewed
 - majority of reviewed courses were approved
 - reasons sighted for courses that were not approved:
 - more than the required number of student outcomes (reviewers did not know which to keep and which to eliminate)
 - credit hours for the course not indicated
 - incomplete assessment plans
 - assessment plans that were too complicated
 - the committee had a conversation about how to improve the process for future retreats

- As a result of the retreat, confusion arose regarding the definition of diversity pertaining to the Diversity and Inclusion outcome. This committee agreed by consensus that the already established definitions should be used.
- Also from the retreat, the Quantitative Literacy review team expressed concerns about the wide range of courses submitted for inclusion in the course category. Math courses from the exploratory level to calculus are included, and prerequisites for some of these courses are listed in the same course category. The concern is that students who do not need foundation level classes should not be forced to take such courses just because of their major (i.e. students who are required to take calculus for their major have already met the Student Learning Outcomes for algebra). Cumming noted that students who meet prerequisite course requirements either through testing out, SAT score, or AP courses, receive credit for that prerequisite course. Y. Ford pointed out that higher-level courses could have the same Student Learning Outcome, but higher-level assessment criteria can be used to determine competency. It was determined that the committee will evaluate the data from courses in this category once the program is implemented, and make appropriate changes.

WMU Essential Studies

Course Review and Approval Committee Chair's Remarks – Hains

During the Review and Approval Committee's regularly scheduled meeting on 4 February, some additional courses were approved. Some of those approved were in the Diversity and Inclusion category. The next retreat is 15 February.

Provenzale reported that OIT would be changing the course owner's work view such that it can be viewed but not altered. It is anticipated this change will reduce the issue of formatting changes that occur with revisions and should make future formatting of submissions easier.

WMU Essential Studies Director's Remarks – Elliott

Elliott outlined the process for notifying course originators of required changes. For minor changes, such as inconsistent listing of credit hours, inaccurate or incomplete catalog information, he will be contacting the faculty initiator to inquire if he may make the changes. This process will prevent the proposal from being denied and returned to the faculty initiator and going back through the entire workflow in order to make relatively benign changes. Email tracking those interactions will be saved to the shared OneDrive.

Elliott reported that preliminary review of course submissions is indicating that there may be insufficient courses in oral and digital communication. Elliott will continue to monitor this situation.

DISCUSSION / INFORMATION ITEMS

Feedback and Questions

L. Ford raised a resource issue; without having the program approved, the committee cannot accurately forecast resource needs. Summy and Elliott stated that such information would not be available until after the final retreat in April. Elliott also noted that the committee would need to review historical data to make forecasts and related decisions. Success will lie in configuring the competencies correctly.

Ayers asked when course originators would be informed that their course is approved for inclusion in the WMU Essential Studies program. Summy responded that it would be around 1 July, because final decisions will not be made until all of the courses are approved and the entire curriculum can be reviewed. However, if the course is not recommended for approval at any point in the workflow, the originator will be notified of recommended changes immediately.

ADJOURNMENT

The WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee will meet next on 19 February 2019 from 1 to 2:30 p.m., in the Bernhard Center room 205. Chair Sarah Summy adjourned the meeting at 2:28 p.m.

Submitted by: Yvonne Ford, Secretary