Members Absent: Jessica Parker, Diane Riggs
Ex Officio Member Present: Sarah Summy
Advisory Members Present: Marilyn Duke, Mervyn Elliott, Matt Provenzale, Dave Reinhold
Advisory Members Absent: Jeanne Baron, Carrie Cumming

Committee Chair pro tempore Sarah Summy called the meeting to order at 1 p.m.

PROCEDURAL ITEMS
Acceptance of the Agenda
A motion was made by Hains, seconded by Knutson, to accept the agenda as provided. Motion carried.

Approval of the Minutes – 10 May 2019
A motion was made by Ayers, seconded by Knutson, to approve the minutes of 10 May as provided. Motion carried.

WMU Essential Studies Director’s Remarks – Elliott
Elliott reported that a web developer has been hired and will begin work on a student website as of 1 July 2019. This new webpage will be directed toward students and will not be linked to the Faculty Senate webpage.

ACTION ITEMS
WMU Essential Studies Mission and Vision Approval
Hains presented the proposed mission statement that had been distributed to committee members via email, reflecting the most recent modifications based on committee feedback at the 10 May retreat. Hains expressed appreciation to Ayers and Riggs for their suggestions. Suggestions were made for further edits. A motion was made by Ayers, seconded by Y. Ford, to accept the mission statement as edited. Motion carried.

WMU Essential Studies Mission Statement:
The WMU Essential Studies Program provides Western Michigan University undergraduate students an integrated curriculum designed around a university-wide set of Essential Studies Learning Outcomes which enhance the quality of the undergraduate experience.

The vision statement that had also been distributed via email was reviewed. A motion was made by Knutson, seconded by Ayers, to accept the vision statement as presented. Motion carried.

WMU Essential Studies Vision Statement:
Using a learner-centered approach, the WMU Essential Studies program enables students to succeed in an ever-changing world by expanding their understanding of human cultures and the physical/natural world, enhancing their intellectual and practical skills, and exercising personal and social responsibility through integrated and applied learning.

DISCUSSION / INFORMATION ITEMS
Review Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis
Summy briefly reviewed the results of the SWOT analysis conducted at the 10 May retreat which were distributed to the committee members via email. She asked committee members for corrections or edits, but none were identified.

Class Size at Level 3 Interpretation
Elliott noted that in MOA 17/05: Revision of WMU General Education Curriculum the class size for Level 3 courses is suggested to be limited to 25 to 30 students. However, it is not an explicitly stated requirement. Some courses were submitted for Level 3 approval with up to 67 available seats, which were approved by the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee based on the selected Student Learning Outcomes and an appropriate assessment plan. In other instances, courses submitted that would have met the intent and outcomes for Level 3 were submitted in Level 2 categories so as to retain the higher number of available seats. Elliott asked for guidance from the committee as to how to manage the enrollment issue for these courses. Discussion was held regarding the following items:
- The rationale for the suggested 25 to 30 seats was to promote in-depth discussion and assessment of outcomes more suited for smaller classes.
- The issue of responsible use of available resources was raised; if faculty believe that they can adequately assess outcomes in a larger class, is it responsible to suggest a two-fold (or higher) increase in required resources?
- Having smaller class sizes at Level 3 is aspirational, but may not be achievable at this time.
- The WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee approved courses knowing that the number of seats exceeded 25 to 30 seats; is it appropriate for this committee to overturn that determination.

After discussion, the committee agreed to allow the higher enrolled courses to go forward as approved. If the student learning outcomes can be met, larger class sizes for Level 3 courses are allowed. Achievement of student learning outcomes will be analyzed as the program rolls out; these courses will likely not be assessed for three years.

Review Process for Changing Categories by Initiator
Hains presented a draft of a process for course initiators to request a change of level or category for a course. The intent of this process is to allow already approved courses to be offered in a different category than the one for which they were initially submitted. It is expected that some courses will be required to change categories; and if initiators are required to restart the course submission process from the beginning, they may opt not to resubmit. The proposed process would allow for an email submission, rather than submission through the electronic curriculum process. Discussion was held regarding the following items:
• The proposed process would only be allowed for courses that were previously approved by the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee.
• The proposed process will be shared via individual messages with the initiators who are being asked to consider changing the category or level of a course.
• A brief statement of rationale for the proposed change must be included in the email resubmission, even if it is being made at the request of the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee.
• Deans will be notified of requests for changes via email.
• To maintain the integrity of the peer review process, the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee will review requests for changes and approve or deny the request.

The committee was in agreement regarding the process.

Call for New Course Proposals
Hains distributed a draft letter to be sent to deans, chairs, and directors requesting a review of the draft program. Elliott distributed a document outlining the approved courses. Hains and Summy proposed sending the documents to deans, assistant deans, chairs, and directors. Several committee members expressed concerns about simply sending out the documents. Discussion was held regarding the following items:
• The documents as formatted appear very similar to the current General Education curriculum “picklist” of courses. A concern is that it would be interpreted as a rehash of the old curriculum.
• Distribution by email may get lost/buried due to the volume of email academic leaders receive on a daily basis, especially if individuals are away from their office for a period of time.
• It was suggested that the curriculum and the request for additional courses materials be presented at a meeting, such as Academic Forum or the Provost’s Council. Such a meeting would focus the participants’ attention on the task of reviewing the program and allow committee members to identify errors, answer questions, and solicit ideas for new courses.

Summy and Hains noted the deadline to have the draft of the program distributed is 1 July, and scheduling a meeting might delay that goal. Summy, Hains, and Elliott will determine the next steps.

Program Process First Look
Suggestions were offered to Elliott for additions to the draft of the program, including:
• Include the date in the document footer.
• Change the document watermark from “DRAFT” to “PRELIMINARY” or “PROPOSED”.
• Include the credit hours for each course.
• List the courses in the order in which the categories are listed in the MOA and DegreeWorks (e.g. use an asterisk to designate courses in the Diversity and Inclusion and Planetary Sustainability categories).

Call for Marketing Subcommittee
Item postponed to next meeting.

Review Summer Projects
Item postponed to next meeting.

ACTION ITEMS, Cont.
Program First Look Approval
Item postponed to next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT
The WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee will meet next on 25 June 2019 from 1 to 2:30 p.m., in room 205 of the Bernhard Center. Chair pro tem Sarah Summy adjourned the meeting at 2:45 p.m.

Submitted by: Yvonne Ford, Secretary

www.wmich.edu/facultysenate