General Remarks by Rick Gershon, WMU Faculty Senate President

- The Faculty Senate Executive Board is currently seeking to fill positions on its seven councils and numerous committees. Faculty may nominate themselves or others who they believe would be effective members of the councils or committees by sending an email to faculty-senate@wmich.edu by 28 February.
- The Presidential Scholars Convocation will be held on 22 March from 4 to 6 p.m. in the Bernhard Center.
- On 25 January, the first of four retreats was held by the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee. This represents an important next phase in the WMU Essential Studies curriculum process.
- Research and Creative Activities Day, organized by the Graduate College, will be held on 11 April. The event brings together graduate students from across campus to present their research and to interact with other graduate students and faculty. Anyone who wishes to attend can meet and talk with students about their research.
- The International Education Council is currently working with the Haenicke Institute for Global Education to develop a new Global Classroom initiative, which has the potential to transform cross-cultural student integration at WMU. The global classroom concept takes advantage of current videoconferencing technology to bring shared classroom experiences between a WMU course and a possible counterpart from another university.

General Remarks by Edward Montgomery, WMU President

- **Changes in Lansing**: there is a brand new legislature with a republican congress and a democrat governor. There is not a lot of experience with higher education in legislature.
- **Dunbar Hall**: one of the most heavily used classroom buildings and home to more than a dozen academic programs, will undergo $40 million in renovations, thanks in large part to state capital outlay dollars. Some $30 million in funding from the state of Michigan and $10 million in funding raised by the University, including through philanthropic support, will pay for this renovation. Dunbar Hall has been on the University’s state capital outlay wish list for quite some time. We celebrate this major project funding finally coming to fruition and thank all those who helped make the case for the need.
- **Michigan House Appropriations Subcommittee on Higher Education and Community Colleges**: will be in session next week. It offers an opportunity to meet with members who are freshmen legislators. Talks will be about how absolutely critical it is for the state to appropriately fund public higher education operations (not just capital project investment) and the unfortunate history of not doing so. The subcommittee membership needs to know that higher education is the only component in the state budget that has not recovered from pre-Recession levels, despite the fact that it’s one of the few that is serving the most people at the same time. If Michigan is to continue to enjoy a remarkable higher education infrastructure, which has 15 public universities, including WMU, then the legislature needs to resource these institutions. Limiting funding for the state’s universities has real costs, for our economy and for the strength and future vitality of high-quality higher education in Michigan.
- **Spring Enrollment**: WMU has seen drops in domestic resident students. There are challenges holding on to resident students. There have been increases of students with holds on their accounts for academic or financial reasons. At the end of the spring semester is typically when students leave and don’t come back, but it can be changed. Faculty know the students better than anyone else does, keeping students at WMU is about personal connections.
- **Sanford Center for Financial Planning and Wellness**: part of the Haworth College of Business, was established with a generous gift from Alumnus Todd Sanford. The center focuses very specifically on the lack of financial acumen in general and offers ways to address that for both our students and the public at large. This new resource is going to bring a lot of value to students, to campus and to the broader community. WMU appreciates Alumnus Sanford and those in HCOB for this vision.
Remarks by Jennifer Bott, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

- **Think Big**: the town hall meetings have offered significant time in learning about the legacy of WMU. The meetings are an opportunity for faculty, students, and staff to inform the administration about what makes WMU special. The theme of engagement with our community, faculty, and staff has been clear at each of the sessions. All of the ideas collected thus far are on the website: https://wmich.edu/thinkbig. The remaining town hall meetings dates are:
  - Feb. 12, 3 to 5 p.m. at the Student Recreation Center
  - Feb. 13, 3 to 5 p.m. at the Trimpe Multicultural Center
  - Feb. 15, 9 to 11 a.m. at the Parkview Campus

- Relationships with the faculty are the most critical in improving retention and persistence. It needs to be remembered that every student is an indicator of our success.

MOA-18/06: Honors Upon Graduation

- The Transfer of Credit Committee recommended reduction of the number of credit hours of WMU coursework required to be considered for graduation with honors from 50 to 30. A motion was made and seconded, to approve MOA-18/06. Discussion was held. The motion to approve MOA-18/06 carried.

WMU Essential Studies Update – Sarah Summy, Chair, WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee

- The WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee held the first of four half-day review retreats on 25 January. Sixty-six course proposals were reviewed at that meeting through a strong peer-review process that everyone involved believed went well. It is a time consuming process. Approximately 300 courses will be reviewed by the committee.

- Courses that have been reviewed are either accepted or denied within the workflow system. The majority of courses reviewed in January were approved. If a course has been denied, the initiator of the proposal will receive email notification along with the review notes from the committee on what is needed to re-submit the proposal. Often the reason for the denial is additional information and/or further clarification is needed on a certain item. The committee strongly encourages re-submissions.

- The status of courses that have been reviewed are included in the minutes of the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee and can be accessed on the Faculty Senate website. Additionally, inquiries can be made through the WMU Essential Studies email address: wmu-essentialstudies@wmich.edu

- The goal of the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee is to have an initial WMU Essential Studies curriculum approved and ready to go over the summer. The next step following the course approvals will be for the WMU Essential Studies Director, in collaboration with the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee and the WMU Curriculum Director, is to review all courses as part of the overall WMU Essential Studies curriculum. It will need to be ensured that there are enough courses, not too few and not too many, in each category and that there is a sufficient number of sections to meet student demand.

Healthy Campus 2020 – Diane Anderson, Vice President for Student Affairs; Cari Robertson, Director, Health Promotion and Education; Ken Martin, Case Manager for Student Affairs; Brian Fuller, Director, Sindecuse Counseling Center; Gayle Ruggerio, Psychiatrist Physician

- The main thrust of their presentation was to look at how WMU students compare to the national average in terms of mental health challenges and issues on campus. Some of the main talking points looked at the growing number of students both at WMU and nationally who require mental health support services. The panel presented WMU student data with national comparisons: https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u370/2019/Healthy_Campus_2020-FS_Presentation.2-7-2019.pdf

Discover Kalamazoo – Jennifer Williamson, Business Development Manager

- Williamson provided information about the partnership between WMU and the city of Kalamazoo. She provide information and overview involving the planning and scheduling of conferences in Kalamazoo: https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u370/2019/Discover_Kalamazoo-FS.2-7-2019.pdf