Remarks by Richard Gershon, WMU Faculty Senate President

- Last year, 2018 marked the 60th anniversary of the founding of the WMU Faculty Senate. Indeed, the Faculty Senate was founded in 1958. And so, as consideration for the year ahead and the important work of the various councils and committees, as well as our partnership with the senior administration of the University – it gives new meaning to the term “shared governance.”

- Prior Learning Assessment Policy: In the coming year, both the Undergraduate Studies Council and the Graduate Studies Council have been asked to consider best practices and recommend procedures to award academic credit for professional/industry experience for non-traditional students. At issue, is that the University currently has in place Credit by Examination. The goal is to develop a more comprehensive policy regarding industry/work experience for prospective students coming to WMU.

- Revised Honorary Degree Policy: The Office of the President, in cooperation with the Faculty Senate, has undertaken a major revision of the University’s current Honorary Degree Policy. The purpose of awarding an Honorary Degree is to recognize persons of exceptional scholarly, artistic, professional, or humanitarian achievement who exemplify the mission of Western Michigan University and whose career or lifetime accomplishments serve as models of University ideals and aspirations for its students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

- Formation of New Ad Hoc Committee on Interdisciplinary Academic Studies: In April 2019, the Faculty Senate Executive Board established the ad hoc committee to examine the current practices of interdisciplinary academic study at WMU and evaluate both opportunities and challenges going forward. The committee has been charged with understanding the different types of interdisciplinary academic programs that currently exist at WMU. The committee has also been asked to provide a set of recommended strategies with the goal of helping to advance interdisciplinary academic study at WMU. The committee members have been selected and have begun meeting regularly.

- A more detailed description of the Faculty Senate President’s presentation is available at: 

Remarks by Edward Montgomery, WMU President

- Faculty Senate Recognition evening: A reception to celebrate 60 years of the Faculty Senate and the importance of shared governance took place on Sept. 25 at Heritage Hall. Several past Presidents of the Faculty Senate were recognized for their contributions. It was a reminder of the importance of continued collaboration and how much the work and willingness to move WMU forward of the Faculty Senate is appreciated.

- State Budget: Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed a state budget that included the higher education appropriations that were expected. The state budget includes a 0.5% increase in WMU’s appropriation, which supports the 4.3% tuition increase and 1% operations increase as approved by the WMU Board of Trustees this past June. The
University is working to address an $11 million deficit reduction so that WMU is on more of a solid financial footing moving forward.

- **Employee Engagement Survey:** The feedback sessions are the first step of sharing the survey results with the WMU community and obtaining feedback. There were 114 pages of typed comments collected at the sessions which have been posted online. Those sessions were part of the process that was initiated in the spring to gather feedback from across the University on attitudes towards the University, the work environment, as well as the senior leaderships. WMU employees were not shy in sharing their thoughts. The University’s senior leadership is very serious about elevating the campus environment and making it a place where everyone feels like a part of the WMU team. A new website was launched to provide the survey results and initial feedback, and to enable others to provide feedback: https://wmich.edu/employee-engagement

- **Honorary Degree:** WMU recently awarded a honorary degree to Dr. Bojie Fu, a Professor in geography and landscape ecology at the Research Centre for Eco-Environmental Sciences at the Chinese Academy of Sciences. His research focuses on interactions between human beings and the environment, sustainability, and interactions between ecosystem services assessment and management. Thank you to the Faculty Senate Executive Board for its work in updating the procedures. Special thanks to Faculty Senate President Richard Gershon, who has done an exceptional job in navigating this effort that has resulted in a vibrant and effective process to help identify truly exceptional individuals and raise the visibility of WMU.

- **Autonomous Electric Shuttles:** The self-driving vehicles are part of a new research project at WMU. They are designed to help those students and people challenged with mobility issues. The new shuttles will be tested as part of a project funded by the Michigan Department of Transportation’s Michigan Mobility Challenge. WMU is one of several collaborators on this study, including colleagues at the University of Michigan, Robotic Research, Comet Mobility, Pratt & Miller and others. Zach Asher, an Assistant Professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering is working with two graduate students to test two of these futuristic vehicles.

**Remarks by Jennifer Bott, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs**


**Vice President Special Election**

There is an election process underway to select a new Vice President for the Faculty Senate. In accordance with Senate Bylaws, a special election must be held to complete the term, which ends in May 2020. The Faculty Senate office received one petition for candidacy for the office of Vice President from Marilyn Kritzman, Faculty Specialist II – School of Communication. With no additional nominations from the floor, and without objection, nominations for Vice President were closed. Ballots were mailed on October 18 to all faculty and voting will close on November 4 at 5 p.m.

**MOA-19/05: Revision of MOA-16/08: High School Dual Enrollees Undergraduate Catalog**

Bruce Ferrin, Chair, Undergraduate Studies Council, introduced the Memorandum of Action. Ferrin provided background information and rationale. The Undergraduate Studies Council recommends the
revision of the Undergraduate Catalog-Admissions-Nontraditional Admissions Program-High School Dual Enrollment admission criteria, as established in MOA-16/08. Ed Martini, Associate Provost for Extended University Programs, provided details regarding the data in the linked presentation: 

**Academic Program Review**
The University is currently undertaking a plan to engage in an Academic Program Review that will begin in January 2020. Introducing the topic was Provost Jennifer Bott, who in turn, introduced Vice Provost Chris Cheatham who gave an overview of the plans in terms of methods and approach. He also answered several questions from the audience. The main talking points of his presentation are available at:

**Think Big Initiative by Tony Proudfoot, Vice President for Marketing and Strategic Communication**
The Think Big initiative is about creating ways to provide enhanced value to the University’s academic mission. It is also intended to increase student enrollment on campus. The major introduction and roll out of the Think Big initiative is happening this month (with two general meeting sessions having already occurred) with specific designated times for faculty on October 30 and 31.

**WMU Essential Studies Update by Mervyn Elliott, Director**
WMU Essential Studies remains on target for its launch in fall 2020. The WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee, as well as the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee, have been meeting regularly throughout the summer and early fall. The main work of the Advisory Committee pertains to curriculum mapping. The Course Review and Approval Committee is looking at the current set of resubmissions. Director Elliott’s remarks are available at:

Once approved the complete set of the Faculty Senate’s October 3 meeting will be posted to the Faculty Senate website:
https://wmich.edu/facultysenate/senate/senateschedule