

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE
WMU ESSENTIAL STUDIES EXECUTIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes of 10 May 2019

Members Present: Suzan Ayers, Jonathan Bush, Leigh Ford, Yvonne Ford, Decker Hains, Kevin Knutson, Jessica Parker, Diane Riggs, Sarah Summy, Delores Walcott

Member Absent: Elke Schoffers

Ex Officio Member Present: N/A

Advisory Members Present: Carrie Cumming, Marilyn Duke, Mervyn Elliott, Dave Reinhold

Advisory Members Absent: Jeanne Baron, Matt Provenzale

Committee Chair Sarah Summy called the meeting to order at 9 a.m.

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

Acceptance of the Agenda

A motion was made by Ayers, seconded by Knutson, to accept the agenda as provided. Motion carried.

Approval of the Minutes – 16 April 2019

A motion was made by Hains, seconded by Ayers, to approve the minutes of 16 April as provided. Motion carried.

Chair's Remarks – Summy

Summy's comments included:

- Review of the goals of the meeting:
 - Develop mission and vision statements for WMU Essential Studies
 - Review course submissions for WMU Essential Studies at a curricular level
 - Conduct a Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis of each WMU Essential Studies course category.

WMU Essential Studies

Course Review and Approval Committee Chair's Remarks – Hains

Hains noted that the course review process comprised over 1,500 hours of work by the members of the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee, using a standardized four-page review form. That committee was not charged to make decisions regarding whether a course was a good fit for the program, which leads to the purpose of today's meeting. The WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee examined individual courses for the degree to which they met the submission criteria at the course level. The WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee will be reviewing the entire curriculum at this meeting.

WMU Essential Studies Director's Remarks – Elliott

Elliott noted that at this point, not all courses which were denied have been resubmitted. The notes and recommendations from the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee review have been provided to the initiators of the courses which were denied. It was noted that if an initiator of a proposal has not received a denial, they should assume that the course has moved forward. If the

WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee notes were not attached to an email notifying the initiator of denial, they can be sent to the initiator by contacting Elliott. A notice emphasizing this should be added to the WMU Essential Studies website.

DISCUSSION / INFORMATION ITEMS

Review WMU Essential Studies Mission and Vision

Summy and Hains presented draft mission and vision statements. Discussion regarding the intent and wording of the statements was held. Summy and Hains will implement suggestions and changes for consideration at the next meeting.

Review Basic Principles of WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee versus WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee

Summy and Hains reviewed the basic principles of the WMU Essential Studies program, the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee, and the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee.

Basic Principles Include:

- WMU Essential Studies is a new curricular program. It is not perfect, but is evolving, dynamic and fluid.
- The goal is to provide better value and quality to the undergraduate experience while ensuring that all students meet a core set of outcomes.
- WMU Essential Studies is an outcomes based approach, which is a significant and major improvement over the prior General Education curriculum, and is data driven.
- The WMU Essential Studies Program requires students to develop connections across disciplines, while complementing study in a major or a program.
- Prerequisites to WMU Essential Studies courses may be required to support students' success by providing required skills.
- Some courses in the WMU Essential Studies program may be taught in a student's major, integrating WMU Essential Studies outcomes into the major.
- It is recognized that some majors have external accreditation constraints (e.g. engineering, nursing).
- Courses in the WMU Essential Studies program have been approved through a peer-review process (the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee) to examine course fit, communication of outcomes to students, and whether assessment criteria are reasonable and feasible.

Assumptions:

- Students who pass the course are assumed to have met the student learning outcomes (SLO's).
- Faculty members are working to do the right thing; issues will surface during the assessment process and be addressed during the cyclic program review.
- There will be no harm to students. Advisors may substitute courses and are the standard enforcement mechanism along with the registrar's office using tools such as DegreeWorks and the graduation audit process.
- The office of the Associate Provost for Assessment and Undergraduate Studies will not be approving or denying courses. Associate Provost Dave

Reinhold's role is to verify that all of the required components for course listings and catalog content are present.

Reinhold noted that the success of the program will depend on faculty collaboration. The committee needs to emphasize that detail and uphold the processes, including the sharing of data with the faculty members teaching courses in the WMU Essential Studies program.

Complete Strengths Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

Elliott presented the courses submitted for each of the 12 course categories within the WMU Essential Studies model. The information presented included the number of courses, the Student Learning Outcomes identified for each course, and the estimated number of seats to be available for each course each year. For courses which were previously offered as part of the current General Education curriculum, the number of enrollments over the past year (S18 through F18) were included. For each course, the approval status from the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee was also noted (e.g. approved, needs review and correction, or denied). For each of the categories, an assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats was conducted and noted. Errors in course titles and potential changes in categories for better fit were recorded. After each category was reviewed, a similar review of the entire program was conducted.

OTHER

Summy and Elliott noted the future work of the committee in preparation for a fall 2020 launch, which will include:

- Clarifying and publishing processes for resubmission
- Establish the Marketing and Communication Subcommittee
- Identify needed and available resources
- Update catalog copy and DegreeWorks
- Reverse mapping to the prior General Education curriculum
- Identify volunteers to pilot assessment of student learning outcomes in Elearning.

ADJOURNMENT

The WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee will meet next on 11 June 2019 from 1 to 2:30 p.m., in room 205 of the Bernhard Center. Chair Sarah Summy adjourned the meeting at 1 p.m.

Submitted by: Yvonne Ford, Secretary