

**WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY SENATE  
CAMPUS PLANNING AND FINANCE COUNCIL  
Minutes of 8 December 2020**

**Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Campus Planning and Finance Council was called to order at 3 p.m. on 8 December, via Webex video conferencing by Valerian Kwigizile, chair.

**Roll Call**

**Members in Attendance:** Todd Barkman, Cheryl Bruey, David Dakin, Betty Dennis, Keith Hearit, Lynne Heasley, Valerian Kwigizile, Geoffrey Lindenberg, James Penner, Colleen Scarff, Matthew Screnock (Graduate Student Association), Udaya Wagle

**Member Absent:** Emma Scheller (Western Student Association), Jan Van Der Kley,

**Advisory Members in Attendance:** Chris Cheatham, Tony Proudfoot

**Ex Officio Member in Attendance:** Osama Abudayyeh

**Guest:** Jason Jach, Interim Director of Institutional Research

**Quorum**

A quorum was present.

**Agenda**

It was moved by Wagle, seconded by Barkman, to accept the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

**Minutes**

It was moved by Penner, seconded by Hearit, to approve the 17 November minutes as provided. The motion carried unanimously.

**Reports of Officers**

Chair Kwigizile reported that the Faculty Senate Executive Board has voted and approved continuing all council and committee meetings virtually on Webex through the Spring 2021 semester.

Ex Officio Abudayyeh did not provide a report.

**Reports of University Representatives**

Dakin provided the report of Campus Facility Development, topics included:

- The State of Michigan Department of Management and Budget has sent the IF-1 Dunbar Hall Renovation and Addition project to the legislature with a letter of recommendation to approve.
- More information will be available before the holiday break, if it is approved and signed by the Governor.
- If approved, the project will restart January 2021 and the projected completion is projected for summer 2023.

Scarff provided the report of University Budgets and Business & Finance, topics included:

- The 2021 calendar year bond issuance is currently being preparing.
- The second phase of bonds will be to finish out the new student center, new dining facility within the new student center, and the loop road.
- The bonds will be going to market mid-January and the bond reading call is taking place in mid-December.
- The council will be updated on the bond reading from both Standard & Poor's (S&P) and Moody's, and the budget impact from spring enrollment at the January meeting.
- Business and Finance is monitoring and tracking in-person and online spring enrollment.
- The census will be complete in time for the next meeting.

- There will possibly be a CARE's package provided by the State or Federal level.
- The next step is the January Revenue Report at the state level, that will drive the possible mid-year state action. This will be our first indications for spring 2021.

Discussion included the criteria that is used to decide the bond rating. There are many factors that determine the bond rating, including the stability of higher education in general, enrollment trends, the state budget status, and peer institution comparison. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this year will be different. There will be an opportunity to have discussions with the rating agencies focusing on how the University has responded to the pandemic and hinderances moving forward. The credit outlook perspective was not favorable during the previous reporting. Currently, the University has a good rating, there is a chance the rating can change given the pandemic.

Cheatham provided the report of the Provost's office Budget and Personnel, topics included:

- Enrollment rates are trending up around 8% for fall 2021 applications. The national trend is down 7.7%.
- The projected increase is due to several factors, including the new branding initiative "Rethink Smart," and the optional ACT/SAT requirement. The admission office has had a quicker turnaround with applicant decisions.
- The merit-based rewards have been restructured to be more competitive by lowering the GPA requirement for the introductory award to provide to more students.
- Currently, Education Technology, Services, and Research (EAB) is in the process of modeling for need based financial aid. Based on data from last year, the University is creating a model that will optimize WMU's net tuition revenue, while keeping with the mission of being an access institution. The recommendations will be available mid-December and financial aid packages will be ready for students by mid-January. Merit based applications are due on 15 December 2020.

Discussion included merit-based and needs-based financial aid applications. The lowest GPA for merit-based scholarship is 3.25. The University is in the second year of changes that were realized by eliminating the 3.0 minimum GPA requirement for need based aid. Comparatively, the University of Michigan and Michigan State University are the only other Michigan colleges with an upward trend. Nationally, Universities are down 7.7%. The fall 2021 applicant profile has increased with the elimination of the test requirement. The University has not changed the admissions criteria.

Proudfoot provided the Marketing and Strategic Communications report, topics included highlights from the Marketing email:

- Fall 2021 applications and admissions are up at WMU compared to downward trends statewide and nationally. The University still needs to get through yield.
- Ad campaign resulted in 62 million impressions; the campaign does not target the entire state. Website views resulted in 63 thousand views.
- Media buying has changed and was once done internally. Ad views have increased from 13 million to a projected 120 million ad-impressions for the year, with almost the same investment as previous years.
- Another important metric includes the click-through rate, data shows that the University is doing well at about four times the industry standard.
- The University has all the brand tools to understand the Rethink Smart Ad Campaign, the substance and process behind the campaign.
- Recently announced a new visual identity refresh, bringing alignment to all of the University's logos. By Fall 2021, the logos for advancement, athletics, and academics will be the same for the first time in University history.
- Trademarks and licensing are now part of Marketing and Strategic Communications. After three months, a few positives for the University include a \$1 thousand scholarship awarded to veterans through Operation Hat Trick and being one of two MAC schools to have holiday merchandise in Costco.

Discussion included tracking demographic information, retail licensing, target audiences, and marketing outlets. Information is tracked depending on the conversions set-up. Rethink Smart is focused on awareness and driving traffic to the website. The trade-offs include not being able to track all of the clicking behavior. It is important that the message is provided to a wide audience. The University's Ad

buying is targeted to the demographics of Undergraduate and Graduate prospective students and their families. Discussion was held regarding the Costco retail licensing. Expanding the retail square footage for WMU merchandise is important and a positive for the University. Discussion was held regarding targeting audiences through radio. Radio is a strong outlet for reaching adult audiences, the University advertises on NPR. Discussion was held regarding marketing strategy and outlets. Digital marketing is around 43% of the buy. This percentage was impacted by the presidential election. The University has traditional news advertising, digital advertising that includes social media, and YouTube advertising. WMU's target audience are teens age 14-18 and adults age 35-54. The full media purchase includes all of Michigan, specifically Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids, Detroit, Fort Wayne, Lansing, and surrounding areas such as Indianapolis, Chicago, and Seattle.

### **Reports of Council Standing Committee**

Dakin did not provide a report of the Transportation Committee.

### **Unfinished Business**

Abudayyeh put forward Charge #11: *Identify approaches and methods used to increase civility and respect in order to create a safe environment both within the Faculty Senate at the University.* It was recommended to postpone action until February to align with the actions of the University Racial Justice Advisory Committee. It was moved by Bruey, seconded by Barkman, to postpone charge #11. The motion carried unanimously.

### **New Business**

Cheatham and Jach put forward Charge #5: *Investigate, evaluate, and report on the current processes for WMU enrollment forecasting to understand its impact on recruitment and retention. Assess the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on recruitment and enrollment forecasts.* Details included:

- Spring 2021 enrollment forecast is down 11.7% compared to spring 2020, with 43 days until census. The decline is expected, since fall 2020 enrollment was down and there was a smaller pool of applicants for spring 2021 enrollment. The number is changing which is not surprising given the circumstances. Students are leaving campus to take online classes. Normally, there is a decline of seven to eight percent from fall to spring, due to a significant December graduation and the low ratio of new students starting in spring.
- Currently, the University is down 29% from the fall 2020 census enrollment. Normally, the University is 21.6% down from fall census. The 21.6% improved over time to a seven to eight percent decline. Currently, spring enrollment is tracking 8% down from this time last year. This change could be explained by a change in behavior relating to contextual factors.
- The enrollment forecasting for the next fiscal year looks at trends over the last three to five years, average yield rates, average retention rates, and how students have advanced to graduation. The averages are applied to the data that can be projected for the upcoming year. The other forecast method is to look at a granular level and try to predict student progression through classes. Both methods are very accurate and dependent on historic student behavior remaining relatively consistent. This year, discussions over the next couple of months will be held to determine a predictive model.

### **Announcements**

No announcements were reported.

### **Adjournment**

It was moved by Barkman, seconded by Heasley, to adjourn the meeting at 4:33 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The Campus Planning and Finance Council will meet next on 19 January 2021 via Webex at 3 p.m.

### **Approval**

Submitted by Lindsey Rossiter, Recording Secretary

Minutes approved this nineteenth day of January 2021.