
**Undergraduate Studies Council
Minutes of 11 May 2021**

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Undergraduate Studies Council was called to order at 3:02 p.m. on 11 May 2021, through a virtual Webex meeting by Clifton Ealy, chair.

Roll Call

Members in Attendance: Jessica Birnbaum, Deanna Bush, Carrie Cumming, Clifton Ealy, Steven Eberth, Bruce Ferrin, Lori Gray, Elijah Lewis (Western Student Association), Mary-Louise Totton, Nicolas Witschi, Kelly Wittenberg

Members Absent: Kristal Ehrhardt (substitute for Kate LaLonde), Eli Lantz (Western Student Association), Irma Lopez, Colin MacCreery

Academic Advising Liaison in Attendance: Betsy Drummer

Advisory Members Absent: Edwin Martini

Ex Officio in Attendance: Matthew Mingus

Guest(s): Daniela Schroeter, Public Affairs and Administration

Quorum

A quorum was present.

Agenda

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

Election of Officers

Chair Ealy called for nominations. Ex Officio Mingus identified the need for training of those persons nominated for officer positions. Wittenberg raised a question regarding attendance if nominated due to a schedule conflict with the current USC meeting schedule. All officers were present and agreed to the nominations. It was moved by Ferrin to elect Ealy as chair. The motion carried unanimously. It was moved by Mingus to elect Gray as vice chair. The motion carried unanimously. It was moved by Ealy to elect Eberth as secretary. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes

It was moved by Cumming, seconded by Ealy, to approve the 13 April 2021 minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

Chair Ealy and Schroeter attended the Institutional Interdisciplinarity Team meeting. Future work on the proposals submitted is yet to be decided after the first round of proposals were reviewed.

Mingus reported that MOA-21/03: Revision of Dean's List Honors will be directed to the Executive Board. MOA-21/02: Creation of Transfer Minor Policy will come before the USC at its next meeting. Cumming clarified the intent of MOA-21/02 to provide undergraduate students a minor.

Reports of Council/Committee Standing Committees

Intellectual Skills Program Advisory Committee report was not provided.

Cumming provided the report of the Transfer of Credit Committee.

Reports of University Representatives

Martini reported that WMUx is working to improve faculty education and student support. Two priorities are Elearning and the Office of Faculty Development. They are finding success in making support available to improve faculty abilities to move classes online. They are working together to put in place more services and especially through OFD to improve offerings to help with instructional design. They intend to connect faculty to services that can assist them. Plans for a OFD location is underway. They are developing plans to create a “one-stop-shop” to help faculty. Ealy questioned classroom set up for hybrid learning. Martini clarified Hyflex as a pedagogy to make the transition to improve instructional design, as a high-tech cart of equipment to facilitate an interaction between students who are in-person with students who are in a virtual environment. Ehrhardt stated that she had observed this technology in use by Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Jennifer Bott and validated the effectiveness of engaging special education students. She stated the technology worked better than expected. Ealy asked about studies related to the use of various platforms. Martini responded to indicate that he was unaware of studies but that Webex has improved in functionality as a result of WMUx efforts. Webex has security advantages and remains WMU’s preferred platform versus and will continue for the foreseeable future. Microsoft Teams was identified as another frequently used platform. Wittenberg provided comments regarding the usability of Webex but that students who were on campus had internet access difficulties. Martini validated the need for connectivity upgrades across campus. Bush indicated he uses Zoom due to his need for usability with music and inquired about Webex improvements to support music. Martini stated that a re-test is needed, but improvements were made to the platform. Ealy summarized the continued need for online learning and technology to support the education of students.

Unfinished Business

Mingus provided an update on curriculum proposal CAS17-373.SPAA-AccelGradDegree indicating it has been updated by the School of Public Affairs and the Graduate Studies Council, but still needs to be approved by the USC. The issue around the reduction of the provisional GPA requirements was resolved (AGDP reduced from 3.5 to 3.25. CPA needed to continue from AFDP into graduate student status reduced from 3.25 to 3.0). Witschi clarified the need to use 5000 level courses from 4000 level courses, such that courses at the 4000 level in prior version all adjusted to reflect that these are now 5000 level courses as will be reflected in the fall 2021 catalog. It was moved by Ealy, seconded by Cumming, to approve proposal CAS17-373.SPAA-AccelGradDegree. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Ealy provided an update on MOA-14/02: Undergraduate Certificate Programs. Cumming clarified that 10 undergraduate certificates have been approved and intended to be stand-alone. Identified certificates mirror requirements for a minor. Technically, a student could receive both a certificate and a minor. A resolution was suggested that students could use all but two courses of a certificate toward a minor or a major. Birnbaum inquired why two courses would be necessary, to which Cumming clarified that two was a starting point. Birnbaum asked if programs have difficulty with adhering to this expectation because of the size of the program. Witschi clarified the intent is to make the distinction clear for enrolled and unenrolled students and the change primarily apply to degree seeking students at the University. It was moved by Ealy, seconded by Cumming to put forward the proposed resolution. The motion carried unanimously.

New Business

Mingus provided an update regarding MOA-13/04: Revisions to the Accelerated Degree Program. Mingus reported that in April the USC voted to determine what revision would be needed for the MOA due to GPA changes. Wittenberg raised a point of clarification as a new member. Cumming recommended the student must earn a 3.0 GPA unless a higher GPA is required by the department. Ferrin suggested language that identified the minimum GPA required by the department but in no case lower than a 3.0. Cumming recommended a change in “a letter” to the AGDP Course Approval form. Witschi indicated the revisions being recommended required a revision of the document rather than a vote at this time. The proposed changes will be drafted by Mingus and Cummings for review by the Graduate Studies Council prior to returning to the USC.

Announcements

Witschi reported on the acquisition of a Curriculog to provide improved processing of curriculum proposals and integration of course changes and the catalog. A meeting with the vendor is pending. It is anticipated to be launched by fall. For the first year, parallel systems will exist to ensure a smooth transition.

Adjournment

It was moved by Cumming, seconded by Mingus, to adjourn the meeting at 4:27 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The Undergraduate Studies Council will meet next on 8 June 2021 on a virtual Webex meeting at 3 p.m.

Approval

Submitted by Steven D. Eberth, Secretary

Minutes approved the eighth day of June 2021.