I. **Review of the Minutes from January 31, 2014**

Minutes approved.

Attendance: Maurianne Adams, Karen Stevens, Ernie May, John Lenzi, Dori McCracken, Justin Fermann, Paulina Borrego, Patricia Gubitosi, Claire Hamilton, Carol Barr, Martha Stassen, Martha Yoder, Christiane Healy, Steve Gencarella, Haivan Hoang, Bryan Beck, Philippe Baillargeon, Mei Yau-Shih, Yolanda Wiggins, Christian Pulver

II. **Standing Reports: Carol Barr, Ernie May, Martha Stassen**

Report from Martha Stassen: Right now, our office is conducting several focus groups with UMass undergraduates. So far, we have conducted focus groups with three sets of sophomores, one group of juniors and one group of seniors. During the focus group we ask about integrative learning and reflection, and specifically about Gen Ed and the overall UMass experience. In various ways, students describe their experiences as “hit or miss,” “win or lose,” “boring,” and “exciting.” We are finding it is a mixed bag on the experiences students have in their Gen Ed courses. We also launched our second round of IE instructor survey. We are thrilled with the responses we have received so far (56% response rate with only one reminder). We are going to send out at least one more reminder. The targeted survey population is everyone who has taught an IE including those who are teaching an IE course for the first time. There is also an open-ended item of the survey where instructors can provide more detail. We have found that this is extremely helpful for others thinking about teaching the IE. At the last Gen Ed Council meeting, we all voted to have an ad hoc IE planning group. Since then, Anne Herrington and I have been in the process of directing the group’s next steps. The group met for the first time on Thursday, February 27th. A number of faculty currently teaching the IE or those previous having taught the IE are a part of this group. The group members include Lisa Green, David Damery, Christina Metevier, Luis Marentes, Mei-Yau Shih and Yolanda Wiggins. We have already scheduled three workshops around assignment development – March 25th, April 7th, and May 5th. David, Luis and Christina will be presenting about their experiences teaching an IE course and will also discuss guiding principles that have emerged. If at least 5-10 faculty members in various departments could attend these workshops that would be great. At our last workshop on May 5th, we will conclude with a cocktail hour in celebration of the end of the semester and Cinco de Mayo.

Report from Ernie May: The big thing going on is the Joint Task Force Resource Allocation that is going through a set of steps to write a report to the campus and Faculty Senate meeting in April or March. The Joint Task Force will have something out to the campus open for comment on May 1st as well as a status report for this year. This is projected to continue for a couple of years. JTSO was the meeting I was in before this. The primary take away from that meeting is defining the UG experience at UMass. So, what makes UMass exciting or unique, and is there a concept that we can all unite? MIT has cutting edge technology, for example, other schools have certain things they use to brand themselves. That is perhaps the most important thing about the strategic planning process here at UMass—we have a variety of things to offer and being very decentralized is one of them.
Carol Barr: If I could follow-up. Right now, we’re in the process of looking at how we are defining UMass education. The broad themes are, students as self-learners and self-engaged. They’re learning and developing and creating their own path. This is known as student agency. The second theme is responsibility. We want them to be responsible citizens, taking part, and being active advocates. The third is tools and skills. We want to make sure students are taking advantage of resources and that we have mechanisms in place so they are prepared for their future lives. We hear from employers that students are not ready for the workforce. We want to make sure our students are prepared in a variety of ways including being technologically savvy, having time management, etc. With our Gen Ed curriculum, too, we’re identifying broad themes and talking about our student success strategies and what are we are holistically contributing across these areas. How does the curriculum support what we’re about and what is the student experience?

III. **Review of New Course and Curriculum Management System for General Education Proposals** (Christian and Yolanda)

Feedback from the Council included making the submitted syllabus more visible, using course numbers and titles for the name of the proposal, automatic email notification when changes occur to a proposal, a column with course designation, maintaining reviewer anonymity, additional reviewer response of “Unsure, request clarification”, read access to all proposals for GEC members.

IV. **IE Reviews**

1. **Legal 397G – Law, Crime, and Society [course needed Fall 2014]**

   Reviewer 1: Recommended. The main mechanism for the IE reflection is a blog that students will keep throughout the course (graded 10%) and use as a springboard for class discussions and exercises.

   Reviewer 2: Recommended. Instructor carefully lays out how the course, overall, addresses IE criteria/goals. They took Gen Ed skills identified in the syllabus and in each class period they outlined what Gen Ed skills were being laid out. This way you could see what was being covered over the course of the class and you could see how everything was being laid out. This exemplary IE course.

   **Council decision**: Approved, with note to department that this is a model IE course.

V. **General Education--Quinquennial Reviews**

2. **AFROAM 132 – African American History 1619-1860 (HS U)**

   Reviewer 1: Recommended. Fine course description and an adequate statement of alignment with Gen Ed goals in the syllabus. I believe it would benefit from a short paragraph stating what Gen Ed is supposed to provide, and how this course fits within that general scope.
Reviewer 2: Recommended. Excellent course that is illustrative of what the HS and U designation are supposed to achieve.

Council decision: Approved

3. **ART 110 – Basic Studio/Drawing (AT)**

Reviewer 1: I’m not quite ready to recommend. The course objectives seem to be clearly in line with Gen Ed overall and AT designation-specific goals. Two suggestions: (1) The syllabus doesn't yet indicate that the course is a Gen Ed course that satisfies the AT requirement--though the objectives are clearly in line with this designation. (2) The syllabus doesn't describe or list the required assignments and their grade weight; for that reason, it's not clear to me whether writing and problem-solving are part of the required assignments. I would ask that the proposer add these to the syllabus before granting full approval.

Reviewer 2: I still have some concerns about recommending this course. The course objectives seem to be clearly in line with Gen Ed overall and AT designation-specific goals, but I have two suggestions for the proposer: (1) The syllabus doesn't yet indicate that the course is a Gen Ed course that satisfies the AT requirement--though the objectives are clearly in line with this designation. (2) The syllabus doesn't describe or list the required assignments and their grade weight; for that reason, it's not clear to me whether writing and problem-solving are part of the required assignments.

Council decision: Request for more information and revisions.

4. **CLASSICS 224 – Greek Mythology (AL)**

Reviewer 1: Proposer needs to make the Gen Ed goals clearer in the syllabus. As it stands now, it is not clear which designation goals are being met. The syllabus says that the main goals of the course are, "To introduce students not only to the specific mythological narratives of the Greek world, but to the underlying archetypes and structures shared by multiple mythological systems," but there appears to be very little student participation in the course to allow for this kind of exploration beyond the 10 written pages required through the semester. On the other hand, "critical thinking, creativity, and communicating persuasively and effectively in writing" are all considered as secondary goals by the instructor. Although the instructor states that the course "critically examines the various ways that mythologies of any culture serve as a psychological roadmap for those communities that create and perpetuate these narrative systems," there is no evidence in the syllabus on how students will "critically examine" these ideas. Will they be engaged in class discussion? Presentations? I request that the proposer clarify these concerns before approving.

Reviewer 2: I do not recommend at this time. The instructor fails to communicate how the course will meet Gen Ed. learning goals and objectives. Neither the syllabus nor the answers to questions on the forms address this. The instructor needs to explicitly communicate how he will meet the expectations of a Gen. Ed. course. The only thing that is clear is that the writing component is met (10 pages).

Council decision: Send back with request for revised syllabus.
5. **COMM 212 – Cultural Codes in Communication (SB)** [hold over to March meeting]

6. **COMM 250 – Interpersonal Communication (SB)**

   Reviewer 1: Recommended: Some of the various syllabi need to be updated to include Gen Ed goals such as the one from Professor Yin’s Section.

   Reviewer 2: I recommend this course for approval based on the assumption that all instructors will transform their syllabus to closer match the Gen Ed guidelines submitted with Prof. Siyuan Yin’s updated syllabus.

   **Council decision:** Approved with a comment regarding the need of the department to ensure that multiple sections are all coordinated.

VI. **General Education—New Reviews**

7. **GeoSci 220 – World Regional Geography (SB G)**

   Reviewer 1: Recommended. This looks like a great course. Rationale, learning objectives, and assignments are explained clearly and in detail, yet without cumbersome language. Particularly good work on the syllabus explaining not only how the course meets designation-specific Gen Ed goals, but why this should matter to students. I want to take this course!

   Reviewer 2: Recommended: This is a good course that does everything it's supposed to do for the SB and G designations. Great syllabus.

   **Council decision:** Approved

8. **Education 190A – Education and The Movies (SB)** [Needed Fall 2014]

   Reviewer 1: Recommended. The course is now recommended. I missed the info on the weighting, as it was somewhat hidden in the grading info, but the revisions that were submitted by the proposal demonstrate grade weights that are appropriate for a Gen Ed course.

   Reviewer 2: Recommended. This course fulfills the requirements for a Gen Ed course.

   **Council decision:** Approved

9. **STPEC 100 – Social Thought & Political Economy (HS G)**

   Reviewer: Recommended. After several revisions, this course is ready for approval.
Reviewer: Recommended. First, let me say that I hope this class is still running when my children attend UMass a decade from now. I think it will be an excellent addition to Gen Ed, and certainly emphasizes critical thinking, self-reflection, and making important connections between global and historical knowledge, while tying it to today. I think the assignments are extremely well-planned, especially for a 100-level course, but I would also pause that as proposed, it may not add up to 10 pages of writing. I would encourage the professor and TAs to think about incorporating low-stakes writing assignments that could complement class discussions and the group oral presentations. Finally, I should note that the Course Description in Form H and LG is a bit askew for what might be in the Undergraduate Catalogue, as it describes the Gen Ed component without presenting a sentence summary of the course content itself. All in all, this is an excellent course in the making, and I readily recommend.

Council decision: Approved

VII. Discussion: Multiple departmental courses or modules. Approval of template v. template as model, with GEC approval of all courses or modules.

Summary of discussion: The Council agreed that an IE course template developed by departments would cause too many procedural problems for the course approval process. Hence, all IE proposals must come through the GEC for approval. A template can be used to guide the development an IE but it still must be approved by the GEC.

VIII. Discussion: Class Size for Effective General Education Courses: face-to-face, small group discussions, writing & feedback on writing (Steve)

Summary of discussion: The Council decided it was too arbitrary to set come up with a set number for course enrollment in a Gen Ed due to the many factors that go into a course (teacher style, TA support). Some members mentioned that loose guidelines could be suggested to departments to give them a sense of how large to make their Gen Ed courses while still being able to achieve Gen Ed learning goals.

Next Meeting – Friday, March 28, 2014:

- Global “G” diversity designation criteria will be on the Agenda.
- Carol will report on her efforts to encourage a School/College/other online IE for students not on campus during their senior year & in need of the IE