Chair Jennifer Ricketts called the meeting to order at 3:17 PM. A quorum was established with 9 voting members. Two more members arrived after approval of the minutes.

I. Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 18, 2015. 
Robert Indik motioned to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously with 9 votes in favor.

II. AAC&U Institute on General Education and Assessment Proposal
Ryan Foor reported on the acceptance of UWGEC’s proposal to the Summer Institute on General Education and Assessment hosted by the AAC&U. Elaine Marchello, Tom Fleming, Jennifer Ricketts, Ingrid Novodvorsky (OIA) and Ryan will attend the Institute to learn more about assessing large-scale programs and to develop a pilot assessment program specific to the UA’s General Education. He will brief the committee on the team’s progress in September.

III. Policy on Who Can Teach General Education Courses
Debra Tomanek asked for discussion of a request from SVPAA Gail Burd to consider changing the wording of the Policy on Who can Teach General Education Courses. It currently states that primary instructors must be faculty members. Recently a student petitioned a grade because her General Education course was taught by a GTA during a regular term. What about changing “must” to “should?” Members mentioned several reasons for maintaining the current policy: it’s important for incoming freshmen to take at least one course from a faculty member (an effective recruiting tool), faculty bring their research to the classroom, GTAs may or may not be experienced teachers—they should be closely supervised by a faculty member, and a wording change will open the door to more and more GTAs teaching Tier One/Two courses. Members acknowledged that many departments have budgetary constraints which prompt them to assign GTAs as the primary instructors in lower-division courses. And those teaching assistant positions provide much-needed financial support to graduate students. But members felt it was important to uphold the current policy. There is less quality control of graduate students, who may or may not be trained in effective teaching techniques.

Jennifer asked for a straw poll on changing the wording from “must” to “should.” The poll revealed that all 11 members were opposed. But they recognized that regardless of the policy, GTAs serve as instructors of record in some colleges. This practice cannot be policed. Members would like to get a better idea of how many GTAs currently serve as instructors of record for Tier One/Two classes. Ryan will run a query on this from the classes scheduled in recent semesters, with the understanding that GTA’s may not be identified by some departments.

IV. Tier One Course Proposal
The Tier One Subcommittee presented one new proposal for consideration:

- RELI 150B, Religion and Popular Culture (Individuals/Societies).
  Members agreed that the content meets the learning outcomes for this study area, along with the mechanics of Tier One. However, a few omissions were noted in the syllabus: the Honors component wasn’t explained and it was unclear how the revision of one paper would be handled with respect to the grade. Also Religious Studies needs to be reminded that a Tier One course cannot apply toward the major or minor.
Jennifer motioned to approve RELI 150B for Individuals/Societies, with the understanding that the instructor would be asked to strengthen his syllabus with the changes mentioned above. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously with 11 in favor.

To assist course instructors with the Honors option, Robert Indik recommended adding a couple sample Honors component descriptions to the General Education website. This suggestion will be conveyed to Victor Braitberg.

V. Tier Two Course Proposals
The Tier Two Subcommittee presented two proposals for consideration:

- RELI 345, Religion and the Arts in India (Arts, Diversity Emphasis).
- RELI 367, Yoga (Humanities, Diversity Emphasis).

John Leafgren, speaking for the Subcommittee, noted that both courses meet the learning objectives for their respective study areas and the criteria for Tier Two. However, the syllabi lack an explanation of the Honors component.

John motioned to approve these courses as proposed for Tier Two, but with a request to define the Honors component in the syllabus. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously with 11 in favor.

VI. Withdrawal of RELI 355, Health & Healing in American Indian Religious Traditions
UWGEC had conditionally approved the proposal to create RELI 355 in February, pending an investigation by Carla Stoffle on possible overlapping contact with SBS courses. Duplicative content was found with MAS 160A1. The instructors and department heads of both courses met on 3/12/15. The outcome of this meeting was that RELI 355 would be restructured to remove all overlapping content with MAS 160A1. With the understanding that a new proposal would be submitted, Celeste then denied the initial proposal in the CMS.

VII. Undergraduate Council (UGC) Report
Tom Fleming briefed members on the March UGC meeting. The Council is in the process of updating several policies, such as the Undergraduate Course Syllabus Policy, to meet the needs of online instructors and students.

Proposal to Exclude 400-Level Courses from Tier Two. Tom, Celeste, and Elaine Marchello updated members on the status of UWGEC’s proposal. The College Academic Administrators Council (CAAC) and the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) were not in favor of the proposed policy, which has now been withdrawn by the UGC. Concerns and suggestions included the following: (1) the problem with 400-level courses in Tier Two needs to be better defined, (2) UA South faculty believes their 400-level courses are very appropriate for Tier Two; (3) some members fear that UWGEC will want to exclude 300-level courses next; (4) what will happen to the two currently approved 400-level courses; and (5) UWGEC should provide a stronger justification for excluding these courses. The UGC Chair suggested that UWGEC schedule an information session to CAAC and the Faculty Senate on the purpose of the General Education Program, the learning outcomes, and the assessment plans for the existing curriculum. Members decided to table the proposal until next Fall.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:29 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by Rebecca Pérez, 3.26.2015
Edited by Celeste Pardee, 3.31.2015