I. **Approval of Minutes**: Minutes from the January 25 meeting were approved. The February 8 meeting did not have sufficient attendance to allow for formal business.

II. **New Business**:

Because Dr. Jane Creighton, a member of the committee, is on faculty leave, discussion ensued regarding the possibility of requesting a temporary replacement representing the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

There followed a review of assessment statistics from the Empirical and Quantitative Reasoning band. There were several problems: not all faculty submitted their assignments as requested. There is continued difficulty in getting the faculty to align signature assignments with the assessment requirements and utilizing the associated rubrics. Furthermore, the General Education Committee is looking for very specific data elements: sophomores who began their college education at UHD, and were not designated as “early college students.” This very much narrows down the pool of assignment responses that can be assessed.

In the end, there were about 60 assignment responses that were assessed for empirical and quantitative reasoning. Some assessments simply were not aligned with the applicable rubrics, so their data was invalid. Of those that did follow the rubrics, the students’ assessment scores averaged as 2.0 out of 2.5.

There were not enough samples obtained for “creativity” to assess that skill.

The “inquiry and analysis” skill could not be assessed, since the faculty simply did not score the signature assignment correctly.
With the “teamwork” assessment, it was evident that the professors in the bands with these assignments were simply choosing whatever assignment they had given which happened to involve teamwork. It was obvious that the professors were not teaching anything about the processes, theories, benefits, etc. of teamwork, which was the point of the assessment. Furthermore, there was critical information lacking: the year of the student, who wrote the team’s product, and so on. It might be useful to send the faculty participants a pdf with rubrics for evaluation of signature assignments.

There have been numerous requests by the committee to faculty teaching the various bands to attend a training session, and even as many as 75 training sessions provided. However, generally the sessions attracted only one faculty member, or even no faculty members.

It appears that, for the General Education Core assessments to be successful, faculty in the bands being assessed will require a mandatory training session the semester before their signature assignment is assessed. One issue with this is the adjuncts teaching these courses: when would they train?

Perhaps the best way to solve this problem is to require disciplines to set up a 30 minute meeting of their faculty, or a 30 minute segment of a pre-established discipline meeting, for a committee member to explain how to design a signature assignment and its rubrics, the process of approval, and the process of implementing and assessing the assignment properly. The faculty could be previously requested to bring a sample assignment that might be turned into a signature assignment, and the faculty in attendance can work with the committee member to turn the assignment into one that would be suitable for the assessment process.

It is critical that the assignment prompt is clear to faculty and students, and the faculty understand how to apply the assessment rubrics to the assignment. At these meetings, can the faculty be asked what the problems are with current prompts, and what they need to be clear?

Actually, the assignment prompts are generally understandable, according to previous analysis.

It might be useful to provide model signature assignments for discussion at these meetings with faculty. An assignment that already exists could be “tweaked” to fit the requirements of the assignment. Perhaps one assignment be reused periodically, for a particular course and particular professor.

The deans need to understand how important this assessment is—it is part of the accreditation, UHD’s retention efforts, and other important matters—so much so, that the deans might be involved to stress to the faculty their need to fully cooperate and implement these signature assignments.
Is it possible to give some recognition to faculty who actually do attend training, and do correctly implement the signature assignment, or an authoritative reminder to faculty who don’t?

It is important to note that, regarding these assessments, the rubrics can’t be really changed dramatically, because the whole faculty voted on and approved these rubrics.

The forthcoming skills to be assessed in the fall are oral presentation skills, writing skills, and social responsibility.

For assessment of oral communications, there has to be video recorded oral presentations for assessment. The problem is that there is limited memory space on the UHD servers. Then followed a discussion of the technical possibilities for overcoming this problem. However, solving this problem is not necessary at this time; what is necessary is making sure that the basic signature assignments and rubrics are in place, and the faculty understands what is required in obtaining the data from these signature assignments.

The schedule for fall is due March 10—only after that can the faculty who will be teaching in the targeted bands be trained.

What appears necessary is to contact by email the discipline coordinators, with courtesy copies to the chairs and deans. The email will explain that, next semester, certain courses they teach in General Education will be assessed for certain skills. The discipline coordinator will need to set up a meeting with his or her faculty, which allows for 30 minutes of training on this. Faculty could bring in a sample assignment that seems to closely match the assessment criteria. The committee could create a schematic design of a signature assignment from this, and show the faculty what would be a possible signature assignment based on this schema.

There can be a meeting of discipline coordinators afterwards, for further training to convey to their faculty regarding implementation of the assessment of the signature assignment.

Before April 1, the discipline coordinators need to have the meeting that will include training for their faculty. The committee can collect their sample signature assignments in April, evaluate and approve these in May, and authorize their use for the fall assessment bands.

Faculty must be aware that General Education courses serve the Core, and must conform to the Core skill assessments. This also means that there has to be some cohesion across the sections of a particular course in assessing this skill. For the faculty to understand the importance of these assessments, it ought to be stressed to them that the goal is to determine what skills our students are underperforming in, design ways to improve their performance, and thus improve their education. Also, they should know that these same skills will be taught and assessed in other courses in other disciplines—all of which means
that the students will improve in these skills after taking a variety of courses, and be better prepared to do well in their upper level courses in their major.

III. General Education Committee Policy Statement:
The University Curriculum Committee has developed policies for the General Education Curriculum, and these policies have been approved and are in force. When one discipline wishes to change their major’s course requirements and these affect General Education Core courses, this would require changing policy, since General Education requirements for all students are embedded in a policy. Thus, the University Academic Policy Committee, as well as the University Curriculum Committee, would also have to approve these changes.

We expect that SACSCOC will soon require that we “close the loop” on the General Education Core course skills. This will be a major undertaking, since it will require that course curriculum changes will be required to improve those skills in which UHD students perform poorly, according to the assessments.

Given the enormous workload of the chair of the General Education Committee, there should be a course release for her or him each “long” semester. This should be specified in an official document.

It was also noted that all emails sent by the General Education Committee chair are courtesy copied to all members of the committee.

The meeting was then adjourned.