I. Corrections to the minutes of February 22:

Jean Creighton should be listed as Jane and is in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Regarding the “reason empirically and quantitative reasoning” skills, the previous minutes imply that a large number of students did not demonstrate those skills. This was not the case. Rather, some assessments simply were not aligned with the applicable rubrics; in other words, their data was invalid. Of those that did follow the rubrics, the students’ assessment scores averaged as 2.0 out of 2.5.

II. New Business:

The College of Sciences and Technology still does not have two representatives on the General Education Committee, and is unlikely to remedy this for this semester.

There will likely be a new policy, in which there will be one representative to the General Education Committee from each department. This is expected to occur in the fall semester.

The History Discipline has a good signature assignment for their General Education assessment (in analytical writing); in some other departments, it is up to the professor to design the signature assignment. This tends to create problems with all the assignments being aligned to the rubrics; otherwise they do not generate useful data. It is generally best for the discipline coordinators to create a signature assignment agreed upon by the faculty from that discipline.

Regarding new General Education courses: there was an email sent out asking for new core course proposals, and there were several courses proposed, mostly in the area of UHD seminars.
There is a long timeframe for approval of General Education courses. They have to go through the Course Inventory Request (CIR) Workflow, then to the chair of the University Curriculum Committee, then the Chair of the General Education Committee, then the full University Curriculum Committee.

The question arose: should there be a course proposal cycle each semester, or only once per academic year? Since the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) meets only once per year, it makes sense to have only one course proposal cycle each academic year.

Will the course approval from the THECB be received in time for the course to be added to the UHD Course Catalog? It could be, even if on an errata sheet. It really might be a year later before it is in the Catalog.

The Catalog is official for the next academic year by April 1 of the previous academic year. The provost needs to approve all courses that will be in it, which takes two weeks; therefore, any new Core courses have to have all their necessary approvals by early March.

Since the University Curriculum Committee would need to approve the course no later than its November meeting, and the THECB needs time to examine the proposed courses, from December 15 to February, new course proposals should be entered in the CIR Workflow before October. Thus, the course ought to be prepared in the spring and summer, and submitted no later than October 1, to be approved and taught the next year.

The emphasis should be on full development and approval of the courses well ahead of time. The departments should thoroughly vet the courses before submission to the CIR Workflow. This would help prevent a lot of delays and a lot of extra work on behalf of the approval committees. There is a need for more advanced software that the CIR Workflow to facilitate new course approval.

The proposed courses need to be submitted along with corresponding signature assignments and syllabuses. In some cases, two or more signature assignments are warranted per course. Quite a few disciplines are working together to develop signature assignments for their band. The General Education Committee must approve the signature assignments.

There will probably be only six or seven proposed Core courses per year.

Those who intend to propose a new Core course will need to meet with a representative of the General Education Committee, who can explain the timeline and requirements for new Core courses.

It would be a good idea to have a worksheet for the faculty member proposing the course, to make sure that the course approval requirements are fulfilled. There would need to be nine worksheets, since there are nine bands. Since templates exist for all these bands, worksheets could be created based on these templates. Sample courses would also need to be provided, as
well as a course approval timeline. The Provost’s Office can put these materials on the UHD website.

All the committee members need to study these templates and samples—they can be put on Blackboard.

The University Curriculum Committee should approve our proposed timeline at their next meeting, and thus these course proposal guidelines can then be announced to the entire UHD faculty.

Proposed revisions to the SACSCOC Standards would require universities to “close the loop” on their Core course assessments: in other words, after determining what deficiencies exist in each band, according to goals and outcomes, it will be necessary to design ways to improve students’ performance towards those goals and outcomes to eliminate those deficiencies.

The “Assess a Fest” report for 2015 to 2016 needs to go to the University Curriculum Committee. There are about sixteen assessment reports for that academic year. These have been sent to the Assessment Committee. These now need to go out to the whole faculty.

There now needs to be faculty volunteers to assess critical thinking.

There is sometimes software to facilitate assessment associated with textbooks: Pearson’s Media Share, for example. But this is making students pay for the assessment tools (video upload space, for example). Students should not have to pay for us to do the faculty’s assessment job.

Oral Communication will soon be assessed. To do this, students will need to record their presentations, and upload them to Media Share. These then go to the Assessment Committee.

Most faculty will use either a private You Tube Channel or record a video for the oral communications assessment. Using You Tube, there is no need for additional assessment software.

The TK20 assessment software allows each student to create a portfolio. Faculty manage this during class; they can make sure that each student uploads their assignments. The faculty member can then decide which assignment uploaded by the student is then moved to the assessment portfolio. The student work to be used for assessments must be “tagged” in certain courses. The signature assignments must be titled the same across the board, so they can be easily located. At the end of the semester, TK20 can collate all the General Education signature assignment assessment results. We need to wait until the TK20 software is implemented, so that the faculty need be trained only once on how to use this software. We hope we will have sufficient data collected next fall.
Some courses might sound, from their title, to be centered on oral communication skills, but this might not be the case at all. These courses might just study what people say, rather than have the students communicate orally: for example, a course in Intercultural Communication.

However, there can still be oral communication assignments created for such courses. For example, video recording a student interviewing someone from a different culture. There can continue to be pilot assessments to test the effectiveness of signature assignments.

What is the General Education Committee roll in assessment? There needs to be a training session on each band to prepare the Committee to train the faculty on signature assignment creation and assessment procedures.

“Assess a Fest” can be scheduled during a General Education Committee meeting for this purpose.

Perhaps the members of the General Education Committee should go to a norming or assessment session.

Faculty can be trained on how to do signature assignments for their band for about one hour at the beginning of discipline meetings in the fall.

There needs to be stimulus from the department chair or the dean to get faculty to cooperate. There is an assessment coordinator in each department. They need to make sure faculty do what they are supposed to do relating to assessment. If necessary, the General Education Committee can inform the chairs of those cases in their department of faculty not participating in this assessment process.

Discussion on course release for the Chair of the General Education Committee: the work of the committee chair is analogous to the work of a discipline coordinator, as the General Education Chair has to deal with program curriculum, work with the State Accrediting Board, work according to a set timeline for course approval, and so on. Thus, this is more work than other policy committees.

There needs to be a job description for the Committee Chair in the application for a course release. For example, it should be clear that the General Education Committee is responsible for assessment of General Education Signature Assignments. The Committee chair is also responsible for finding signature assignment faculty evaluators to help with the corresponding assessments.

Meeting adjourned.