

STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT

November, 2011

1. Senate Matters: Composition and Membership

We are advised that the membership of the Senate is stable at this time.

2. Committee Matters: Composition and Membership

The Steering Committee would also like to thank the members of Student Government, especially the Student Government President, Mr. Oluwadamisi Atanda, for working with us to find student representatives for every committee—and furnishing the Steering Committee with a list that we are hoping to have loaded to all the websites within the next few weeks.

3. Committee Matters: Activities

- The Steering Committee would like to report that the Special Budget Advisory Committee of the Academic Senate, created by the Academic Senate at the meeting of last February, 2011, has now met a second time to discuss the budget allotted to Queensborough Community College. The Steering Committee would also like to indicate that, with the incorporation of this Budget consultation process, Queensborough takes its place among those CUNY colleges which adhere to “best practices” in this regard, as per a wonderful presentation given at the last University Faculty Senate Plenary on October 18, 2011, by Professor Risch Raj, Chair of the Faculty Senate at City College of the City University of New York.
- Senators will be aware that the Faculty Meeting of October 26 incorporated some consideration of changes to the By-Laws of the Faculty of Queensborough Community College. In the wake of the so-called “Perez Decision” related to the Open Meetings Law (discussed on the CUNY website at http://www1.cuny.edu/mu/vc_la/2006/01/02/requirements-of-the-open-meetings-law/; senators may also wish to consult the analysis at http://sunshinereview.org/index.php/Perez_v._City_Univ._of_New_York), and the incorporation of CLTs and HEOs into our Academic Senate, members of our Steering Committee, and members of the Faculty Executive Committee, have noted some additional changes that are needed to bring the Bylaws of our Academic Senate, and Queensborough’s overarching “Governance Plan,” into conformity with current practice as it has developed over the last decade. For this reason, the Steering Committee has already asked the Committee on Bylaws to consider a few changes to the By-laws of the Academic Senate that would, for example, recognize the Steering Committee’s report to the Academic Senate (a practice we believe is useful for the assessment purposes of transparency and accountability in the conduct of our role as governance leaders); and allow for department chairs to bring a motion before the Academic Senate when they

deem it appropriate. Similarly, we will be asking the members of the Committee on Bylaws to work with us as we make necessary modifications to our governance plan, as per its charge, to:

4. Advise the Academic Senate regarding the application of the Bylaws.

5. Upon the request of the Executive Committee of the Faculty, consider and recommend to the faculty new bylaws and amendments to the Bylaws of the Faculty.

The Steering Committee is extremely grateful to our colleagues on the Faculty Executive Committee and the Committee on Bylaws for their support through this project.

- The Steering Committee would also like to thank Professor Galatia Iakovou, Chair of the Committee on Committees, for preparing revisions to the Committee Guide for her Committee. As of this writing, the Steering Committee is reviewing this committee guide, which has implications for all committees of the Academic Senate, given the foundational nature of the Committee on Committees, and will be consulting with her further regarding the substance of these revisions.

4. University and College Wide Matters with Direct Bearing on the Senate

- Over the past few weeks, another initiative of potentially critical importance to the future of CUNY is a move by the Office of the Vice-Chancellor of Legal Affairs, Frederick Schaffer, to revise the Bylaws of the CUNY Board of Trustees. These by-laws revisions have been shared both with the Executive Committee of the University Faculty Senate, and with the Professional Staff Congress, as well as the governance body for graduate students of the CUNY Graduate Center. All have expressed concerns over various modifications proposed by the CUNY Central Office. It is for this reason that the Steering Committee has also taken the liberty of sharing these proposed changes with the Committee on Bylaws of the Academic Senate, as per its charge to:

2. Consider and recommend to the Academic Senate new bylaws and amendments to the existing Bylaws of the Board of Trustees.

3. Consider and inform the Academic Senate of changes in the Bylaws of the Board of Trustees.

- We would also like to remind Senators that the visit of Michelle Anderson, Dean of the CUNY Law School, and chair of the Steering Committee for the CUNY Pathways Initiative, is scheduled to visit our college this Friday, November 11, 2011. The Steering Committee is taking the liberty of appending Dean Anderson's report to this report (also available, together with other documents related to this planning process, at <http://www.cuny.edu/academics/initiatives/degreepathways/planning-process.html>) with a renewed request that members of the Academic Senate read it, share it with colleagues, and encourage everyone to share their questions for Dean Anderson during the time she spends with us. As we

move toward formulating an implementation plan, as a college, that can be in the best interests of our students, it is critical that faculty make their voices heard.

October 31, 2011

Dear CUNY colleagues,

On June 27, 2011, the CUNY Board of Trustees passed the *Resolution on Creating an Efficient Transfer System*, which specified that general education at CUNY would consist of a 30-credit Common Core for all campuses across the University and a 12-credit College Option for senior colleges. The Chancellor charged the Pathways Task Force with making a recommendation on the contours of the 30-credit Common Core structure.

Attached is a draft structure for the Common Core. Although the Resolution did not require the Task Force to do so, the Task Force is now engaging in formal campus consultation so that it can reflect carefully on coordinated campus feedback. The Task Force hopes to incorporate the best ideas from across the University in revising the structure before submitting it to the Chancellor.

The college president's office should submit the coordinated campus response via email to pathways@mail.cuny.edu by 5 p.m. on November 15, 2011. The Resolution mandates that the Pathways Task Force submit its final recommendation to the Chancellor by December 1, 2011.

There are two parts to the Common Core structure developed by the Pathways Task Force: 1) the Required Core, and 2) the Flexible Core. The Required Core consists of 15 credits, which include seven credits in English Composition, four credits in Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning, and four credits in Life and Physical Sciences. The Flexible Core, also with 15 credits, includes four thematic areas: World Cultures, U.S. Experience in its Diversity, Creative Expression, and the Individual and Society.

As required in the Board *Resolution*, each area of the Common Core includes specific learning outcomes that a course must meet in order to fulfill that area. Each area, including those in the Required Core, is defined by the learning outcomes it requires, not by its title. For example, "World Cultures" is not limited to those courses with the words "World" or "Cultures" in their names. It is restricted to those courses that satisfy the applicable learning outcomes in that area.

This Common Core structure, with specific learning outcomes defining each area, is designed to do several things:

- 1. Bolster the basics.** CUNY students must achieve excellence in the fundamental areas of English, math, and science, so the structure places each of these areas in the Required Core and grants them slightly weightier credits. Effective written and oral communication are given special prominence throughout the Common Core. In the Required Core, English composition obviously expects students to learn how to produce coherent texts and support well-reasoned arguments. Math also requires students to effectively communicate solutions to mathematical problems in written or oral form, and science requires students to produce

effective written laboratory reports. In the Flexible Core, every course requires students to produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.

2. **Strengthen critical thinking skills.** High-level critical thinking skills are required in every Common Core course. In English, students must demonstrate critical reading, listening, and analytical skills. In math, students must identify and apply logically valid arguments. In science, students must apply the scientific method to explore natural phenomena, including observation, hypothesis development, and the evaluation of evidence. Every course in the Flexible Core requires the critical evaluation of evidence and arguments from a variety of sources and points of view.
3. **Provide broad curricular exposure.** The Pathways Task Force takes as a given that the first 30 credits of general education at any University should require the study of a wide range of disciplines. Courses in the Flexible Core are limited to three credits to allow students to take five courses. These five courses must be taken in four different thematic areas and five different disciplines. The requirement that students take no more than one course in any particular discipline is designed to mandate the study of different fields and thereby broaden curricular exposure.
4. **Maximize flexibility for the campuses.** The Common Core allows campuses to submit courses across a variety of disciplines in many areas of study. None of the thematic areas in the Flexible Core is defined by discipline, and courses in any discipline or interdisciplinary field may fit in a range of areas. Where disciplines are identified in thematic areas, they are provided only as examples, and are not meant to constitute exhaustive lists. The Flexible Core is designed to grant campuses the maximum opportunity to fit their current general education courses into the Common Core.

At the end of this letter we have included a set of Frequently Asked Questions to help the CUNY community understand the Common Core structure developed here. Although not required by the Board *Resolution*, the Pathways Task Force has also developed a set of overarching Learning Goals to help guide its own work and the work of the campuses as they implement the Common Core. That document, and much more information on the history and work of the Pathways Project, may be accessed on the Pathways website: www.cuny.edu/pathways.

While we welcome all your feedback, in order for a campus response to be most useful, and to increase its likelihood of influencing the final recommendation to the Chancellor, we ask colleges to make concrete and specific suggestions for revision if they seek changes in the Common Core structure. For example, if a college believes that a particular discipline should be placed in the Required Core, we hope that it would not simply describe the importance of learning in that discipline. We request that the college suggest specifically how to alter the structure to include it. Alternatively, if a college

believes there are too many learning outcomes listed in a certain area, we hope that it would not simply describe the burden of numerous outcomes. We request that the college suggest which specific learning outcomes to delete.

The Pathways Task Force looks forward to receiving the coordinated campus feedback by 5 p.m. on November 15, 2011. Please submit campus responses as Microsoft Word documents to facilitate their prompt transmission to the members of the Pathways Task Force for expeditious review and consideration.

Other individuals or groups are also encouraged to submit feedback via email to pathways@mail.cuny.edu.

Sincerely,

Michelle J. Anderson
Dean and Professor of Law, CUNY School of Law

CUNY Pathways Common Core FAQs

Do remedial courses count for the Common Core?

No. Common Core courses must be credit bearing. Remedial courses are not credit bearing. All courses in the Common Core must also be at the college level. The New York State Education Department regulations require: "Credit toward an undergraduate degree shall be earned only for college level work." The CUNY-wide committee tasked with evaluating courses submitted for the Common Core will ensure that all courses approved for the Common Core are college-level courses.

Do all courses in the Common Core have to be at the lowest level?

No. Within each area of the Common Core, colleges must offer at least one course that has no prerequisites. Colleges will also offer higher-level courses. Colleges should submit courses of different levels and students should be encouraged to take courses at levels compatible with their knowledge and skills.

What are College Option credits?

Each senior college will develop its own 12 College Option, general education credits. In addition to the 30 credits of general education in the Common Core, senior colleges will require all students who begin at their colleges to complete 12 College Option credits. Students who transfer in to the senior college with 30 or fewer credits must similarly complete 12 College Option credits. Students who transfer in with more than 30 credits but without an Associate Degree must complete 9 College Option credits. Students who transfer with a completed Associate Degree must complete 6 College Option credits.

Do AAS degree programs have to implement the full Common Core?

No. AAS programs are not required to implement the full Common Core. The Board *Resolution* states: "liberal arts requirements for AAS degrees will be drawn from the

courses approved for the Common Core such that AAS students will receive partial certification for completion of the Core.” Moreover, CUNY will ensure that all licensing and accreditation standards for AAS and other degree programs are met.

What about programs that cannot fit the Core?

It is possible that some high-credit majors with very specific course demands will not be able to accommodate the requirements of the Common Core. At a later stage in the Pathways process, the CUNY Office of Academic Affairs (OAA) will review such cases. In situations where licensing or other requirements preclude program changes, OAA will ensure that students are not required to enroll for additional semesters to complete general education requirements.

What is the relationship between the Common Core and requirements for the major?

The Pathways Majors Committees in nine areas (accounting, biology, business, criminal justice, English, finance, nursing, psychology, and teacher education) are working to recommend the first three to six lower-division courses that will serve as entries into the majors. These committees may also recommend courses for beginning the major that could be taken as part of the Common Core. For example, a student majoring in sociology might be required to complete Sociology 101 as part of the major and also have the option of completing an area of the Common Core by taking Sociology 101. A student could count that course for both the Common Core and the major.

How will the Common Core affect articulation agreements between community colleges and senior colleges?

With respect to the transfer of general education credits, the Common Core will supersede existing articulation agreements. Courses taken as part of the Common Core will transfer as general education credits. Articulation agreements that cover courses in the major might continue to apply, although the work of the Pathways Majors Committees will supersede many articulation agreements in the major.

Will the Common Core also benefit students transferring from a senior college to a community college?

Yes. Common Core courses will transfer for general education credit whether students are transferring from a community college to a senior college, from one senior college to another, from a senior college to a community college, or from one community college to another. If students transferring from a senior college to a community college have taken some or all of the senior college’s 12 College Option credits, those credits will transfer for elective credit or for the major, as appropriate.

Draft Common Core Structure
November 1, 2011

I. Required Common Core

A. English Composition: 7 credits

English composition courses must meet all of the following learning outcomes. A student will be able to:

- Demonstrate critical reading, listening, and analytical skills, including identifying an argument's major assertions and assumptions, and evaluating its supporting evidence.
- Produce coherent texts (such as formal essays, research papers, and reports) using appropriate technology, critique one's own and others' texts, and improve them using standard English, grammar, mechanics, and clear prose.
- Demonstrate research skills using appropriate technology, including finding, evaluating, and synthesizing primary and secondary sources.
- Support a thesis with a well-reasoned argument and communicate persuasively across a variety of contexts, purposes, audiences, and media, using appropriate rhetorical modes and technology.
- Formulate original ideas and integrate them with the ideas of others by employing the conventions of ethical attribution and citation.

B. Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning: 4 credits

Mathematical and quantitative reasoning courses must meet all of the following learning outcomes. A student will be able to:

- Interpret and draw appropriate inferences from mathematical models, such as formulas, graphs, and tables.
- Use algebraic, numerical, graphical, or statistical methods to draw accurate inferences and solve mathematical problems.
- Represent quantitative problems expressed in natural language in a suitable mathematical format.
- Effectively communicate quantitative analysis or solutions to mathematical problems in written or oral form.
- Evaluate solutions to problems for reasonableness using a variety of means, including informed estimation.
- Identify and apply logically valid arguments.
- Apply mathematics in a real world context.

C. Life and Physical Sciences: 4 credits

Life and physical science courses must meet all of the following learning outcomes. A student will be able to:

- Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and research methods of a scientific discipline.
- Apply the scientific method to explore natural phenomena, including observation, hypothesis development, experimentation, measurement,

data collection, evaluation of evidence, quantitative analysis, and presentation of data.

- Use the tools of a scientific discipline to carry out collaborative investigations in appropriate laboratory settings.
- Obtain, analyze, and interpret data and present it in an effective written laboratory report.
- Apply scientific ethics and unbiased assessment in the reporting of scientific data.
- Retrieve, evaluate, and interpret information from a variety of sources.

II. Flexible Common Core: five 3-credit liberal arts courses, with at least one course from each of the four areas and no more than one course in any discipline. All Flexible Common Core courses must meet the following three learning outcomes. A student will be able to:

- Retrieve, evaluate, and interpret information from a variety of sources and points of view.
- Evaluate evidence and arguments critically.
- Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.

A. World Cultures

A course in this area must meet at least three of the following additional learning outcomes. A student will be able to:

- Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and research methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring world cultures, including, but not limited to, anthropology, economics, foreign languages (non-duplicative of previous language acquisition), history, political science, and world literature.
- Analyze the concept of culture and global cultural diversity and describe any given event or process from more than one cultural viewpoint.
- Analyze the historical development of a non-U.S. society.
- Analyze the significance of a major movement that has shaped the world's societies.
- Identify and discuss the role that race, ethnicity, class, gender, or belief plays in cultural systems.
- Speak, read, and write a language and use the conceptual skills to appreciate and respond to cultures other than one's own.

B. U.S. Experience in its Diversity

A course in this area must meet at least three of the following additional learning outcomes. A student will be able to:

- Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and research methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring the U.S. experience in its diversity, including, but not limited to, anthropology, economics, history, political science, sociology, and U.S. literature.

- Analyze the major themes of U.S. history from different social, economic, demographic, cultural, or political perspectives.
- Evaluate how immigration and slavery have shaped the development of the United States.
- Explain the role of the United States in international relations and how this role has influenced the country and the rest of the world.
- Identify and differentiate among the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of government and analyze their influence on the development of U.S. democracy.
- Analyze common institutions or patterns of life in contemporary U.S. society and how they influence or are influenced by race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, or other forms of social differentiation.

C. Creative Expression

A course in this area must meet at least three of the following additional learning outcomes. A student will be able to:

- Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and research methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring creative expression, including, but not limited to, communications, creative writing, media arts, music, and theater.
- Analyze how arts from diverse cultures of the past serve as a foundation for those of the present and describe the significance of works of art in the societies that created them.
- Articulate how meaning is created in the arts or communications and how experience is interpreted and conveyed.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the skills involved in the creative process.
- Use appropriate technologies to conduct research and to communicate.

D. Individual and Society

A course in this area must meet at least three of the following additional learning outcomes. A student will be able to:

- Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and research methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring the relationship between the individual and society, including, but not limited to, anthropology, computer science, philosophy, psychology, religion, and sociology.
- Examine how an individual's place in society affects experiences, values, and choices.
- Articulate and assess ethical views and their underlying premises.
- Articulate ethical uses of data and other information resources to respond to problems and questions.
- Analyze the transformational impact of science or technology on the individual and society.
- Identify, analyze, and engage with local, national, or global trends and analyze their impact on individual or collective decision-making.