Baruch College faculty and leadership have conducted a participatory and thorough review of the work of the University-wide Steering Committee that was established to propose a structure for the Common Core, which forms the backbone of the University’s Pathway Project. In anticipation of the release of the draft Common Core on November 1, 2011, the College scheduled a series of meetings to insure that there would be opportunities for faculty to provide input into the process. These meetings culminated in a College-wide meeting that included the chairs of the undergraduate curriculum committees of both the Zicklin School of Business and the Weissman School of Arts and Sciences, department chairs from both schools (the School of Public Affairs does not have departments), the Deans and Associate Deans of all three of the College’s Schools, the leadership of the Baruch Faculty Senate, and the Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning.

Discussions that took place in this culminating meeting, and in the school-specific meetings and Baruch Faculty Senate meetings that preceded the culminating meeting, were wide-ranging. They included analyses not only of the proposed Common Core but also a consideration of how the proposed Core would be integrated into other elements of the Pathways project. Not surprisingly, many different views emerged in these various meetings. There was consensus on some elements and divergence on others.

As a result, within the constraints of the 15-day review period it was not possible to reach full consensus on a singular Baruch College response. Nor was it possible to secure formal approval through the usual faculty governance process. The standing practice of the Baruch Faculty Senate’s processes is for a proposal to be reviewed first by one or more Senate committees, then by the Senate Executive Committee, and finally by the full Senate; this practice could not be accommodated in the time available. Therefore, although informed and influenced by a broad consultation with various faculty groups, this response, strictly speaking, represents the views of the College’s leadership as informed by the above referenced meetings. At the same time, I am attaching as an addendum to this memo a statement just received from the Baruch Faculty Senate Executive Committee. It is also possible that individual faculty members from the College may submit their own responses to the proposed Common Core.
We present our responses in four major categories:

- The 30-credit Common Core
- The 12-credit College Option, which although not part of the remit of the Steering Committee, builds so closely on the Common Core that we determined that the two could not be discussed in isolation
- A proposal on limiting lower-division courses
- A series of specific comments on the detailed definitions contained in the proposed Common Core

Each of our responses is, we believe, consistent with the overall goals of the Pathways Project, with the spirit of the Board of Trustees resolution on the Project, and with the report of the Steering Committee. Taken in sum, our response recommends changes that the Baruch community feels are very important and that will allow the University to achieve Pathway’s goals while insuring both academic excellence and Baruch’s continuing success in providing a rigorous general education program that is most appropriate for our particular undergraduate student body.

Our responses are as follows:

1. The proposed “30-credit Common Core” (which includes nine courses) should be modified to include ten courses so that either the first semester of a foreign language sequence or an oral communications course may be required as part of the common core.

This change could be accomplished in two ways—namely, either by a Board resolution that would slightly increase the number of credits allowed in the common core, or by reducing the number of credits for some of the courses proposed in the draft. Given that the 4-credit English and Math courses prescribed in the draft proposal for the “Required Common Core” are not currently the norm within the university, it would be possible to reduce those to 3-credit courses. That would reduce the nine-course core to 28 credits, thereby making it possible to add an additional 3-credit course to the Common Core while increasing the total credits of the Core to 31 credits.

Alternatively, the proposed 4-credit lab science course also could be reduced to 3 credits (unlike the Math and English courses, 4-credit lab science courses are a CUNY norm). It would still be possible to include 3 credit lab courses (one model would be 2 hours of lecture, plus 3 hours of lab). That change (along with those in Math and English) would reduce the 30 prescribed credits to 27 credits, and thereby allow for a tenth course within the 30-credit limit, as approved by the Board of Trustees.

The Baruch College leadership prefers the latter approach: limiting all courses in the Common Core to 3 credits, allowing a laboratory science course to continue to have a place in the core, while also allowing the addition of a tenth course. We would propose that this additional course be added to the Required Core, and that it be a course specifically devoted to oral communication. It has been Baruch’s consistent experience over many years that enhanced skills in oral communication are essential if our students
are to succeed in their chosen careers—especially in the world of business. We regularly hear from employers that strong oral–and written–communication skills are essential, indeed so essential that we believe a course devoted to enhancing such skills should be part of the Required Core.

2. The senior colleges should be allowed to require 12 college-specific credits of all transfer students (in lieu of the proposed 6-9-12 option). We believe that it is fundamentally important for each of the CUNY senior colleges to develop and sustain its own “signature identity” component of general education. One of the great advantages of the CUNY system is that its breadth, scale and structure allow individual senior colleges to support unique arrays of academic programs that differentiate each senior college from the others, thereby giving the applying student a range of options from which to choose. A 12-credit college option for all students would allow each senior college to develop a subset of the general education curriculum that is particularly well-suited to its student body, its faculty, and to the unique array of academic programs its campus.

3. The University should allow no more than 60 credits of lower-division courses to be considered for transfer credit. Students who start and complete their undergraduate education at a single institution should also be limited to 60 credits of lower-division courses. This limit (and enhanced advisement) would help ensure that students completing bachelor’s degrees at all CUNY colleges have both a broad and rigorous education that is equally divided between more challenging and more focused upper-division courses and more broadly designed lower-division courses that provide both basic skills and general knowledge.

4. Some specific proposals for slight modifications to the proposed categories of the Common Core:

- Within each category of the “Flexible Common Core,” the draft prescribes that courses “must meet at least three of the following additional learning outcomes.” Instead, all courses in the category should be required to meet the first outcome (“Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and research methods…”) plus at least two of the remaining outcomes.

- Within the categories of the “Flexible Common Core,” specific disciplines should not be listed. Instead of listing disciplines, the first outcome should read “Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and research methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field that addresses at least two of the following learning outcomes.” A less acceptable alternative would be a much longer list of disciplines for each category (see below under e).

- The proscription in the “Flexible Common Core” against taking more than one course in a single discipline should be dropped. The resulting flexibility would be especially relevant for language study, for which a single semester is simply inadequate.
Within the “Required Common Core,” the second bullet under “English Composition” should be revised, in recognition of the type of writing required across the undergraduate curriculum as well as for graduate study, from… “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” to… “Produce coherent academic essays using appropriate technology, critique one’s own and others’ texts, and improve them using standard English, grammar, mechanics, and clear prose.”

If specific disciplines/courses will continue to be named in the categories of the “Flexible Common Core” (see b above):

- Within the “World Cultures” category: cultural studies courses should be added. In addition, the parenthetical “(non-duplicative of previous language acquisition)” [after foreign languages] should be revised to clarify that students may not begin a college-level language class at the same (or lower) level at which s/he studied the same language before; students may take the same foreign language as in high school or at a previous college but must continue at a higher level.

- Within the “U.S. Experience in its Diversity” category: public affairs, anthropology and cultural studies should be added.

- Within the “Creative Expression” category, neither communications (a course that is not focused on creativity per se) nor creative writing (an course that requires additional background and literature) should be included.

- Within the “Individual and Society” category, computer science should not be included; political science, public affairs, journalism, cultural studies, sociology, and information sciences/resources should be added.

As stated at the outset of this response, we believe that each of the specific recommendations made above, and the sum of these suggestions taken as a whole, would greatly enhance the effectiveness of the proposed Common Core, while remaining completely faithful to the goals of the Pathway Project as well as consistent with the structure of the Common Core proposed by the Steering Committee. We believe these suggestions will enhance the ability of each of CUNY’s senior colleges not only to provide transfer students with the clear path to the bachelor’s degree they deserve, but also would simultaneously provide each senior college with the flexibility to require a college-specific core that is most appropriate to its unique array of academic programs and capabilities. We trust that these comments will be helpful as the Steering Committee prepares its final set of recommendations on the Common Core, and as other stages of the Pathways Project continue forward. We welcome further participation in this process, and would also be eager to clarify any of the issues discussed above.
Statement of the Baruch Faculty Senate Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of the Baruch Faculty Senate offers the following statement on the Common Core. Unanimously approved November 15, 2011.

The unfortunately truncated two week response period precluded this statement from going through the regular governance process. We provide our comments recognizing that they will remain the view of the Executive Committee until the entire Baruch Faculty Senate acts. We would have appreciated more time to address this very important issue.

Our first issue is the interconnectivity between Common Core Structure and the remainder of the Resolution on Creating an Efficient Transfer System. In particular, as several of the larger transfer majors are offered at Baruch it is difficult to develop a fully informed comment without some understanding of what is contained in the “…no fewer than three and no more than six courses that will be accepted as entry level courses for beginning the major or as prerequisites for such courses…”

Our second issue deals with proposed common core itself. We find it too rigid in the specification of credits instead of courses. We find the specifications of the learning outcomes of the flexible common core far too imprecise. We find omission of oral communication in the required common core difficult to understand in light of the persistent criticisms of the skills of our students.

Our third issue has to do with the 6-9-12 credits allocated to each senior college. It is our view that these numbers, as few as six and no more than twelve, are insufficient to establish a COMMON Baruch experience for our students. This will lead to a lack of consistency in the experiences of the graduates of Baruch.

Our fourth concern refers back to our first comment. The flexibility of the Common Core Structure proposal and the current unknowns regarding the remainder of the Pathways Proposal raises a very real prospect of different students in the same major having significant differences in preparation without significant differences in GPA. This will inevitably lead to confusion in the marketplace and could undermine Baruch’s reputation for quality. The total Pathways project must ensure that the unconstrained student flexibility inherent in the proposal does not inadvertently compromise student success after graduation.
November 15, 2011

Michelle Anderson, Dean and Professor of Law
CUNY School of Law at Queens College
65-21 Main Street
Flushing, NY 11367

Dear Dean Anderson:

As per your email sent on October 31, 2011, I am providing Borough of Manhattan Community College’s (BMCC) coordinated response to the proposed 30-credit Common Core for all campuses across the City University of New York (CUNY).

Overall, we endorse the concept of a CUNY-wide General Education Core that will enable our students to transfer seamlessly to our sister institutions. As part of the review process we have engaged and consulted with the chairs of our academic departments, who have discussed the Common Core with their faculty and forwarded to us their observations, issues and concerns. The Common Core was also reviewed through our governance process. Chairs of the standing committees in our Academic Senate met with their committee members to discuss the Core and shared their concerns and observations at their Executive Committee meeting held on November 9, 2011.

Upon review of the various responses from the academic departments and Academic Senate participants, as well as in consultation with my Cabinet members, the following salient concerns about the Common Core were identified:

- **Seven Credits Required for English**

Many senior and community college English courses are three (3) credits and no pedagogical rationale or assessment to support the increase in credit was offered in the Common Core document.

- **Speech and Language Arts**

A number of academic departments and standing committees voiced concern about the absence of required Modern Language and Speech Communications courses in the Common Core, especially since the current job market has stressed the need for both written and oral communication skills with a global perspective, i.e., proficiency in more than one language. Therefore, faculty have suggested that a fifth theme entitled “Speech
Communication and Language Arts” be added to the Common Core, in which courses in speech and modern languages could fulfill the requirement. We fully support this suggestion.

- **Revision of the Theme-based Flexible Core**

Many members of the standing committees observed that the areas of the flexible core are oriented towards courses in the social science disciplines. While the social sciences are important to a student’s general education, part of the purpose of a General Education Common Core is to provide students with both depth and breadth of experience; therefore, it should not rely heavily on the social sciences. It was proposed that the theme-based core be revised to include areas other than the social sciences.

- **Technological Skills**

One possible area that would enhance the theme-based flexible core is technology. Faculty stated that it is a myth that all CUNY students are adept technologically. Our students’ proficiency in technology falls at all levels on the continuum. Their knowledge of and facility with technology, including the several varieties of social media, cannot be taken for granted. There must be university/institutional encouragement for all students to focus on this area as part of their General Education. Therefore, another theme that may be added to the flexible core is “Technological Skills.” E-learning courses, technology-enhanced courses, and computer science courses that improve students’ technological skills at the basic and advanced levels may be used to fulfill the requirement.

- **Curriculum Revision**

There was some concern expressed by academic chairs and members of the standing committees that the Common Core will force changes in our current curricula that will have a negative effect on the goals and articulation agreements of the programs, especially for those in the sciences. For example, the A.S. degrees in our Science for Forensic Science, Biotechnology and Engineering Science programs provide the basic science courses for the first two years of science programs at CUNY senior colleges, such as John Jay College of Criminal Justice and York College. However, the proposed Common Core would necessitate our replacing some of the foundation science courses with other liberal arts/general education courses to meet the learning outcomes of the Core. This, in turn, would force the senior colleges to require the students to take more foundation science courses in the third and fourth year, and possibly have an unintended consequence of students taking more than eight semesters to complete the baccalaureate because the foundation science courses are pre-requisites for many of the third- and fourth-year science courses. This is especially disconcerting since the University has identified these current ten years as “CUNY’s Decade of Science.”

- **Articulation in the Common Core**
Some faculty have raised concerns about how the Common Core will affect current articulation agreements and accreditation in A.A.S. degree programs, such as Nursing, Respiratory Therapy, Health Information Technology, and Media Arts and Technology. There should be an on-going review of such programs with respect to the Common Core.

- **Revision of General Education Assessment, Program Outcomes and Assessment Plans**

BMCC has in place a General Education Assessment Plan. It is based on the college’s seven General Education Outcome Goals that were approved through our governance process. It would appear that the proposed General Education Common Core will supersede our General Education Outcome Goals, and that all academic departments will revise their syllabi to incorporate the new general education learning outcomes associated with the Common Core.

I appreciate the opportunity that the University has given BMCC to share our observations, issues and concerns about the proposed General Education Common Core. Equally important, we appreciate being involved in a process that will ultimately benefit all of the students within CUNY.

Respectfully yours,

Antonio Pérez
President
DATE: November 15, 2011
TO: Members of the Pathways Steering Committee
FROM: President Carole M. Berotte Joseph

RE: Bronx Community College’s Coordinated College Response to the
Pathways Draft Common Core Structure Proposed on November 1, 2011

Bronx Community College is pleased to submit the following response to the Pathways Draft Common Core Structure. We recognize the critical importance of the Pathways initiative. As we move toward the implementation and planning stages which will begin on December 1, we are fully prepared to consider, over the next months, the implications of Pathways for our curricula and for many other dimensions of academic programming and policy. As a first step, we now offer our coordinated response for the consideration of the Pathways Steering Committee’s deliberations between now and December 1.

Our response reflects three (3) types of activity: intensive deliberations within College faculty governance structures; an open invitation by the President for faculty, students and staff to participate in a Campus Wide Forum and the submission of individual/group responses to the Pathways document. What follows is a synthesis and summary of these activities. In addition, members of the campus community were encouraged to submit comments directly to the Pathways Steering Committee via the established website.

A. Governance Discussions and Resolutions

Following release of the Draft Common Core Structure and campus-wide circulation of the materials, discussions about Pathways were held at the College Senate (November 3), and College Curriculum Committee (November 8) and the College Faculty Council (November 10). Substantial time was reserved on the agenda, and the format consisted of a “Q&A” session in which Dr. Howard Wach, Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs, responded to questions and comments about the Draft Common Core at the first two meetings.

Governance discussions culminated in a meeting of the College Faculty Council, entirely devoted to Pathways, held on November 10. Council members had been urged to bring formal resolutions to the meeting. Minutes of this meeting reflect the passing of two (2) successful resolutions:

1. That “History” be included as a discipline under Flexible Core D “Individual and Society” within the Flexible Core structure. Justification of this resolution was submitted by the BCC Department of History. A supporting statement follows:
We strongly urge the inclusion of history as a discipline under the Flexible Core, D., “Individual and Society.” A close look at what the discipline of history seeks to convey, and the methods by which it does so, alongside the learning outcomes enumerated by the Steering Committee in this area, makes the congruence of the two apparent.

For confirmation that the learning outcomes listed are at the heart of the historical endeavor, one needs go no further than Peter Stearn’s 2008 essay, “Why Study History,” posted on the American Historical Association’s website. His declaration, “History should be studied because it is essential to individuals and society…,” is highlighted in 18-point red type. Stearn argues further that history “provides the only extensive materials available to study the human condition” and in so doing offers “a terrain for moral contemplation.” (http://www.historians.org/pubs/free/WhyStudyHistory.htm) These reflections are entirely consonant with the desired student outcomes of Flexible Common Core D.

The discipline of history examines questions of individual experience, identity, status, rights, ethical, moral and civic responsibilities, and relationships with collectives beyond the self. These issues are examined in cultural, political and socio-economic contexts. History strongly emphasizes the transformative effects of philosophical and scientific knowledge, social scientific inquiry, and technological innovation on human lives, ideas and institutions. It examines agrarian and industrial, rural and urban life, comparative cultural change, elite-popular relations, and questions of identity, membership in, or exclusion from polities in the United States and other countries.

The methods of analysis engaged by historians lead students to consider the moral and ethical dimensions of past circumstances as they affected individuals and the societies in which they lived, and to consider the implications that both past and present circumstances and actions bear on their day-to-day lives. Local, national, and global trends and their long-term movements are interwoven in comparative context, into the discourse of historical method and perspective.

An empathic appreciation of individual circumstance linking past and present is also a key learning method in history courses. Students, in their research, discussion and writing outcomes, are often required to compare, evaluate and consider the manner in which decisions taken on the societal level impact their lives. These considerations are fundamental not only to the study of the individual and society, but to conscious individual participation in society itself, a core general education value essential to student learning at Bronx Community College and CUNY. In short, the discipline of history is essential to a full appreciation of the complex, highly nuanced and often vexed relationship—past and present—of the individual and society.

2. That “Health/Physical Education” also be added to the “Individual and Society” area, and that the word “lifestyle” be added to “experiences, values, and choices” in bullet 2.
B. Additional Discussions / Suggestions for Revising the Common Core

1. Aside from the approved resolutions listed above, additional resolutions and responses were submitted directly to the Office of Academic Affairs and the President’s Office from the Department of Modern Languages and the Department of Education and Reading in collaboration with the Communications Department. Changes were suggested to the wording of the learning outcomes to expand English Composition to include Reading and Communications.

2. The Modern Languages response had two components: a request for amended language to the general Flexible Core learning outcomes (substitution of the word “effectively” for “critically” in bullet 2), and the addition of three (3) language credits to the Required Common Core thus bringing the total number of credits in the Flexible Core to eighteen (18) credits.

C. Campus Wide Forum - On Monday, 11/14/11, a campus wide forum was also held.

D. Summary and Next Steps
We endorse the formally approved resolutions listed above. In the case of History, a close correlation between the “Individual and Society” learning outcomes and the fundamental premises of historical study make a compelling case for inclusion. In the case of Health and Physical Education, we recognize the critical importance of health education as a necessary element of our mission, and its close connection to the larger goals embedded in our longstanding working concept of General Education.

Though they were not approved in our faculty governance deliberations, we include the concerns of the Modern Languages and Reading and Communications Departments in order to reflect the full range of discussion that the Pathways Project has generated at BCC. Similarly, we’ve documented the unsuccessful proposals (as reflected in our Faculty Council Minutes) for inclusion of Communications within the Pathways credit structures. Some of these proposals (notably Communications and Modern Languages) have also been submitted directly to Dean Anderson and the Pathways Steering Committee.

Finally, we can also report initial discussions about how the Required Core credits in Math and Composition may be allocated, and whether new courses (along with new credit allocations) will be appropriate to our institutional plan.

We are in support of the proposed learning outcomes and have appointed a BCC Pathways Steering Committee, consisting of senior faculty and designees from the Offices of Academic Affairs and Institutional Research, who will be charged to deliver our Pathways Implementation Plan on April 1, 2012. They have drawn up a calendar and preliminary work plan.
Once the final Pathways Common Core plan is released on December 1, our Steering Committee will begin its work in earnest. We look forward to their deliberations, and to the campus wide discussions that will follow. The effort will provide our faculty and staff with many opportunities to examine what we do, and to determine how Pathways can complement and strengthen our campus-based academic initiatives.
Dear Dean Anderson,

As you have requested, I am submitting to you the coordinated response of the faculty and the provost to the Pathways Report issued on October 31st. All of our campus conversations about Pathways have been framed in the context of our deep commitment to provide Brooklyn College students with a general education program that prepares them to excel in their undergraduate studies and succeed in life in a complex, interdependent, and rapidly changing world. Our campus discussions of the proposed Pathways outline also embraced the four principles that guided the Steering Committee’s deliberations—bolster the basics, strengthen critical thinking skills, provide broad curricular exposure, and maximize flexibility for the campuses.

At Brooklyn College, the review and response process included the following chronology and milestones:

- **November 2**: informational session for all faculty, conducted by Professor Mona Hadler, Pathways Steering Committee member;
- **November 2-8**: review by schools, departments, programs, and relevant Faculty Council committees;
- **November 3 & November 8**: discussion at the November meetings of the Council on Administrative Policy (CAP) and the Faculty Council (Faculty Council “Resolution on the Draft Common Core” enclosed);
- **November 10**: Pathways Summit meeting, convened by Provost William A. Tramontano, attended by 35 faculty and academic leaders, including Brooklyn College Pathways Steering and Working Committee delegates.

After many hours of discussion from numerous and varied perspectives, our coordinated campus response consists of the following recommendation and concerns:

**PART I: RECOMMENDATION TO ADOPT THE SECONDARY MOTION ALTERNATIVE TO THE PROPOSED PATHWAYS DRAFT COMMON CORE STRUCTURE**

There is broad consensus at Brooklyn College to support the adoption of a 12-18-12 Common Core Structure that is based on the Secondary Motion to Structure the Common Core discussed by the Pathways Steering Committee on October 14th, with modifications (as underlined below):

1. **Required Common Core**
   
   English Composition                                           6 credits
II. Flexible Common Core: six (6) 3-credit courses, with at least one course from each of five areas, and no more than two courses in any department:

1. **World History and Cultures**—Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and research methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring world history and cultures, including, but not limited to foreign languages, anthropology, history, political science, economics, and world literature.

2. **U.S. Experience in its Diversity**—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 history, political science, economics, sociology, and U.S. literature.

3. **Creative Expression**—Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and research methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring creative expression, including, but not limited to fine arts, creative writing, media, music, and theater.

4. **Individual and Society**—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, health, philosophy, psychology, religion, and computer science.

5. **Scientific World**—Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and research methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring the scientific world, including, but not limited to computer science, the natural and physical sciences, mathematics, statistics, logic, and technology studies.

III. **College Option Credits:** Each senior college will develop its own 12 College Option general education credits. In addition to the 30-credit Common Core, senior colleges will require all students, except those who transfer with an AA or AS degree, to complete 12 college option credits. Students transferring to a senior college with an AA or AS degree will be required to take a total of 6 college option credits.

**RATIONALE FOR THE SECONDARY MOTION FRAMEWORK:**

- **Brooklyn College Students Want Broader Choice:** CUNY’s undergraduate students are arguably the most diverse group of students in the world. Whether first-time full-time freshmen or transfers, students entering Brooklyn College are prepared to embrace intellectual challenges and eager to expand their world view. They want more choices and broader intellectual exposure. In their comments during our 2010 strategic planning discussions, students voiced strong support for expanding our curriculum in areas that they consider hallmarks of a 21st college experience—science, interdisciplinary studies, and global competencies. By basing the CUNY Core around a 3-credit standard, students would have the broader choice of an additional course, potentially within an additional thematic/disciplinary category.
• **Expand Student Choice Within the Flexible Core:** To provide students with maximum flexibility in terms of choice, where a department can offer courses that satisfy learning outcomes in more than one thematic area, we urge the adoption of the more liberal policy of allowing the student to choose no more than two courses within a specific department. This will be particularly meaningful for students in colleges that offer interdisciplinary courses across many departments.

• **Effect of Mixed Credit Courses on Student Success:** The Required Common Core in the proposed draft allocates one 4-credit course to Life and Physical Sciences, one 4-credit course to Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning, and English Composition has been inflated to 7 credits to accommodate the 30-credit framework. The Flexible Core then allows for an additional five 3-credit courses, creating a mix-and-match scheduling scenario for students of 3-credit and 4-credit courses. In 2006, following a comprehensive review of a long-standing Core curriculum based on mixed credit values, Brooklyn College adopted a standard 3-credit general education curriculum based on two decades of evidence that our students preferred not to mix-and-match courses based on credit values.

• **Exposure to Mathematics and Science:** The same 2006 Core curriculum revision, which took over two years of evaluation and planning, requires at least two 3-credit courses in life and physical sciences, and one 3-credit course in quantitative or computational reasoning. At Brooklyn College, we are currently developing a 21st-century interdisciplinary science curriculum that will be housed in a modern science teaching commons now in the design stage. A fundamental element of our planned science curriculum will be an interdisciplinary course in life sciences designed to fulfill one of our existing general education science requirements and for which we are seeking the support of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. We have grave concerns about the erosion of exposure to the sciences and the absence of the option for study of the Scientific World in the Flexible Core; students will have lost the precious opportunity to explore fields that are crucial to 21st-century knowledge and hold the promise of future employment for many students. As we close the first CUNY Decade Of Science, we believe it is a setback to limit our university’s undergraduates to one required 4-credit course in life and physical sciences and one required 4-credit course in mathematical, computational, and quantitative reasoning.

We also seek the inclusion of a mathematical, computational, and quantitative reasoning component in the Required Common Core in order to incorporate potential offerings in computer science that provide a laboratory for learning mathematical and quantitative reasoning, while contributing to the technological literacy of an informed citizen.

• **College Flexibility and the 12 Credit College Option Core:** The proposed sliding scale of required college option core credits does not provide senior colleges with the opportunity to adequately shape the educational experience of our graduates. Based on the scale, the reality is that most students will not be required to take 12 credits in
the College Option Core. Moreover, depending upon how their previous coursework aligns with the courses designated in the college option, students may be deprived of signature educational experiences valued by the senior college from which they plan to graduate. We strongly urge that the Board of Trustees consider amending the Pathways resolution to require the 12-Credit College Option for all students, except those who transfer to a senior college with an AA or an AS degree and who would be required to take only 6 credits of the College Option.

The following are two major illustrations of experiences and competencies that we believe should define a globally prepared Brooklyn College graduate, regardless of a student’s coursework at another institution:

- **The Experience of Commonality:** Since its inception, the signature component of our Core curriculum has been the creation of a common student experience in a set of carefully constructed interdisciplinary courses that are not owned by a single academic department. The introduction of two courses (6 credits) of upper tier interdisciplinary Core requirements in 2006 guaranteed that our transfer students would benefit from this signature Brooklyn College experience.

- **Foreign Language and Global Competencies:** The loss of a universal requirement for foreign language competency within a 42-credit Common Core is of serious concern to Brooklyn College. It is our view that a globally-competent graduate who is truly prepared for success in our globalized society should have exposure to a foreign language. Our feeder high schools have raised the bar on language competencies, and it is our obligation to meet their standards. If the foreign language requirement were to be subsumed in a college option core, and students were only required to take 6 college option credits on the sliding scale, it might not be possible to allocate those credits for foreign language; in this circumstance, the importance of foreign language competency could be at serious risk.

PART TWO: CONCERNS

- **Implementation Timetable:** The timeframe for response and the implementation date of the Pathways Initiative are very tight. We are concerned that the push to meet these deadlines may result in condensing our curriculum into the new framework without adequate time for review and revision. Moving the implementation timetable to fall 2014 could address this concern.

- **Management, Administration, and Tracking:** There is concern about the complex system that is being developed and its ongoing implementation. Questions have emerged, such as: How will modifications, such as new course proposals, be reviewed and certified? How will Flexible Common Core and College Option Core requirements be tracked and made accessible so that students can make informed decisions about their choices?
• **Student Advisement:** What additional resources will be required to implement the Pathways Initiative and ensure that students fully benefit from it? How will increased advisement costs be addressed?

• **Curriculum Reform Issues:** With the reduction in the number of required general education credits to 42, the number of “free credits” will increase. At Brooklyn College, this change would result in a total of three 3-credit courses. We will need to carefully consider how to manage and advise students with respect to these new course options so that our students may benefit fully from broader curricular exposure and the chance to pursue their own life interests, as Chancellor Goldstein vividly described during his recent visit when he recalled his own experience as a mathematics major who wanted to study music for the fun of it.

The comments enclosed herein to summarize the many conversations that have transpired at Brooklyn College over the past two weeks. We hope that they prove helpful to you as you finalize the Steering Committee’s report.

Sincerely,

Karen L. Gould
President
The City College of New York strongly endorses the objectives of facilitating transfers from one CUNY institution to another, improving graduation rates, helping more students earn their degrees on time, raising academic standards, and lowering student and University costs. The proposed framework, however, presents a number of significant challenges to City College, a few of which may be unique to the institution because of the many degree categories offered, while others undoubtedly impact other CUNY institutions. A key enabler to effective implementation will be adopting language that provides the flexibility allowing individual institutions to accommodate their needs, while retaining the core of the mission’s objectives.

City College currently has eight General Education curricula: one for each of the degree categories, B.A., B.F.A. and B.S., offered by our College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS); one for our Center for Worker Education (CWE – formally a division of CLAS); and one for each of its professional schools (Architecture, Biomedical Education, Education and Engineering). In developing this response, a number of consultative meetings were held with faculty and deans from all schools/divisions in a variety of settings at which the proposed framework and its impact on the existing curricula were discussed and analyzed. The CLAS Faculty Council convened a final college-wide meeting on November 3, 2011 and invited all the deans and faculty representatives to participate in the discussion and share their views and comments.

The feedback from the meetings is in support of the following recommendations:  (1) using a 6-3-3 formula for the fixed portion of the Common Core; (2) treating the College’s 6-credit Inquiry Writing Seminar as satisfying the English Composition requirement; (3) treating Foreign Language and Speech as proficiency requirements; and (4) balancing Pathways’ requirements with broad definitions and the availability of resources. Given the specific mission of CWE, City College requests an exemption from the 30-credit core framework. For the four Professional schools, the critical issue will be to balance the Pathways’ recommendations with state licensure and/or degree accreditation requirements.

For ease of organization, the College’s response to the Common Core Draft Structure is broken down into the following outline:

I. COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCE (CLAS)

The proposed structure will present a number of challenges to the College of Liberal Arts and Science:

A. 1. The 7-4-4-formula for the fixed portion of the Common Core:

CLAS strongly urges a 6-3-3 rather than a 7-4-4 formula for the fixed portion of the Common Core.
The College understands that the 7-4-4 formula was devised in an effort to accommodate the desire of some colleges to provide their students with a 4-credit science course that includes a wet lab. Wet laboratory courses, which are costly and resource intensive, are a critical part of the curriculum for science majors. The faculty believes, however, that it can offer outstanding and more cost effective alternatives for non-science majors to meet the laudatory goals implicit in the statement: “A student will be able to…use the tools of a scientific discipline to carry out collaborative investigations in appropriate laboratory settings.” Current science pedagogy offers many interactive alternatives to the wet lab that are as effective or more so in achieving the key learning outcomes. For example, there are several computer-based interactive curricula that mimic experimentation and teach the key precepts of science. These would involve fewer resources and require a smaller credit allocation. CCNY currently lacks the space, equipment, and staff to mount across-the-board wet lab-based science courses to all students. A rough estimate by a former biology chair suggests that the College could incur incremental expenses of up to ~$750,000 in annual salaries, in addition to other supply and equipment costs, to provide this wet-lab requirement (analysis available upon request). Therefore, the College recommends that the definition of what constitutes a “laboratory” be broadened to include web-based, experiential, and other innovative approaches to teaching the scientific method. The College further suggests that the third outcome be modified to read, “A student will be able to…use the methods of a scientific discipline to carry out collaborative investigations.”

Secondly, although there may be creative ways to use the 7th credit allocation in English Composition, the 7 credit requirement risks wasting a credit, without contributing to a substantially different educational outcome, or, alternatively, will require a costly and disruptive redesign of existing 3 or 6 credit course structures or the development and assessment of 1-credit stand-alone arrangements.

A 6-3-3 formula would permit the addition of one course to the flexible core and would better meet the needs of the students and of learning outcomes. The additional course in the flexible core could potentially provide the opportunity for further science study (whether as a requirement or among a menu of options). In this connection, the stipulation that there be “no more than one course in any particular discipline” seems unnecessarily stringent. The College endorses the goal of distributed study, but recommends that the stipulation be changed to “no more than two courses in any particular discipline.”

B. The English Composition Requirement:

CLAS urges that the College’s 6-credit Freshman Inquiry Writing Seminar (FIQWS) be treated as satisfying the English Composition requirement.

City has an innovative approach to teaching freshman writing - a double-barreled 6-credit course, half of which is taught by a "topic" instructor and half of which is taught by a "writing" instructor. The writing portion is organized around the material being taught
in the topic portion. There is a single grade as well as a single allotment of credit (6), and all major assignments, culminating in a research paper, are read and graded by both instructors, who work collaboratively throughout the course. An on-line description of the course can be found at: http://www1.ccny.cuny.edu/current/gened/faculty_fiqws.cfm; the main purpose of FIQWS is to develop student writing - that is, the course is specifically and carefully designed so as to make effective writing its outcome. Embedding writing practice and development within the context of quasi-disciplinary study at a freshman level is the means by which this outcome is attained, and there is ample scholarship to support the proposition that this is good writing pedagogy.

C. Foreign Language and Speech Requirements:

CLAS urges the treatment of Foreign Language and Speech as proficiency requirements rather than as General Education requirements.

Currently City College requires students to demonstrate a certain level of proficiency in a language other than English and in oral communication, rather than completing a certain number of college-level credits. A student may, for example, demonstrate intermediate level proficiency in a language other than English through performance on a placement exam or completion of four-years of a foreign language at the high school level. Last year, of approximately 1000 students who took the placement exam, 50% demonstrated an intermediate level of proficiency (the requirement for BA candidates) or higher and thus were not required to undertake LOTE coursework. There is thus a strong argument to be made, both on theoretical and empirical grounds, that the Foreign Language requirement should be treated as a proficiency requirement rather than as a General Education requirement. A similar argument can be made with regard to the College’s Speech requirement, which can be satisfied by successful performance on a Speech Proficiency examination.

D. The Availability of Resources:

CLAS wants to ensure that all coursework offered to students within the General Education framework is of a sufficient quality to ensure the necessary outcomes of student learning and that there are sufficient resources supporting this endeavor.

This concern has already been referred to in point 1, with regard to Science wet-labs, and the possible costs of adding a 7th credit of instruction in English Composition. CLAS has not undertaken a comprehensive analysis of the budgetary implications of implementing the Pathways framework, but an analysis prepared by a former Science chair estimating the additional lab costs City would incur were the Common Core to be implemented in its present form, shows the costs to be significant for the additional personnel alone not to mention the costs of lab renovations and equipment. Because one of the objectives of Pathways is to save money for both the students and the University in total, it is recommended that the guidelines be broadly defined so that the needs of the students can be balanced with the needs of the individual institution without compromising on the critical objectives.
II. THE CENTER FOR WORKER EDUCATION (CWE)

Because of CWE’s historic mission to assist working adults – non-traditional students – in moving efficiently towards a Bachelor’s degree by offering 4-credit classes, City College strongly urges an exemption of CWE from the 30-credit core framework.

CWE was established as a degree-granting program of CLAS thirty years ago, in 1981, in response to requests from government employees through the Federal Executive Board and Labor Union Education Programs to create an off-campus Bachelor’s degree program for working adults, primarily structured for evening and weekend classes. Since its inception, CWE courses typically have been four credits. The extended class time that four-credit courses afford is crucial for returning working-adult students, who benefit from intensive class time that engages them in collaborative learning activities. As many of the courses are interdisciplinary, a student taking these courses is exposed to multiple disciplines and perspectives, thus ensuring rigorous and comprehensive coverage of the learning outcomes in the various subject areas. Additionally, four-credit classes allow working students to enroll full time so that they can qualify for financial aid. The four-credit course structure, consequently, helps students work more efficiently toward a Bachelor’s degree.

Given the specific and unique mission of CWE, City College requests an exemption from the 30-credit core framework. In its place, CWE would offer a 32-credit core, comprised of eight four-credit courses in the subject areas outlined in the proposed 30-credit Common Core Structure.

We add in passing that few of the non-traditional students served by CWE articulate either into or from the programs of other CUNY schools. Hence this exception would not disadvantage students either at other CUNY schools or in this program.

III. PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS

To a greater or lesser extent, all of the professional schools face the same dilemma: a potential conflict between the requirements of the Pathways framework and the requirements of their respective accrediting agencies. These issues appear to be most easily addressed in the case of Architecture and with the greatest degree of difficulty in the School of Education. One of the FAQs accompanying Dean Anderson’s cover memorandum of 11/1/11 notes:

“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.”
Such flexibility may indeed be in order for all of the College’s professional schools. Furthermore, as for CLAS, the use of a 6-3-3 rather than a 7-4-4 formula for the fixed part of the core will be essential in order to implement the Pathways framework. The following individual statements from the professional schools go into slightly more detail.

A. SPITZER SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

While the proposals appear to be compatible with the undergraduate curriculum leading to the Bachelor of Architecture professional degree, the mandatory conditions for accreditation would necessitate a waiver from the total credit requirements for general education.

The Bachelor of Architecture curriculum is highly structured and students are required, starting in the first semester, to progress through the program in a sequential and uniform manner. In the first two years, in which students are required to complete between 66 and 69 credits, 29 credits are required (available) for General Education. Of the total 2-year credits, 32 credits are in required professional courses, and 8 are in two required courses (physics and earth science). Of the remainder, 18-21 credits are ‘distributed’ amongst a Gen. Ed. selection and 8 are free electives.

The National Architectural Accrediting Board places conditions on all professional programs requiring a specific distribution of credits amongst professional, non-professional and general education. In addition, they require a certain number of elective courses.

B. SOPHIE DAVIS SCHOOL OF BIOMEDICAL EDUCATION

As a specialized Professional program, Sophie Davis faces unique curricular challenges. With a separate admission process, Sophie Davis accepts very few students who transfer from other units of CUNY. Similarly, few students transfer out of Sophie Davis. Further, the curriculum is large (159 credits over 5 years) prescribed, and with limited student choice. The specific course demands of this high-credit major make it difficult to accommodate the requirements of the Common Core.

Because Sophie Davis depends on CLAS for its General Education offerings, it is crucial that the curriculum of Sophie Davis be adjusted to correspond with the 30-credit core eventually adopted by CLAS. With some additional minor modifications, Sophie Davis can reasonably expect to do so, with the exception of the 7-4-4 formula, which would be very difficult to implement given the School’s accreditation requirements. Sophie Davis can, however, adapt a 6-3-3 common formula without major consequence.

C. SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

The proposed common core structure presents serious challenges to students in the School of Education due to requirements established by New York State. The current core structure aligns, in part, with the New York State Education Department (NYSED)
mandate requiring schools of education to embed in their preparation of teacher candidates “30 hours of liberal arts” coursework in specified areas. NYSED mandates 6 hours of mathematics and 6 hours of science. In the approved Pathways, students get only 4 hours in each subject area. In the design of the Flexible Core foreign language study is part of a range of choices. If the student completes another area of study within the range of choices, the opportunity to satisfy the language other than English requirement would become a deficiency in the program mandate from NYSED. Although “Communication” is listed among the areas associated with Creative Expression, the outcomes for the latter are too wide-ranging to be successfully addressed by a dedicated Speech course of the kind from which Education majors would benefit.

The School of Education therefore requests the following changes to allow the School to remain in compliance and alignment with accrediting (NCATE) and licensing (NYSED) units on which its programs are registered.

(i) Expand the range of coursework and credits in the CUNY Common Core Structure to 15 credits for students in teacher education tracks to include an additional course in mathematics and science either at the community college level or senior college level. 
(ii) Unpack the Foreign Language requirement from the Flexible Core in World Cultures. Proficiency can be demonstrated through performance on a placement test or appropriate coursework. 
(iii) Remove communication from the Flexible Core in Creative Expression and treat Speech as proficiency to be demonstrated through performance on a placement test or appropriate coursework.

D. GROVE SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

The most obvious challenge posed by the proposed common core for the CCNY Engineering curriculum is the seven credit requirement for English. Engineering majors are currently required to take six credits of English. Accreditation requirements defined by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) leave little room for adding credits to what are already high-credit majors. 

More time would be needed to carefully assess the impact of the proposed 15 credit Flexible Common Core component on the Engineering curriculum. Currently, Engineering students are required to take six approved general education courses (18 credits), with at least six credits (two courses) at the 2000 level or higher. The six courses must satisfy at least three of the four general education clusters, defined as follows:

1. Outcome f: Professional and Ethical Responsibilities Cluster
2. Outcome g: Communication Cluster
3. Outcome h: Global and Societal Context Cluster
4. Outcome j: Contemporary Issues Cluster

Whether and how these outcomes as defined by ABET might be mapped onto the outcomes outlined for the flexible core will require careful study.
SUMMARY

The faculty of City College recommends the following with regard to the Core structure as it impacts its Schools and Divisions:

With regard to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS):
- Modify the current proposed 7-4-4 structure to a 6-3-3 formula for the fixed portion of the Common Core;
- Treat the College’s 6-credit Inquiry Writing Seminar as satisfying the English Composition requirement;
- Treat Foreign Language and Speech as proficiency requirements;
- Balance Pathways’ requirements with broad definitions and the availability of resources;
- Broaden the definition of “laboratory” to include web-based, experiential, and other innovative approaches to teaching the scientific method.

With regard to the Center for Worker Education (CWE):
- Given the specific mission of CWE, City College requests an exemption from the 30-credit core framework.

With regard to City College’s professional schools:
- Given the various constraints placed upon the professional schools, the critical issue will be to balance the Pathways’ recommendations with state licensure and/or degree accreditation requirements. City College recommends flexibility to balance these requirements versus objectives and needs.

Finally, the College wants to express its gratitude for being given this opportunity to actively consult with the College’s faculty and to provide feedback to this very important initiative.
Resolution

Whereas, Throughout CUNY’s long history, curricula have been the responsibility of the faculty and faculty governance bodies on the campuses, as specified in CUNY Board of Trustee bylaws 8.6 and 8.7; and

Whereas, in June, 2011, the Board of Trustees approved the chancellery’s plan to make general education requirements more uniform across all campuses and to restrict the number of general education courses campuses are allowed to offer; and

Whereas, CUNY Central’s mandate will require the City College CLAS to reduce its general education requirements from 51 to 42 credits, contrary to the CLAS Faculty Council’s best judgment when it created its current general education curriculum; and

Whereas, although a more uniform general education curriculum aims to facilitate student transfer, CLAS is extremely flexible in the awarding of transfer credit and, in any case, believes that any transfer issues can be handled separately; now therefore be it

Resolved, that although the The City College CLAS Faculty Council may out of necessity decide to work within the CUNY Central general education mandates, Council strenuously objects to CUNY Central’s circumvention of the faculty’s historic authority with respect to curricula; and be it further

Resolved, that The City College CLAS continues to hold the educational interests of our students paramount and pledges to serve those interests.

Passed by vote of the City College CLAS Faculty Council, October 6, 2011
November 15, 2011

Michelle J. Anderson  
Dean and Professor of Law, CUNY School of Law  
Chair, Pathways Task Force

Dear Dean Anderson,

I am writing in response to your letter of October 31, 2011, inviting commentary on the draft structure for the Common Core. In your letter you request that coordinated campus feedback be provided for transmission to members of the Pathways Task Force.

The CSI Faculty Senate passed a resolution (35 yes, 8 no) to categorically reject the CUNY Board of Trustees June 27, 2011 Resolution on Creating an Efficient Transfer System. In addition, I have included resolutions and commentary from the Student Government Association, General Education Committee, sixteen Academic Departments, and three Interdisciplinary Programs (Attachment 1).

Additional campus consultation resulted in five recommendations for consideration by the steering committee (Attachment 2).

Thank you for your work in chairing the Pathways Task Force and for providing the opportunity for campus response to this important project.

Sincerely,

Tomás D. Morales, PhD  
President
Dear Chancellor Goldstein and Members of the CUNY Board of Trustees,

We transmit to you the College of Staten Island response to the Pathways draft of November 1, 2011, passed by the CSI Faculty Senate on November 10, 2011. In view of the overwhelming rejection of the Pathways Initiative by the CSI faculty and students expressed in this document, and the massive opposition to this program at our sister colleges, it is clear that the Board of Trustees should immediately withdraw the Pathways Resolution and find a more reasonable and educationally sound means of addressing issues of transfer.
Coordinated CSI Campus Response to the Pathways Proposal

Approved by the CSI Faculty Senate November 10, 2011

The College of Staten Island rejects the Pathways project in its entirety and affirms that the Pathways Project cannot be redeemed by mere cosmetic changes to individual components.

In its meeting of September 22, 2011, the CSI Faculty Senate approved a motion that its Executive Committee appoint a subcommittee of five to draft the Coordinated Response to be presented at a special meeting on November 10, 2011. A subcommittee was formed in October, including faculty from both divisions, all of whom have curricular experience, several having served on the General Education Committee. Their names were announced in a campus-wide email. The Executive Committee hosted and moderated a Town Hall Meeting on October 19, 2011, and there was a subsequent Town Hall on November 2, 2011, hosted by the General Education Committee, and moderated by the Provost. An email address also was set up after the first Town Hall Meeting for campus members to send comments to the committee.

That committee contacted CSI Student Government and the chairs of all academic teaching departments and programs, encouraging them to discuss Pathways with their constituencies and provide input that expressed the will of each group. The committee also contacted the Council of Chairs and the College General Education Committee and members of the academic administration along with CSI's two distinguished professors. The committee collected detailed notes from the two well-attended Town Halls and from the special e-mail account for campus feedback. Because of the short time frame, the committee received most of the resolutions and other responses a few days before the November 10 Faculty Senate meeting.

Out of the seventeen academic teaching departments, twelve passed resolutions opposing the Pathways Initiative; three letters of opposition were also received from three interdisciplinary programs. Two academic departments expressed a neutral position, and one viewed the Pathways general-education component acceptable if it were modified in specific ways. The CSI Student Government and the CSI General Education Committee also passed resolutions opposing Pathways.

Summary of Resolutions Opposing the Pathways Project:
The student government’s resolution expressed the opinion of the majority of faculty that “this proposed curriculum limits the knowledge and skill level expected of students and
does not reflect the high standards of education, which the institutions of CUNY strive to provide.”

There was widespread agreement that Pathways
(1) lowers educational standards at CUNY, severely damaging its reputation for academic excellence;
(2) violates legally defined and traditional prerogatives of faculty to determine curriculum; and
(3) departs from recognized norms of academic freedom, exposing CUNY to national condemnation.

The faculty was outraged that such a sweeping revision of the university curriculum could be imposed on such an accelerated timetable. The General Education Committee, part of CSI's governance structure, which has representation from all academic departments and student government, in its resolution rejecting Pathways, observed that “The breakneck pace of the deadline Pathways imposes on CUNY Colleges and the Colleges’ governance committees makes it impossible for such a radical change of our general education program to be given proper analysis and evaluation,” and that the committee would be forced to “make major curricular decisions without guidance from the departments, the Curriculum Committee, and the Faculty Senate,” violating the College’s own governance.

In contrast to the haste with which the Pathways Initiative attempts to transform the university curriculum, CSI has been rethinking, revising, and modifying its general education requirements, based on students’ needs, for close to two decades. The College has created a rich and academically rigorous set of general education courses (in the lab sciences, mathematics, humanities, social sciences, foreign languages) that prepare students for their eventual majors and for lifelong learning. Of this, the CSI faculty is extremely proud. In 2006, then University Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Selma Botman noted in a letter to CSI President Marlene Springer that “CSI’s approach to General Education reform is a model for the University.”

In resolutions and Town Hall discussions, the campus community rejected the university administration’s argument that Pathways is necessary to resolve issues on transfer between the colleges. CSI strongly urges the central administration to find alternate methods of dealing with transfers that do not involve such drastic revisions of the university-wide curriculum.

Specific Suggestions on the Common Core Draft:
Many departments, individual faculty members, the Provost's Council of academic administrators, and various attendees at the Town Halls made specific suggestions, which will be forwarded to the General Education Committee for its consideration, and to the CSI faculty representatives on the Pathways Task Force.
When one examines the specific suggestions in toto, their clear intent is to salvage as much as possible of the general education program now in place at CSI. This rich general education program would be replaced by Pathways, a program the CSI community regards as arbitrarily imposed, poorly conceived and educationally unsound, a belief detailed in the resolutions and responses from students, departments, and programs that form the final section of this report.

College of Staten Island
of the
City University of New York

Student Government Association

November 3, 2011

Resolution on the Pathways to Degree Completion Initiative

Whereas, The College of Staten Island Student Government Association (CSI-SGA) acknowledges the dire need for a CUNY policy, which allows for the efficient transfer of credits between the CUNY Colleges and stresses that such a policy would be in the best interest of students; and

Whereas, After considering the current proposal to fill this need, namely the “Pathways to Degree Completion Initiative,” specifically the four proposed areas in the “Flexible Common Core” – “World Cultures,” U.S. Experience in its Diversity,” “Creative Expression,” and “Individual and Society” – the CSI-SGA has determined that this proposed curriculum limits the knowledge and skill level expected of students and does not reflect the high standards for education, which the institutions of CUNY strive to provide; and

Whereas, The CSI-SGA is supported in its position by a majority of the CUNY faculty as well as such scholarly organizations as Phi Beta Kappa; so be it

Resolved, That while the CSI-SGA appreciates the effort by the Pathways Task Force to consider the needs of CUNY students; it suggests that the Task Force take time to reconsider the structure of the Common Core and make certain that it corresponds to the quality educational standards of CUNY.
Resolution of the CSI General Education Committee  
November 7, 2011

The breakneck pace of the deadlines Pathways imposes on CUNY Colleges and the Colleges’ governance committees makes it impossible for such a radical change of our general education program to be given proper analysis and evaluation. Despite its best efforts, the General Education Committee cannot give due consideration to even this first stage of the Pathways master plan under this kind of pressure. The timetable would oblige the General Education Committee to overstep its bounds of authority by having it make major curricular decisions without guidance from the Departments, Curriculum Committees, and the Senate.

We have been made aware that the student government and a growing majority of departments have made known their opposition to Pathways on pedagogical, social, legal, and ethical grounds in formal resolutions.

For these reasons, the General Education Committee of the College of Staten Island believes the Pathways Proposal should not be implemented unless it is ratified by all of the CUNY Colleges in accordance with their governance procedures on curricular change. Passed with no dissenting votes, November 8, 2011
Biology

The following comments re the Pathways Project were approved by the Biology Department faculty in the November 3, 2011 meeting. The CSI Biology faculty is committed to the active learning experience provided in laboratory classes and therefore, support the adoption of a four credit science course in the common core. We also note the learning goals listed emphasize understanding the process of science and therefore, are best achieved in courses with a laboratory component. However, to broaden the knowledge of the student thus creating a more educated citizen and potentially recruiting students to careers in science, we strongly urge the inclusion of a second science course within the twelve credit college option. The Biology Department accepts Pathways with the assumption a second science course will be added.
Our department discussed Pathways extensively during our meeting on 11/3. Following is a summary of our conclusions.

We have no departmental position on the consultation process leading up to Pathways. The Business Department does not offer General Education courses and was not involved in early discussions about Pathways GenEd requirements.

Overall, we anticipate that the impact of the Pathways GenEd requirements on our department will be neutral. We can work within many different GenEd frameworks to maintain quality education in business.

We recognize the concerns of those departments whose disciplines may be negatively affected by Pathways. We hope that all departments can work together to maintain a strong General Education curriculum. High standards in math and English are especially critical to the success of our students.

We recognize that our department may have to revise our pre-major and major requirements as a result of Pathways changes to GenEd. Although the specific changes are not yet clear, we anticipate that they will be workable.

We are concerned that inadequate time is being allowed for discipline committees to choose common courses for transfer in the major. There already appears to be some differences of opinion between the faculty of different colleges. In particular, our accounting faculty are concerned about maintaining proper course sequencing in the pre-major so that accounting students can complete their degree requirements within four years. The discipline committees could make more effective decisions on these and other issues if more time were allocated to their deliberations.
Computer Science Department

The Computer Science Department is concerned that the Pathways Project is not aligned with the well thought-out General Education goals that were recently passed by our CSI faculty. These goals were formulated over months of work and with the consultation of many faculty members.

We feel that the ramifications of the proposed changes can pose problems for various majors, especially those majors with many requirements. We recommend further study before the implementation of such a major revision in General Education across the university.
Resolution from the Department of Education

November 2011

On November 3, 2011, the Department of Education, College of Staten Island, voted unanimously in favor of the following resolution on the Pathways initiative of the City University of New York:

Whereas, the Pathways initiative for general education undermines the essential grounding in liberal arts and sciences that distinguishes general education at CSI and thoroughly prepares its education students to become classroom teachers;

Resolved, the Department of Education objects to the Pathways initiative and urges the Board of Trustees and Chancellor to work through faculty leadership and consider a better mechanism for easing student transfer throughout CUNY.

Department of Engineering Science and Physics

The following resolution regarding the Pathways project was approved by the Department of Engineering Science and Physics on November 9, 2011.
WHEREAS: It is essential for all college students to be better educated in Knowledge of the Physical and Natural World, Critical Thinking, and Quantitative and Mathematical Reasoning (henceforth, “scientific knowledge and skills”),

AND WHEREAS: Laboratory science courses as general education requirements often provide the only opportunities for most liberal arts students to develop scientific knowledge and skills, which are essential to success in the economically competitive, technologically advanced world in which we live,

AND WHEREAS: The College of Staten Island and other CUNY senior colleges have always required two semesters of laboratory science courses for all majors,

AND WHEREAS: The improvement of education in science and mathematics is essential for the United States to continue as a leading nation in the world,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT: The Engineering Science and Physics Department at the College of Staten Island opposes the Pathways project in its current form.
Two Resolutions on the Pathway Initiative

Resolution 1:

The Department of English opposes adoption of the General Education plans proposed by the Pathway Initiative. The faculty believes that the initiative is pedagogically unsound, threatens Academic Freedom, violates shared university governance and is illegal.

Rationale:
Curriculum belongs to the province of faculty of responsibility and privilege. The Pathway Initiative threatens Academic Freedom.

According to AAUP statement “On the Relationship of Faculty Governance to Academic Freedom,” which states

. . . since the faculty has primary responsibility for the teaching and research done in the institution, the faculty’s voice on matters having to do with teaching and research should be given the greatest weight. From that idea flow more specific principals regarding the faculty’s role . . . Since such decisions as those involving choice of method of instruction, standards of student competence in a discipline, subject matter to be taught, policies for admitting students, standards of student competence in a discipline, the maintenance of a suitable environment for learning, and standards of faulty competence bear directly on the teaching and research conducted at an institution, the faculty should have primary authority over decisions about such matter – that is, the administration should “concur with the faculty judgment except in rare instances and for compelling reasons which should be stated in detail.”

b. The Pathway initiative violates Section 8.6 of the CUNY Bylaws, which operationalizes the concept of shared governance at CUNY:

The faculty shall meet at least one in each semester, or oftener, upon call by the president, or by petition of ten per cent of its members. The faculty shall be responsible, subject to guidelines, if any, as established by the board, for the formation of policy related to the admission and retention of students including health and scholarship standards [italics added], therefore student attendance including leaves of absence, curriculum, awarding of college credit, granting of degrees. It shall make its own bylaws, consistent with these bylaws and conduct the educational affairs customarily cared for by a college faculty.
Section 8.6 of the CUNY Bylaws:

The faculty shall meet at least one in each semester, or oftener, upon call by the president, or by petition of ten per cent of its members. The faculty shall be responsible, subject to guidelines, if any, as established by the board, for the formation of policy related to the admission and retention of students including health and scholarship standards [italics added], therefore student attendance including leaves of absence, curriculum, awarding of college credit, granting of degrees. It shall make its own bylaws, consistent with these bylaws and conduct the educational affairs customarily cared for by a college faculty.

Section 8.13 CUNY Bylaws:

There shall be a university faculty senate, responsible, subject to the board, for the formulation of policy relating to the academic status, role, rights, and freedoms of the faculty, university level educational and instructional matters, and research and scholarly activities of university-wide import . . .

c. The Initiative violates the Policy approved by the CUNY Board of Trustees on November 24, 1997, which the Board stipulated in settlement of litigation previously undertaken by the PSC, and which

RESOLVED, that the Board, in the exercise of its authority to govern and administer the University pursuant to N.Y. Education Law 6204[1], in conjunction with the Board’s making of educational policy, recognizes and reaffirms that the faculty, in accordance with CUNY Bylaws 8.6, shall be responsible, subject to guidelines, if any, as established by the Board, for the formulation of policy relating to the admission and retention of students including health and scholarship standards therefore, student attendance including leaves of absence, curriculum, awarding of college credit, and granting of degrees; that this responsibility is to be exercised through the college faculty senates pursuant to Board Bylaws or the University Faculty Senate in accordance with CUNY Bylaws 8.13 which states: “There shall be a university faculty senate, responsible, subject to the board, for the formulation of policy relating to the academic status, role, rights, and freedoms of the faculty, university level educational and instructional matters, and research and scholarly activities of university-wide import. The powers and duties of the university faculty senate shall not extend to areas or interests which fall exclusively within the domain of the faculty councils of the constituent units of the university” and that such policies will then be considered by the Board or its appropriate committees in making policy decisions relating to educational matters.

d. The Pathway General Education plan is pedagogically unsound. It goes against the guidelines of the Association of American Colleges and Universities:
1. to proceed incrementally; 2. to spread the reforms over a long period of time; 3. to secure the buy-in of all constituencies affected.

At considerable expense the College sent a delegation to an Association of American Colleges and Universities conference on general education in Vermont. A topic that pervaded the conference was an examination of what works and what doesn’t work in reforming general education. We were guided by the well-known AAC&U publication on the topic, Gaston and Gaff, Revising General Education. In particular we attended seminars that compared success and failure in reforming general education, and [developed] key ingredients for a successful revision of general education.

e. The Pathway Proposal does not allow for future reforms of the General Education program:

In addition to the lengthy procedures already in place at each college for faculty approval of new and revised courses for Gen-ed, the Pathways proposal adds a new CUNY Committee. It appears that every change in these courses will need to go through the same process. How much time will this add to the approval process?

We advise the Board to “do the math”: if each college submits all of the courses to be approved for Gen-Ed, how much time can this CUNY committee actually spend reviewing each course? How long will it take to review each? Given that the plan encourages flexibility among the campuses, this process seems unworkable and of little value.

Overview:
No data that we know of has assessed the degree-completion time of transfer students within CUNY, nor shows clearly that this plan will improve the ease of transfer. Moreover the 30+12 credit structure, together with the varying number of college-option credits each transfer student must satisfy, will make advising transfer students no easier than it is now.

We believe that transfer students presently must complete extra credits because of pre-major requirements or prerequisites to major courses, not because their gen-ed credits are not accepted.
Resolution 2:

If the Pathways Initiative is implemented, we call on the College administration to respect faculty authority over all curricular changes that may be necessary.

History

Whereas the problem of transfer facilitation can be addressed without the imposition of a destructive new curriculum on the colleges of the City University and

Whereas the Pathways initiative has shown a total disregard for the legally defined and traditional rights of faculty governance over curriculum and

Whereas the imposition of a curriculum by a board of trustees, so contrary to the national best practices of curricular reform, will make CUNY an outlier in the educational community, and so will erode the national reputation of the university and

Whereas Pathways would cut the general education curriculum in half, thus debasing the students’ education and devaluing their education and the reputation of the College of Staten Island and the City University of New York and

Whereas Pathways undermines the College’s stated goal of developing “a richer array of rigorous undergraduate… programs that meet students’ educational and professional aspirations” and

Whereas Pathways threatens to make the College less able to recruit and retain outstanding scholars due to a higher teaching load and

Whereas the contempt shown to the faculty in the discussion of Pathways undermines the college’s stated goal of becoming “a more vibrant center of intellectual and cultural exchange through community partnerships”

Therefore the Department of History concludes the Pathways Project cannot be redeemed by tinkering with its individual components and rejects Pathways on pedagogical, social, legal and moral grounds.
International Studies November 5, 2011

As director of the International Studies program at CSI for the past decade, I write to express my rejection of the proposed Pathways initiative. I have arrived at this position for three reasons, each one of which seems sufficient to dispose of this project on its own merits. These are: Pathways’ disregard for faculty’s role in designing and implementing curricula; its haphazard and anti-intellectual assignment of disciplinary and interdisciplinary courses into ill-defined “outcomes” categories; and, finally its flagrant violation of CSI’s mission to create a well-informed global citizenry. Since the faculty’s position on the first point seems to have been clearly articulated in numerous forums, I will focus on the second and third areas.

As an interdisciplinary program, International Studies profoundly respects the integrity of the traditional academic disciplines. One cannot – as the Pathways proposal mandates – simply exchange a course in the social sciences for one in the humanities. In the same light, one cannot substitute within these areas (i.e. a course in anthropology does NOT achieve the same outcome, or provide the same knowledge, or the same critical thinking skills as a course in economics.) It is a grave disservice to CUNY students to fail to make this distinction.

In the same light, the proposal omits any consideration of the unique Contemporary World category. The requirement’s rationale is extremely clear, and the vague menu of unrelated courses described in Pathways pales by comparison. In my view, the most compelling case for this requirement lies in its description in the CSI catalogue:

Courses fulfilling this requirement are designed to provide an understanding of global and regional contexts… The courses will emphasize the interactions of societies along political, economic, and cultural dimensions. Courses will cover the development, formation, and impact of the global context and ways in which different nations, societies, and cultures influence and are influenced by global forces. Students will use comparative and historical analytic frameworks for understanding the contemporary world.

In this increasingly interconnected world, our students need a solid educational foundation to compete in the professional marketplace and to co-exist with the global community. For the former, they must leave college with the basic tools possessed by their educated peers. CSI students’ current understanding of geography, politics, economics, history and foreign languages places them at a competitive advantage. If the foundation of their education is stripped away, they will suffer professionally. As for the latter point – global citizenry – one has only to take a cursory glance at world events (ranging from prolonged military conflicts to critical financial crises) to comprehend the urgency of our liberal arts agenda.

The College of Staten Island, as a comprehensive institution, is uniquely qualified to educate New York City’s finest citizens. We have demonstrated an ability to help disadvantaged students with the most limited preparation reach intellectual heights beyond their wildest expectations. At the same time, we have shown that CSI students can successfully compete for opportunities in graduate schools, scholarships and jobs that
place them at the level of the nation’s best and brightest. The Pathways proposal, if passed, will irrevocably alter this fine achievement.

Sincerely,

Jane Marcus-Delgado, Ph.D., Director, International Studies Program
Department of Mathematics

Resolution on Pathways; approved unanimously, Nov 3, 2011.

The CSI Department of Mathematics is opposed to the CUNY Pathways Project, which replaces all current general education programs with a 30-credit Common Core, and 12-credits chosen by each College, and will also determine the pre-major requirements for “high-transfer” programs (biology, English, teacher education, et al).

CSI, along with every other Senior College has worked for many years to create a thoughtful general education program that is appropriate for its students. Pathways dismantles these programs and replaces them with a minimum-credit program written in great haste, without respect for traditions or evaluation of consequences.

The Pathways framework has been imposed by the Board of Trustees, despite widespread faculty opposition. Every part of the Pathways Project is determined by committees that are appointed by the Chancellor, rather than by the University Faculty Senate, the appropriate body for university-wide changes in curriculum. This takes away the faculty’s traditional rights and responsibilities on an important matter of curriculum and transfers them to the Chancellor, violating CUNY’s governance procedures, and undermining its faculty.

The Pathways Project essentially takes minimum degree requirements and turns them into maximum allowable requirements. The philosophy of the project puts ease of graduation ahead of educational quality, which we believe will greatly damage CUNY’s reputation.
Department of Media Culture

Resolution of the Department of Media Culture, College of Staten Island, on Pathways, passed on November 4th, 2011

"Whereas the problem of transfer facilitation can be addressed without the imposition of a arbitrary new curriculum on the colleges of the City University of New York and

Whereas the Pathways initiative has shown a disregard for the legally defined and traditional rights of faculty governance over curriculum and

Whereas the imposition of a curriculum by a board of trustees, contrary to the national best practices of curricular reform, will make CUNY an outlier in the educational community, and so will erode the national reputation of the university and

Whereas Pathways would cut the general education curriculum in half, thus debasing the students’ education and devaluing their education and the reputation of the College of Staten Island and the City University of New York and

Whereas Pathways undermines the College’s stated goal of developing “a richer array of rigorous undergraduate… programs that meet students’ educational and professional aspirations” and

Whereas Pathways diminishes the General Education goals, especially critical and creative thinking, and intercultural knowledge as they pertain to the understanding of human cultures through the study of languages, arts, social sciences and humanities and

Whereas Pathways threatens to make the College less able to recruit and retain outstanding scholars due to a lack of coherence and rigor in the overall program and a college wide vision of excellence and

Whereas the contempt shown to the faculty in the discussion of Pathways undermines the college’s stated goal of becoming “a more vibrant center of intellectual and cultural exchange through community partnerships”

Therefore the Department of Media Culture concludes the Pathways Project cannot be redeemed by amending its individual components and rejects Pathways on pedagogical, social, legal and moral grounds.

Voting for the Resolution: 11
Voting against the Resolution: 0
Abstentions: 2
Interdisciplinary Program of Modern China Studies

Whereas the Pathway proposal dilutes General Education by reducing the number of required credits and diminishing BOTH breadth and depth of studies;

Whereas the Pathway proposal reflects a complete disregard for disciplinary integrity in its subject categories;

Whereas the Pathway proposal reflects little understanding of the educational needs of our students, especially at the College of Staten Island;

Whereas the Pathway proposal will result in overall diminished knowledge of our current world, the languages with which to communicate in a multi-cultural society, and the skills to understand and navigate in our technologically advanced society;

Whereas the Pathway proposal reflects a violation of faculty governance and threatens academic freedom;

Therefore, the members of the Executive Committee of the Interdisciplinary Program of East Asian Studies at the College of Staten Island are resolutely opposed the Pathway General Education proposal.
Department of Nursing Pathways Discussion

The Department of Nursing discussed the Pathways Initiative at our Faculty Meeting, Thursday, November 3, 2011. The discussion centered around the Pathways Proposal and feedback from the Disciplinary Committee appointed to review the proposal related to the discipline of Nursing. While faculty recognized the seriousness of changes to the CSI General Education requirements and its impact on student education, the consensus was that it would seem that we would be able to work within the proposed changes to meet the program outcomes for nursing curricula and the requirements of disciplinary accreditation. That being said however, we do support our colleagues in the other disciplines and their concerns about changes particularly in the areas of Science and Language.
Department of Performing and Creative Arts

On November 3, 2011 the Department of Performing and Creative Arts voted unanimously in favor of the following resolution on the Pathways initiative of the City University of New York:

Whereas the Pathways initiative has shown a total disregard for the legally defined and traditional rights of faculty governance over curriculum, and

Whereas the problem with transfer credits in no way speaks to historical precedence at the College of Staten Island as a comprehensive college within CUNY where two/thirds of its transfer student population are internal transfers who rarely encounter any problem whatsoever with transfer credits, and

Whereas the remaining problem of transfer facilitation can be resolved technically and without the imposition of a less rigorous new curriculum on the colleges of the City University, and

Whereas the imposition of a curriculum by the Board of Trustees, so contrary to the national best practices of curricular reform where more, not less, general education is called for, will erode the national reputation of the University, and

Whereas the timeline for revising the University's curriculum is far too short and impedes thoughtful consideration, and

Whereas Pathways would cut the general education curriculum at the College of Staten Island by 17 credits making them less competitive in a difficult job market or adequately prepared for graduate study, devaluing both their education and the reputation of the College of Staten Island and the City University of New York, and

Whereas the inclusion of a category “Creative Expression” in the proposed Core Curriculum of Pathways allows for classes in the academic analysis of the arts, but does not allow for classes in the practice of making studio art, photography, theatre, music or dance, thus debasing the significance of the arts as foundational to a liberal arts degree, and

Whereas Pathways more generally threatens to make the College less able to recruit and retain outstanding scholars due to a diminished commitment to excellent academic standards, and

Whereas the contempt shown to the faculty in the consideration of Pathways undermines the college’s stated goal of becoming “a more vibrant center of intellectual and cultural exchange,”

Therefore be it resolved that the Department of Performing and Creative Arts affirms that
the Pathways Project cannot be redeemed by mere cosmetic changes to individual components, categorically rejects Pathways on pedagogical, social, legal and moral grounds, and stands in solidarity with our colleagues in other disciplines.
Department of Physical Therapy

The following comments re the Pathways Project were approved by the Department of Physical Therapy faculty at the November 9, 2011 meeting. The faculty of the Department of Physical Therapy opposes the CUNY Pathways Initiative based on the following reasons:

1. A broad background in general education is needed for anyone considering a career in the health or medical sciences.
2. Accreditation standards require that students enter the professional program with a balance of course work in the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. Limiting general education requirements could adversely their preparation for entering the profession.
3. It is important that any and all curriculum decisions be kept within the domain of the faculty at their respective institution. This is exigent to faculty rights and responsibilities.
Resolved, That the Department of Political Science, Economics, and Philosophy strenuously objects to the Pathways General Education proposal in both process and form, and calls on the CUNY Board of Trustees to reengage the faculty in a more thoughtful, deliberative process of change consistent with the legal and professional requirements of faculty governance.
The Psychology Department has a number of concerns about the proposed CUNY Pathways initiative to standardize the general education curriculum across campus. Our department has been highly involved in the development of the existing General Education curriculum at CSI, offering more than 10 courses with a general education designation.

The current proposal being drafted by the CUNY pathways task force includes a common core with broadly defined areas (English Composition: 7 credits, Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning: 4 credits, Natural and Physical Sciences: 4 credits). This common core excludes broadly defined courses in the humanities and social sciences even though 100% of CUNY’s senior colleges currently require one social science course and one humanities course.

Instead, the humanities and social science courses will be required to fit within themes designated by the task force (e.g. World Cultures, U.S. Experience in its Diversity, Creative Expression, Individual and Society). This is problematic because the humanities and social sciences will not be afforded the same flexibility provided to the English, Math, and Natural and Physical Sciences disciplines, and will require a substantial restructuring of many of our existing general education courses to converge with these themes.

Furthermore, the suggestion has been made, and a straw poll has been taken, indicating most, if not all, of the common core courses that are not math, English or the physical and natural sciences, should be offered at 3 credits. This will impact all but one of our current general education offerings and weaken the learning experience of our students. Our experience as faculty is that students need 4 hours a week per course in order to learn the material covered in the courses.

As the second largest major on campus, we feel a responsibility to present a clear curriculum to our over 900 majors. The drastic curriculum changes proposed over a very short time frame could reverse all of the work our department has done to ensure that our students understand the curricular requirements of our major. Moreover, the proposed CUNY Pathways initiative would have a significant negative impact on our majors if key courses are restructured to reduce the material by 25% and to revolve around the common core themes. Additionally, the curricular changes would lead to our students being required to take more classes to reach their overall 120 credits and the 38 credits needed for a BA or 42 credits needed for a BS in Psychology. This could have an adverse effect on the retention and graduation rates of incoming students.

The impact will be so great on our department that some members of our faculty have advocated withdrawing all of our general education offerings, and focus on continuing to present the curriculum that was designed by our faculty.

Our faculty is also critical of the Pathways Initiative in that it is undermining the faculty’s role in determining the curricula of the college.
Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work Department, College of Staten Island
Resolution on Pathways, passed at the November 3, 2011 faculty meeting

Pathways reduces General Education requirements to 30 credits CUNY-wide and an additional 12 credits that will be set by each campus. The argument has been made that Pathways eases transfers within CUNY, in that a student completing the 30 credit CUNY-wide Gen Ed requirement will be able to transfer those 30 credits elsewhere in the system with no need to seek course equivalencies. Each school will designate courses that fit into designated “buckets,” so that a Hunter student taking a course in Bucket A and transferring to CSI will have net the CSI Bucket A requirement at even if CSI has no precise equivalent.

After discussing Pathways, the SASW faculty concluded that:
1. Whereas pathways reduces a carefully crafted Gen Ed plan by 17 credits, thus defeating several purposes for which Gen Ed was either originally established, including the production of well-rounded citizens with sufficient knowledge of the larger social and physical world so as to be able to follow developments in that world and make informed decisions about it, and
2. Whereas the reduction deprives students of the opportunity to explore different areas prior to selecting a major by requiring no more than one course from any department in the Flexible Core, and
3. Whereas the buckets lack intellectual integrity in terms of the way they have been constructed, and
4. Whereas languages get short shrift in the sense that the 30 credits contain space for one 3 credit semester of a foreign language, with dire implications for the Department of World Languages and Literatures, as well as for tolerance, understanding and democracy in one of the most linguistically diverse cities on earth, and
5. Whereas students left on their own with an additional 17 elective credits cannot, in general, be trusted to select wisely but in many cases will gravitate toward the easiest, least demanding courses, without concern for their overall intellectual and personal development, and
6. Whereas CSI students will be disadvantaged on leaving the college vis-à-vis persons graduating from other institutions with more rigorous General Education requirements, and
7. Whereas Pathways represents a “dummying down” of CUNY requirements and a concern with quantity (number of people graduating in x amount of time) over quality lending the oft-cited “student success” concern an ever more quantitative and thus technocratic character, and
8. Whereas the process violates the faculty role in the determination of curriculum

Be it resolved that the SASW Department opposes implementation of Pathways and urges that General Education requirements be maintained in their current form.
Voting for the Resolution: 14
Voting against the resolution: 0
Abstentions: 1
Science Letters and Society (SLS)

The Science Letters and Society (SLS) program at CSI-CUNY was created to serve as the major for students enrolling in elementary and early childhood education programs offered by the Education Department at CSI-CUNY. The Mission Statement of the SLS program (adopted in 2010) states that:

"It is the mission of the Science, Letters and Society (SLS) Program to provide a challenging liberal arts major, and to work closely with Education faculty to enhance students’ participation in the acquisition and facilitation of learning. The SLS Program reinforces the CSI-CUNY General Education objectives of: critical and creative thinking, reading, writing and quantitative reasoning, global knowledge and intercultural skills, information literacy and communicative skills, and ethical judgment and personal responsibility, whilst also providing the SLS major with a broad knowledge of subject matter and disciplinary methods in the Natural Sciences and Mathematics, the Humanities, and the Social Sciences. Our teaching philosophy is grounded in the belief that the best teachers are those who receive a quality education, since in order to be a good educator one must be well educated in a broad range of subjects and disciplines."

To fulfill its academic mission, the SLS program has not only created a challenging liberal arts major that provides students with a grounding in the Natural Sciences and Mathematics, the Humanities, and the Social Sciences, it has also developed a set of prerequisites/pre-major requirements embedded in the present CSI General Education curriculum that support the learning goals of the SLS major. These account for 15 credits and introduce students to key foundations in disciplines (literature and critical writing in the humanities; foundations for math and science; U.S. history and critical writing in the social sciences; and global awareness through a geography course). With this major structure and pre-major/prerequisite courses in place, the SLS program has proven highly successful in its academic mission over the years, being one of the largest majors at CSI (over 600 majors) and having a graduate pass-rate in the NYS teacher certification examination of 98% on the LAST, 90% on the Multi-Subject CST, and 99% on the Elementary ATS-W.

As the present Director of the Science, Letters and Society Program, I have attended town hall meetings about the CUNY Pathways initiative, I have read the Pathways reports that have been made available, most recently that released on November 1, and I have discussed Pathways and its implications with many faculty colleagues. Having examined and reflected upon the Pathways proposals, I can only see Pathways as undermining the general education preparation of SLS majors, and thus of threatening the academic mission of the SLS program. The reduction to the so-called 'common core' of 30 credits, even with the so-called 'college option' of an additional 12 credits, is a willful and destructive diminution in general education, which goes against national norms and best practices. CUNY students do not deserve the intellectual and academic deficit that will result, and they will be inevitably less well prepared to enter the SLS major. SLS pre-major requirements/prerequisite courses will be diluted if not abolished by the Pathways "one size fits all" approach, while the so-called 'flexible core' option categories show a perverse disregard for the academic disciplines that frame the SLS mission and
major. SLS faculty will also lose their fundamental right to determine appropriate curriculum in support of the SLS major, a fact that strikes at the heart of academic freedom and governance. The flagrant disregard, if not contempt for faculty governance and input and that has accompanied the development of Pathways, and which continues in efforts to implement it, is unworthy of a great university, the teaching and academic reputation of which depends on its faculty.

I therefore cannot but reject and deplore the CUNY Pathways initiative on academic, legal, and moral grounds as a flawed and hostile imposition on the university, its students and its faculty.

Professor Eric A. Ivison

SLS Director
Resolution from the Department of World Languages and Literatures
November 2011

Whereas the problem of transfer facilitation can be resolved technically and without the imposition of a destructive new curriculum on the colleges of the City University, and

Whereas the Pathways initiative has shown a total disregard for the legally defined and traditional rights of faculty governance over curriculum, and

Whereas the imposition of a curriculum by the Board of Trustees, so contrary to the national best practices of curricular reform where more, not less, general education is called for, will erode the national reputation of the University, and

Whereas the implementation of Pathways will provide even less incentive for the public schools to adequately prepare students for college-level work, and

Whereas the timeline for revising the University's curriculum is far too short and impedes thoughtful consideration, and

Whereas Pathways would cut the general education curriculum in half, thus debasing the students’ education, making them less competitive in a difficult job market or adequately prepared for graduate study, devaluing both their education and the reputation of the College of Staten Island and the City University of New York, and

Whereas the proposed inclusion of second language acquisition falls vaguely under the "World Culture" section among a wide variety of disciplines, and ignores the nationally defined standards of outcomes, goals, and assessments in second language learning which drive pedagogy as well as the creation of textbooks, and

Whereas Pathways undermines the College’s stated goal of developing “a richer array of rigorous undergraduate…programs that meet students’ educational and professional aspirations” by lowering standards and, in many cases, eliminating pre-requisites, and

Whereas Pathways more generally threatens to make the College less able to recruit and retain outstanding scholars due to a diminished commitment to excellent academic standards, and

Whereas the contempt shown to the faculty in the discussion of Pathways undermines the college’s stated goal of becoming “a more vibrant center of intellectual and cultural exchange,” and

Whereas Pathways is also charged with working on a University-wide common core of pre-major courses in certain disciplines, beyond the General Education requirements, and
Whereas community and four-year colleges are ultimately being asked to turn over decisions about the content of forty to fifty percent of the students' undergraduate curriculum to the central administration,

Therefore be it resolved that the Department of World Languages and Literatures affirms that the Pathways Project cannot be redeemed by mere cosmetic changes to individual components, rejects Pathways on pedagogical, social, legal and moral grounds, and stands in solidarity with our colleagues in other disciplines.
Attachment 2. Five Recommendations from CSI on the Pathways to Degree Completion Project Proposal

1. In general, the restriction on “no more than one course in any discipline” in the Flexible Core may be too rigid. Among the strengths of the 30-credit Common Core is that courses from a single discipline may be inserted into more than one area of the Flexible Core, provided that they meet the learning outcomes. For example, history courses might be proposed in fulfillment of the world cultures requirement, but history courses might also fulfill individual and society and/or other requirements. The broad thematic nature of the four areas in the Flexible Core allows for greater creativity than before in terms of course choices for each area, but the restriction on choice undercuts the possibilities of the thematic categories.

Further, students often use introductory courses in general education as building blocks for more in-depth study of a particular topic or issue or discipline, either in the general education curriculum itself or later in the majors. While the project to determine the three to six courses that are pathways into the major may address the interests of students who choose to pursue that major, the one-course-per-discipline requirement in the Flexible Core would make it impossible for a student to pursue a subject of interest that may not be related to their choice of a major or minor.

In general, it may be advisable to provide students with the option to pursue in-depth knowledge from a disciplinary perspective, even in the general education curriculum, or to choose to pursue breadth of perspective through course options in different disciplines.

Flexibility of choice as to the number of courses from a particular discipline that can be used to fulfill requirements allows for a more creative approach to the general education curriculum. Further, the common learning outcomes emphasize basic skills to be developed. If the emphasis of the curriculum is on critical skills addressed by all courses within the thematic constructs, then flexibility will achieve those goals as easily as the currently proposed restrictions.

2. There are minor issues related to the terminology in the description of the Flexible Core. The current description reads: “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.” On the state level, the phrase “liberal arts core” is used by the NYSED to refer to the total number of credits per type of degree that must be composed of “liberal arts and sciences” courses. Since the Flexible Core does not equal the number of credits referred to on the statewide level as the “liberal arts core” and the verbiage in the description is actually in reference to the courses in the flexible core, we suggest that the descriptive text for the Flexible Core be revised to read “liberal arts and sciences courses” to match statewide terminology. While we all agree that the phrase “liberal arts” encompasses the sciences, we
believe that this will also help to allay some of the reactions of science faculty who may think the sciences cannot be made to apply to any of the proposed thematic areas.

3. There is some concern about the number of outcomes a course might have to meet, especially in the Flexible Core. We very much like the addition of the three outcomes that all courses in each area must meet, but the imposition of the requirement that courses must meet at least three additional outcomes in each thematic area may be too stringent. For example, a foreign language course proposed for the World Cultures thematic area may not be able to meet as many as three of the learning outcomes suggested. We suggest that the committee consider reducing the requirement to two outcomes.

4. Under the U.S. Experience in its Diversity thematic area, we propose revising the third bullet as follows: “Evaluate how indigenous populations, immigration, and slavery have shaped the development of the United States.”

5. The restriction that all courses for the Flexible Core be liberal arts and sciences courses undercuts some of our current offerings and seems to pose issues, in particular, for the Creative Expression category. While we understand the rationale behind this restriction and are aware that this restriction is consistent with national trends, the general education curriculum at the College of Staten Island currently includes a three to eight credit requirement (AA, BA, and BS) in textual, aesthetic, and linguistic analysis (our TALA requirement). This area of our general education curriculum currently includes courses in drawing, acting, painting, sculpture, photography and other applied arts, which speak to the very nature of creative “expression.” Our Performing and Creative Arts Department has historically included artists with national reputations, who provide unique opportunities for students to experience the arts. Upon reflection, the distinction between some courses designated now as liberal arts and sciences courses, such as foreign language and composition courses that focus on basic skills, and courses in drawing, painting, or other similar areas seems arbitrary.

Given that the proposed thematic area focuses on creative expression, it seems counter intuitive to undercut courses that clearly are at the heart of creative expression. Further, these types of courses currently appear not only in our general education curriculum, but also in the curricula of Queens College (acting, set design), York College (Visual Design, Drawing, Painting, Photography), John Jay College of Criminal Justice (any three-credit course in art, music or drama), and other CUNY colleges. We ask that the committee consider relaxing this restriction to allow for one course to be taken in the Creative Expression area of the Flexible Core that does not currently qualify for inclusion on the NYSED list of liberal arts and sciences courses. Because the statewide requirement currently ensures that an appropriate percentage of associate and baccalaureate degree program credits be composed of liberal arts and sciences courses, this modification would not affect the overall integrity of a degree program and would
allow for the proposed Creative Expression thematic area to include courses that truly speak to the theme.
CUNY Baccalaureate for Unique and Interdisciplinary Studies

Kim J. Hartswick, Director and Beth Kneller, Deputy Director

The Common Core does not satisfactorily address non-CUNY transfer credit issues nor does it address students’ needs in mathematical, scientific or foreign language literacy.

The Required 15 credit Core

1. 7 credits for **English Composition** are unrealistic; virtually every English Composition course in CUNY (and outside of CUNY) is offered for 3 credits. The requirement for English Composition should be 6 credits. [When the issue of 7 credits was posed the response was “there are a variety of ways one could reach 7 credits in English, for example, with a one-credit college success course.” A one-credit college success course, however, is not English Composition.]

2. 4 credits for **Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning** should be reduced to 3 credits. CUNY’s current Mathematics courses are mostly offered for 3 credits. While there are very few QR courses and those need to be developed, requiring 4 credits excludes the current CUNY and Non-CUNY 3-credit Math courses, and puts too much pressure on faculty to quickly develop new 4-credit options. [Attached: A NYT article recommending “Mathematical Literacy” in high school and college curricula; the concepts outlined here should be used as a guide: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/25/opinion/how-to-fix-our-math-education.html?scp=2&sq=quantitative+%2B+math&st=nyt]

3. 4 credits for **Life and Physical Sciences** should also be reduced to 3 credits. CUNY offers many excellent 3-credit Science courses; the requirement for 4 credits in this area seems to indicate a requirement for a Lab section. Most students do not need to work in a Laboratory setting to learn about Science; moreover, CUNY does not have the facilities to require ever student to have a Lab section. Like Math, Life and Physical Sciences should be reconceived as Scientific Literacy.

A solution for the 15 credits in this part of the Core could be:

1. English Composition: 6 credits
2. One Literature Course: 3 credits – after fulfilling the Composition requirement, students should be required to apply what they have learned – and gain further experience in writing – in a Literature course.
3. Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning: 3 credits
4. Life and Physical Sciences: 3 credits

The Flexible Common Core

We recommend that the Flexible Common Core be changed from 15 credits to 9 credits, wherein students take 3 courses from one of the 4 categories (with no more than 1 course from any specific discipline or category). The other 6 credits should be made up of two semesters of a foreign language, e.g., Spanish 1 and Spanish 2.
As the Flexible Common Core is written, students who take the first semester of a foreign language to fulfill the World Cultures category could not use the second semester of the language. This will dissuade most students from continuing to the second semester. In this day of globalization, as well as CUNY’s drive to enhance Study Abroad options, this is shortsighted. One year of a language should be required. (Students who are exempted from language could be required to complete the 15-credit Flexible Core as written.)

Finally, it remains unclear how courses from outside CUNY especially will be identified as fulfilling the specific categories of World Cultures, US Experience in its Diversity, Creative Expression, and Individual and Society.

Concern for non-CUNY Transfers

The rationale for developing an efficient transfer system states: “CUNY must insure that students’ credits earned from any CUNY college transfer smoothly and efficiently to all other CUNY college.”

According to recent data it appears that about 47% of entering students are transfers from outside the CUNY system (almost 9,000 students out of a total of about 18,000 transfers in Fall 2010). Furthermore, although there is no CUNY-wide institutional research about how many credits on average non-CUNY students transfer, for CUNY Baccalaureate for Unique and Interdisciplinary Studies such non-CUNY students typically enter with about 60 transfer credits.

As a result, it will be imperative that a smooth, efficient and timely transfer process be developed in order for these non-CUNY students to understand the courses that will be applied particularly to the common core.

Will non-CUNY courses have to be articulated to specific courses offered at the matriculated college to satisfy the core? Or, will transfer equivalencies be disciplined based? For example, if specific psychology courses fulfill a designated core category, will ANY psychology course transferred from outside CUNY satisfy this core requirement? Will each college have its own way of dealing with this issue or will there be a CUNY-wide process on how to handle such transfer credits with regard to fulfilling the common core?

If there is no centralized process, then a non-CUNY transfer could potentially fulfill core requirements at one college but not at another, creating a chaotic scramble for transfers to find the best college for them in terms of fulfilling core requirements.

Representing almost half of all transfer students, non-CUNY transfers must be considered before implementing a “common core,” which appears to be focused exclusively on students transferring within CUNY rather than from outside the system.

Recommendations
For both ease of transfer and for a diverse education, we recommend the following Core, in some ways similar to the current CUNY BA Core:

**Required 15 Common Core, 15 credits**
1. English Composition I and II: 6 credits
2. One Literature Course: 3 credits – after fulfilling the Composition requirement, students should be required to apply what they have learned – and gain further experience in writing – in a Literature course.
3. Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning: 3 credits of any college-level Math or QR course
4. Life and Physical Sciences: 3 credits of any college-level Science course

**Flexible Common Core, 15 credits**
Rather than emphasize themes that will be difficult to determine from course titles and even descriptions:
1. One year of a Language (e.g., Spanish I and 2) – 6 credits
2. One Humanities course – 3 credits
3. One Social Science course – 3 credits
4. One Applied Creative Expression course (i.e., Intro to Painting, African Dance, Acting, etc.) – 3 credits

This proposed structure has the advantage of simplicity as well as diversity and would permit ease of transfer not only within CUNY but also from outside the system.
Below is Hostos Community College’s institutional response to the draft of the Pathways Initiative. We hope our comments and concerns help strengthen the process of producing the best possible framework for our work as an integrated University.

**College Consultation**

Prior to receiving the final draft of the Pathways initiative for CUNY, the Hostos faculty, staff, and administration engaged in various discussions about its potential impact on the college. The draft was sent to the college community on October 31st. To insure full input, faculty members from all academic departments were asked to review this document, focusing particularly on the impact it might have on students and curriculum. Furthermore, everyone was encouraged to attend the open forum on November 7th. Several college committees and governance bodies also held meetings to discuss the Pathways initiative:

- Nov. 2nd: A Steering Committee representative presented the initiative to the General Education committee.
- Nov. 2nd: A meeting was held with personnel of the Advisement and Assessment offices so they could give feedback from their perspectives.
- Nov. 7th: A Steering Committee representative presented the initiative to the Academic Council.
- Nov. 7th: Steering Committee representatives presented the initiative in an open forum to which all members of the college community were invited. (There were over 50 participants.)
- Nov. 8th: A Steering Committee representative presented the initiative to the College-wide Curriculum Committee.

A common staff and faculty concern has been the short period of time we have to consider the Pathways initiative’s ramifications for all our degree programs and to make informed decisions. We are very excited by this opportunity to address the issues
surrounding transfer; however, two weeks has not been sufficient time to consider all the issues and potential consequences of the suggested changes. The faculty members overwhelmingly expressed the need for additional time to engage in further investigation and a sustained discussion. Another central concern is the likelihood of students accumulating basic liberal arts courses that already can be transferred, thereby encouraging their premature transition from community colleges after earning the initial thirty credits rather than completing their associate’s degree program.

We are also concerned about the resources that will be needed to conduct appropriate student academic advising when the changes become operational. Faculty and staff will have to be trained on how to advise new students, as well as current students who might otherwise continue to follow the previous set of rules. The Chancellor’s Office should consider allocating additional funding so that adequate staffing resources are made available to ensure proper advisement, including training for current faculty and staff.

**Required and Flexible Core Recommendations**
The seven credits for English and four credits for Mathematics or Quantitative Reasoning does not align with our curriculum. At Hostos, all English courses are for three credits, and all degree programs require six credits of English. Most of our Mathematics courses are also for three credits. Only some of the STEM-related Mathematics courses are for four credits. If the draft remains as is, Hostos would have to revise all of its degree programs (including the AAS degrees) to accommodate the extra credit of English and the extra credit of Mathematics. The increased credits would also reduce essential credits in other areas of the degree. Changing of credits would also affect scheduling, room availability, and advisement, and increase the need for additional adjuncts. Such curriculum revisions, within a narrow timeframe, would present a significant challenge for the College’s governance process.

The Hostos faculty recommends changing English and Mathematics to a range of credits. English should be 6-7 credits, and Mathematics should be 3-4 credits. Therefore, the Flexible Core would be 15-17 credits. This would provide the flexibility necessary for each campus to meet these requirements without changing its programs with the New York State Education Department.

Concrete examples of interdisciplinary courses also need to be included in the Flexible Common Core, such as ENG223/WST223 -Women in Literature and PSY 140 - Psychology of Women.

College governance bodies should be allowed to determine the eligibility of a course for inclusion in the Flexible Core on the basis of the institution’s disciplinary designation.

**Impact on Degree Programs**
There needs to be more extensive investigation of the impact on degree programs, particularly if there is a change in the number of credits for English and Mathematics.
There are also certain degrees that will not be able to accommodate the fifteen credits of liberal arts courses within the Flexible Core. Examples of this are our four dual-degree programs in engineering. Existing transfer options and articulations should be preserved. At the most recent meeting of the College-wide Curriculum Committee, which includes representation from every discipline, the group highlighted many of the concerns on campus and adopted three motions for modification of the draft proposal. We share with you the motions:

- **Motion One:** The issue of transferability of sequence of courses (i.e., science and foreign language) has not been sufficiently addressed. A mechanism needs to be developed and implemented that will support transferability beyond the thirty credits.
- **Motion Two:** Credit allocation should be revisited in Mathematics and English to minimize the negative impact on credit distribution for program majors or concentrations.
- **Motion Three:** The timeline is operationally unfeasible. As this needs to be done in a realistic time frame, an extension is warranted.

Many of our suggested modifications from college governance are consistent with Pathways objectives, including maximizing flexibility for the campuses, bolstering the basics, strengthening critical thinking skills, and providing for broad curricula exposure.

C: Provost Carmen Coballes-Vega
The Hunter College Response to the Draft Recommendations for the Common Core of the CUNY Task Force on Pathways

Submitted by Jennifer J. Raab
November 15, 2011

Hunter College’s comments on the Draft Recommendations of the Common Core are informed by a deep appreciation of the concerns that drive the Pathways initiative, specifically the need to improve the retention and graduation rates of our students and ease transfer across colleges.

Long admired as an excellent center of liberal arts education, Hunter is proud that our academic profile and national rankings are on the rise thanks in large part to the high quality of our programs and our overall educational philosophy. We are committed to discerning opportunities that will further our undergraduate mission: namely, to provide a rigorous and distinctive education for our students in all schools, an education that includes vital breadth in the liberal arts and depth of majors or professional programs of study. We want to ensure that Hunter College continues to prepare its students to be engaged and productive citizens of a globalized world, students who will achieve great success in employment and in post-baccalaureate studies. We would like to avail ourselves of some of the intriguing pedagogical opportunities presented by the Pathways initiative: for example, the reduction in general education credits required will make it possible for students to strengthen their portfolios for post-baccalaureate pursuits by completing second and even third majors and/or correlate certificates and minors.

We are pleased that the CUNY Task Force on Pathways has elected to promote writing with 7 credits, and allot 4 credits to each of mathematics/quantitative reasoning and science in the Required Common Core, as Hunter College championed. But we remain deeply concerned as a community that the proposed framework makes it so difficult—if not impossible—to preserve our requirement that students demonstrate proficiency equivalent to two years of a language other than English—the very minimum one needs to learn another language. We regard such a requirement as fundamental to the preparation of students in the contemporary world, where international and inter-cultural understanding has never been so important.

The proposals below are guided by our commitment to continue offering a highly distinctive liberal education of the highest quality, one that will continue to allow Hunter College to assume its place of distinction in the landscape of higher education, while also improving the academic prospects and experiences of our transfer students. They reflect our overall concerns for flexibility, depth, and substantive focused exposure within the recommended framework.

These proposals emerged from a highly consultative process that drew from multiple meetings of each of two committees: the Presidential Task Force on Pathways, chaired by the Dean of Arts and Sciences, and the General Education Subcommittee of the Hunter College Senate. The Pathways initiative was also discussed at meetings of the
Arts and Sciences Advisory Committee meeting for department chairs and program directors and in a well-attended open forum of faculty, administrators, students and staff held on November 9, 2011, and were amended in light of an extensive, constructive discussion across the Hunter community.

Our proposals are organized in order of priority.

I. Proposals Concerning the Prescribed Common Core.

1a. Proposal: Within the prescribed core (English Composition, Math and Quantitative Reasoning, Science) we should permit exemptions and substitutions at a higher level for students qualified to do more advanced work. Completing the course work at the higher level would fulfill the corresponding requirement in the Common Core.

Rationale: The Pathways project intends to facilitate student progress. One of the great assets of CUNY is the diversity of its students, who come to the University with a great variety of experiences and levels of preparation. We will discourage better-prepared students, many of whom apply to Hunter College, and unnecessarily delay their progress, if we do not create academic pathways that meet their particular needs. Students will benefit from having the opportunity to demonstrate competency as a means of satisfying the requirement; for some students this might mean allowance for substitutions of courses not ordinarily approved for "Core" areas. For example, the student who arrives at the College and passes a placement test that determines that her/his skills meet or exceed those outlined in the required core area for English Composition might be granted a substitution for a course in creative writing, although the College would not normally allow such a course to satisfy the requirement.

1b. Proposal: We should permit colleges to approve substitutions for transfer courses for requirements in both Required and Flexible sections of the Common Core.

Rationale: Many of our students come from outside CUNY and have taken courses that have no direct counterpart at Hunter. Some of these courses, however, meet the learning outcomes of various sections of the Common Core. Requiring a student to take additional coursework in this situation is burdensome and unnecessary. For example, take the student who has successfully completed a 4-credit course in Botany at a non-CUNY institution. Hunter offers no courses in Botany. If the appropriate department at Hunter determines that the course meets the learning outcomes of 1.C., the student should be granted credit as having fulfilled 1.C.

2. Proposal: We recommend that students be allowed to choose two courses from a single discipline to fulfill the Flexible Core. We further urge that each campus be allowed to determine when disciplinary duplication does or does not occur.

Rationale: The current rules governing the Flexible Common Core prohibit taking “more than one course in any particular discipline.” This rule ensures that students will not be able to achieve substantive exposure in any one area in the Flexible Core, including the important case of foreign language study, where it is widely recognized that a single, one-
semester course is of limited use in language learning. Enabling students to select any discipline for the fifth course would allow interested students to take one full year of foreign language under the Flexible Core rubric, without sacrificing breadth of exposure in any meaningful way.

There is a larger issue here regarding what constitutes a discipline. Some disciplines like psychology and geography are inherently multidisciplinary. Moreover, some major fields like neuroscience may be housed within psychology at one college and within biology at another. Given this, it makes sense to allow individual colleges to determine whether disciplinary duplication has occurred within the context of their own disciplinary/departmental structures.

3. **Proposal**: We ask that senior colleges be permitted to require the 12-credit "College Option" of all students, including transfer students, regardless of the number of credits transferred in. We strongly recommend against reducing the requirements for the College Option under any circumstances. These 12 credits are few enough in number, but they will represent the distinctive signature curricula of the institutions from which students ultimately seek their degree.

**Rationale**: The "College Option" will allow the senior colleges to provide distinctive common experiences and educational opportunities, to build on knowledge and skills gained from the Common Core. It provides a measure of depth within what is otherwise a flat general education framework, thereby aligning with what are widely regarded as best practices for general education curricular design. We believe all students should have that this experience and that it cannot be achieved in any meaningful way with two or three courses, needlessly forcing a choice between breadth and depth within the College Option. We recognize and support the need to improve the efficacy of transfer as well as well as remove unnecessary academic impediments to graduation. However, the CUNY Common Core significantly reduces overall general education credits, enabling 30-48 credits of electives in a student’s course of study. Requiring all students to fulfill a 12 credit College Option enables colleges to retain, tailor, and articulate those aspects that are specific to each college’s identity and directs students in their elective coursework while achieving the goal of enhanced efficacy of transfer and graduation within CUNY.

4a. **Proposal**: Reduce the number of learning outcomes that must be met for the Flexible Common Core from the 3 required of all 4 categories to 1 of 3 for all 4 categories.

**Rationale**: This part of the Common Core begins with the stipulation that “[a]ll 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.”
The Pathways initiative and its Common and Flexible core framework are aimed, inevitably and appropriately, at foundational and introductory courses. One could argue that it takes students the better part of their entire college experience to develop the three abilities suggested in the learning outcomes above, or perhaps, to put it somewhat differently, that these three, taken together, are major-level, not introductory course-level learning outcomes. As such, it may not be feasible to achieve (or indeed desirable to pursue) all three of these learning outcomes in a single introductory-level course. A thoughtful reduction in learning outcomes for introductory level courses would enable faculty and students to address each learning outcome in a more meaningful way, thus ensuring stronger academic foundations.

4b. Proposal: Replace the additional learning outcomes outlined in the November 1st version of the Flexible Common Core with those listed in the summary of the October 21st meeting for all four areas of this section of the Common Core Structure.

Rationale: There are significant differences between the additional learning outcomes of October 21st and November 1st in all four areas of the Flexible Common Core: World Cultures, U.S. Experience in its Diversity, Creative Expression, Individual and Society. The latest guidelines emphasize analysis and the application of fundamental concepts and research methods of (inter)disciplinary fields, tasks that typically require previous and sustained intellectual training. In contrast, the earlier guidelines stress goals that are more consonant with the scope and methods of the foundational coursework that the Pathways initiative encompasses: by targeting goals such as understanding, developing informed perspectives, demonstrating knowledge, thinking critically, and identifying, examining, explaining and evaluating information, the additional outcomes proposed on October 21st better enable students to acquire the content base and cognitive abilities needed later for more focused learning and research.

5. Proposal: Rules governing graduation requirements should restrict the number of credits earned at the 100 level to no more than 60 of the minimum of 120.

Rationale: Since the Common Core both replaces and reduces all non-major requirements for graduation, we currently run the risk of having students misguidedly fill out most or all remaining coursework (approximately 48 credits) with 100-level courses. This would severely decrease the rigor and value of undergraduate education and make our students far less competitive for both employment and graduate study. We urge that our rules prohibit a random accretion of low-level courses and that we encourage students to avail themselves of one of the truly exciting curricular possibilities of the Pathways initiative; namely productive supplementation of Common Core and major requirements with additional areas of extended study. The Common Core offers some breadth to the liberal arts education of our students while opening the intriguing opportunity for ‘clustering’ areas of study outside of the major in certificate programs and minors that may closely be associated with and productively supplement majors.

6. Proposal: While Hunter College accepts four credit science courses from other CUNY colleges that have three-hour lecture and three-hour labs, we urge that our 4 1/2 credit
laboratory courses continue to fulfill the Life and Physical Sciences Common Core requirement.

Rationale: At Hunter College, biology, chemistry, physics, and geology courses with laboratory, appropriate for the CUNY Core, are 4 1/2 credits, three for a three-hour lecture and 1 1/2 for a three-hour laboratory. This complies with New York State Education Department regulations.

Our final proposal concerns implementation of the Pathways initiative.

7. Proposal: We propose that CUNY Central create and maintain a database of which courses at each college fulfill the requirements of the Required and Flexible Common Cores, and that each student’s record is somehow tagged with her/his status within the CUNY Common Core.

Rationale: For the Pathways initiative to succeed in easing transfer among colleges, it is essential that campuses are effective and efficient in evaluating transfer credits, advising students, programming DegreeWorks and auditing degrees, and so on. In order to achieve this, a solid logistical solution must be in place from the start of implementation.
November 15, 2011  
Michelle J. Anderson  
Dean and Professor of Law  
CUNY Law School  
Chair, Pathways Task Force on the Common Core

Dear Dean Anderson:

I am hereby conveying the consolidated response of the John Jay College academic community to the draft recommendations of the Pathways Task Force for a 30-credit Common Core at all campuses across the University.

To generate this response, Provost Jane Bowers charged the chairs of the primary faculty governance bodies at the College with discussing the draft recommendations and sending their consolidated responses to her. She received responses from the Faculty Senate, transmitted by Professor Karen Kaplowitz; the Council of Chairs, transmitted by Professor Harold Sullivan; and the Undergraduate Curriculum and Academic Standards Committee (UCASC), transmitted by Dean Anne Lopes. In addition, the curriculum committees of the academic departments were encouraged to send their responses directly to the Provost and/or the UCASC. Seven departments did so: Africana Studies, Art & Music, Communication & Theatre Arts, English, Foreign Languages, Interdisciplinary Studies, and Science. Finally, several individual faculty members communicated directly to the Provost and/or the Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

The responses of these various bodies and individuals have been synthesized and transmitted to me by Provost Bowers. As Chief Academic Officer of the College, Provost Bowers has forcefully conveyed to me the faculty’s view regarding its authority over the curriculum of the College and the ways the Pathways proposal impinges on that authority. The concerns of the faculty are here organized into several broad categories: 1) the impact of the Pathways proposal on the College’s general education curriculum and on the joint degree programs of the CUNY Justice Academy; 2) violation of general academic principles in the process of creating the Common Core and in the proposal itself; 3) specific objections to elements of the proposal; and 4) the exclusion or de-emphasis of certain disciplines. Following the summary of concerns, we suggest changes to the Pathways proposal that would address at least some of the faculty concerns.

1. The Impact of the Common Core on the College’s General Education Curriculum and on the Joint Degree Programs of the CUNY Justice Academy.

The Pathways proposal undermines John Jay’s five-year, consultative, faculty-led process of revising our General Education curriculum, culminating in a vote by our College Council at the end of spring 2011 to endorse an outcomes-based, scaffolded, curricular
structure, which unifies the broad disciplines of the liberal arts under the theme of educating for justice and gives a unique identity to a John Jay education. This curriculum was designed to be assessable and is based on best practices as described by the AAC&U and required by Middle States. If the Pathways proposal is approved, it will mandate changes to the innovative General Education curricular structure developed by our faculty. The faculty feels that the University is asking them to take all of their hard work on General Education reform and set it aside. The imposition of the Pathways proposal will likely engender faculty resistance rather than the support and buy-in our own approved program enjoys.

John Jay has already made a tremendous contribution to seamless transfer at the University through the creation of the CUNY Justice Academy: joint degree programs in Criminal Justice, Forensic Science, and Forensic Financial Analysis, created in partnership with CUNY’s six community colleges and developed and approved by the faculty of the participating colleges. The carefully articulated curricula of these programs include common courses in the majors for indigenous and transfer students and specific agreements about general education requirements at the community college and senior college level that not only ensure seamless transfer, but also ensure that community college students are adequately prepared for success at John Jay. All of these degree programs will need to be revisited and revised in light of the Pathways proposal even though they are perfect transfer pathways envisioned and implemented before there was a Pathways initiative at CUNY. We will be seeking an exemption from the Pathways requirements for at least one of these programs.

2. Violation of General Academic Principles in the Process of Creating the Common Core and in the Content of the Proposal

Without exception the responses from our faculty included a statement to the effect that the Pathways process has violated the traditional rights of faculty governance over curriculum. More specifically, the Pathways process ignored the role of the local campus faculty in setting the college’s curriculum, and the new curriculum will be imposed by the Board of Trustees without a vote of the faculty governance bodies of the college, which normally vote on new curriculum.

Some faculty members oppose the Pathways proposal because it departs from sound principles and best practices in general education. In particular, if this proposal is adopted, the general education curriculum at CUNY will not be scaffolded across a student’s entire undergraduate career, a best practice that enables students to develop necessary skills and knowledge over time. While we applaud the University for seeking to develop an outcomes-based general education, we believe that the proposal’s outcomes are too wide-ranging and ambitious for a 30-credit core curriculum. Because the proposal does not build in a progression of learning across time and because the outcomes are too-wide ranging, assessment of the curriculum will be difficult. Moreover, the University has not put forward an assessment plan with the proposal; therefore, the faculty cannot tell how or if the curriculum will be assessed and improved.
3. Specific Objections to Elements of the Proposal

**Number of Credits:** Although the email transmitting the Pathways Proposal stated 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 BOT resolution actually specifies a variable-credit College Option depending on the number of credits the transferring student has accumulated at the sending institution. The Provost and the faculty of John Jay College strongly oppose the variable-credit College Option. The goal of the College Option is to allow the colleges to put their unique signature or stamp on their graduates. It is impossible to achieve this goal in six credits and difficult in nine. The full twelve credits would ensure that all John Jay graduates would have taken a set of courses exemplifying and fulfilling our mission of educating for justice.

The John Jay College faculty believes that the 42 credits mandated by the BOT are too few; that such a small general education would seriously compromise undergraduate education at the University. They recommend at least 48 credits.

**Outcomes:** We note that the proposal has no outcomes related to mastery of new technologies and that the learning outcomes are too advanced and therefore inappropriate for 100-200 level courses. Further, we believe that the outcomes are too numerous to be achieved in the 30 credits of the Common Core.

**Disciplines:** We suggest that the proposal clarify the meaning of “discipline” in the Flexible Core. Does the proposal consider English and philosophy disciplines? Or does it consider “humanities” the discipline. Does “humanities” encompass the fine and performing arts? Does the proposal consider science a discipline? Or is the discipline chemistry, biology, or physics? Further, the proposal does not acknowledge the existence of inter-disciplines (e.g. gender studies) nor provide guidance about how/where these fit into the Flexible Core.

**Waivers:** We have been told that certain majors/programs will be granted waivers from the Pathways general education requirements. We intend to request a waiver for the Forensic Science major, both locally and in the CUNY Justice Academy. John Jay’s Forensic Science major is a carefully sequenced 73-credit curriculum, which necessitates that general education courses be taken throughout a student’s plan of study. In order for the Science for Forensic Science associate degree students to transfer with ease and succeed academically, the general education credits of these joint degrees cannot be front-loaded at the community colleges. Without a waiver, the College will have to remove Forensic Science from the inventory of the CUNY Justice Academy or formally apply to have Forensic Science declared a five-year major.

4. The Exclusion or De-emphasis of Certain Disciplines
The responses below come primarily but not exclusively from the faculty in these disciplines.

Science: If approved, CUNY would be among the smallest STEM core requirements of all major university systems. Further, the de-emphasis of science and mathematics is certain to negatively impact the future career prospects of our students, move us further from our roots as a strong STEM-oriented university, and run contrary to recent efforts such as the CUNY administration’s Decade of Science and Mayor Bloomberg’s work to attract more STEM education to New York City. Finally, the learning outcomes associated with the Physical and Life Sciences component of the Required Core, while reasonable and valuable, cannot be covered or achieved in a single course.

Foreign Languages: Foreign language study is crucial. A CUNY without a required foreign language course (ideally two semesters) does an enormous disservice to our students. How, our faculty asks, will our graduates ever compete for career positions in any field involving international business, politics, law, and the like? This exclusion of foreign languages appears especially egregious in a cosmopolitan, multi-national city like New York.

History: Our faculty believes that no student should graduate from college without having taken at least one history course. By taking one required history course, students can learn that a) countries and peoples have a past; b) this past shapes their present and future.

Speech: Some faculty expressed deep concern that our students will be able to complete the core without having dealt with their very serious speech problems. Unless we have a speech requirement, they predict that there will be a decline in the quality of student presentations and class participation.

Art & Music: With the implementation of the Pathways proposal, for the first time in the history of many CUNY colleges, John Jay among them, no specific fine arts class will be required of our students. Rather than a broad liberal arts requirement, CUNY should have a specific fine arts requirement.

Although some members of our community believe that the Pathways project cannot be “redeemed” by tinkering with its individual components and that it should be re-thought and re-designed or rejected entirely, others make the following specific suggestions, which I support.

- Eliminate the variable-credit aspect of the College Option and allow each campus to require 12 credits of every transfer student, at no matter what stage of their education they enter the college.
- Increase the Common Core to at least 36 credits.
- Specify that the six-credit increase proposed be allocated to a foreign language, which would become part of the Required Core. Take foreign languages out of the World Cultures category.
- Add a fifth category to the Flexible Core that specifies historical knowledge and skills. A variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches should be represented.
- Revise the learning outcomes so that they are appropriate for 100 and 200 level courses and limit them so that they are ambitious but achievable in 36 credits.
- Substitute “Writing” for “English Composition” in the Required Core.

I found the University report on transfer a powerful and disturbing call to improve transfer for CUNY students so that they can move seamlessly among our many colleges. In view of that compelling report, the John Jay College community supports the goals of the Pathways initiative. Indeed, the leadership role played by John Jay College and our faculty in the design of the CUNY Justice Academy is ample evidence of our support for the creation of smooth pathways from community to senior college. However, I must report that the responses from our faculty have been highly critical of the process and of the first proposal of the Pathways Initiative regarding General Education. I hope that this summary of our community’s responses will be helpful to you as you consider changes to the current proposal.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Travis
President
In response to the request of the Pathways Task Force for feedback from the CUNY campuses regarding the draft of a Common Core curriculum, Kingsborough Community College is submitting the observations and recommendations that follow. Kingsborough elicited a broad range of opinion through the following:

- The KCC Faculty Committee on General Education, which recently formulated a revision of Kingsborough’s general education requirements that was adopted by the college’s governing board (College Council), reviewed the draft Common Core and issued its consensus view.
- After circulating the draft Common Core to the entire college community through email, I convened a special meeting of the KCC College Council on Thursday, November 10, to discuss the proposal in general and the General Education Committee’s response.

KCC General Education Committee Review

The KCC Faculty Committee on General Education includes representation from every academic department, members of the College Council, and members of the KCC delegation to the University Faculty Senate. In addition, Professor Michael Barnhart, who is a member of the Pathways Task Force, attended the meeting to discuss the Common Core. The General Education Committee’s conclusions consist of the following five major points:

1. The 15-credit flexible core recommended for all associate in arts (AA) and associate in science (AS) curricula, prescribes a balance of disciplines and basic
skills. The flexible structure allows each college the opportunity to continue offering existing courses that are popular with students as well as appropriate for a broad foundation in the liberal arts and sciences.

2. Several A.S. curricula will need to add 3-6 credits to their current General Education requirements in order to satisfy the proposed 30-credit common core. With the exception of a small number of them, the majority can use available elective credits or make other relatively minor adjustments in the major.

3. The KCC associate in applied science (A.A.S.) degree curricula will need to increase from a 6-credit to the 7-credit English and from a 3-credit to the 4-credit mathematics requirement. This addition in liberal arts and sciences credits will override State Education regulations, which do not require more than the minimum twenty credits in liberal arts subject matter for this degree type.

Recently, KCC added college mathematics and a laboratory science requirement to all degrees, including AAS career programs. To accommodate the additional credits, Freshman English I (ENG 01200) was reduced to three credits from four. Several AAS career programs opted to require a three-credit mathematics course, either College Algebra (MAT 00900) or Statistics (MAT 02000). The Pathways initiative, as conceived in the Task Force draft, will cause these AAS curricula to take credit(s) either from the major or perhaps one less course from the flexible core from which AAS degrees are exempt.

4. In order for language study to satisfy the flexible core, existing KCC Language I and II courses must be reduced to three credits from four. The College must address either the loss of a semester hour of instruction in language study or the additional cost of providing four semester hours of instruction for three credits.

5. The Committee has concluded that the 30-credit common core, as designed, should benefit CUNY students as they transfer from one institution to another, particularly those who transfer from associate to baccalaureate institutions. Given the significant percentage of CUNY baccalaureate graduates who began their studies at a CUNY community college, Kingsborough faculty will take up the work necessary to accommodate the 30-credit common core for all degrees.

KCC College Council (Governance Body) Review

Vice President and Provost Stuart Suss presided at the special meeting of the College Council attended by 32 representatives. He informed the group that the meeting was intended as part of a consultative process for the CUNY Pathways project and that the council’s input was welcome. A review of the General Education Committee’s conclusions about the Common Core was provided.

Although there was general agreement with the input provided by the General Education Committee, there were several other issues raised from the floor. Because no extensive
discussion followed on any of the additional opinions and because no votes were taken, it is not possible to determine that the opinions expressed were widely held. In the interest of providing a complete report, however, I will note the following:

- The chairperson of our Mathematics Department observed that the CUNY Mathematics Discipline Council recommended that the area in the Common Core entitled “Mathematics and Quantitative Reasoning” be re-titled “Mathematical Reasoning.”
- It was also mentioned that the CUNY Computer Science Discipline Council has recommended that the Common Core be augmented to include a required course “where students deal meaningfully with technology itself.”
- The chairperson of the KCC Foreign Languages Department reported that the CUNY Foreign Languages Discipline Council proposed that a foreign language requirement be added to the required Common Core credits, raising its total from 15 to 18 credits.

Other comments made at the College Council meeting tended to focus on process rather than on the specific aspects of the proposed Common Core. While, for the most part, it was determined that process questions were beyond the scope of this particular discussion, it was noted that Kingsborough was very well represented in the development of a university-wide Common Core. Not only has Professor Barnhart served as a member of the Task Force but the college also has representatives on various discipline councils that will review which courses will satisfy the core requirements.

In conclusion, it is apparent that a large majority of Kingsborough faculty endorse a university-wide Common Core. The proposed structure accomplishes the goal of ensuring a firm basis in foundational courses and providing broad curricular exposure, while at the same time giving sufficient flexibility to the individual colleges. In addition, because nearly 80% of Kingsborough graduates transfer to a baccalaureate college – most to a CUNY four-year institution – it is incumbent upon our university to make the transfer process as efficient as possible. A clear pathway is long overdue.
LaGuardia Community College  
Response to Pathways Initiative  
November 15, 2011

THE PROCESS USED TO GATHER CAMPUS-WIDE RESPONSE

The CUNY Pathways to Degree Completion initiative (http://www.cuny.edu/academics/initiatives/degreepathways.html) was “designed to create a curricular structure that will streamline transfers and enhance the quality of general education across the University.” Three representatives from LaGuardia were named to the Pathways Steering and Working Committees. They are:

Elizabeth Beck, Student, Steering Committee member
Valerie Taylor-Haslip, Associate Professor, Nursing, Working Committee member
Scott White, Associate Professor, Library, Working Committee member

After an initial joint Steering and Working Committee meeting, which was held on August 26, 2011, the three LaGuardia members of the Pathways Task Force met to create a strategic plan to keep the campus informed about Pathways’ development. Because of the short time frame, it was agreed they would share developments as they unfolded campus wide. LaGuardia was able to engage in a very open dialogue about the Pathway’s project, including creating conversation opportunities at various campus functions, meeting with leadership groups and using multiple web communication tools.

The working committee created a blog (http://pathwaysblog.wordpress.com/) to keep the campus informed, answered questions and communicated with the campus community via e-mail, and actively worked to involve students by having the head of student government engaged in campus conversations and by providing students access to all online dialogues. The conversation was deepened through the use of an innovative campus-wide on-line discussion. This discussion was moderated and facilitated in the form of a Jam, a process the campus learned of from Knowledge in the Public Interest. A Jam provides an opportunity for in-depth dialogue whose digitized results provides the basis for a comprehensive analysis. LaGuardia’s Jam, entitled the “Pathways to Degree Completion Jam”, was open to all faculty, staff and students and was held from November 7, noon to November 8, midnight. A group of campus leaders, in addition to the members of the working group, met to analyze the Jam transcript.

LaGuardia Pathways Task Force members met with the following groups:

3. Faculty Council – Valerie Taylor-Haslip/Scott White - 10/5/11.
4. Instructional Staff Meeting (an open meeting for all faculty) - Valerie Taylor-Haslip/Scott White – 10/12/11.
6. President’s Cabinet (a quarterly meeting of 65 campus leaders) – Scott White – 10/21/11.

The Chair of Faculty Council, Janet Michello and Chair of the College Senate Robert Kahn, suggested an ad hoc committee be formed to finalize the abovementioned suggestions, and developed the following timeline.

1. Draft of Pathways "Common Core" distributed November 1.
2. Feedback accepted from campus at large. November 1-11.
4. Professors Taylor-Haslip and Scott White Co-Chair ad-hoc Committee on the Common Core to analyze and synthesize responses. November 9-11.
7. Further responses forwarded to Pathways through review period.
8. Final draft of Pathways "Common Core" released December 1, 2011.

Members of the Pathways Ad Hoc Response committee:

Valerie Taylor-Haslip, Associate Professor, Nursing, Co-Chair
Scott White, Associate Professor, Library, Co-Chair

Representing Student Body
Missary Arredondo, Secretary, Student Government Association
Elizabeth Beck, Student, Member of Pathways Steering Committee
Donavan Borrington, President, Student Government Association

Representing the College Senate
Loretta Capuano, HEO, Director, Student Information Services, Student Affairs
Marcia Glick, Professor, Communication Skills
Robert Kahn, HEO, Director, Grants Development; Chair, College Senate

Representing Faculty Council
Jean Buckley-Lockhart, Lecturer, Counseling
Holly A. Porter-Morgan, Assistant Professor, Natural and Applied Sciences

Representing Curriculum Committee
Terry Cole, Professor, English
LAGUARDIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE CAMPUS-WIDE RESPONSE

The general sentiment about the Pathways initiative is that it is a noble cause. Trying to discover a more seamless, less cumbersome transfer system is in our students’ best interests. We commend the Pathways to Degree Task Force for the draft learning outcomes. We agree that students should be able to demonstrate the knowledge and skills proposed, and we find the learning outcomes appropriate. LaGuardia’s own focus on learning outcomes has resulted in extensive and important curricular standards and has allowed us to use authentic student work (through our e-Portfolio process) in assessing student achievement of these outcomes. Learning outcomes provide the flexibility for achieving student learning in multiple yet rigorous ways, and we strongly support the use of learning outcomes as the process of creating seamless transfer continues.

We are also heartened by the University’s stance of including community college professors as full partners in the process of creating the common core of general education. The faculty at LaGuardia are active scholars, and their academic excellence and experiences provide an important voice in the dialogue concerning what students should learn. Previously, trying to negotiate degree articulation between LaGuardia and four-year colleges was challenging, and rarely structured as a negotiation between equally qualified peers. The common core will greatly facilitate this process.

We understand that a discussion of what a student should learn in college goes to the heart of our purpose as a university, and therefore deeply held perspectives of the faculty will vary. We further understand that there is a tension in American higher education between the ideal and the practical. Less than 50% of all students attending any CUNY campus will complete all of their studies at one campus, a trend that is also true nationally. Holding a single standard at a particular campus is, therefore, realistically achievable by only a small subset of all students. And it is here that the practical and the ideal sometimes collide. The focus on creating a more flexible system, which has clear overall goals and provides students with different campus-based processes to achieve these goals, serves both the University and our students well.

Overall, concerns about the Pathways might be grouped into process issues, flexibility, and implications for degree programs. Furthermore, there is a deep concern that the process does not contain sufficient incentives for students to complete an associate’s degree, as Pathways might have the unintended consequence of encouraging early transfer. We believe that a degree matters, and encourage the University to take additional steps to make completion of the associate’s degree as attractive as possible through a variety of mechanisms.

We would like to outline the issues that were raised on campus as we discussed the Pathways initiative. One of the earliest criticisms was that the faculty who developed the Pathways project were not the formally elected members of the College Senates.
(Parenthetically, this process would have been complex at LaGuardia, since the formally elected College Senate also has student and staff members. As noted above, two of the three representatives from the College Senate, LaGuardia’s formal college governance structure, were not faculty.) There are some at LaGuardia who maintain that the Pathways project ignores faculty prerogative over the curriculum, although this point is contentious. There is no doubt that our curricular structure will be affected and that this change will be initiated by a university-wide faculty group that was not elected, but ultimate changes must be voted on by LaGuardia’s Curriculum Committee and College Senate. We are in receipt of Vice Chancellor Schaffer’s November 7th memo, which details the Pathways process and its legal and administrative standing. This memo provides valuable information, yet some staff and faculty at LaGuardia do not believe the process was sufficiently collegial. Hard work has gone into the creation of curriculum and programs that have been constructed and approved at the departmental curriculum committee, the College Curriculum Committee, the College Senate, the CUNY Board of Trustees and the New York State Education Department, and we acknowledge that many college programs will have to be revised.

Additionally, some would have preferred more time for substantive feedback. As will be demonstrated, the impact Pathways will have on LaGuardia will be significant. It would have been easier to have more time allotted to hear and respond to legitimate concerns about the Pathways proposal. However, we must also acknowledge that the impediments to student transfer have existed for more than thirty years without being addressed, and that the shortened time frame has created led to concrete action for the first time.

A Professor from the Communication Skills Department stated the following in the Pathways Jam:

Streamlined transfer is needed. Other state and city systems are not as fragmented and unfriendly to students as CUNY. A gen-ed core is probably a good idea but this one seems inflexible and likely to reduce the course offerings at the community and to a lesser degree the 4 year colleges drastically. What about new curriculum and programs? It's not clear how CUNY central will deal with them. Didn't the college just spend the last several years creating new courses and programs to appeal to students? Will this expand or shrink them? Will we now see a Darwinian struggle at the community colleges and the 4 years of what and whose courses get saved? And what about transfer from community college to community college?

Several issues have continually been raised regarding the potential impact Pathways will have on the college. These issues also were discussed as part of the Pathways Jam and during the Ad Hoc LaGuardia Committee meeting. It will be on these issues that we will focus our response.

They include:
1.) **The impact the proposed Common Core credit structure will have on LaGuardia programs.** As a counselor stated in the Jam:

…this process will necessitate each department to re-evaluate their requirements not in light of what they believe is the best preparation for their students, but what is needed to meet the core requirements. I believe the required core will be easier to implement but even this will result in major changes. I reviewed 18 majors at LaGuardia that offer either an AA or an AS and 16 of these would have to adjust their requirements to meet the pathway requirements. If we were able to reduce the English requirement to 6 credits that would reduce the number of majors that would have to change to 13, which is still a very large number.

Another Jam response from a HEO in the College Senate:

I am mystified by the apportionment of 7 credits to English Composition and 4 credits to Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning within the Common Core. I did a quick look at the requirements at all the CUNY colleges. I only found 3 colleges that devote 7 credits to English Comp (CSI, York, and Kingsborough). A few require only one comp course and then require a certain number of courses be taken during the entire 4 years that carry a W designation. But the majority (11 by my count) are like LaGuardia and require two 3-credit courses. So, why did the Steering Committee go with 7 credits?

As an example of the impact on the college of the change in credit allotments, let’s examine Environmental Science, a relatively new AS program. Burl Yearwood, the Chair of the Natural Sciences Department, and Holly A. Porter Morgan, faculty member and Director of the Environmental Science program, provide the following breakdown that compares the current Environmental Science program to what it could look like after Pathways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Science</th>
<th>Proposed Curriculum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Curriculum:</strong></td>
<td><strong>After Pathways:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS Degree</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Counseling:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Counseling:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Student Seminar (0)</td>
<td>New Student Seminar (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>English: 6 credits</strong></td>
<td><strong>English: 7 credits</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Composition 1 ENG 101 (3)</td>
<td>???</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Through Literature ENG 102 (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Humanities: 3 credits</strong></td>
<td><strong>Math, Engineering &amp; Computer Science: 4 credits</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Ethics HUP 108 (3)</td>
<td>Pre-calculus MAT 200 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Math, Engineering &amp; Computer Science: 7 credits</strong></td>
<td><strong>Natural Sciences: 32 credits</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Statistics I MAT 120 (3)</td>
<td>Fundamentals of Biology I SCB 201 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fundamentals of Biology II SCB 202 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General Microbiology SCB 260 (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pre-calculus MAT 200 (4)

**Social Science: 6 credits**
- Introduction to Macroeconomics SSE 104 (3)
- Environmental Sociology SSN 202 (3)

**Natural Sciences: 32 credits**
- Fundamentals of Biology I SCB 201 (4)
- Fundamentals of Biology II SCB 202 (4)
- General Microbiology SCB 260 (4)
- Fundamentals of Ecology SCB 265 (4)
- General Chemistry I SCC 201 (4)
- General Chemistry II SCC 202 (4)
- Geographic Information Systems SCG 150 (4)
- Environmental Science SCG 250 (4)

**Cooperative Education: 6 credits**
- Fundamentals of Professional Advancement CEP 121
- Full-Time Internship CEP 201 (3)

(Both Day and Extended Day students are required to take CEP 121. Extended Day students make take CEP 201 or an unrestricted elective course.)

This fulfills the Urban Study requirement

**TOTAL CREDITS: 60**

| Fundamentals of Ecology SCB 265 (4) |
| General Chemistry I SCC 201 (4) |
| General Chemistry II SCC 202 (4) |
| Geographic Information Systems SCG 150 (4) |
| Environmental Science SCG 250 (4) |

**Life and Physical Sciences: 4 credits**
- Any Natural Science course will meet this requirement.

**Flexible Common Core: 15 credits**

**World Cultures:**
- Environmental Sociology SSN 202 (3)

**U.S. Experience in its Diversity:**
- Introduction to Macroeconomics SSE 104 (3)

**Individual and Society:**
- Environmental Ethics HUP 108 (3)

**Creative Expression:**

**TOTAL CREDITS: 62?**

The required core will force several changes in this program. The required English composition requirement would have to be increased from six credits to seven credits. The Math requirement would have to be split between the common core and the requirements of the degree at the College. The curriculum would need to be changed to include a course to satisfy the Creative Expression area. Environmental Ethics, Introduction to Macroeconomics, and Environmental Sociology would probably satisfy the three remaining subject areas in the flexible core. The Natural and Applied Science requirement would be satisfied by any of the classes under the Natural Sciences heading. These changes leave the need for 3 credits to satisfy the 5th discipline area and would leave students with 2 credits of electives. In any scenario, a course in the current program would have to be changed to satisfy the core.

Our suggestion is to continue to incorporate more flexibility into the Common Core, with the possibility of students completing 28-32 credits that would satisfy the common core.
This could be accomplished on a program by program basis, initiated at the local college level.

2.) **What happens to Articulation Agreements? Will the Pathways Initiative erode programs at the Community College level?** Articulation agreements have been important for LaGuardia students and have been the result of tremendous efforts by Faculty. We question whether, since the Common Core is hinging satisfaction of discipline area requirements upon learning outcomes, articulation agreements would be in peril as we are no longer matching courses. The initial and second phases of the Pathways project are (1) examining the gen-ed requirements and (2) transferring the agreed upon major courses to the most commonly transferred majors. It is then assumed that the remaining courses that students have taken at the community college level will transfer as electives.

There are several questions surrounding articulation because Pathways will supersede articulation agreements — although it is still not clear how agreements will be handled in the future. It is also unclear how programs that fall outside the “most transferred” majors currently under examination in phase 2 will be handled.

Again, a HEO in the College Senate discussed this issue during the Jam:

> The current proposal does not go nearly far enough in solving the transfer problem for our students. The 30-credit Common Core is not the only place - or major place - where students lose credits and time. The CUNY BOT needs to take the next step: all 60 credits of an AA or AS degree should transfer without difficulty. Students are "guaranteed" that, with a degree, 60 credits will transfer. But, in reality, many of their credits only transfer as free electives for which most degrees have little room. So, the credits are actually wasted. Let's ask CUNY to do the real work and agree on a way for all 60 credits to count. Community colleges will offer the first 2 years (i.e., 60 credits) and the senior colleges will add the final two years (i.e., 60 credits).

The ad-hoc LaGuardia Pathways Response Committee supports this idea, suggesting that articulation agreements still be in effect and further pursued to follow a 2 + 2 model, governed by specific agreements or partnerships.

One of the largest fears is that the Pathways project might have the unintended consequence of decreasing students’ persistence toward the associate’s degree. We believe that this will not only erode programs at the community college level, but also ultimately lower CUNY graduation rates since a student completing an associate’s degree is more likely to graduate with a bachelor’s. A retired Professor in the Humanities Department writes on the Pathways Jam:

> It seems to me that the interests of LaGuardia students are best served by providing the incentive for them to complete the AA, AS or AAS degree in one of our carefully constructed and well articulated programs, and then entering a
baccalaureate program with the Associate's degree in hand. "Pathways" encourages a "take the 30 credits and run" mentality, encouraging students to leave prematurely, facing increased costs and a resistant milieu, with no actual credential to demonstrate their achievement and support them in meeting a career opportunity, if working full-time becomes a necessity.

An Associate Professor in the English Department writes:

What isn't clear to me yet about Pathways is how it will impact majors at LaGuardia. What Pathways is proposing is 30 credits of general education—our majors at LaGuardia are 60 credit majors—so then, what happens? Does every major at LaGuardia agree that those 30 credits of Pathways satisfy the "general" classes for our majors and then agree that there are 30 credits left within the specific discipline of the major for students to take? How will those remaining credits transfer? And what is the risk, then, of students who complete the 30 credit Pathways transferring before an AA/AS/AAS degree is completed? Do we risk lowering our graduation rates because student won't see merit in staying at the CC before moving onto the 4 year after their general ed pathway is completed?

Another Assistant English Professor thinks a little differently:

Since Pathways proposes a guaranteed smooth transfer process, I predict that students may be more likely to complete an Associate degree once it is in place—so the senior colleges' concern about the erosion of the 12 credit gen ed program may be justified. However, many students I currently advise can't wait to be at a 4 year school; if they have the opportunity to transfer early they will.

It's an interesting point, because when we discussed the erosion of programs at the community college level with fellow Pathway committee members, representatives from senior colleges believed the opposite. Senior college representatives hypothesized that students will be more apt to graduate from community colleges. According to these representatives, senior colleges are worried about a further erosion of their 12 credit gen ed college option, which would be reduced to six credits for students transferring with an associate's degree.

The distinction between senior and community colleges was also mentioned by responders in the Jam. While the Professor cited above sees an increase in graduation, she also makes the following observation.

[There is] the unfair stigma that community colleges carry in the eyes of the 4 year schools. It's a sad perspective to hear from our senior college CUNY colleagues who do not realize that our curriculum is equally competitive.

A College Senate HEO writes on the Jam:

Part of the problem within CUNY is that the senior colleges often adopt a patronizing attitude toward the 2-year colleges and community college students.
a. The evidence is clear that community college transfers do every bit as well academically as students who begin their careers at the senior colleges.
b. The community college atmosphere is more student-friendly during the first two years of college instruction than the senior college model. Community college classes are small (rarely larger than 30 students) and allow students to develop relationships with faculty (not graduate assistants who often deal with individual students in large lecture sections).
c. The senior colleges would be much smaller places without the community college transfer students. Our response needs to document the percentage of senior college students who began as CUNY community college transfers.

While there are arguments from both sides concerning the issues of early transfer and lower graduation rates, it is important to remember that there will be an annual review of the Pathways initiative. The review will have to focus on the traditional enrollment measures, but also take into account the impact that Pathways has on programs at LaGuardia.

3.) **Sequential Courses.** Some LaGuardia faculty expressed concerns surrounding foreign language courses, as well as those surrounding sequential courses in general. Several people weighed in on the issue of foreign languages and Pathways.

From an Academic Chair:

… A one semester course in Modern Languages will give students the ability to use a tourist phrase book, but no understanding of how a language is structured and no structure to build on if they choose to take another Modern Language course later on.

Spanish (or any other language) I is a pre-req to level II. No college in the country I know of takes the first semester without the second. If the second semester is the course listed, how can students be required to take Level I as a pre-req.

Another colleague has pointed out:

"The restricted number of possible credits, the nature of the newly defined outcomes, and the number of outcomes that must be met, conspire to essentially exclude beginning and intermediate foreign language courses from the Flexible Core; having no College Option to fall back on, the community colleges would feel the impact of this policy even more severely than the rest."

With this plan, the World's Community College will no longer be able to bring English monolingual students into the multi-lingual worlds they live and WORK in.

From a HEO in the College Senate:
The issue of foreign language instruction - as several of my colleagues have noted - needs more rigorous consideration than it has received thus far. In a richly multicultural and multilingual city like New York and in a more globally-connected world, those who are multilingual are in demand. Since two semesters of a foreign language is the minimum competency recognized throughout the academic world, students should be able to count two semesters as part of the Common Core. There are two ways to accommodate this reality: (1) Students transferring with two semesters of a foreign language should have 33 credits recognized for transfer, or (2) students presenting a 2-semester sequence in a foreign language should be exempted from the arbitrary requirement that the 15 credits in the Flexible Common Core must come from 5 different disciplines.

A Library faculty member suggests we require six credits in foreign language and that that we should go back to 66/126 credits to graduate.

Faculty from Natural Sciences are also concerned. One professor identified the problem as follows:

We have concerns about the effect of the Pathways initiative on sequential courses. Specifically, how will sequential courses be treated in the transfer process when the first part of a two part course sequence is included in the Common Core?

This is an issue with numerous sequential courses in several disciplines at LAGCC. For example, in Natural Sciences, the Fundamentals of Biology course is a sequential course including SCB 201 and SCB 202, with SCB 201 being a candidate for the 4 credit Science requirement under the Common Core. In order for students to receive credit for Fundamentals of Biology from LAGCC, they must take both part one (SCB 201) and part two (SCB 202).

If part one of a sequential course is included in the Common Core and a student completes that course, it will be transferred to their senior college under the Pathways agreement. However, in the senior college, as at LAGCC, the equivalent courses are sequential courses and therefore students are required to complete two semesters in order to receive credit. Will the senior college allow this student to use part one of the sequential course from LAGCC as part one of the equivalent sequential course at the senior college and subsequently allow the student to move on to the senior college's equivalent of part two? Or will the student instead have to take both parts one and part two at the senior college (thereby retaking part one) to receive credit for the year-long course?

In another scenario, a student has taken both parts of a sequential course and again part one is included under the Common Core and will be transferred to their senior college under the Pathways agreement.
What then happens to the credits from part two of the sequence? The senior college could: 1) not accept the credits from part two; 2) accept the part two course as an elective, yet still compel the student to take the senior college's equivalent version of part two, as this course was not included in the Common Core agreement; 3) accept the LAGCC part two as part two of the equivalent sequence and give the student full credit for the year-long sequential course.

We foresee situations where students could be required to repeat courses that are part of the Common Core at the senior college, if those courses are part of a year-long sequence. Therefore, we suggest that clear guidelines be written for the transfer of sequential courses under the Pathways initiative.

An academic Chair in the sciences also expressed concerns about sequential courses and the credit structure of Pathways;

For sequence courses (like 203/204), if the first course is accepted as part of the common core, then the second course may or may not be accepted by the 4-yr college. The 4-yr college may (1) accept the course as a science credit (2) accept the course as an elective, or (3) not accept the course at all and make the student repeat the course.

Another factor to consider: if the student stays at LaGuardia and earns an Associate degree, in order for the student to get credit at LaGuardia for the first course, they have to take the second course. Thus, a student who stays and earns the Associate has no guarantee that the second sequence course will be accepted at the 4-yr college, but they still have to take the 4-yr course.

The sequence courses are a very important consideration in our department because most of our courses are sequence courses. The Environmental Science, Biology, and Liberal Arts: Math and Science require sequence courses.

I am not sure what the 4-yr colleges will do with sequence courses...will they require students to transfer both halves of sequence courses when only one can be used for the common core, or will they discourage students from taking sequence courses (especially when both courses aren't part of the common core).

Several recommendations are made by the Ad-hoc LaGuardia Response Committee:

1. A clarification for Natural Science courses that satisfy the core and are part of sequential curriculum areas needs to be completed and disseminated.
2. An adjustment in the flexible common core should allow students who choose to take a foreign language for two semesters to waive the need for a fifth discipline in four subject areas. The credits should remain at 15.
3. Existing articulation agreements should remain in force and new ones encouraged.

4. In Michelle Anderson’s cover memo that accompanied release of the Pathways common core draft, she writes, “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.” Clarification needs to be made regarding Pathways alterations to recently approved curricula for AS degrees. As in the Environmental Science program, Pathways changes would render the curriculum less useful to both discipline-specific academic preparation and preparation for future employment.
In response to CUNY Pathways’ call for timely feedback on the proposed Common Core structure, the President of Medgar Evers College initiated several discussions on campus. These included the General Education Standing Committee, the Academic Council composed of the Chairpersons and the Deans and the Office of Academic Affairs. Also, the President convened a Stated Meeting of the Faculty where the campus representatives to the CUNY Pathways Committee made presentations to the faculty about the Pathways common core and its objectives. In addition, the President and the Office of Academic Affairs requested that individual faculty members and departments provide their comments on this structure. The Office of Academic Affairs convened a meeting to review the responses and to craft the College’s response to the Pathways Common Core recommendations in light of the College’s General Education curriculum and its stated learning outcomes.

In summary, the opinions of the faculty at Medgar Evers College have been varied. Some members of the faculty have expressed concerns about the impact of the Pathways initiative on their work as faculty and the development after much time and effort to develop consensus that has resulted in the Medgar Evers College General Education Program (see Appendix A). However, the College’s General Education Program with some modifications will meet the requirements of the Pathways Common Core. As the University moves forward to implement the Pathways Common Core, we look forward to other opportunities to provide reflective and constructive feedback that will enhance the success of our students at the College and at other Colleges in the University.

Below are comments and suggestions for consideration:

**Required Common Core**

**A. English Composition:**

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

1. Demonstrate critical reading, listening, and analytical skills, including identifying an argument’s major assertions and assumptions, and evaluating its supporting evidence.
2. 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.

Comment: Coherent texts are not produced because of technology or Standard English or peer review; coherent texts are texts whose ideas connect to one another cogently and clearly. Disconnect producing coherent texts from these other issues.

Demonstrate research skills using appropriate technology, including finding, evaluating, and synthesizing primary and secondary sources.
Comment: Research skills are the purview of all subject area/content faculty; they should not be isolated in a composition course or dependent on composition faculty only to teach these skills; take it out or add to all the other areas.

3. 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].

4. Formulate original ideas and integrate them with the ideas of others by employing the conventions of ethical attribution and citation.

Comment: Why is technology a part of composition? It is not the responsibility of the composition courses or instructors to teach students the use of technology only. Technology or more appropriately Information literacy is one of the intellectual and practical skills, included in the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes, it should be reinforced and taught throughout the General Education Curriculum.

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

1. Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and research methods of a scientific discipline.
2. 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.
3. Use the tools of a scientific discipline to carry out collaborative investigations in appropriate laboratory settings.
4. Obtain, analyze, and interpret data and present it in an effective written laboratory report.
5. Apply scientific ethics and unbiased assessment in the reporting of scientific data.
6. 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. [Through study of a discipline or of related disciplines], all Flexible Common Core courses must meet the following three learning outcomes. A student will be able to

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

Comment: Add analyze and synthesize as two other general learning outcomes to be listed here.

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

1. 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.
2. Analyze the concept of culture and global cultural diversity and describe any given event or process from more than one cultural viewpoint.
3. Analyze the historical development of a non-U.S. society.
4. Analyze the significance of a major movement that has shaped the world’s societies.
5. Identify and discuss the role that race, ethnicity, class, gender, or belief plays in cultural systems.

Comment: Should students also be analyzing and critiquing these roles too? Add analyze and critique.

6. Speak, read, and write a language and use the conceptual skills to appreciate and respond to cultures other than one’s own.

Comment: Does this refer to a second language? This is not clear.

C. 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

1. 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.
2. Analyze the major themes of U.S. history from different social, economic, demographic, cultural, or political perspectives.
3. Evaluate how immigration and slavery have shaped the development of the United States.
Comment: Add analyze and critique here too.

4. Explain the role of the United States in international relations and how this role has influenced the country and the rest of the world.
5. Identify and differentiate among the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of government and analyze their influence on the development of U.S. democracy.
6. 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.

D. Creative Expression

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

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Articulate how meaning is created in the arts or communications and how experience is interpreted and conveyed.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the skills involved in the creative process.
5. Use appropriate technologies to conduct research and to communicate.

Comment: How do speech classes reflect creative expression? Do not include speech classes as options for this area.

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

1. 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 [information/applications] science, philosophy, psychology, religion, and sociology.
2. Examine how an individual’s place in society affects experiences, values, and choices.
3. Articulate and assess ethical views and their underlying premises.
4. Articulate ethical uses of data and other information resources to respond to problems and questions.
5. Analyze the transformational impact of science or technology on the individual and society.
6. Identify, analyze, and engage with local, national, or global trends and analyze their impact on individual or collective decision-making.
Appendix A
Approved Courses for General Education Program Curriculum to Date
September 5, 2011
Medgar Evers College, CUNY
(Curriculum Report Accepted by College Council, May 2011)

**Cluster I - Foundation Cluster**
14 Credits

- MTH 136* Algebra, Geometry and their Connections  3 Credits
- ENGL 112* College Composition I  3 Credits
- ENGL 150* College Composition II  3 Credits
- FS 101/102* Freshman Seminar I & II  2 Credits
- SPCH 102* Fundamentals of Speech  3 Credits

**Cluster II – General Knowledge Cluster**
16 Credits

- SSC 101* Culture, Society and Social Change  3 Credits
- HIST 200* Growth & Development of the U.S.  3 Credits
- MUS/ART 100 Introduction to World Art /World of Music*  3 Credits
- BIO/PHS 101 Biological or Physical Science  4 Credits
- ENGL World Literature: The Evolving Canon  3 Credits

**Cluster III – Socio / Cultural Diversity Cluster**
3/6 Credits

- ENGL 3XX Critical Issues in Global Literature  3 Credits
- ECON 330 Global Trade & Political Economy  3 Credits
- PSYC 300 Psychology of Women  3 Credits
- SSC 300 Race, Gender & Class  3 Credits
- Language I** Foreign Language 1  3 Credits

**Cluster IV – Integrative Knowledge Cluster**
9/6 Credits

- Anchor Discipline, Humanities  (3 Credits)
- ENGL 4XX The Body in Place & Culture  3 credits
- MASS 473 Black Creative Arts  3 credits
- Language II** Foreign Language 2  3 credits

- Anchor Discipline, Social Sciences  (3 Credits)
- ECON/PA 4XX The War on Drugs: Economics, History and  3 Credits
Public Policy

- Anchor Discipline, Natural Sciences and Mathematics (3 Credits)
  BIO XXX Human Genetics and Society 3 Credits

Note:
1. * An existing course that has been revised to meet the learning outcomes of the MEC General Education Program.

Cluster III and IV the total number of credits is 12, distributed as follows:
   Option A: 3 credits in Cluster III and 9 credits in Luster IV for a total of 12 credits.
   In Cluster IV the student must take one course in each of the three anchor disciplines.
   Option B**: If a student wishes to take a foreign language, he/she can take 3 credits of language in Cluster III and 3 credits for the Humanities & Arts anchor discipline in Cluster IV for a total of 6 credits. The student must then take the remaining 6 credits in Cluster IV in the other two anchor disciplines: 3 credits in the Natural Sciences & Mathematics and 3 credits in the Social Sciences.

2. Cluster I and II can be modified to meet the requirements of the Pathways Common Core.

3. Cluster III and IV are responsive and congruent with the Pathways 12-Credit College Option for senior colleges.
To: Dean Michelle J. Anderson  
   Chair, Pathways Task Force  

From: President Scott Evenbeck  
   The New Community College at CUNY  

Date: November 15, 2011  

Re: Coordinated College Response  

After conferring with the NCC community, I’m writing in response to the Task Force’s draft recommendation on the contours of the 30-credit Common Core structure. We held a college-wide meeting on November 8, at which we discussed the proposed Required and Flexible Common Cores and, after a careful analysis, their impact on the NCC curriculum. All faculty and staff were also invited to a subsequent meeting for a further discussion.  

At the outset, let me affirm the work you and the members of the Steering and Working Committees have done to develop the draft plan to implement the Board Resolution on Creating an Efficient Transfer System. We agree with our General Counsel’s characterization of the system that now exists as “arbitrary, inconsistent and incomprehensible.” It cannot be emphasized enough how important this Board initiative is to assure smooth, system-wide recognition of transfer credit for our students and their ultimate success in achieving timely degrees based on the recognition of established learning outcomes.  

The New Community College at CUNY was founded to develop a new educational model. That model, which is based on careful research and promising practices in CUNY and throughout the country, provides for an extensive, highly interdisciplinary learning community common core, and emphasizes experiential learning through applied engagement with critical issues. Institutional student learning outcomes informed by the Lumina Foundation Degree Qualifications Profile/LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes have been carefully developed. Many national experts believe our model represents an exciting new direction in higher education, and this view is part of a growing national trend in recognition of the value of interdisciplinary models. There is a need to assure that the University Common Core as it is finalized at CUNY can accommodate these models.  

The proposed Pathways Common Core articulates learning outcomes and non-traditional groupings of courses centered on key themes important for our society and our students.
It assumes, however, a comprehensive menu of course choices available through a multitude of departments, and many of the suggested learning outcomes appear to propose discipline-specific outcomes. Adapting our interdisciplinary model, with a limited number of clear pathways to graduation in highly structured curricula to the requirements of the Common Core as they now stand, could involve significant re-design of our liberal arts core courses and our programs of study. We would like to suggest the following changes, therefore, to the Pathways recommendations—changes we believe are important not only to The New Community College at CUNY but to other campuses in the system, as well:

- Set the English Composition requirement at 6 credits and allow an additional credit earned through a writing intensive course. This will reinforce a widely recognized and effective approach to Writing Across the Curriculum.

- Make credits tied to learning outcomes (not courses) the ultimate unit of analysis and eligibility. This recommendation, aligned with the Board Resolution’s emphasis on learning outcomes, affords each campus the opportunity within the Required and Flexible Common Core structure to decide the optimal disciplinary and interdisciplinary emphases for its general education program.

- Revisit topical learning outcomes that seem tied to traditional survey course content. E.g. change “Analyze the major themes of U.S. history from different social, economic, demographic, cultural, or political perspectives” to “Analyze one or more major themes . . .”

- Consider more flexibility in the model with regards to the number of areas required. E.g. reduce four areas in the Flexible Core to three by combining U.S. Experience in its Diversity with the Individual and Society; or include learning outcomes for creative expression under the other three areas.

- Consider more flexibility in the model with regards to the total number of courses and credits that satisfy the required Flexible Core. E.g. allow four courses of 3 or 4 credits totaling 15 to satisfy the five 3-credit course requirement as it now stands.
The College’s response summarizes comments and concerns developed by the College's General Education Committee, which has representation from all academic departments, as well as comments received from attendees at an open College-wide hearing sponsored by the College’s governance body, and faculty at large. Several recommendations are offered for the Required Core and the Flexible Core, and in addition, several concerns are noted regarding the need for clarification on some matters related to implementation.

I. Required Common Core

Mathematics and Quantitative Reasoning

As a College of Technology, City Tech has many programs that require advanced mathematics, and therefore a significant number of first-year students place above a generic college algebra course. Higher-level math courses do not directly address all of the learning outcomes specified for mathematics in the Required Common Core; nevertheless, it seems logical to assume that students placing into a higher level will be presumed to have already met the outcomes of the lower-level course, which is a prerequisite.

This interpretation is suggested in the FAQs, where it is noted that “Colleges should also submit courses at different levels, and students should be encouraged to take courses at levels compatible with their knowledge and skills;” however, the current statement of requirements for the Required Common Core does not seem to allow for it.

Recommendation: We recommend that the Common Core requirements clearly state, perhaps with an asterisk after “all of the following learning outcomes,” that students whose initial placement is in a higher level mathematics course will be considered to have met the outcomes for any course prerequisite to that.

Although our recommendation refers to mathematics, the committee might consider it for English Composition and Science, as well.

II. Flexible Core

1. Currently, the requirement calls for “no more than one course in any discipline,” and for each of the four areas, the first outcomes bullet refers to a “discipline or interdisciplinary field.” It is unclear how an interdisciplinary course would be handled in this scheme.
**Recommendation:** We recommend that in the paragraph stating the overall requirement for the Flexible Core, a sentence be added, as follows: Interdisciplinary courses may be counted as any one of their constituent disciplines.

2. Oral communication, an important area, seems under-addressed. While we do not advocate increasing required courses, we believe that the content as well as the skills taught in communications should be represented more fully.

**Recommendation:** We recommend that “communications” be added to the list of disciplines under Individual and Society.

3. Understanding that foreign languages have presented a challenge to the committee, the compromise offered seems unsatisfactory on several counts:

- In the first bullet under World Cultures, the phrase “non-duplicative of previous language acquisition” appears to preclude courses designed for heritage speakers. Many CUNY students have a working knowledge of a home language, but lack literacy skills or sometimes the ability to use more formal registers in that language. Often, acquiring these skills would be greatly advantageous. They also may have limited knowledge of the history and culture represented by that language, but a deep interest in learning more.

**Recommendation:** We recommend the deletion of “non-duplicative of previous language acquisition.”

- The last bullet under World Cultures requires a course beyond the basic level. Would advanced ESL courses for non-native speakers meet the requirement?

**III. Implementation Concerns**

Looking ahead to the need to develop an implementation plan, we have concerns that we hope will be addressed before that work is undertaken:

1. There is no guidance provided regarding the level at which students will be expected to meet these outcomes, especially for the Required Common Core. Will this be a matter for individual colleges to decide?

2. The FAQs include material that needs to be clarified in the policy itself. These include how accreditation and licensing requirements will be addressed.

3. The FAQs state that courses for AAS degree students will be “drawn from the courses approved for the Common Core” and notes that “some high credit majors with very specific course demands” may not be able to fit the requirements. The Committee should be aware that when students transfer from AAS programs to BS programs, they may need additional
coursework, especially in mathematics or science needed for the major, which could require additional credit accumulation and/or semesters.
TO: Michelle Anderson, Chair, Pathways to Degree Completion Steering Committee

FROM: James Muyskens, President, Queens College

RE: Pathways proposal

DATE: November 15, 2011

I am pleased to submit this report from Queens College responding to the November 1st draft from the CUNY Pathways Steering Committee. Over the past seven years, the faculty at Queens have been deeply engaged in developing and refining our General Education curriculum. We are quite proud of the forward-looking, rigorous curriculum that is now in place and our leadership role in General Education reform at the University and in the nation. Hence, we have carefully and thoughtfully studied the Pathways Steering Committee’s recommendations for a new set of CUNY-wide requirements.

Last Thursday, the college’s Academic Senate passed a resolution (attached) that “rejects Pathways on pedagogical, intellectual, and legal grounds.” Many of the senators voting for this resolution have been very active in our own curricular reforms. They do not see how moving to a new curriculum as proposed by the Pathways Committee will provide our students with the kind of General Education they have come to support.

Other groups of faculty, including senators, have been working diligently for weeks to offer suggestions for improving the November 1st draft. I join them in commending the Pathways Committee for their excellent work. Building upon that, we are proposing major edits and several structural changes. We believe that these changes clarify and streamline the recommendations and provide coherence. If all the edits and changes were adopted, the revised proposal would look like this:

**The Common Core**

**A. Writing: 7 credits**

Courses must meet all of the following learning outcomes. Students will be able to:

- Write clearly and coherently in varied formats (essays, papers, reports, etc.) using standard English.
- Read and listen critically, and critique their own writing and that of others.
- Support a thesis with well-reasoned arguments, and communicate effectively across a variety of contexts, purposes, audiences, and media.
- Use appropriate tools to perform research, finding, evaluating, and integrating primary and secondary sources.
- Create original ideas and relate them to the ideas of others, following the conventions of proper attribution and citation.
B. Mathematics: 4 credits
Courses must meet all of the following learning outcomes.
Students 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.
- Apply mathematical methods to problems in the natural and social sciences, technology, or engineering.

C. Science: 4 credits
Courses must meet all the following learning outcomes.
Students will be able to:
- Understand and apply the concepts and methods of a scientific discipline.
- Use scientific methods, including hypothesis development, observation, measurement, and data analysis.
- Carry out scientific investigations in the laboratory or the field.
- Gather, analyze, and interpret data and present it effectively in a laboratory or fieldwork report.
- Follow ethical practices in gathering, assessing, and reporting data.

Flexible Common Core
Fifteen credits in liberal arts courses, with at least three credits in each of the five areas given below. Flexible Common Core courses must meet all of the following learning outcomes.
Students will be able to:
- Understand and use the concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field.
- Gather, interpret, and assess information from various sources, and evaluate arguments critically.
- Solve problems, support conclusions, or defend insights.

A. Global Studies
All courses in this area must meet at least two of the following additional learning outcomes.
Students will be able to:
- Explain the effects of globalization on economies, cultures, or literatures.
- Describe a given event, movement, or process from more than one cultural viewpoint.
• Analyze the historical development of a non-U.S. society.
• Identify and discuss the organizing principles and values of cultural systems.

B. U.S. Studies
A course in this area must meet at least two of the following additional learning outcomes. Students will be able to:
• Analyze a major theme of U.S. history or literature from any valid social perspective.
• Evaluate how immigration and slavery have shaped the development of the United States.
• Explain the role of the United States in international relations.
• Identify and differentiate among the three branches of government and consider 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 any form of social differentiation.

C. Visual and Performing Arts
A course in this area must meet at least three of the following additional learning outcomes. Students will be able to:
• Understand how works of music, art, theatre and film are created.
• Use basic vocabulary essential to the understanding and discussion of individual arts disciplines.
• Describe the evolution of diverse artistic styles, with emphasis on specific characteristics that can be identified and compared.
• Demonstrate knowledge of the intellectual skills involved in creative processes, as well as the role of interpretive artists.
• Demonstrate how meaning is interpreted and conveyed in the arts, through performance or by creating works of visual or performance art.

D. Individuals and Society.
Courses must meet at least two of the following additional learning outcomes. Students will be able to:
• Examine how individual experiences and values are affected by social factors.
• Articulate and assess differing ethical views.
• Use information to address social problems ethically and appropriately.
• Understand the impact of science or technology on individuals and society.
• Identify local, national, or global trends and analyze their impact on individual or collective decisions.

E. Language
Courses must meet at least two of the following additional learning outcomes. Students will be able to:
• Differentiate types of language and appreciate their structures.
• Appreciate what is lost or gained in translations among languages.
• Relate language, thought, and culture.
• Compare natural languages, formal languages, and logic.
• Understand the processes involved in learning languages.

Following are some general comments as well as detailed explanations for the changes in wording that we have proposed.

GENERAL COMMENTS

A. Need for an overarching philosophy, a unifying statement of the value of a liberal education.

We recommend that the core structure be preceded by a vision of liberal education that represents the grand history and tradition of liberal education at CUNY. The statement should assert the value of a liberal education for our global student body. As Chancellor Goldstein has said in the preface to Reclaiming the Public University: Conversations on General & Liberal Education, “We live in a time when a traditional education, the pursuit of a broad base of knowledge, is more important than ever before. The City University of New York was built on liberal learning….” (xi)

We suggest that the preamble include ideas such as those offered by my colleague, Judith Summerfield:

“College should provide students with opportunities to explore and taste knowledge in various ways and from various perspectives, at the same time that they learn to develop fully their critical abilities to write, read, and use language and other symbol systems, effectively, productively, creatively…They need a curriculum that speaks to the complex times we are living in and to the past, one that students experience as meaningful and useful, and one that enables them to envision and contribute to the future. ‘There is a world to be known,’ says William James. A liberal general education opens doors to that world for all students.”

B. Need for general education program coherence and connectedness, as well as an expansive theory of adult learning

The Middle States Commission has argued that General Education needs to be related to and connected to every major and professional program. A college education must be an integrated whole, promoting interconnectedness, coherence, and purpose. We recommend that the rationale for Pathways take into account the following: A general education program—developed, owned, and reviewed by the institution’s faculty—should be purposeful, coherent, engaging, and rigorous. (Middle States Characteristics of Excellence, Standard 12, “General Education”).

In addition, we endorse AAC&U’s statement on liberal learning as a foundation for discussion of learning theory and practical pedagogical assumptions of the new curriculum structure.

“The ability to think, to learn, and to express oneself both rigorously and creatively, the capacity to understand ideas and issues in context, the commitment to live in society, and the yearning for truth are fundamental features of our humanity. In centering education
upon these qualities, liberal learning is society's best investment in our shared future.” (Statement on Liberal Learning, 1998)

C. General Education should be a college-wide responsibility.

At Queens College, we have been engaged in a decade long development and implementation of a dynamic general education curriculum. We see General Education as our “college major,” one that engages the faculty across intellectual disciplines and divisions. We urge that the University Pathways project embrace this vital role of both our full and part-time faculty in curriculum development. We recognize that it is our faculty and students who will make the curriculum come to life.

Explanations

In this section, I will compare the revise draft presented above with the November 1\textsuperscript{st} draft and offer reasons for the proposed changes.

November 1 Draft

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.

Recommended Version

A. Writing: 7 credits

Courses must meet all of the following learning outcomes. Students will be able to:

- Write clearly and coherently in varied formats (essays, papers, reports, etc.) using standard English.
• Read and listen critically, and critique their own writing and that of others.
• Support a thesis with well-reasoned arguments, and communicate effectively across a variety of contexts, purposes, audiences, and media.
• Use appropriate tools to perform research, finding, evaluating, and integrating primary and secondary sources.
• Create original ideas and relate them to the ideas of others, following the conventions of proper attribution and citation.

Explanations

We recommend making the names of all Common Core areas concise and unambiguous. “Writing” is more concise than “English Composition.”

• We recommend differentiating between critical thinking and analytical thinking. It makes both the wording and the objectives themselves clearer.
• “Standard English” encompasses the various elements listed in the original second outcome. By using this term, the text becomes more succinct and clearer.
• “Appropriate tools” may well include various technologies, but omitting traditional research techniques implies that they are no longer relevant. On the other hand, mentioning them would make the outcome even more wordy and unclear. So we recommend the simplification given.
• The term “technology” muddies the intent of the original fourth objective. Computers and the Internet are technologies; blogs and online forums are media; rhetorical modes are communication strategies. Rather than try to explain that the choice of rhetorical mode might depend on the communication medium at hand in the wording of the outcome, it is better to simplify and clarify the wording.
• Minor change of wording: “integrate” implies that one’s thesis must always agree with those of one’s sources. “Relate” makes more sense.

November 1 Draft

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.

Recommendations

B. Mathematics: 4 credits
Courses must meet all of the following learning outcomes. Students 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.
• Apply mathematical methods to problems in the natural and social sciences, technology, or engineering.

Explanations

As formulated, this area is a course in mathematics, so that’s what we recommend for the title. We considered recommending outcomes that would make this into a Quantitative Reasoning course, but it would have made the area too large to be covered in a 4-credit course. Instead, we hope to infuse quantitative and other forms of reasoning across the other areas.
We also recommend three changes to the last three learning objectives:
• Drop the “evaluate solutions” outcome; it is subsumed by the third outcome.
• Drop the reference to logically valid arguments. The main reason for doing so is that requiring proper treatment of “logically valid arguments” would introduce too much material into the course. If it were required, and honest wording for the outcome would have to be along the lines of, “students will hear logical reasoning mentioned.”
• The recommended language for the last outcome replaces the colloquial phrase, “real-world” with what, we think, is the intended class of problems.

November 1 Draft

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.

**Recommended Version**

**C. Science: 4 credits**
Courses must meet all the following learning outcomes. Students will be able to:
- Understand and apply the concepts and methods of a scientific discipline.
- Use scientific methods, including hypothesis development, observation, measurement, and data analysis.
- Carry out scientific investigations in the laboratory or the field.
- Gather, analyze, and interpret data and present it effectively in a laboratory or fieldwork report.
- Follow ethical practices in gathering, assessing, and reporting data.

**Explanations**

We recommend simplifying the title. Let the title indicate the area and let the learning outcomes clarify what may be included.
- Simplify and clean up the wording.
- Here, we seem to go counter to our normal practice of reducing the text in order to achieve greater clarity. The problem is that “the scientific method” does not describe how scientists actually go about the business of doing science. We make the area clearer by enumerating the activities students actually need to learn about.
- The typical “lab partner” structure neither reflects how scientists operate nor prepares students for the types of collaboration that scientists actually do, so we recommend loosening the wording of this outcome to allow for laboratory work that can in fact expose students to a more realistic view of how science is done and, even, to help prepare them for that sort of work.
- We strongly recommend including the “field work” phrase to make explicit the fact that not all “lab work” is actually done inside a laboratory.
- An “effective written laboratory report” is not always the most appropriate way to present the results of laboratory session. Our recommendation allows for the use of a structured laboratory manual for communicating results.
- Finally, we recommend combining the last two outcomes into the single, clear and succinct, one given.
**FLEXIBLE COMMON CORE PREAMBLE**

**November 1 Draft**

**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.

**Recommended Version**

**II. Flexible Common Core:** fifteen credits in liberal arts courses, with at least three credits in each of the five areas given below. All Flexible Common Core courses must meet all of the following learning outcomes. Students will be able to:
- Understand and use the concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field.
- Gather, interpret, and assess information from various sources, and evaluate arguments critically.
- Solve problems, support conclusions, or defend insights.

**Explanations**

There are two goals in this preamble: to provide a coherent structure for the curriculum at large, and to ensure that students are exposed to a broad range of disciplines. We recommend specifying the requirements in terms of credits rather than number of courses because there are a number of one-credit participation courses in the arts (music ensemble participation, for example) that, in aggregate, would be an excellent way to satisfy Area C.

The recommended set of required outcomes is clearer, and sets the stage for the more coherent structure of the five required areas. The five areas, in turn, are coherent; they provide students with five key perspectives. Three perspectives address different scopes: global, national, and individual. The other two deal with distinguishing human characteristics: the arts and language.

In general, we recommend avoiding a focus on disciplines in defining the Flexible Common Core, for several reasons:
- CUNY first identifies three levels of academic structure: Academic Organization, Academic Unit, and Subject. At Queens, a subject is a discipline, a unit is a department, and an organization is a division (defined as a group of departments that report to a particular dean.) One department can offer courses in multiple
disciplines. So the attempt to ensure breadth by limiting the number of “disciplines” is going to lead to intractable problems of definition.

- Dealing with the breadth issue at the discipline/subject level does not address the problem we have identified at Queens: the November 1 draft structure would allow a student to complete all the FCC requirements from within the Arts and Humanities division without ever taking any courses in the Social Sciences division, and vice versa.
- A discipline-centric approach perseverates “turf boundaries” that are orthogonal to the students’ educational best interests.
- Some of the best general education courses being developed do not follow disciplinary boundaries. That is, it is not a good idea to make it hard for well-conceived interdisciplinary courses to be used for general education.

We note that a weakening phrase, such as “such as” when introducing a discipline list could eliminate many of the difficulties above. But then the list becomes non-normative. The intent should be made clear by the wording of the learning outcomes.

FCC Area A

**November 1 Draft**

**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 (nonduplicative 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.

**Recommended Version**

**A. Global Studies**

All courses in this area must meet at least two of the following additional learning outcomes. Students will be able to:

- Explain the effects of globalization on economies, cultures, or literatures.
- Describe a given event, movement, or process from more than one cultural viewpoint.
• Analyze the historical development of a non-U.S. society.
• Identify and discuss the organizing principles and values of cultural systems.

Explanations

We recommend changing the title to emphasize the analytical focus, rather than experiential nature, that this area should address.

• The first objective in the draft has been elevated to the preamble covering all FCC areas.
• The wording we recommend allows “cultural diversity,” but also allows social processes to satisfy the outcome.
• The wording of our fourth outcome clarifies the intent of the fifth item in the draft, yet is conceptually more general.
• Eliminating the last outcome from the draft is predicated on adding a fifth area (See Area E below.) One semester studying a foreign language is not an effective way to expand or deepen one’s understanding of other cultures. Furthermore, there are many practical problems with incorporating a foreign language requirement as a learning outcome in this area, notably that students come to the university with widely varying degrees of foreign language proficiency, making it very difficult to “place” students with respect to this outcome. Our fifth required area de-couples language from culture, which is a much stronger academic position.
FCC AREA B

November 1 Draft

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.

Recommended Version

B. U.S. Studies
A course in this area must meet at least two of the following additional learning outcomes.
Students will be able to:

- Analyze a major theme of U.S. history or literature from any valid social perspective.
- Evaluate how immigration and slavery have shaped the development of the United States.
- Explain the role of the United States in international relations.
- Identify and differentiate among the three branches of government and consider 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 any form of social differentiation.

Explanations

We recommend changing the name of this area to make it clearer and simpler; to emphasize the analytic focus of the area; and to parallel the naming for Area A.
We recommend eliminating the first outcome (a) because it now duplicates one of the common requirements for the FCC and (b) to eliminate the discipline-centric problems mentioned in Area A. Minor wording changes clarify and simplify the language, or allow more flexibility in course content without lessening the intent of the outcomes.

FCC Area C

November 1 Draft

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.

Recommended Version

C. Visual and Performing Arts
A course in this area must meet at least three of the following additional learning outcomes. Students will be able to:

- Understand how works of music, art, theatre and film are created.
- Use basic vocabulary essential to the understanding and discussion of individual arts disciplines.
- Describe the evolution of diverse artistic styles, with emphasis on specific characteristics that can be identified and compared.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the intellectual skills involved in creative processes, as well as the role of interpretive artists.
- Demonstrate how meaning is interpreted and conveyed in the arts through performance in a musical, dance, or theatrical production, or by creating works of visual or performance art.

Explanations

New York City is an international center for the visual and performing arts. The city’s cultural strengths should be reflected in the education of its university’s students.
The title we recommend uses terms in current use, avoiding negative connotations associated with the draft version and other terms not currently in use. The recommended title also makes it easier to establish the academic focus of studies in this area.

- The first outcome makes it clear that creativity is work, and introduces students to how that work actually takes place.
- The arts assign specific meanings to terms that could easily seem amorphous to students with no training. It is important for students to learn that terminology matters, and to develop basic competence with that terminology.
- The third outcome is a restatement of the second outcome in the draft.
- The fourth outcome parallels the fourth outcome in the draft.
- The fifth outcome is important in two ways. (1) It introduces the concept of meaning, opening the opportunity to relate this Area to Area E (“the language of dance,” for example). (2) It allows active participation in the arts to be incorporated into the area.

FCC Area D

November 1 Draft

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.

Recommended Version

D. Individuals and Society.
Courses must meet at least two of the following additional learning outcomes. Students will be able to:

- Examine how individual experiences and values are affected by social factors.
- Articulate and assess differing ethical views.
- Use information to address social problems ethically and appropriately.
- Understand the impact of science or technology on individuals and society.
Identify local, national, or global trends and analyze their impact on individual or collective decisions.

Explanation

We assume the original name for this area was a typographical error. Our recommendations parallel the original outcomes. (Again, the first outcome has been subsumed by the set of global outcomes for all FCC areas.) Our wording is clearer, more direct, and eliminates ambiguous terms, like “place in society,” which has radically different connotations in India (caste), England (lineage), and the United States (race).

FCC Area E

Recommended Fifth Area

E. Language
Courses must meet at least two of the following additional learning outcomes. Students will be able to:

- Differentiate types of language and appreciate their structures.
- Appreciate what is lost or gained in translations among languages.
- Relate language, thought, and culture.
- Compare natural languages, formal languages, and logic.
- Understand the processes involved in learning languages.

Explanations

Our intent is to introduce language as an object of study, one that illuminates issues of thought, culture, and intelligence. Because of the city’s cultural and linguistic diversity, CUNY is especially well positioned to address this issue. By raising language to an area in its own right, students will gain a perspective on such otherwise amorphous topics as “critical thinking,” “informed decision making,” “cultural norms,” and even “creativity.” Language underlies notions of knowledge and understanding. Rather than hope that these outcomes will emerge from the process of taking courses in the other areas of the required and flexible common core, this area brings them to the fore and addresses them directly. We see this as an enabling requirement: courses from many disciplines can be structured to satisfy it. The possibility of introducing cross-disciplinary courses to this area is an exciting one, but not required.

Conclusion

I want once again to thank the members of the Steering Committee for their good work. We have offered some suggestions that we think will strengthen the proposal and bring new exciting ideas to the table. We are eager to be fully engaged in the ongoing
discussions. Few things are closer to the heart of faculty than the curriculum. I have been deeply impressed by the dedication and brilliance of the Queens College faculty who have so thoughtfully and meticulously helped to craft our response.
In response to the request from the CUNY task force, here is Queensborough Community College’s response to the Pathways framework and learning outcomes distributed for comment on October 31, 2011.

The Queensborough campus has been involved in a number of consultations and discussions (a comprehensive list is provided at the end of this memo) in which various concerns and reservations have been expressed. Probably the fundamental concern of the institution is to ensure that one of its core values—“[p]roviding a rich general education core aimed at enhancing students’ critical thinking and decision making skills” (from the Mission)—is preserved in whatever form the Pathways framework takes.

To this end, in a close examination of the learning outcomes proposed, we have determined that they align very well with the general education objectives and learning outcomes of the college. It is, in fact, the case that the Pathways framework omits two important learning outcomes that the college values, one for technology use and one for collaborative work, and the recommendations below have addressed these omissions. This core value has led to some refinements to the learning outcomes both in the required and in the flexible core.

In addition, to ensure that the framework fosters “a collaborative, learning-centered community . . . dedicated to academic excellence and to the development of the whole individual in an environment that promotes intellectual inquiry, global awareness, and life-long active learning” (from the Mission), it is proposed that the mandatory learning outcomes in the flexible core be modified to ensure that a broader array of disciplines will meet the flexible core requirements, including an area like foreign languages, which figures prominently in many of the curricula at the college.

Finally, it is the college’s sincere hope that, when the final version of the Pathways framework is released, that CUNY make a definitive statement about the relation between the common core established and the associate degree programs at the campuses, one that provides clear incentive to ensure that students complete their degree programs before transfer to baccalaureate institutions.

In response to the specific request of the CUNY task force, Queensborough offers the following recommendations to the task force for its consideration. Recommendations have been organized according to several categories. To save space, learning outcomes
are referred to by roman numeral and letter as they appear in the draft framework distributed.

**Alternative structures or category titles**

Four modifications are recommended:

- Under I.A, change “English Composition” to “English Composition and Communication.” This allows greater flexibility for the inclusion of speech communication in the required common core, should this become a direction the college wants to take, and coincides with a minor modification to two of the learning objectives in this group (see below).
- Under II, for the three mandated learning outcomes, make the following changes: 1) delete the second bulleted item and 2) revise the third bulleted item, as follows: “Using evidence appropriately to support conclusions, produce written or oral arguments or presentations commensurate with level of learning objectives.” These changes make the mandatory learning outcomes accessible and applicable to a broader range of disciplines, particularly foreign languages.
- Change the description for the flexible core, under II, to read: “five 3-credit liberal arts courses, with at least one course from each of the four areas and the possibility of two courses in one discipline.” This change offers an opportunity for individual colleges to build in a course sequence in one area where the institution wishes to place emphasis.
- Under II.C, change the category title from “Creative Expression” to “Aesthetics and Communication,” as this is more appropriate to an area that is part of liberal arts rather than performance, which “Creative Expression” seems to imply.

**Omissions in learning outcomes**

Three additions are recommended to account for the omission of “technology competency” and “collaborative work” and for clearer inclusion of speech communication in the flexible core. Technology competency is, in many cases, a significant component through computers and graphic calculators in the solution of mathematical problems. Collaborative work is generally recognized as an important component of the undergraduate experience.

- Under I.B, the following learning outcomes have been modified to include technology competency:
  - Interpret and draw appropriate inferences from mathematical models, such as formulas, graphs, tables, and technology-aided models.
  - Use algebraic, numerical, graphical, statistical or technology-assisted methods to draw accurate inferences and solve mathematical problems commensurate with level of learning objectives.
  - Effectively communicate quantitative analysis or solutions to mathematical problems in written, oral, or visual form.
• Add as a second bullet the following learning outcome to II. C and D: “Work collaboratively in diverse groups to accomplish learning tasks.”

• Add the following learning outcome to II.C to allow for speech communication: “Speak clearly, accurately, and coherently in several modes of delivery.”

**Modifications to learning outcomes**

In the modifications recommended below, the specific learning outcome is referenced, deletions are indicated by strikethroughs, and additions are underlined. The changes are meant to improve the overall precision of the statements or to make clearer the inclusiveness of certain disciplines (i.e., foreign languages and speech communication).

• Under I.A – Produce coherent texts (such as formal essays, research papers, and reports, and speeches) using appropriate technology, critique one’s own and others’ texts, and improve them using standard English, grammar, mechanics, and clear prose.

• Under I.A – Support a thesis with a well-reasoned oral or written argument and communicate persuasively across a variety of contexts, purposes, audiences, and media, using appropriate rhetorical modes and technology.

• Under I.C – Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and research methods of a scientific discipline.

• Under I.C - Apply scientific research ethics and unbiased assessment in the reporting of scientific data.

• Under II.A – Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and research methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring world cultures, past and present, including but not limited to anthropology, economics, foreign languages (nonduplicative of previous language acquisition) with placement at level commensurate with student language competency, history, political science, and world literature.

• Under II.A – Identify and discuss the role that race, ethnicity, class, gender, language, or belief plays in cultural systems.

• Under II.A – Speak, read, and write in a language other than English and use the language conceptual skills to appreciate and respond to cultures other than one’s own.

• Under II.B – 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.

• Under II.C – Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and research methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring creative expression aesthetics and communication, including, but not limited to, communications, creative writing, and the visual and performing media the arts, music, and theater.

• Under II.C – Speak clearly, accurately, and coherently in several modes of delivery.

• Under II.D – 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.

For a complete accounting of all these changes, please see the accompanying appendix, which has the entire Pathways framework and the recommended changes, each in its place.

The recommendations above are the result of consultations with a broad constituency and from a number of forums for discussion at the college, specifically:

- Multiple broadcast emails to all faculty, CLTs, adjuncts, HEOs, Student Government Association/students of all CUNY announcements as well as the Steering Committee proposal
- Several discussions at executive meetings of the Faculty Executive Committee and Steering Committee of the Academic Senate
- Discussion with the senior administration on September 20
- Discussion with Student Government Association on September 22
- Discussions at the College Advisory Planning Committee on September 27
- Pathways student Q and A sheet sent to all students via Tiger Mail
- Updates at each of the monthly Academic Senate meetings in writing and presented orally by the chair and president and representatives on Pathways committees and Special Committee of the Academic Senate on General Education
- Updates at meetings of the College Personnel and Budget Committee
- OAA discussion with department chairs on November 1
- Meetings of the Special Committee on General Education of the Academic Senate
- Fall Faculty Meeting on October 26 with panel of college’s representatives on Steering Committee and Working Group
- Campus Conversation on November 9 for all faculty, CLTs, HEOs (campus-wide notice sent twice): over 50 attended
- Conference of the College on the Pathways project on November 11 (featured speaker Dean Michelle Anderson): remarks and Q and A; over 100 attended
Appendix:
Pathways Framework and Learning Outcomes
With Recommended Modifications

Note: Additions are indicated by underlining and deletions by strikethroughs.

I. Required Common Core

A. English Composition and Communication: 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, and speeches) 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 oral or written 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, and technology-aided models.
- Use algebraic, numerical, graphical, or statistical or technology-assisted methods to draw accurate inferences and solve mathematical problems commensurate with level of learning objectives.
- Represent quantitative problems expressed in natural language in a suitable mathematical format.
- Effectively communicate quantitative analysis or solutions to mathematical problems in written, oral, or visual 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:

6. Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and research methods of a scientific discipline.
7. 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.
8. Use the tools of a scientific discipline to carry out collaborative investigations in appropriate laboratory settings.
9. Obtain, analyze, and interpret data and present it in an effective written laboratory report.
10. Apply research scientific ethics and unbiased assessment in the reporting of scientific data.
11. 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 the possibility of two no more than one courses in one any discipline.

Flexible Common Core courses must meet all three both learning outcomes below:

- Retrieve, evaluate, and interpret information from a variety of sources and points of view.
- Evaluate evidence and arguments critically.
- Using evidence appropriately to support conclusions, produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments or presentations commensurate with level of learning objectives using evidence to support conclusions.

A. World Cultures

A course in this area must meet the mandatory learning outcomes under II above and at least three of the following 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, past and present, including, but not limited to, anthropology, economics, foreign languages (nonduplicative of previous language acquisition) (with placement at level commensurate with student language competency), history, political science, and world literature.
- Use appropriate technologies to conduct research and to communicate.
- 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, language, or belief plays in cultural systems.
• Speak, read, and write in a language other than English and use the language 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 the mandatory learning outcomes under II above and at least three of the following 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.
• Use appropriate technologies to conduct research and to communicate.
• 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 Aesthetics and Communication

A course in this area must meet the mandatory learning outcomes under II above and at least three of the following 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 aesthetics and communication, including, but not limited to, communications, creative writing, and the visual and performing media arts, music, and theater.
• Work collaboratively to accomplish learning tasks.
• 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.
• Speak clearly, accurately, and coherently in several modes of delivery.

D. Individual and Society

A course in this area must meet the mandatory learning outcomes under II above and at least three of the following 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.
• Work collaboratively to accomplish learning tasks.
• Use appropriate technologies to conduct research and to communicate.
• 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.
School of Professional Studies Response to the Draft Common Core Structure

The Online Baccalaureate program Academic Directors, Consortial Faculty, and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the School of Professional Studies have carefully reviewed the Pathways documents; the November 1, 2011, Draft Common Core Structure; and Dean Michelle Anderson’s October 31, 2011 Cover Memo. We recommend to Dean Mogulescu the following changes to the Draft Common Core Structure and we also have some questions that we hope the Task Force can address.

Recommendations:

The four-credit Composition and Math courses will pose problems for non-CUNY transfer students, who may have taken three-credit General Education Mathematics and Composition courses at other institutions. If transfer students’ 3-credit courses are accepted by CUNY institutions for transfer credit, it may leave the students lacking 1-credit in either Composition (if the student transferred in with two Composition courses) or Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning, if the student transferred in with one Math/Quantitative course. How will non-CUNY transfer students make up these missing credits? This issue is of special concern to SPS since our baccalaureate degrees are completer degrees for transfer students with 30 or more credits.

Recommendation: We recommend that the language of the Required Common Core be amended to allow or encourage the creation of 1-credit courses, perhaps in Information Literacy or Quantitative Literacy, to allow transfer students to make up the 1-credit deficit. An issue to consider here would be whether a 1-credit course could accomplish all of the required learning outcomes in these areas.

Recommendation: Since much of what is covered under Required Common Core area A English Composition includes non-written communication, we recommend that the word Communication be incorporated into the area title.

Recommendation: In Required Common Core Area B Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning, we recommend the following change to the learning outcomes text:

Bullet #1: Interpret and draw appropriate inferences from quantitative representations mathematical models, such as formulas, graphs, and tables.

Rationale: The term “mathematical models” is often used to refer to complex, quantitative representations of systems. The alternative phrase we have suggested here, “quantitative representations,” is accurate and does not have these other associations.

Bullet #2: Use algebraic, numerical, graphical, or statistical methods to draw accurate conclusions inferences and solve mathematical problems.

Rationale: Inferential statistics is a specific and somewhat advanced part of Statistics. The alternative term we recommend, “conclusions,” is applicable to a wider range of
statistical and other quantitative operations and includes the types most likely to be emphasized.

**Recommendation:** In Required Common Core area C Life and Physical Sciences we recommend that the area be amended to include *Behavioral Sciences*.

Rationale: The Behavioral Sciences, especially many sub-fields of Psychology, include opportunities to do laboratory research and otherwise satisfy all of the expectations and objectives of this section.

**Recommendation:** In Required Core Area C Life and Physical Sciences we recommend the following additional changes to the learning outcomes text:

Bullet #3: Use the tools of a scientific discipline to carry out collaborative laboratory investigations in appropriate laboratory settings.

Rationale: Appropriate laboratory settings sounds a bit strange. The recommended wording is just better.

Bullet #5: Apply scientific research ethics and unbiased assessment in the reporting of scientific data.

Rationale: Students learn about ethical research methods, not about ethical science.

**Recommendation:** In the Flexible Common Core Area A World Cultures, we recommend that Sociology be added to bullet #1.

Rationale: Many other behavioral sciences are listed; Sociology should be included because it is a behavioral science and because of its increasing emphasis on the impact of globalization and global inequality.

**Recommendation:** In the Flexible Common Core Area B. US Experience in its Diversity, we recommend that Psychology be added to bullet #1.

Rationale: Many other behavioral sciences are listed; Psychology should be included.

**Recommendation:** In the Flexible Common Core Area D. Individual and Society, we recommend that bullet #5 be changed to read: Analyze the transformational impact of science, technology, and media, as well as the transformational impact of religions and political ideologies on the individual and society.

Rationale: Examining the impact of only science and technology seems arbitrary; religion, media, and political ideologies have also had a transformational impact on the individual and society.
November 15, 2011

Dear Dean Anderson:

Let me first thank you for your leadership of the CUNY Pathways Task Force and express my thanks to the Committee as well for its thoughtful recommendations. The recommendations from York that I convey to you are a result of a series of consultations across the college that occurred within individual departments, at a college-wide Town Hall meeting, and at a College Personnel and Budget Committee meeting. Student government leaders, faculty governance representatives, and PSC union representatives were present. York College faculty, serving on the Pathways Committee, led the discussions.

York College recommendations fall into two categories: specific Required Core and Flexible Core elements, and contextual and facilitating aspects that impact implementation. In relation to the first category, we offer the following:

1. The category Math and Quantitative Reasoning should be changed to Math only. The term “Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning” is vague and both “Mathematical” and “Quantitative” are adjectives. Thus, the term “Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning” opens the door to a wide range of courses without significant mathematical content. Mathematical concepts are treated differently when introduced in courses offered by Mathematics departments than when offered by other departments. Moreover, the subject of mathematics has traditionally been one of the fundamental cornerstones of a liberal arts education.

2. An American History course should be required in the additional 6 to 12 credits. Further, the History discipline should be listed as one of the appropriate disciplines included in Category Four of the proposed Common Core, "Individual and Society."

3. An inclusive list of disciplines for courses in the various categories should be included for example, see item 2 above.

4. The Natural Science core requirements should be increased from 4 to 6 credits, requiring two courses from different natural science disciplines. These credits can be made up by reducing the English Core requirements from 7 to 4 credits. (If necessary,
additional writing intensive courses could be required to expand opportunities to improve writing skills). This would involve changes at the college level in the 6, 9, or 12 additional credits.

5. Two semesters of foreign language courses should be required. This can be accomplished by adding 3 credits of foreign language study to the required Common Core. This would increase the total number of credits in the required Common Core from 15 to 18 credits, thereby reducing the total number in the Flexible Core to 12 credits and allowing students to choose 3 credits in each category. This change will not affect the overall number of required general education credits, which will remain at 30 credits.

6. There should be a requirement of one course in US History plus one course in Foreign Language if the student has less than one year of high school language or cannot pass a foreign language proficiency test. In all cases, in both the Flexible Core and in the additional credits, a discipline can only be used once (This would insure the widest possible distribution of courses in the core).

With regard to matters of context that impact implementation, we recommend the following to the Task Force:

1. The final text should state explicitly, preferably in a Preamble, that the final document is a living document, intended to undergo organic growth and evolution; that it will be subject to modification and revision over time. Without such explicit language, by and from the original creators, there is the likelihood that the document can appear to have such “permanence” as to complicate the pursuit of modification in the future. The Task Force may also indicate when and under what circumstances it expects the final document to be modified.

2. The final document should include an Appendix or a Supplement that outlines the Task Force’s interpretations and rationale for the terms used in each of the learning outcome bundles (areas). The Appendix can also include the appropriate citation of evidence. During the implementation phase, there will be concerns and controversies about the exact meaning and intent of the Task Force concerning specific terms and phrases. Provision of the Appendix will serve to mitigate such debates.

3. This is an opportune time for the university to standardize best practices regarding class size in order to enable faculty and students to meet the learning objectives proposed in the Required Common Core. One of the three learning objectives that pertain to all five classes in the Flexible Core is that students "produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions." Students need to learn how to "produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments" through instruction, repetition, reinforcement, and feedback. It is recommended that CUNY standardize reasonable class size for classes in the Common Core across the university to embrace the learning objectives meaningfully. This issue is especially important for the 7 credits in "English Composition." At present, composition class size varies.
across the university from 20 (Queens and Hunter) to 27 (community colleges). As we standardize the learning objectives, we should move to standardize the conditions under which these objectives are to be met.

4. The critical importance of advisement for student success in the Core and in the educational journey generally suggests the need for explicit language on this matter. (There is also the matter of allocation of resources to consider).

The York College community appreciates the opportunity to have further input on this crucial initiative and looks forward to a final document that benefits from our recommendations as well as those of colleagues across the University.

Sincerely,

Marcia V. Keizs
President

c: Provost Ivelaw L. Griffith
November 15, 2011
Lehman College’s Response to the Pathways draft on the Required Core

Background and Context:

The Lehman College Response is the result of deliberations on the Pathways process by an Ad Hoc Gen Ed group of faculty which began addressing specific curricular issues as soon as the Pathways Steering and Working Committees began their work in August 2011. This group is led by the Lehman Senate Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, chaired by Professor Barbara Jacobson.

Other Senate committees participated as well (Governance and Academic Standards and Evaluation), and a number of faculty members interested in the curriculum and Gen Ed attended and took part in the discussions. Lehman’s members on the Pathways Steering and Working Committees have also participated in the deliberations.

Over the past months the Ad Hoc Gen Ed group has met generally every other week to discuss the Pathways project, the work of the Committees, and the ways in which the College might best respond to the Pathways draft. The Ad Hoc group shares its deliberations and its members' suggestions through a Blackboard organization open to all Lehman faculty. On November 2 the Ad Hoc group invited all faculty members to a meeting to discuss the Steering Committee Draft, and on November 9 the Ad Hoc group held an open hearing for the college at large, preceding a General Faculty Meeting.

Thus, the Lehman College Response to the Pathways draft reflects these deliberations among faculty members across the College. The final version has been formulated by the Senate Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

Lehman College looks forward to the next phase of the Pathways Project on the Flexible Core.

Response:

Lehman College makes the following recommendations to the Common Core Draft of November 1, 2011. The rationale behind these recommendations is presented in the endnotes indicated.

I. Recommendation to add specific content to the learning objectives of the Required Common Core category C. Life and Physical Sciences, namely
   - Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and research methods of one of the following disciplines: physical anthropology, astronomy, biology, chemistry, geology, geography and physics.

II. Recommendation to revise the first learning outcome in the Flexible Common Core category D. Individual and Society to read as follows:
   - Identify and apply the scientific method to explore social and behavioral phenomena such as the relationship between the individual and society, including,
but not limited to the concepts and research methods of anthropology, computer science, philosophy, psychology, religion, and sociology.\textsuperscript{i}

III. Recommendation to add a \textbf{fifth} area to the \textbf{Flexible Common Core}, such that this category includes five areas of 3-credit liberal arts courses, and such that a student must take at least one course from each of the \textbf{five} areas and no more than one course in any discipline.

IV. Recommendation that this fifth area be:

E. \textbf{Languages and Literatures}.\textsuperscript{iii} Students must take at least one foreign (non-English) language (non-duplicative of previous language acquisition) or literature taught in a non-English language at the intermediate level or above, or demonstrate non-English language competence at least at the intermediate level. Or a student may take a course in English grammar, syntax, or linguistics (for which there is no pre-requisite). Language and literature study must meet \textbf{three} of the following learning outcomes:

- Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and research methods of a language other than English or of linguistics and of world cultures.
- Analyze the concept of culture and global cultural diversity and describe any given event or process from a cultural viewpoint other than English-language cultures.
- Analyze the structure or development of a non-U.S. society.
- Identify and discuss the role that race, ethnicity, class, gender, or belief plays in linguistic or cultural systems.
- Speak, read, and write a language and use the conceptual skills to appreciate and respond to cultures other than one’s own.

V. Recommendation to revise the title in the \textbf{Flexible Common Core category A. World Cultures} to read: \textbf{World Cultures and Societies}.\textsuperscript{iv}

VI. Recommendation to revise the learning objectives in the \textbf{Flexible Common Core category A. World Cultures} to read as follows:\textsuperscript{iv}

- Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and research methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring world cultures and societies, including, but not limited to, anthropology, economics, foreign languages (non-duplicative of previous language acquisition), history, sociology, philosophy, ethnic studies, geography, political science and world literature.
- Identify and discuss the role that race, ethnicity, class, gender or belief plays in world cultures and societies.
- Speak, read, and write a language and use the conceptual skills to appreciate and respond to cultures and societies other than one’s own.
- Analyze the historical development of one or more non-US societies.
- Analyze the significance of one or more major movements that have shaped the world’s societies.
• Analyze the major themes of globalization from different cultural, social, economic, historical, or political perspectives.

1 The Life and Physical Sciences criteria do not explicitly require or specify a particular content or set of possible contents. The consequence is that some courses in the Social Sciences qualify for inclusion. For example, Experimental Psychology satisfies the criteria. The course teaches the scientific method as well as experimental and non-experimental research designs. Students also learn to formulate hypotheses, collect data and evaluate these hypotheses using quantitative methods. Psychology is not generally considered a STEM discipline but the point of this example is that exposure to STEM disciplines should encompass more than a familiarity with the scientific enterprise.

Arguably, if we compare the skills acquired by a student who did well in experimental psych with a student who had completed introductory biology, the experimental psych student would have a better idea as to why randomized clinical trials provide much stronger evidence than descriptive or epidemiological studies in bio-medical research. Of course, the experimental psych student would not have a clue as to the structure of cells or what controls basic biological processes. The learning objectives, as presently defined, do not indicate that this issue matters. They do not require anything with regard to content in the fields of physical anthropology, astronomy, biology, chemistry, geology, geography and physics.

ii As it stands, the Common Core perpetuates the myth that “science” is exclusively associated with certain disciplines and that other subject areas do not need to be informed by this process. Criteria having to do with the scientific method are housed, for the most part, within the Life and Physical sciences. In contrast, the flexible component includes four areas that are defined in terms of certain knowledge or content related to issues within these general domains. These definitions do not include any mention of the scientific method even though this is the approach taken by many social sciences to the issues associated with these areas.

This limitation is problematic for several reasons. First, it conflates the scientific method with particular content areas and this conflation is inconsistent with the aims and goals of a number of disciplines. Second, the current description may produce students with a passing knowledge of the four main content areas but it does not guarantee any familiarity with the approaches or epistemologies of the social sciences. It is currently possible for a student to complete the core without having taken a single social science course. Therefore, we recommend that the role of the scientific method be included in one or more of the Flexible Core categories. We suggest the emendation presented here. Excluding it, as is presently the case, leaves out the science component in the social sciences. The learning outcome presently found only in the Life and Physical Sciences also fits the social sciences: only two words need to be changed.

iii The Common Core draft requires no Foreign Language. The Lehman General Education program requires proficiency in a foreign language at the intermediate level (3-9 credits). By eliminating a foreign language requirement the Common Core removes an important pathway to excellence for Lehman students. Foreign languages are an essential component of most general education programs throughout the country and for good reason. In addition to preparing students for graduate school they also provide widely acknowledged benefits in cognitive and skill developments. Additionally, if we think of our students as “global citizens,” we will be ignoring a major element of “global culture” by excluding and de-emphasizing the value of language. Imagine the global consequences if educational systems around the world decided language was not an essential component of an educated person and English was not studied outside of the “Anglophone” world. By telling CUNY students they do not need a foreign language and making it difficult to shoehorn into a degree, even in an international discipline, CUNY is devaluing a crucial element of a degree and creating a linguistic narrowness that belies the claim that our students are and will be prepared for the global world.

Some Task Force members have suggested that a 3 credit language course could be included in a “World Culture” bucket. Since any number of courses will be included in that bucket, the importance of a foreign language is clearly diminished. Indeed, even more students could end up graduating from CUNY with no
foreign language on their transcripts. Such a probability is increased when we consider that the languages offered can be at the intermediate level only if a course with no prerequisites is also included in the bucket. Foreign language is not incompatible with other disciplines; in fact, it is complementary. It should not go without notice that colleagues in many disciplines are speaking out in support of the inclusion of language in the CUNY curriculum.

iv The “World Cultures” bucket and its learning outcomes reflect a consistent micro focus on only one concept integral to global transformations, that of “culture.” Students are asked to “identify and apply the fundamental concepts….exploring world cultures,” “analyze the concept of culture and global cultural diversity,” “analyze and discuss the role that race, ethnicity….plays in cultural systems,” “speak, read, and write a language….to respond to cultures other than one’s own.”

Our “world,” however, consists of macro as well as micro trends and these societal processes require more than the concept of “culture” to explain them. Indeed, macro studies are required in order to understand the micro events (cultural and individual) which are embedded within them. Industrialization, urbanization, climate change and environmental pollution, globalization, demographic shifts, deforestation, the rise of the middle class, of nation states and modern warfare, changes in world economies and politics as well as transformations in other institutions such as education, the economy and politics—all of these changes are excluded from the “world cultures” bucket. Yet, they are critical to students’ comprehension of and appreciation for the complexity of global events and how they impact on their lives as citizens of the world. They are also backed by a robust and impressive interdisciplinary literature.

Only two of the learning outcomes in the “world cultures” bucket reference these macro global events. One asks the student “to analyze the historical development of a non-US society” and the other to “analyze the significance of a major movement that has shaped the world’s societies.” But even here the outcomes are too limiting in focus: global transformations often reference more than one society and frequently require an analysis of more than one major movement. Moreover, even if a globalization course could compact some of these macro trends into these two learning outcomes as presently stated, it still would be excluded from this bucket since the rules state that a course in this area must meet at least three of the learning outcomes.