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.