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 of 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 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.

**Questions about the Draft Common Core Structure and Cover Memo**

**Question:** What will the process be for submitting new courses for inclusion in the Common Core?

**Question:** Are two-credit courses permissible?

**Question:** Does the April 1, 2012, deadline to submit a plan for implementation of the General Education Framework include revisions to all of our degree programs or just the plan for implementation of the Common Core alone? If April 1, 2012 isn’t the deadline for revisions to degree programs, when will it be? Will there be a format for submitting these revisions to degree programs?
Question: Regarding 'major entry' courses. We know that if there is a major course, for example a 101 course, that is also part of the Common Core that it can count toward both the Common Core and the ‘major entry’ requirement. But, what if there are major entry courses that aren’t part of the common core? Will those courses be counted toward the major or somewhere else?