Pathways English Majors Committee
Meeting of November 18, 2011, 1:00-3:00

Present: Duncan Faherty (Queens), Hildegaard Hoeller (Staten Island), Allison Pease (John Jay), Linda Reesman (Queensborough), Grace Russo Bullaro (Lehman), Jim Tolan (BMCC), Barbara Webb (Hunter), Josh Wilner (Chair, City,) Sue Young (LaGuardia)
Absent: Martha Nadell (Brooklyn)

Picking up a discussion from the previous meeting, the committee agreed that it would identify a three-course entry ramp that would provide guidance to prospective English majors at all Colleges. At the same time, it was emphasized that there were other significant obstacles to efficient transfer among institutions, especially the inconsistent processing of elective course credit, articulation agreements notwithstanding. It was agreed that a statement on this issue would form part of the committee’s final report.

The committee confirmed its commitment to working with the following framework:

English Composition - 3 credits
Introduction to Literature – 3 credits
Introduction to Methods of Literary Study – 3 credits

There was discussion as to exactly how the first two courses might form part of the common core. There was agreement that there could be double-dipping, with a given course serving one purpose vis-à-vis the common core and another vis-à-vis preparation for the major. Thus, a writing about literature course might both form part of the 6 (or 7) credits of English Composition (in addition to the 3 credits of composition already identified) and also serve as an Introduction to Literature course for the major. Similarly, a World Literature course might satisfy both the Global Cultures part of the flexible core and the Introduction to Literature pre-major requirement. The possibility of courses within the major serving this purpose was also broached and requires further discussion, as will the general question of interchangeability among courses at different levels (e.g. one hundred vs. two hundred or even three hundred).

It was agreed that outcomes for the 3 credits in English Composition would be taken over from the work of the Pathways Task Force.

The committee then began work on framing outcomes for the Introduction to Literature course. Five broad areas for consideration were identified in a preliminary way:

- Exposure to multiple genres
- Close reading
- Historical/Cultural Context
- Aesthetics of literary language
- Writing about literature

The chair asked the group to think about how we might define close reading, since the meaning of the term is self-evident to us but may not be to other groups, including students.
It was apparent that, as the committee refines outcomes for the Introduction to Literature course, a basic question will be how broad a menu of options can/should be accommodated.

At its next meeting, the committee expects to work further on outcomes for the Introduction to Literature course and, with luck, begin work on the outcomes for the methods course.

Respectfully submitted,

Joshua Wilner