

**CUNY Pathways to Degree Completion
All-Day Task Force Retreat
Friday, October 14, 2011**

Steering committee members present:

- Michelle Anderson, Dean and Professor of Law, CUNY School of Law (Committee Chair)
- Paul Attewell, Distinguished Professor of Sociology, Graduate Center
- Michael Barnhart, Professor of Philosophy, Kingsborough Community College
- Laird Bergad, Distinguished Professor of Latin American and Caribbean History, Lehman College
- Theodore Brown, Professor of Computer Science, Queens College
- Katherine Conway, Associate Professor of Business Management, Borough of Manhattan Community College
- Edward Grossman, Professor of Mathematics, The City College of New York
- Mona Hadler, Professor of Art, Brooklyn College
- Orlando Hernandez, Professor of Modern Languages, Hostos Community College
- Patricia Mathews-Salazar, Professor of Anthropology, Borough of Manhattan Community College
- Elizabeth Nunez, Distinguished Professor of English, Hunter College
- Neal Phillip, Professor of Chemistry, Bronx Community College
- Elizabeth Beck, Student, LaGuardia Community College

Working committee members present:

- Emily B. Anderson, Professor and Chairperson, Department of Social Sciences and Human Services, Borough of Manhattan Community College
- Charlotte Brooks, Assistant Professor of History, Baruch College
- Donal Byard, Associate Professor of Accounting, Baruch College
- Peter Catapano, Associate Professor of History, New York City College of Technology
- Alex Couzis, Professor and Chairman, Department of Chemical Engineering, The City College of New York
- Ashley Dawson, Associate Professor and Chairperson, Department of English, College of Staten Island
- William Divale, Professor of Anthropology, York College
- Emmanuel Egbe, Professor of Business, Medgar Evers College
- Eva Fernandez, Associate Professor of Linguistics & Communication Disorders, Queens College
- James Freeman, Professor and Chairperson, Department of Social Sciences, Bronx Community College
- Andrea Gabor, Professor of Journalism, Baruch College
- Dene Hurley, Assistant Professor of Economics and Business, Lehman College

- David Lieberman, Professor and Chairperson, Department of Physics, Queensborough Community College
- Keming Liu, Professor of English, Medgar Evers College
- Alan Lyons, Professor of Chemistry, College of Staten Island
- Robert Melara, Professor and Chairperson, Department of Psychology, The City College of New York
- Gloria Nicosia, Professor and Chairperson, Department of Communications and Performing Arts, Kingsborough Community College
- Lisandro Perez, Professor and Chairperson, Department of Latin American and Latina/o Studies, John Jay College
- Jonathan Peters, Professor of Finance, College of Staten Island
- Shirley Raps, Professor and Chairperson, Department of Biological Sciences, Hunter College
- Margaret Reilly, Professor of Nursing, Queensborough Community College
- Howard Ruttenberg, Professor of Philosophy, Department of History and Philosophy, York College
- Kim Sanabria, Professor, Department of Languages and Cognition, Hostos Community College
- Patricia Schneider, Professor of Biological Sciences and Geology, Queensborough Community College
- David Smith, Professor and Chairperson, Department of Entertainment Technology, New York City College of Technology
- Debra Swoboda, Associate Professor of Psychology, York College
- Valerie Taylor-Haslip, Associate Professor of Health Sciences, LaGuardia Community College
- Lynn M. Thomson, Professor of Theatre, Brooklyn College
- Scott White, Associate Professor, Library, LaGuardia Community College
- Esther Wilder, Associate Professor of Sociology, Lehman College
- José Luis Morín, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost, The New Community College
- Jennifer Fernandez, Student Government President, Kingsborough Community College
- Liliete Lopez, CUNY Coalition of Students with Disabilities, Queens College

I. Presentation of Common Core Structures Recommended by the Steering Committee

A. Welcome: Dean Anderson opened the session by thanking everyone for attending. She emphasized that everyone assembled had agreed to engage with this project because of a shared love for CUNY, a common belief in the potential of CUNY students, and a mutual wish to establish the best Common Core framework possible within the guidelines of the Board of Trustees' resolution.

B. Common Core Structures: Following up on an email that had been circulated to the entire group, Dean Anderson then reviewed both the Common Core structure that was recommended by a majority of the Steering Committee at its last meeting (considered as the primary motion) and the structure that garnered the next highest level of support (secondary motion):

Primary Motion to Structure the Common Core

English Composition: 7 credits

Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning: 4 credits

Natural and Physical Sciences: 4 credits

Flexible Common Core Credits: five, 3-credit, liberal arts courses for 15 credits in the following four areas, with at least one course from each area and no more than one course in any particular discipline.

1. World Cultures—courses drawn from foreign languages, anthropology, history, political science, economics, world literature, and other fields addressing global cultures.
2. U.S. Experience in its Diversity—courses drawn from history, political science, economics, sociology, U.S. literature, and other fields addressing the U.S. experience in its diversity.
3. Creative Expression—courses drawn from the fine arts, creative writing, communications, music, theater, and other fields addressing creative expression.
4. Individual and Society—courses drawn from anthropology, philosophy, psychology, religion, computer science and other fields addressing the relationship between the individual and society.

Secondary Motion to Structure the Common Core

English Composition: 6 credits

Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning: 3 credits

Natural and Physical Sciences: 3 credits

Flexible Common Core Credits: six, 3-credit, liberal arts courses for 18 credits in the following areas, with at least one course from each area and no more than one course in any particular discipline.

1. World Cultures—courses drawn from foreign languages, anthropology, history, political science, economics, world literature, and other fields addressing global cultures.
2. U.S. Experience in its Diversity—courses drawn from history, political science, economics, sociology, U.S. literature, and other fields addressing the U.S. experience in its diversity.
3. Creative Expression—courses drawn from the fine arts, creative writing, communications, music, theater, and other fields addressing creative expression.
4. Individual and Society—courses drawn from anthropology, philosophy, psychology, religion, and other fields addressing the relationship between the individual and society.

5. Scientific World—courses drawn from computer science, the natural and physical sciences, mathematics, statistics, logic, technology studies, and other fields addressing the scientific world. [There is a question whether this area is included.]

Recommendation on 4-Credit Math and Science Courses

The Pathways Task Force recommends that colleges be *required* to offer enough 3-credit courses for all students to satisfy the Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning and Natural and Physical Sciences credits of the Common Core. The Task Force also recommends that colleges be *allowed* to offer 4-credit math and science courses to satisfy these respective areas of the Common Core, particularly for those students who intend to major in STEM fields, provided:

1. The exemption for 4-credit courses applies only to math and science. It does not apply to courses in any other field.
2. The CUNY-wide Committee, consisting predominantly of faculty, tasked with reviewing and approving all courses proposed for the Common Core will not approve any 4-credit math or science course until after the submitting college has had approved a sufficient number of 3-credit math and science courses for students' general education.
3. A college cannot require a student to take a 4-credit math or science course to satisfy any area of the Common Core. It may, however, recommend or require a student to take a 4-credit math or science course to satisfy the requirements of a major.
4. The college submitting a 4-credit math or science course for approval to satisfy the Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning or Natural and Physical Sciences credits of the Common Core must certify that the course submitted counts toward the major in that field.

II. Discussion of Common Core Structure and Voting

A. General Discussion: Dean Anderson opened up discussion of the Common Core structure. It was noted that the two models, which emerged from lengthy considerations and comparisons of additional models among the Steering Committee, share some similarities.

Initial comments covered a range of topics and questions, including:

- Connections between the structure(s) and learning outcomes.
- Procedure of voting by majority in relation to garnering consensus.
- Treatment of the humanities disciplines “versus” the sciences.
- How much and what kinds of English composition should be included in the Common Core.
- Whether a laboratory science course should be a required part of the Common Core.
- Whether specific disciplines should or should not be permitted to “repeat.”
- The presence/absence of oral communication in these models.
- Implications of structure for interdisciplinary courses and programs.

Many of the topics were then reformulated and presented as proposed amendments to one or the other (or both) models.

B. Motion to amend #1: The primary model should be amended so that the flexible option would be composed of “15 credits, with four 3-credit courses for 12 credits with at least one course from each area and no more than one course in any particular discipline and one 3-credit course from any area and any discipline within that area” and the secondary model should delineate the flexible option as “six 3-credit, liberal arts courses for 18 credits in the following areas, with at least one course from each area and no more than two courses in any particular discipline.” The motion was seconded. After vigorous debate, a vote was called. The motion failed.

C. Motion to amend #2: This amendment called for amending the secondary motion such that “Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning” would be changed to “Mathematical Reasoning” and a fifth area within the flexible common core credits would be added in “Quantitative Reasoning and Scientific Inquiry.” The motion was seconded. After vigorous debate, a vote was called. The motion failed.

D. Motion to amend #3: This amendment called for changes in both models, such that all text from em-dashes forward within the area listings for the flexible common core credits would be removed. The relevant sections would then read

1. World Cultures
2. U.S. Experience in its Diversity
3. Creative Expression
4. Individual and Society

and

1. World Cultures
2. U.S. Experience in its Diversity
3. Creative Expression
4. Individual and Society
5. Scientific World

The motion was seconded, and dialogue ensued. There was then a motion to table the discussion pending the work to come later in the day on learning outcomes. That motion was seconded. A vote to table was called. The group voted to table the motion.

E. Motion to amend #4: This motion to amend affected both models. It called for changing the “English Composition” requirement in both proposals to “Analytical Writing and Research,” of which 3 credits would be fulfilled in composition and 3 (or 4, depending on the model) would be met in a writing-intensive course focused on nonfiction texts and research. The motion was seconded. Vigorous debate ensued. A vote was called. The motion failed.

F. Motion to amend #5: This motion, affecting the secondary model, called for the removal of bracketed line “[There is a question whether this area is included]” at the end of the fifth category listing within the flexible common core credits. This motion was seconded and moved quickly to a vote. A friendly amendment was offered and accepted to change (in both models)

the descriptive phrase “Natural and Physical Sciences” to “Life & Physical Sciences.” The motion moved quickly to a vote. The motion passed.

G. Motion to amend #6: This motion, affecting both models, called for the addition, within the initial paragraph describing the flexible common core requirements, of “and at least one course with an historical perspective encountering the past.” There was a second. Vigorous debate ensued. The motion failed.

H. Motion to amend #7: This motion called for an amendment to the primary model such that the text explaining the flexible common core credits would read “...for 15 credits in the following four areas over a broad range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields.” The motion was seconded. Debate ensued. A vote was called. The motion failed.

A participant then called for language to include interdisciplinary courses in the Common Core. General agreement was expressed, and Dean Anderson indicated that the Steering Committee would revise the structure of the Common Core to indicate that interdisciplinary courses could be included.

I. Motion to amend #8: This motion called for language in the Common Core to indicate that the only courses that would qualify for the Common Core would be those that were prerequisites for other courses or courses that were accepted for a major. The motion was seconded and discussed. A vote was called. The motion failed.

J. Motion to amend #9: This motion called for an amendment to the primary model such that the English composition requirement would be 6 or 7 credits, and the flexible common core credits would call for five 3-credit courses or four 3-credit courses and one four-credit course. The motion was seconded and vigorously discussed. A vote was called. The motion failed.

K. Motion to amend #10: This motion called for amendments to the primary model such that one the English Composition requirement would be reduced to six credits, with a new flexible common core credit area in Scientific Inquiry being added for four credits. The motion was seconded, discussion ensued, a vote was called, and the motion failed.

L. Motion to call the question: The motion was seconded. The Task Force was asked to vote on which of the two structures of the Common Core would constitute the proposed recommendation from the Pathways Task Force that we would circulate to the colleges for their feedback and discussions, complemented by the necessary draft learning outcomes. The primary Common Core structure prevailed.

III. Reports on Area Group Deliberations and Refinement of Language of Learning Outcomes

Following lunch, Task Force members divided into groups to develop learning outcomes to define the areas of the Common Core framework. The groups reviewed sample learning outcomes developed by Pathways Steering Committee members and learning outcomes

developed at other universities in their discussions. The Task Force then reconvened to share their group reports.

A. English Composition area group: The group indicated that general outcomes were developed so that specifics could be determined at the campus level. It indicated that it might be appropriate for courses submitted for the area to meet only some but not all of the outcomes. Learning outcomes were included in response to concerns articulated earlier in the day about the need for students to develop analytical writing skills focused on nonfiction texts and research. This group emphasized that courses submitted for the area did not necessarily have to come from the English department. Feedback from other Task Force members included a suggestion to specify that students must learn to write using correct grammar and mechanics. The committee revised the learning outcomes accordingly. The committee presented the following outcomes:

Learning Goals:

- Written and oral communication
- Critical reading and critical thinking
- Information literacy

Learning Outcomes:

Students 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 (traditional essays, research papers, proposals, reports, presentations etc.), and demonstrate the ability to revise and improve such texts in order to achieve clear and controlled prose that exhibits standard usage of English grammar and mechanics.
- communicate persuasively across a variety of contexts, purposes, audiences, and media, using appropriate rhetorical modes.
- demonstrate research skills, including finding, evaluating, analyzing, and synthesizing appropriate sources from diverse media.
- integrate original ideas with those of others, by applying the conventions of attribution and citation.

B. Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning area group: This group developed the following outcomes:

Learning Goals:

- Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning
- Inquiry and analysis

Learning Outcomes:

Students completing a course meeting this distributional requirement should demonstrate:

- An ability to represent quantitative problems expressed in natural language into a suitable mathematics format.
- An ability to solve mathematical problems using algebraic, numerical, graphical and or statistical methods.

- An ability to recognize valid and invalid deductive reasoning; and to use valid deductive reasoning.
- An ability to apply mathematics in a real world context.
- An ability to effectively communicate solutions of mathematical problems and/or quantitative analysis in written and/or oral form using appropriate media.
- An ability to check solutions to problems through a variety of means including informed estimation.

C. Life and Physical Sciences area group: This group indicated that any lab science course from a broad range of disciplines could fulfill the presented learning goals and outcomes. Group members suggested that further guidance may be needed from the Steering Committee to determine the number of outcomes a course must meet to be approved for the area. Feedback from Task Force members included a concern that the learning outcomes might rule out broad survey courses and courses without labs. It was stated that some campuses may not have adequate facilities to provide a lab science for all students. Group members responded that rigor must be insured, and that traditional lab space may not be necessary for all courses as a wide variety of interactions with the natural world may qualify as lab work. Task Force members also suggested that learning outcomes should be as unrestrictive as possible such that a wide variety of courses could qualify for inclusion in the Common Core.

Learning Goals:

- Inquiry and analysis
- Scientific, technological, and information literacy.
- Collaborative and creative problem solving.
- Ability to integrate knowledge from diverse source and methods of inquiry.

Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate a broad understanding of the fundamental concepts of a scientific discipline.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the scientific methods used to explore natural phenomena, including observation, hypothesis development, experimentation, measurement, data collection, evaluation of evidence, quantitative analysis and presentation of data.
- Evaluate or test hypotheses by analyzing evidence.
- Use appropriate tools of the scientific discipline to carry out collaborative investigations in a laboratory setting.
- Obtain, analyze and interpret data and present it in a written laboratory report.
- Develop a set of scientific ethics and unbiased assessment and reporting of scientific data.
- Retrieve, evaluate and interpret information from textbooks, lectures, journals, seminars, and/or internet sources.
- Communicate effectively in oral and written formats.

D. World Cultures/Global Issues area group: This group proposed adding “Global Issues” to the area title. Several Task Force members raised questions about the placement of foreign languages within this area, some raising concerns that a student might fulfill the area with an introductory foreign language course while others stated that such courses would be appropriate

for the area. Dean Anderson clarified that the resolution does not allow for required (non-remedial) prerequisite courses before student can complete the Common Core. Therefore, if foreign language is included in the area, the introductory level of a foreign language must also be included. A point of clarification was provided that prerequisites can be required for some courses as long as there are some courses with no prerequisites in the Core. The group indicated that the last bullet was added to include foreign language as an option. Group members suggested that courses approved for the area might meet two or more of the outcomes. Task Force members also suggested that writing be included explicitly as an outcome within the area.

Learning Goals:

- Awareness of and engagement with local, national, and global issues
- Intercultural knowledge and competence

Learning Outcomes:

Students should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of culture of the variety of cultures geographically and historically.
- Develop informed perspectives on the historical development of cultures, focusing on the interrelationship among institutions, values, and ideas.
- Understand significance of major movements, processes, and themes that have shaped the world's cultures and societies.
- Investigate the roles that race, ethnicity, class, gender, power and economic and belief systems play in past and present cultural systems.
- Develop the language and conceptual skills needed to appreciate or respond to cultures other than one's own.

E. U.S. Experience in its Diversity area group: This group reported that the learning outcomes explicitly included History as well as a number of other disciplines. The group suggested that courses approved for the area should meet several learning outcomes, but left this question for open discussion.

Learning Goals:

- Awareness of and engagement with local, national, and global issues
- Intercultural knowledge and competence

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will understand the major themes of U.S. history from social, economic, demographic, cultural, and political perspectives.
- Students will gain knowledge of how race, ethnicity, immigration, slavery, colonialism, gender, class, and sexual orientation have impacted the historical and contemporary development of the United States.
- Students will understand the role of the United States in international relations and how this has impacted the United States and the rest of the world.
- Students will understand the political and judicial institutions and governmental process fundamental to U.S. democracies and political participation.

- Students will understand common institutions and patterns of life in contemporary U.S. society and how they affect different groups.

F. Creative Expression area group: Group members proposed that courses approved for the area must meet at least two of the outcomes. The Task Force discussed the place of Speech/Communication within the area and some members raised a concern that the learning outcomes did not allow for the inclusion of these courses. It was proposed that the area be renamed “Creative and Oral Expression.” Task Force members expressed concern that the learning outcomes did not allow for courses related to the demonstration of creative expression such as creative writing. In response to this concern, the group revised the learning outcomes.

Learning Goals:

- Cultural and aesthetic literacy

Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate an understanding of diverse forms of artistic expression including art, music, theater, dance, media arts, creative writing, and other fields of creative expression.
- Understand how the arts from diverse cultures of the past inform those of the present.
- Understand and explain the research methods used in the acquisition of artistic knowledge and the testing of competing theories in the arts.
- Think critically about how meaning is created in the arts and how experience is variously interpreted.
- Understand and/or demonstrate knowledge of the skills involved in the creative process.

G. Individual and Society area group: This group listed disciplinary areas within the learning outcomes but made clear that the list was not exhaustive. The group also included an array of skills and knowledge.

Learning Goals:

- Ethical reasoning
- Awareness of and engagement with local, national, and global issues
- Intercultural knowledge and competence
- Ability to integrate knowledge from diverse sources and methods of inquiry

Learning Outcomes:

- Awareness of how individuals fit into society and the world as well as how this affects one’s experiences, values, and choices.
- Understand, use, and communicate the major ideas and methods employed in at least one of the disciplines used to explore issues of human behavior within society and across cultures including:
 - Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Philosophy, Religion, Political Science, Economics, History (including art history), Literature
- Articulate and assess ethical views and their underlying premises.
- Identify, locate, evaluate, and share information from a variety of sources.
- Write a well-reasoned essay and present an oral argument using a variety of evidence.

- Recognize, analyze, and engage with local, national, and global issues; understand their impact on individual and collective decision-making.

IV. Other Matters

Following the area group presentations, two Task Force members read a statement that the Pathways Project and resultant reduction in general education requirements at a number of CUNY colleges would diminish standards at CUNY. Several Task Force members spoke to disagree with the statement. It was acknowledged that the work on the Pathways Task Force itself has been faculty-driven and democratic. It was also acknowledged that the Pathways project was controversial on the campuses.

V. Next Steps and Closing Remarks

Dean Anderson indicated that the Steering Committee will meet in one week to refine the proposal and learning outcomes. The major committees will also soon begin work to agree upon three to six courses that will be accepted as entry-level courses for the majors. Dean Anderson stated that further feedback will be sought from the full Task Force on the work completed at the retreat and all formal feedback received from the University community will be distributed to the full Task Force for consideration.