Statement on General Education/Core Curricula

The purpose of general education at CUNY should be to assure that students graduate with:

* a well-rounded knowledge and critical appreciation of their cultural and intellectual inheritance, an interest in relating this past to the complex world in which they live today, and the ability to help society create a fresh and enlightened future

* the ability to understand and appreciate the cultural and intellectual inheritance of others

* a curiosity about the world that leads to the discovery of productive connections and interrelations of ideas, and to lifelong learning

* the ability to express their thoughts as productive members of their communities, responsible citizens, and committed professionals

* the habit of examining their own beliefs and assumptions as well as those of society at large, and of forming independent judgments based on sound reasoning and objective evaluation

Principles to be followed in developing general education curricula should include:

1. Faculty alone should ultimately decide course content, pedagogical methods, and learning materials.

2. Faculty should continually review curricula, including cores and/or distribution requirements.

3. The existence of gaps in students’ knowledge must be recognized and can be addressed by a number of differing, equally valid approaches.

4. Distribution requirements, core courses, or a combination of both could all easily achieve the goals of a sound general education.

5. Articulation among college general education programs can and should be achieved without a uniform curriculum across the system.

6. Each college should be allowed to define its own curriculum based on its mission, institutional history, and the needs of its students.

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7. In a general education curriculum, there can be no single perspective on what constitutes knowledge.

8. Major curricular renovation is impossible without adequate funding.

Endorsed unanimously by UFS Executive Committee and Committee on Academic Affairs, February, 2001