CUNY Pathways to Degree Completion  
Steering Committee Meeting  
Friday, September 23, 2011  
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.  
Summary of the Meeting  
(Revised October 11, 2011)

Committee members present:

- Michelle Anderson, Dean and Professor of Law, CUNY School of Law (Committee Chair)
- Paul Attewell, Distinguished Professor of Sociology, The Graduate Center
- Michael Barnhart, Professor of Philosophy, Kingsborough Community College
- Laird Bergad, Distinguished Professor of Latin American and Caribbean History, Lehman 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
- Steven Rodriguez, Student, Vice Chairperson for Legislative Affairs, University Student Senate
- William Fritz, Provost, College of Staten Island
- Anne Lopes, Dean of Undergraduate Studies, John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Committee member absent:

- Theodore Brown, Professor of Computer Science, Queens College

Central Office staff support present:

- Erin Croke, Director of Undergraduate Education Policy
- David Crook, University Dean for Institutional Research and Assessment

Dean Anderson called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

I. Announcements

- Dean Anderson distributed issue briefs on the following topics:
Should the Common Core only include 3-credit courses, or a mixture of 3- and 4-credit courses?

- How should STEM fields be handled?
- How broad should areas be within the Common Core?
- Should History have its own area in the Common Core, or be placed with either the Humanities or the Social Sciences?
- How should Foreign Languages be treated in the Common Core?

- Possible models for the 30-credit Common Core proposed via email by Steering Committee members were also distributed.
- Dean Anderson announced that the summary of the Steering Committee’s September 9, 2011, meeting has been posted to the Pathways website (http://www.cuny.edu/pathways).
- Via email over the past two weeks, there had been substantial dialog with the full Working Committee about the draft cross-curricular learning goals developed at the September 9, 2011, meeting. As a result of suggestions from the Working Committee, the Steering Committee revised the “Essential Learning Goals” draft as follows:

### Essential Learning Goals

**The City University of New York**

**Preamble**

General education at the City University of New York (CUNY) should provide students with well-rounded knowledge, a critical appreciation of diverse cultural and intellectual traditions, an interest in relating the past to the complex world in which they live today, and the ability to help society create a fresh and enlightened future. General education must also develop students’ intellectual curiosity and commitment to lifelong learning. The purpose of the first thirty credits of the Common Core of general education at CUNY is to expose students to a broad range of knowledge and skills described below, enabling them to engage in more sophisticated study and analysis at successively higher levels as they complete their degrees.

**Knowledge of Diverse Cultures and the Physical and Natural World**

- Through study drawing upon the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts

**Intellectual and Practical Skills**

- Inquiry and analysis
- Written, oral, and visual communication
- Critical reading and critical thinking
- Mathematical and quantitative literacy
- Cultural and aesthetic literacy
- Research, technological literacy, and information literacy
- Collaborative and creative problem solving
- Ability to integrate knowledge from diverse sources and methods of inquiry
Social Awareness

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

II. Review of key questions to consider in deciding on a Common Core model

- The Committee began its discussion of the structure of the Common Core with the question of whether the 30-credit Common Core should include only 3-credit courses, or a mixture of 3- and 4-credit courses. Dean Anderson clarified that 4-credit courses are most common in the lab sciences, math, foreign languages, and throughout the curriculum at CSI. Committee members indicated that they preferred a Core with ten 3-credit courses in order to provide the broadest possible exposure to different areas of knowledge and skills for students. Committee members also felt that including 4-credit courses in the Core would result in disproportionate emphasis in certain areas. Based on a straw poll, the majority of the Steering Committee favored a 30-credit Common Core comprised of ten, 3-credit courses.

- Dean Anderson indicated that the issue of STEM fields is related to the question of whether the Core should include 4-credit courses. Committee members noted that many CUNY colleges offer 4-credit science courses that include laboratories. Others offer science courses for 3 credits without a lab. Still others offer 3-credit science courses that include laboratories, either as part of the 3 credits themselves, or with the lab having its own, one separate credit. Many members expressed a strong desire for majors in the STEM disciplines to be able to take 4-credit science courses with labs early in their academic careers.

- Committee members reviewed the STEM brief and suggested several options to accommodate STEM fields within a Common Core framework that includes only 3-credit courses. It was suggested that senior colleges may elect to offer more science as part of their 12 College-Option credits. Another suggestion was that colleges may choose to give a separate course number and credit allocation for the lab component of science courses. Students might choose to take the lab component to fulfill major requirements or for elective credit. Another suggestion was that the Task Force could recommend that colleges offer many 3-credit options for the Common Core, but also be allowed to offer 4-credit courses in science, particularly for students who intend to major in the field. Committee members expressed concern that colleges may not develop many 3-credit science courses for the Core if they are also allowed to continue to offer 4-credit courses. Through much dialog and a straw poll, Committee members voted to recommend that colleges be allowed to offer 4-credit science courses with labs that would satisfy the Common Core under limited circumstances.
• The Committee decided that the remaining issues, including the breadth of areas, and the place of History and Foreign Languages within the Common Core, might be best explored while examining the concrete models proposed by Steering Committee members via email. (The document of those models is attached.)

III. Discussion of proposed models for the 30-credit Common Core

• Dean Anderson reiterated that the Task Force will develop a draft framework for the 30-credit Common Core by devising multi-disciplinary areas and credit allocations for each area. Then the Task Force will develop learning outcomes to define each area.

• A number of models proposed by committee members for the 30-credit Common Core were discussed.

• Committee members discussed the possibility of having some specified requirements, such as two English/Communication courses and one Math/Quantitative Reasoning course. Through extensive discussion and a series of straw polls, the Steering Committee agreed that the Common Core should include two courses in English, Writing, and Communications for 6 credits, one course in Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning for 3 credits, and one course in the Natural and Physical Sciences for 3 credits.

• In addition to these required components, students could have a number of choices organized around thematic or multi-disciplinary areas. The committee discussed the possible use of thematic areas such as “World Cultures” for a set of flexible Common Core credits. Such an area might include courses from history, political science, economics, etc. Colleges would then have considerable flexibility to choose the courses to populate these areas, and students would have considerable choice of courses within each area.

• Detailed discussion of the merits of a flexible versus more prescriptive set of credits (after the required credits above) ensued. Committee members seemed to favor using flexible, thematic areas after the required English, Math, and Natural Science courses. Through extensive discussion and a series of straw polls, the Steering Committee decided to develop possibilities for 6 courses (18 credits) of Flexible Common Core credits in a range of thematic areas.

• There was considerable discussion about the relationship between particular disciplines to possible thematic areas. In some cases, disciplines could apply to multiple thematic areas and students could take more than one course for the Common Core in the same discipline. Committee members suggested that distributional requirements might be included, or the Task Force might make explicit the disciplines that fit within each thematic area. Other committee members wanted colleges to have maximum flexibility to populate the thematic areas.
The Steering Committee felt that it needed more time to deliberate on the structure of the Common Core before offering a draft to the Working Committee for its in depth feedback and input.

IV. Next steps

- Dean Anderson indicated that the Steering Committee would continue to dialog on the structure of the Common Core via email. Live discussion on the issue will resume at the next meeting on October 7 and a draft structure for the Common Core will thereafter be circulated to the Working Committee for in depth feedback.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.
Ten-course models with all courses 3 credits

1.
- Writing and/or Rhetoric – 6 cr.
- Mathematical, Statistical, Comp. Reasoning – 3 cr.

*Students choose seven additional courses from the following nine areas.*
- Foreign Languages and Cultures – 3 cr.
- Literature, Art, Music, and Performance – 3 cr.
- Historical Studies – 3 cr.
- American government, society, and institutions – 3 cr.
- Economic institutions, finance, and business – 3 cr.
- The Physical Sciences – 3 cr.
- The Biological Sciences – 3 cr.
- Mind, Brain, and Behavior – 3 cr.
- Ethics and moral reasoning – 3 cr.

2.
- Writing and Rhetoric – 6 cr.
- Mathematical, Statistical, Comp. Reasoning – 3 cr.
- Literature, Art, Music, and/or Performance – 3 cr.
- Historical Studies – 6 cr.
  - (Must include one course on U.S. history from multicultural perspectives.)
- Economic institutions, finance, and business – 3 cr.
- The Physical Sciences – 3 cr.
- The Biological Sciences – 3 cr.
- Ethics and moral reasoning – 3 cr.

3.
- English/Communications – 6 cr.
- Math/CIS – 3 cr.
- Science – 6 cr.
- Arts/Humanities – 6/9 cr.
- Social Science/History/Global – 6/9 cr.

4.
- English/Communications – 6 cr.
- Math – 3 cr.
- Science – 6 cr.
- Social Science – 3 cr.
- Arts/Humanities/Foreign Language – 9 cr.
- History – 3 cr.

5.
- English communications – 6 cr.
- Mathematical Reasoning – 3 cr.
- The Natural Sciences – 3 cr.

All students must complete 6 three-credit courses from the following thematic areas, with at least one course from each group.

- World Cultures - encompassing historical, political, economic, and social development in non-US societies
- The American Nation - same as above, with reference to US
- The Visual and Performing Arts - appreciation, performance, critical analysis in artistic fields that are not primarily language oriented
- The Individual in Society - the individual in his relation to political, economic and social structures.
Nine-course models with a mix of 3- and 4-credit courses

6.
- English/Communication – 6 cr.
- Math and Science – 10 cr.
  - (One Math required)
- Arts/Humanities – 4 cr.
- History – 4 cr.
- Foreign Languages/Global Studies/Social Science – 6 cr.

7.
- English/Composition/Communications – 6 cr.
- Math/CIS/Sciences – 10 cr.
- Humanities/History/Arts/Music/Languages – 8 cr.
- Social Science/Global Studies – 6 cr.

8.
- English/Communication – 6 cr.
- Math and Science – 11 cr.
  - (One Math required)
- Arts/Humanities/Foreign Language – 7 cr.
- Social Science/History – 6 cr.

9.
- Communications - 6 cr.
- Quantitative/Scientific/Computational – 8-12 cr.
  - AI students meet minimum Math competency (by exam and/or course).
  - STEM majors would complete 12 cr., non-STEM majors would complete 8 cr.
- Humanities/Social Sciences – 8-14 cr.
  - At least one Writing Intensive course
- Language – 6 cr.
  - If satisfied by placement exam, all or some of these credits would be added to Humanities. The language requirement can be waived for STEM students.
- Arts – 2 cr.