

# Education for Liberation

**...not for profit or credentials**

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## *Students Informing Students about Pathways*

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## Why Should You Be Upset About Pathways?

“The experiment is whether the children of the people — the children of the whole people — can be educated: and whether an institution of learning of the highest grade can be successfully controlled, not by the privileged few but by the privileged many.”

Horace Webster, the first President of the Free Academy, 1849

The CUNY Board of Trustees and the Office of the Chancellor has implemented the "Pathways to Degree Completion" initiative as a means to establish a general core curriculum at CUNY and as a means to ease the transfer of credits between its diverse colleges, *but this is not actually what it achieves.*

Many people around CUNY were initially very excited about the University taking steps to remedy the transfer problems at CUNY. But many of these same people who initially support Pathways are now calling for its repeal. These reasons are not because these people no longer support repairing the problems with transfer, but because of the way Pathways has been instituted and its “dumbing down” of CUNYs general education.

Here are some more specific reasons why Pathways should upset you:

- CUNY should be a bargain for the price, not a cheap education
- The need to increase the graduation rate at CUNY is no excuse for the implementation of a general education framework that provides for the attrition in rigor of education offered at CUNY, and the University's efforts must focus on the provision of the highest quality of education to all CUNY student rather than a fast and easy path to a degree
- The implementation of “Pathways” could possibly result in the elimination or great reduction of academic departments especially in the humanities such as Philosophy, History, Foreign Languages, and Fine Arts, which offer fundamental tools necessary in today's increasingly globalized world
- Pathways' prohibition of required prerequisites and GPA's for core courses will result in a lowering of academic standards in General Education courses and would substantially devalue the general education curriculum, and the reputation of the City University of New York and thereby threatens the University's ability to attract and train outstanding scholars and critical thinkers
- The imposition of a standardized new curriculum by the Board of Trustees rather than by the faculty of individual CUNY campuses stands contrary to nation- wide practices and contradicts the traditional rights of faculty governance over curriculum and CUNY's doctrine of shared governance as stated in the bylaws
- Three credit non-laboratory science courses do not meet the nationwide standards for science courses and therefore actually impede transfer rather than support it while at the same time it devalues a CUNY degree
- The Pathways initiative dismantles the liberal arts education and provides for the inadequate and arbitrary constraint of a 30 credit Common Core and a 12 credit college option for the baccalaureate curriculum
- The value of our degrees and the standing of the university are threatened by the diminished standards, and that students will be less exposed to a variety of disciplines and opportunities.

- The press coverage of Pathways, from the academic community at large, has highlighted the above issues
- Over 4000 CUNY faculty members have signed a petition calling for the suspension of pathways and the development of a more rational way to help students transfer that does not demolish our liberal arts and science courses
- Over 40 faculty groups weighed in against the proposal in the Spring 2011 semester and many more have since
- Although the Office of Academic Affairs maintains that there were over 250 faculty members involved in developing Pathways, but these faculty were either picked by the Executive Vice Chancellor or by administrators. The charters of all the undergraduate colleges require election of colleagues to committees. The Charter of the University Faculty Senate authorizes it to have a major role in programs that cross campuses. The process of appointing faculty rather than electing them violates these charters
- Many of the 250 faculty members maintain that their recommendations were not taken into account. Many resigned from this committee and have expressed that they do not support the common core (see [this site](#) for their resignation letters)

## **Summary of Campus Responses to Pathways**

This list includes statements made by the faculty senates of the colleges. In most cases there are departments or other campus groups that have also published statements against Pathways.

### **Called for the Repeal or Rejection of Pathways:**

Borough of Manhattan Community College  
Bronx Community College  
Brooklyn College  
Hunter College  
Lehman College  
Medgar Evers College

### **Recommend the Suspension or Halting of the Process:**

Baruch College  
Queensborough Community College

### **Object to the Process with which Pathways has been Implemented**

City College  
Queens College  
New York City College of Technology

### **Recommends and Alternate Core Curriculum**

John Jay College of Criminal Justice

### **Requests a Longer Process and Implementation for More Discussion**

College of Staten Island

*Currently no college has passed a resolution in support of Pathways.*

## Addressing the New York Post and Daily News Articles

The following are two examples of pro-pathways articles. Reading their unsubstantiated claims, it is hard to see why they are in support of Pathways. In the first one they are making it seem like someone who is upset about “wrecking” CUNY (and the State not providing for the population of NY) is a ranting madwoman, and in the second article it is unclear how Pathways actually lifts standards, or ends student-torture. A life without the opportunity for a genuine education because the public universities no longer provide one is the real anti-student torture.

### The Battle for CUNY, NY Post

[Source](#)

University Faculty Senate Chairwoman Sandi Cooper, meanwhile, had testified that ending remediation programs at CUNY’s senior colleges would “wreck the nation’s largest urban university” and trigger “college closings.”

Ranting that “the USA does not provide basic services to its population,” she actually threatened CUNY’s board with prosecution under federal civil-rights laws.

### CUNY’s class clowns, Daily News

[Source](#)

Chancellor Matt Goldstein and the board of trustees in June approved reforms aimed at lifting standards across CUNY’s outposts and, just as importantly, ending a long-running instrument of anti-student torture.

## National News about Pathways

### CUNY Relaxes Science Standards

[Source](#)

Unfortunately, one of the ways they’re speeding up the process is by cutting the traditional science course requirement to a single 3-credit-hour course. What’s more, the new regulations require that 3-credit-hour courses take up no more than 3 hours over the course of the week, making lab work in science classes almost impossible, some CUNY science professors told *Insider*.

More than 400,000 students are enrolled in CUNY, the majority from underrepresented minority groups. *Science Careers* has in [several past articles](#) discussed how community colleges serve as a major catalyst for getting minority students involved in science and diversifying the scientific workforce -- and many of these articles emphasize the value of hands-on lab work in getting minority students to stay in science. Despite the noble intentions of CUNY’s new regulations, they could have the unintended consequence of reducing its student body’s exposure to science and stymieing career opportunities for would-be scientists.

### New CUNY Curriculum Squeezes Science

[Source](#)

To succeed, any effort to improve U.S. undergraduate science instruction and attract more minorities into the field must extend beyond the tiny fraction of students educated at the country’s elite colleges. In other words, those reforms also need to be embraced by institutions like The City University of New York (CUNY), which serves more than 400,000 students, many from low-income and minority families. But a new core curriculum at CUNY takes a big step in the wrong direction, say some science faculty members,

by making it less likely that its graduates will be exposed to hands-on laboratory coursework.

## **CUNY Proposes a Leaner Core**

[Source](#)

They were also rankled by what they saw as a hasty set of deadlines. Draft recommendations were released on November 1, with faculty input due two weeks later. The campuses produced [106 pages of critiques](#) in response.

The overall decrease in the number of required general-education credits ultimately gives students the ability to avoid courses they think they do not want to take, said Emily S. Tai, an associate professor of history at Queensborough Community College. This change "empowers them in the short run, but not in the long run," she said.

Requiring students to take a particular course is like a shotgun wedding, she said. "You have four months to show them it doesn't have to be a shotgun wedding. It can be a genuine interest they didn't know they have."

## **CUNY's Pathways to Whatever**

[Source](#)

Is what really lies behind this the willingness of the CUNY administration to lower academic standards and risk the reputation of all of its senior colleges? I don't have access to the inner deliberations of the CUNY administration, but it isn't hard to frame plausible conjectures. I have two. (1) *CUNY is under considerable political pressure to increase graduation rates and decrease average time-to-degree-completion. President Obama has spoken of the need to increase enrollments nationwide, and to increase graduation rates as part of that broader goal. CUNY, which has a huge surplus of students, isn't under pressure to admit more, but it is under pressure to improve graduation rates. Nationwide, numerous advocacy groups have clamored for steps to expedite college students to their degrees. Crowded into this demand for increased graduation rates are several distinct lines of argument. America's national competitiveness, it is said, depends on our achieving a higher percentage of the population holding college degrees. Socio-economic inequality, it is said, can only be dismantled via a faster-track approach to college-degree attainment. We waste resources, it is said, if we support the college costs with public funds but allow a high percentage of students to drift away from college without attaining a degree.*

I am skeptical about this movement to increase graduation rates. That movement is, I think, a consequence of our nation over-selling the idea of a college education and our failure to develop alternative pathways to success for young people. From this perspective, CUNY's decision to undermine its current academic standards in the hope of easing more and more students along the "pathway" to a college degree is futile and self-defeating. More degrees coupled with less education won't help the graduates—talented or otherwise—and it certainly won't help the university, which ultimately depends on the currency of prestige. If the public ceases to believe that a university degree approximately indicates an educated person, the university will be less and less able to command public support.

In that sense, the Pathways Initiative appears to be a bid for political popularity in the short term at the expense of long-term viability. (2) *CUNY's common core is probably driven to some degree by financial calculations. New York State, as I understand it, now balks at paying for college credits beyond those required for a degree. The bureaucratic answer seems self-evident: make every credit count for the degree, regardless of whether it reflects marginal attainment (the D-) or is off-topic. Other financial considerations may pertain as well. This sort of "common core" can marginalize some academic departments, which can be allowed to fade away and out of the budget. And streamlining students from community college through senior college potentially saves a great deal on instructional costs.*

## CUNY News on Pathways

### The GC Advocate

[Source](#)

This past summer, CUNY introduced yet another new initiative designed to maximize the efficiency with which it conducts the business of education, education be damned. On June 27, the Board of Trustees approved a resolution that outlined the university's "Pathways to Degree Completion Initiative" which the chancellor promises will "streamline" the transfer process for students making the jump from junior to senior colleges, while at the same time "enhancing" instruction across the system.

At the heart of the Pathways scheme is a controversial thirty-credit "common core" to be equally imposed on all CUNY campuses. The details of what this will look like when implemented can be found in this issue's "News in Brief" section. More broadly, the "common core," a sense of the controversy generated by CUNY's Pathways plan is best summed up by Sandi Cooper, president of the CUNY University Faculty Senate. "Carefully constructed general education programs in the senior and community colleges are overturned. In the seniors, credits range from 45-60 depending on student competencies and most have at least a year of lab science, a history requirement, one to two years of foreign languages and classes in literature. Choices in other fields are not scattered over eight to ten disciplines and interdisciplinary ideas... This includes Brooklyn's famous core which probably will survive by dropping languages. We all fear for languages and philosophy." Cooper goes on to point out that "It is political when you realize that most CUNY students arrive with severe deficits (two-thirds of NYC high school grads need remediation) and for most of us, this new core represents little more than an effort to insure more students get degrees by a far less challenging curricula."

Despite ferocious opposition to the initiative, CUNY has gone ahead with the plan, recently distributing guidelines for implementation of Pathways. The guidelines pretty much confirm the fear of critics that the university is steering the system to punch out as many graduates as possible, as quickly and painlessly as possible. And they are choosing to do so without consulting faculty planning committees charged with curricular development. Again, Sandi Cooper: "The process by which this core was developed did not reflect any... involvement of faculty with experience in general education. Our General Education committee which was wrestling with a proposal to improve transfer and preserve much of what was good in general education was ignored in the process of developing this common core. The process was driven entirely by a Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs."

### PSC Town Hall Report

[Source](#)



Jamell Henderson, BMCC Student Government Senator: [W]e will be such an insurmountable force that the chancellery will have to stand and listen. Jamell Henderson, a student government senator at BMCC who will enroll at Brooklyn College this fall, argued that Pathways sells CUNY students short. "The path to success is difficult, full of obstacles, full of challenges, the toughest terrain and dangerous situations," Henderson declared. "But it's how you'll become victorious, versus a path that has no obstacles, no challenges, no situations that test the ability of the self."

Many students enter CUNY without enough preparation for college, said Henderson — and like him, many have taken remedial classes to close those gaps. In the face of "violence and crime, police brutality, and economic turmoil," he said, "it is our eagerness to learn that keeps us strong." But Pathways, he said, "is something that will hurt us. It will not give us the value of education that we need in order to deal with the real world."

Henderson thanked CUNY faculty and staff for demanding an alternative to Pathways. "If you didn't care for us, you wouldn't be sitting right here, right now. You know what's at stake," he told the crowd. "And as long as I am a student here in the CUNY system I will stand alongside with you." Together, he said, "we will be such an insurmountable force that the chancellery will have to stand and listen."

## **Student Statements**

### **Student Government Resolutions**

#### ***Baruch College***

#### **Undergraduate Student Government Resolution in Support of Tier 3 Minor**

March 1, 2011

Whereas, the Tier 3 Minor composed of three upper division courses is an important opportunity for undergraduate students to gain specialization in valuable liberal arts disciplines; and

Whereas, an education in the arts and sciences is a valuable asset in the 21<sup>st</sup> century society and a part of becoming a more complete citizen in that modern society; and

Whereas, the communications-intensive capstones offered in the Tier 3 Minors teach important skills necessary for gaining and maintaining a competitive advantage in today's economy; and

Whereas, Baruch College's requirement of the Tier 3 Minor is instrumental in the institution's continued success and growth;

Now Therefore Be It Resolved, by the Undergraduate Student Government of Baruch College, that the students of Baruch College fully support Baruch College's inclusion of the Tier 3 Minor in the curriculum of all bachelor's degrees;

And Be It Further Resolved, that the students of Baruch College oppose any changes to the curriculum required by the City University of New York that would make the college unable to require the Tier 3 Minor.

#### ***Brooklyn College***

#### **College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Student Government Resolution on the Liberal Arts Core Curriculum**

March 30, 2011

Whereas, the liberal arts core curriculum is an important opportunity for undergraduate students to develop their writing and literacy skills and become more well-rounded individuals; and

Whereas, and education in the arts and sciences is a valuable asset in 21<sup>st</sup> century society and part of becoming a more complete citizen in our modern society; and

Whereas, in the job market today, businesses place great emphasis on critical thinking, communication and writing skills for future employees to have, and our core curriculum helps to develop these skills for future members of the workforce; and

Whereas, Brooklyn College's identity has always been to provide a high quality liberal arts education for its students and that its very name, brand and standing in the academic and professional world is based in part on its strong liberal arts core curriculum;

Now Therefore Be It Resolved, by the CLAS Student Government Assembly of Brooklyn College, that the students of Brooklyn College support the liberal arts core curriculum for all students;

And Be It Further Resolved, that the Brooklyn College students oppose any change required by the City University of New York that will negatively impact the core curriculum or the name and reputation of Brooklyn College.

### ***College of Staten Island***

#### **College of Staten Island Student Government Association Resolution on the Pathways to Degree Completion Initiative**

November 3, 2011

Whereas, The College of Staten Island Student Government Association (CSI-SGA) acknowledges the dire need for a CUNY policy, which allows for the efficient transfer of credits between the CUNY Colleges and stresses that such a policy would be in the best interest of students; and

Whereas, After considering the current proposal to fill this need, namely the "Pathways to Degree Completion Initiative," specifically the four proposed areas in the "Flexible Common Core" – "World Cultures," "U.S. Experience in its Diversity," "Creative Expression," and "Individual and Society" – the CSI-SGA has determined that this proposed curriculum limits the knowledge and skill level expected of students and does not reflect the high standards for education, which the institutions of CUNY strive to provide; and

Whereas, The CSI-SGA is supported in its position by a majority of the CUNY faculty as well as such scholarly organizations as Phi Beta Kappa; so be it

Resolved, That while the CSI-SGA appreciates the effort by the Pathways Task Force to consider the needs of CUNY students; it suggests that the Task Force take time to reconsider the structure of the Common Core and make certain that it corresponds to the quality educational standards of CUNY.

### ***Graduate Center***

#### **Doctoral Students' Council Resolution On The Pathways General Education Framework**

Adopted on February 24th, 2012

WHEREAS the Pathways General Education Framework proposes major curricular changes and reduction in requirements across CUNY campuses; and

WHEREAS the Pathways Planning Process bypassed the participation of duly elected faculty who are empowered by the CUNY Bylaws with overseeing cross-campus academic policy; and

WHEREAS the Pathways Planning Process fails to provide adequate time and mechanisms for university-wide and public review; and

WHEREAS the flexible common core places myriad methodologies and disciplines within single thematic groups, and thereby fails to ensure that students gain practice and knowledge in a wide range of disciplines, negating the very flexibility that it proposes to achieve; and

WHEREAS the proposed Pathways Framework hinders the colleges' abilities to enforce meaningful foreign language requirements and thereby discourages the study of foreign languages CUNY-wide, despite the importance of language study to the enrichment of cross-cultural communication and understanding, and the values the Common Core purports to promote; and

WHEREAS these curricular inadequacies make students less broadly educated members of the public, and deny them a strong liberal arts and sciences education; and

WHEREAS, serious objections and significant emendations were voiced in official and unofficial statements from campuses, disciplinary and faculty bodies, individual faculty, students, and members of the academy that were not resolved in the Pathways Task Force's final recommendation to the Chancellor; and

WHEREAS, the DSC represents over 4,700 members of the Graduate School, many of whom are simultaneously students and faculty across the many CUNY campuses, responsible for developing and teaching a significant number of general education courses; therefore, now, be it

RESOLVED, that the DSC urges the Chancellor and the CUNY Pathways Task Force to halt the implementation of the Pathways General Education Framework;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the DSC calls for cross-campus academic policy and curricular change to be determined by duly elected faculty representatives.

## **Doctoral Students' Council Resolution on General Education**

May 13, 2011, Passed unanimously

WHEREAS, the Doctoral Students' Council (DSC) understands and appreciates the many obstacles faced by CUNY undergraduates in obtaining their degrees and strongly supports expediting degree completion as long as those means are compatible with high academic standards;

WHEREAS, any measures to expedite degree completion must be based on a careful study of relevant data and designed under the auspices of strong faculty governance; and

WHEREAS, proposals being brought before the Board of Trustees conflate the issue of degree completion general education, calling for radical and wide-ranging changes to general education curriculum in a very short period of time;

WHEREAS, general education remains the cornerstone of higher education, enriching students' perspectives by exposing them to various areas of study and better preparing them for a diverse and changing job market beyond the specialized training of their majors and minors;

WHEREAS, the proposed framework, by restricting individual campus' ability to design and implement rigorous general education curricula and dramatically lowering the number of general education credits, significantly weakens CUNY's commitment to high academic standards; and

WHEREAS, the DSC represents over 4,700 members of the Graduate School who are simultaneously students and faculty within CUNY, responsible for developing and teaching a significant number of general education courses; therefore, now, be it

RESOLVED that the Doctoral Students' Council recognizes the central importance of general education in undergraduate education and opposes the significant reductions being proposed

FURTHER RESOLVED that the DSC urges the Board of Trustees to defer action on the proposed framework until a more careful and collaborative study of degree completion and transfer credits can be conducted; and

FINALLY RESOLVED that the DSC recognizes and supports strong principles of faculty governance that should guide, separately, the issues of degree completion and general education.

## **Student Unions and General Assembly Statements**

### ***Brooklyn College Student Union***

Brooklyn College Student Union want to see the repeal of CUNY Pathways: Under the guise of making education more "accessible", CUNY Pathways essentially eliminates individual campuses' unique curriculums and limits the autonomy of faculty. A repeal of CUNY Pathways would therefore ensure that campuses are able to serve their specific student bodies, while also maintaining that staff have input regarding a core that they themselves teach.

## **Faculty Resolutions**

The following are just a small selection of resolutions. See "More Materials" for a more complete list.

### **Baruch College**

#### ***Resolution On Halting Pathways***

The Baruch College General Faculty has reached the following decisions:

Whereas, The General Faculty concludes that the Pathways program, which has been portrayed as a solution to problems encountered by students transferring among CUNY campuses, is instead forcing unforeseen and deleterious changes in general education requirements on the university's individual campuses. Whereas, The General Faculty has been unable to find sufficient pedagogical merit in curriculum guidelines established by the University's Pathways program to warrant the substantial cuts the program requires in the College's current general education requirements.

Whereas, The General Faculty has been unable to justify radical curricular changes that will significantly diminish the value of a Baruch College education and degree.

Resolved: The General Faculty therefore recommends that Baruch College discontinue the process of revising the College's general education curriculum until a University-wide summit meeting of campus faculty, students, and administrators along with leaders from CUNY's central office has convened and reached agreement on a solution to the ostensible transfer problems that does not entail a major dilution of the university's general education programs.

#### ***Resolution On Rejecting Existing Pathways Proposals At Baruch***

The Baruch College General Faculty has reached the following decisions:

Whereas, The General Faculty has recommended that the process for revising Baruch's general education curriculum for Pathways should be halted;

Whereas, The faculties of the individual schools will soon have specific proposals to revise Baruch's general education curriculum before them;

Resolved: The General Faculty rejects the current Pathways curriculum proposals that the relevant Baruch College committees and schools have developed.

Resolved: The General Faculty strongly recommends that the faculty at all of Baruch's schools vote to reject the current Pathways curriculum proposals that are coming before them.

## **Borough of Manhattan Community College**

### ***Repeal of 'PATHWAYS--Creating an Efficient Transfer System' and its Replacement by an Alternative Plan to Facilitate Transfer without Compromising Academic Standards***

March 28, 2012

**Preamble:** We, the Academic Senate of the Borough of Manhattan Community College/City University of New York (hereafter BMCC), call for the repeal of the '*PATHWAYS--Creating an Efficient Transfer System*' (Resolution B.I.14) as adopted on June 27, 2011 by The City University of New York Board of Trustees (hereafter BOT) and for its replacement by an alternative plan to facilitate student transfer without compromising the academic standards of degree programs at BMCC and CUNY.

**Whereas**, BMCC's faculty governance body has not been afforded adequate time to review or recommend changes to the proposed text and template of the curricular modifications to General Education proposed by the PATHWAYS directive within its mandated timeline for implementation; and

**Whereas**, Resolution B.I.14's convened a 'Task Force' charged with the responsibility to institute, amend and abolish CUNY credit bearing courses, degree requirements and degree granting programs; and

**Whereas**, Resolution B.I.14's 'Task Force' is not a recognized faculty elected governing body of any constituent CUNY college or CUNY colleges in sum, and in turn usurps the charge of the Academic Senate of BMCC; and

**Whereas**, the BMCC Academic Senate concludes that to propose curriculum within the PATHWAYS' restrictions and parameters as presently described and designed is unachievable without eroding the existing quality and standards of General Education and General Education's composite degree programs; and

**Whereas**, PATHWAYS grossly underestimates BMCC undergraduates' academic preparation for undergraduate work and in turn undermines the requisite undergraduate preparation required to advance BMCC students to academic success at the community college level as well as the senior college level;

#### **Therefore be it Resolved:**

- I. The BMCC Academic Senate endorses the Professional Staff Congress/CUNY petition, '*Call for the Repeal of Pathways and its Replacement by an Alternative Approach for Facilitating Student Transfer*'; and
- II. The CUNY Board of Trustees to repeal '*PATHWAYS--Creating an Efficient Transfer System*' (Resolution B.I.14); and
- III. The BMCC Academic Senate calls upon the Board of Trustees and its representatives to initiate a new planning and implementation process to address the issue of community college student transfer. The process must conform to the University Bylaws, uphold the principles and practices of shared governance and academic freedom, and produce a curriculum worthy of CUNY's mission to educate "the children of the people, the children of the whole people."

## **Brooklyn College**

### ***Faculty Council A Resolution on Pathways***

April 3, 2012

**Whereas**, Pathways fails to uphold academic integrity as defined by the faculty; fails to achieve the goal of creating seamless transfer within CUNY as it negates existing articulation agreements; and penalizes CUNY students by making transfer of credits outside of the CUNY system impossible in certain subject areas; and

**Whereas** at the March Faculty Council meeting Provost Tramontano made clear that much of the actual motivation for Pathways is to improve six-year graduation rates at CUNY in keeping with national efforts to use numerical metrics to evaluate educational effectiveness in higher and primary education (although these metrics have little to do with the actual quality of the education received); and

**Whereas** recent studies indicate that the burdens of employment, which are exacerbated by regular tuition increases, are, in fact, the major cause of the increase in drop-out rates; and

**Whereas** the intellectual unsoundness of Pathways is a direct result of the manner in which it has been imposed; and

**Whereas** the Pathways resolution was passed by the Board of Trustees in violation of its own Bylaws and has been implemented through a process that undermines both shared governance and academic freedom, bedrock principles of a university; and

**Whereas** the CUNY central administration has refused to repeal Pathways despite an outpouring of opposition from elected faculty bodies such as the University Faculty Senate, college senates, academic discipline councils, academic departments and learned societies, as well as over 3,000 individual faculty who signed the PSC petition opposing Pathways; Therefore

**Be it resolved** that the Brooklyn College Faculty Council call on the Board of Trustees to repeal the "Pathways" resolution ("Creating an Efficient Transfer System") at its next meeting – on April 30, 2012; and

**Be it further resolved** that we call on the Board of Trustees and its representatives to initiate a new planning and implementation process to address the issue of student transfer in conformation with the University Bylaws and upholding the principles and practices of shared governance and academic freedom in order to create a curriculum worthy of CUNY's mission; and

**Be it further resolved** that the Faculty Council of Brooklyn College affirm that it will not implement a Pathways curriculum under the current guidelines.

### ***A Resolution of the PSC-CUNY Chapter of Brooklyn College***

**Whereas**, Pathways fails to uphold academic integrity as defined by the faculty; fails to achieve the goal of creating seamless transfer within CUNY, as it negates existing articulation agreements; and marginalizes CUNY students by making transfer of credits outside of the CUNY system impossible in certain subject areas; and

**Whereas**, at the March Faculty Council meeting Provost Tramontano made clear that much of the actual motivation for Pathways is to improve 6 year graduation rates at CUNY in keeping with national efforts to use numerical metrics to evaluate educational effectiveness in higher and primary education, despite the

fact that these metrics have little to do with the actual quality of the education received. Recent studies indicate that the burdens of employment, which are exacerbated by regular tuition increases, is in fact the major cause of increasing drop out rates; and

**Whereas**, the intellectual unsoundness of Pathways is a direct result of the manner in which it was imposed. The Pathways resolution was passed by the Board of Trustees in violation of its own Bylaws, and has been implemented through a process that continues to bypass every elected faculty body; undermining both shared governance and academic freedom, bedrock principles of a university; and

**Whereas**, the CUNY central administration has refused to repeal Pathways despite an outpouring of opposition from elected faculty bodies such as the University Faculty Senate, college senates, academic discipline councils, academic departments and learned societies, as well as over 3,000 faculty signatures on the PSC petition opposing Pathways; Therefore

**Be it resolved** that the Brooklyn College Chapter of the PSC-CUNY calls on the Board of Trustees to repeal the "Pathways" resolution ("Creating an Efficient Transfer System") at its next meeting – on April 30, 2012; and

**Be it further resolved** that we call on the Board of Trustees and its representatives to initiate a new planning and implementation process to address the issue of student transfer. The process must conform to the University Bylaws, uphold the principles and practices of shared governance and academic freedom, and produce a curriculum worthy of CUNY's mission to educate "the children of the people, the children of the whole people"; and

**Be it further resolved** that we urge the Faculty Council of Brooklyn College not to approve any changes in curriculum associated with the Pathways initiative.

Passed unanimously 3/15/12

## **City College**

### ***The CLAS Faculty Council Resolution on Pathways***

April 5, 2012.

Whereas, CUNY Central's Pathways framework infringes on the long-standing responsibility of the faculty with respect to curricula; and

Whereas, The Pathways framework prevents the CLAS Faculty Council from offering a general education curriculum that it believes is in the best interests of its students; now therefore be it

Resolved, That The City College CLAS Faculty Council cannot in good conscience endorse the development of a general education curriculum within the Pathways framework as it currently stands; and be it further

Resolved, That the Faculty Council stands ready to work with all components of The University on transfer and general education issues in ways that do not compromise Council's curricular responsibilities.

## **LaGuardia Community College**

The Departments of Education And Language Acquisition (ELA), English, Health Sciences, Mathematics, Engineering and Computer Science, and Social Sciences all passed their own version of this resolution.

### ***A Resolution of the ELA Department of LaGuardia Community College***

Whereas Pathways fails to uphold academic integrity as defined by the faculty; fails to achieve the goal of creating seamless transfer within CUNY, as it negates existing articulation agreements; and marginalizes CUNY students by making transfer of credits outside of the CUNY system impossible in certain subject areas; and

Whereas, the intellectual unsoundness of Pathways is a direct result of the manner in which it was imposed. The Pathways resolution was passed by the Board of Trustees in violation of its own Bylaws, and has been implemented through a process that continues to bypass every elected faculty body. The imposition of Pathways directly attacks shared governance and academic freedom, bedrock principles of a university; and

Whereas, the CUNY central administration has refused to repeal Pathways despite an outpouring of opposition from elected faculty bodies such as the University Faculty Senate, college senates, academic discipline councils, academic departments and learned societies, as well as over 3,000 faculty signatures on the PSC petition opposing Pathways; Therefore

Be it resolved that faculty members of the ELA Department call on the Board of Trustees to repeal the "Pathways" resolution ("Creating an Efficient Transfer System") at its next meeting – on April 30, 2012; and

Be it further resolved that we call on the Board of Trustees and its representatives to initiate a new planning and implementation process to address the issue of student transfer. The process must conform to the University Bylaws, uphold the principles and practices of shared governance and academic freedom, and produce a curriculum worthy of CUNY's mission; and

Be it further resolved that the ELA Department reaffirm the authority of the LaGuardia College Senate in the design, management, and reform of LaGuardia Community College's curriculum.

## **Queensborough Community College**

### ***Academic Senate Resolution on the Pathways Process And Resolutions Of The CUNY BOT***

WHEREAS the CUNY Board of Trustees and the Office of the Chancellor has implemented "Pathways" as a means to establish a universal core studies curriculum at CUNY as a means to ease transfer between its diverse colleges; and

WHEREAS the "Pathways" committees have been appointed by University administration rather than elected by the duly constituted governance bodies or faculty at both the college (Academic Councils and Senates) and the University level (the University Faculty Senate) that are proposing a new core curriculum for all of CUNY; and

WHEREAS this process stands in direct violation of the Academic Freedom Rights of the faculties, students, and administrators of the individual colleges of CUNY to make their own academic judgments to establish their own degree requirements; and

WHEREAS the Chancellor's and Board of Trustee's prohibition of required prerequisites and GPA's for core courses will result in a lowering of academic standards in General Education courses; and

WHEREAS the proposed "core" fails to include sufficient instruction in numerous areas, including but not limited to mathematics, foreign language, natural science, historical studies, philosophy, political science and Health; and

WHEREAS the Pathways Project provides for the inadequate, arbitrary and capricious constraint of a 30 credit Common Core and a 12 credit College Option for the baccalaureate curriculum;

WHEREAS Queensborough and the other colleges of CUNY were given only two weeks to respond to the draft Common Core proposal;

Be it RESOLVED that the Academic Senate of CUNY/Queensborough, comprised of faculty, students, and administrators, questions the legitimacy of the process by which "Pathways" has been implanted, and we believe that "Pathways" curricular changes are harmful to the academic reputation of Queensborough and the City University of New York, the careers of our graduates and faculty, and to shared governance and academic freedom.

Be it further RESOLVED that while the Academic Senate of CUNY/Queensborough recognizes the need to address transfer issues, it recommends that the "Pathways" initiatives be suspended by CUNY and fundamentally rethought in order to assist the colleges of CUNY to establish more dual-joint degree programs, enhanced articulation agreements and website assistance with transfer advisement to facilitate and support transfer and at the same time maintain the academic quality of all CUNY degree programs.

## Letters About Pathways

### Kafui Kouakou's Letter to the Chancellor

Dear Chancellor Goldstein,

March 7, 2012

On behalf of the University Student Senate, I am writing to express my continued strong support of the "Pathways to Degree Completion" initiative.

As you know, I have been tracking work on the initiative throughout the year. Though the process is long, I am very encouraged to see the progress that has been made. A common core structure is in place, and two key elements are now under way: campuses will soon be submitting their plans for implementing the general education framework and academic disciplinary committees are about to release for comment the proposed courses that will lead into the largest transfer majors.

I know how valuable student input was to the Common Core Task Force during its deliberations. I would like to suggest that students be given the opportunity to offer feedback on the campus plans and major course proposals that will soon be submitted. I understand that curricular matters are decided by the faculty, and I am confident that our faculty will provide a high-quality general education curriculum and majors for all students. However, given the importance of these decisions to hundreds of thousands of current and future CUNY students, I believe that continued student involvement is essential.

In fact, from a student perspective, Pathways is one of the most important initiatives to be undertaken at the University. The principal reason for its creation was the improvement of students' academic experience: to ease student transfer—a serious and longstanding issue at CUNY—and to create a more rigorous and transparent common core across the University. Meeting these goals will strengthen the value of a CUNY education. This is the highest priority of the CUNY student body, especially now, when students and their families are unfortunately asked to pay more tuition for a CUNY education and jobs are so scarce.

For students, the implementation of a University-wide general education curriculum cannot come quickly enough. We know it must be done carefully and thoughtfully. Deciding what students should learn is the most important work a university can do. CUNY students greatly appreciate the extensive efforts of the faculty and administration to date in developing the University's general education curriculum. We are fully committed to continuing our participation in the Pathways initiative through its implementation in fall 2013.

Thank you for your continued leadership on Pathways. I look forward to the next steps.

Sincerely,

Kafui Kouakou  
Chairperson  
University Student Senate

### Sandi Cooper's Response to Kafui Kouakou's Letter to the Chancellor

Dear CUNY community,

March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012

It is time that the trustees and administration face the reality of the impact of the common core and its associated activities which we are repeatedly told is on track, is faculty driven and will produce higher standards. The recent letter from Mr. Kouakou occasions this attempt to introduce reality.

1) On most campuses, effort to insert required courses into the core grid have produced anguish, a sense of unbelief, the recognition that a straight-jacket has been imposed, and the launch of internecine warfare as departments attempt to preserve their disciplines and their commitment to quality. The outcome of forcing the core into both the community colleges will easily be demoralization that will take years to repair while a less educated student body marches through.

2) There is astonishment that the creators of this project refuse to recognize that some basic courses -- English composition, foreign languages, sciences need to meet four, not three hours and that no

laboratory work can be scheduled in a 3 hr, 3 cr confinement. Moreover the rigid 3cr 3 hr jail will seriously undermine such programs as the liberal arts and teacher training at the Center for Worker Education for reasons obvious to anyone who knows anything about that piece of CUNY. The adult students who attend at night and are limited in what they can take (they are full time workers with families) cannot go four nights a week to take 12 credits ... they now can go 2-3 nights because the base courses are 4 credits. If they do not take 12, they lose aid. This is ONLY one fallout which is recognized.

3) There is disbelief that any serious group of scholars could suggest that one semester of a language is sufficient and the panacea offered by the Vice Chancellor that the rest of the language requirement be placed in the free option ignores the problem that a real college education would be wrecked. IF languages are to be featured in the 12 credit addition (senior colleges only) then literature, history, political science, economics, anthropology, computer science, etc etc will fall out of the college experience. It is totally unrealistic to assume that more than a handful of students will opt to take languages or sciences for that matter if given a choice. Thus, faculty have concluded that the common core is a solid diminution (the phrase in the street is dumbing down) of CUNY education and this realization is now widely shared among community college faculty.

4) There is awakening anger that the committees of faculty (the faculty driven group) are appointed and paid by the central administration as opposed to colleagues elected as authorized by our charters; that this system undermines and insults shared governance and violates the Board bylaw placing control of curricula in faculty -- NOT students and NOT administrators. The Board has never previously authorized an **appointed** group to impose a curriculum which serious senior and experienced scholars find laughable.

5) The students who support Pathways (and those who do not seem not to get a public forum) perhaps misunderstand that the common core is not designed to ease transfer but to diminish general education -- and therefore to diminish their college experience and the value of their degree. The concern over the value of a degree has led students at CSI, Lehman, Brooklyn and Baruch and now BMCC and Queens to speak out against it. It would be useful if ALL the students could communicate with each other. The concern over the quality of a degree is of great import to faculty. Faculty vote those degrees and do not wish to be guilty of lying.

6) In a university filled with international students, the elimination of US history as a requirement (U S in its diversity can be anything -- one faculty member is proposing a Finance course) is a step towards creating an even less informed electorate than exists now. History, both US and global, required in most of our colleges is a last ditch attempt to deal with students who do not know the differences between the American Revolution and the Civil War or when World War I and II occurred, with their global consequences.

7) To the assertion that the pathways project is widely supported in CUNY except by a few foot dragging, turf defending faculty, I recommend a visit to the UFS website, section on general education and

8) A visit to [http://action.aft.org/c/521/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action\\_KEY=3633](http://action.aft.org/c/521/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=3633).

There you will find nearly 3000 faculty signatures, collected in 3 days, demanding the repeal of pathways and a re start and a review; and if these signatures -- added to the dozens of voices heard at the Speak out on Thursday (Mar 8) evening to a packed auditorium -- are not evidence, then we are truly in a version of the film, Rashomon.

Every time someone tries to get the Chancellery to modify the strait jacket, the answer is "The Trustees voted this resolution." The faculty urge the trustees to review their decision.

It has always been my credo to speak truth to power.

Sandi Cooper

Chair of the University Faculty Senate

## Excerpts From Other Faculty Letters

John Brenkman, Baruch College [Source](#)

(1) a single semester of foreign language, which is the most that can be required, in the current proposal will not give students more than a passing acquaintance with a language; (2) foreign language courses do not belong in the proposed core curriculum because a semester of language study is not a study of World Cultures; (3) since it is envisioned that the one semester of foreign language will be a choice among several other kinds of courses, the majority of students are likely not to have the experience of studying a language in college

Joel Brind, Baruch College [Source](#)

We in the Baruch Natural Sciences Department have lobbied for many years on behalf of the necessity of continuing to include an actual laboratory component in all natural science courses, to give students a true exposure to science. How ironic that, smack in the middle of what you have proclaimed (Dec., 2006) to be the "Decade of Science", the first line of that proclamation being: "Scientific literacy is a sine qua non of an educated citizenry.", the requirement for such instructional exposure to laboratory science should be eliminated! We know that you and the Board of Trustees and many CUNY administrators continue to believe that science can be taught without laboratory instruction. Indeed the scientific method can be taught in virtually any venue, for it represents a system for making and interpreting controlled observations. But that misses the whole point of what it means to experience how science works, because all the great advances in science in recent centuries have been made by applying the scientific method to phenomena that are not ordinarily observable. Indeed, most of the investment in scientific research by both government and industry is in laboratory facilities, equipment and reagents that are for the express purpose of rendering the invisible world observable. What does it mean to someone to get a blood test, when she has literally no idea how any of those invisible biochemicals are rendered observable and distinguishable? How can an educated citizen draw conclusions about ecology or sustainability without knowing firsthand about how the component gases of the invisible air we breathe can actually be observed, or how the microorganisms that make nitrogen available to plants or cause disease in human beings can be visualized in the microscope? Simply put, without a genuine laboratory experience, all that goes on in the world of science remains, to those who have no major nor minor in science, inside a black box. Considering the extraordinary influence of science in our modern society, how can we in good conscience, confer a bachelor's degree upon any student to whom all of scientific research remains an activity confined to a mysterious black box?

David H. Speidel, Queens College, Professor Emeritus [Source](#)

The issue of ease of transferring credits within the City University of New York has long been a vexing problem for faculty and students, especially for community colleges, such as LaGuardia or Queensborough, to senior colleges, such as York or Queens. The CUNY central administration is taking the radical step of dealing with that problem by imposing a common general education set of courses for all the CUNY colleges. By eliminating the individuality of the college curriculum from place to place, the thinking goes that it should be easy to transfer. But the Law of Unintended Consequences has appeared. To shoehorn all the different desired disciplines into the 30-credit Pathways Proposal, the specific requirement of a laboratory-based science course has disappeared. Non-laboratory science courses fail to meet the nationwide norm for general education science courses. Thus, by making it easier to transfer credits within CUNY, the Pathways Proposal makes it nearly impossible to transfer those credits anywhere else, such as State University of New York colleges. CUNY is still a relative bargain for getting a quality education for a low price. If that quality disappears, it does not matter how little you pay.

George Sussman, LaGuardia Community College [Source](#)

As I have learned more about the Pathways Initiative and the mission of the Common Core Review Committee, I realize that the Committee's task is much more circumscribed than I had imagined. It is, I now understand, to evaluate whether courses meet certain already defined "learning outcomes" specified for each area of the Common Core. I don't know where these "learning outcomes" come from, but they seem to me vague and unrelated to the learning I attempt to promote in my history classes. First, all the learning outcomes refer to skills; none refer to knowledge. But my goal, as a history professor, is to enhance my students' knowledge and understanding of the past, so they will be better informed as readers, as citizens, and as cultured human beings. I would imagine the same is true in most other disciplines whether it be economics, biology, or foreign languages: we teach disciplines, bodies of accumulated knowledge, not skills. Our students may develop certain skills as byproducts of their enhanced knowledge, but we don't set out to teach them the skills. They become better readers, critical thinkers, or whatever from knowing more, from understanding how the present came about, from engaging with great thinkers of the past.

## More Materials

From the [CUNY UFS website](#):

### **Baruch College**

[Executive Committee](#), the Faculty Senate  
[Distinguished Professor John Brenkman](#)  
[Professor Paula Berggren](#)  
[Professor Joel Brind Resignation Letter](#)  
[Professor Joel Brind Letter to Trustees](#)  
[Resolution to Halt the Pathways Process, Meeting of the General Faculty](#)  
[Resolution to Reject the Current Curriculum Proposals, Meeting of the General Faculty](#)

### **Borough of Manhattan Community College**

[Academic Senate](#)  
[Science Department](#)  
[Academic Senate Vote to Repeal Pathways](#)

### **Brooklyn College**

[Chairs and Directors of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences](#)  
[Professor Paisley Currah Resignation Letter](#)  
[Faculty Council](#)

### **City College**

[Liberal Arts and Sciences](#) Faculty Council  
[Faculty Senate](#)  
[Professor Stephen Jablonsky](#)

### **The College of Staten Island**

[Student Government Association](#)  
[Faculty Senate](#)

### **Hostos Community College**

[Professor Felipe Pimentel](#)

### **Hunter College**

[Faculty Delegate Assembly](#)  
[Hunter Senate](#)  
[Film and Media Studies Department](#)  
[Foreign Languages](#) Resolution

### **John Jay College**

History [Department](#)

### **LaGuardia Community College**

[Campus-Wide Response](#)  
[Professor George Sussman Resignation Letter](#)

### **Lehman College**

[Lehman College Senate](#)  
Philosophy [Department](#)  
Statement Unanimously Endorsed by the [Chemistry Department](#)

### **Medgar Evers College**

[PSC Chapter](#)  
[Faculty Senate](#)

### **Queens College** [Faculty Senate](#)

### **Queensborough Community College**

[PSC Chapter](#)  
[Academic Senate](#)

### **CUNY Discipline Councils**

[Chemistry, Biology, Biochemistry, and Physics](#)  
[English \(1\): Statement on Pathways](#)  
[English \(2\): Statement on 3 credit/3 hour revision for composition](#)  
[English \(3\): Request to Keep 3 credits/4 contact hours for composition](#)

[History](#)  
[Mathematics](#)  
[Philosophy](#)  
[Speech and Communications](#)  
[World Language Study \(1\): Memo on absence of foreign languages from Core](#)  
[World Language Study \(2\): Position on 4hr/3cr foreign language courses](#)

**SUNY Faculty Senate** - [Resolution on CUNY's Failure to Use the Principle of Shared Governance in Establishing a New Curriculum](#)

**SUNY Faculty Council of Community Colleges** - [Resolution in Support of CUNY UFS Resolution on Repeal of Pathways](#)

**Miscellaneous**

[Article and Blog from Science Magazine](#)  
[Newstory from Science Magazine](#)  
[USS Chair to Chancellor on student input](#)

The Following Resolutions, Letters, and Statements were Posted Before the Pathways Resolution was Passed by the CUNY Board of Trustees

**Letters and Resolutions from Scholarly Organizations**

[Letter from John Churchill](#), Secretary, The Phi Beta Kappa Society, Washington, DC  
[The New York Association of Scholars](#)  
The [CUNY Association of Scholars](#)

Testimony by [Professor Martin Burke](#)

Unanimous Resolution in [Defense of Shared Governance](#) by the **Professional Staff Congress of CUNY**

**Enter Your Own [Personal Resolution](#) in Support of General Education & Faculty Governance at the Petition Site**

Letter to the New York Times by Former [CUNY Board Chair Herman Badillo](#)

**University Faculty Senate Statements & Resolutions**

[General Education Statement](#)  
[Resolution on General Education](#) and the [Resolution on Transfer](#)  
Endorsed by the Participants in the UFS Conference on [General Education & Faculty Authority](#)

The UFS Executive Committee's [RESOLUTION OF NO CONFIDENCE](#)  
[Letter from UFS Chair Cooper to the CUNY Trustees](#)

**CUNY Student Organizations** (also listed below by college)

[The Doctoral Student Council](#) at the Graduate Center  
[The Undergraduate Student Government](#) at Baruch College  
[The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Student Government](#) at Brooklyn College

**CUNY Discipline Council Resolutions**

World Language Study Letter and [Resolution](#)  
Mathematics  
Philosophy  
[Puerto Rican, Latino, and Latin American Studies \(PRLAS\) Discipline Council](#)

**Baruch College**

[Undergraduate Student Government](#)  
[Faculty Senate](#)

Letter from Distinguished Professor [Ervand Abrahamian](#)

**Brooklyn College**

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Student Government  
Phi Beta Kappa  
Brooklyn College Faculty Council  
Anthropology & Archeology Department  
[Art Department](#)  
[Biology Department](#)  
Chemistry Department: [General Education](#) and [Transfer & Governance](#)  
[Classics Department](#)

[Computer & Information Science](#)  
[Conservatory of Music](#)  
Department of [English](#)  
[History Department](#)  
[Library Department](#)  
[Modern Languages and Literatures](#)  
Philosophy Department  
[Physics Department](#)  
Political Science Department: [General Education](#) and [General Education, Transfer & Faculty Governance](#)  
[Psychology Department](#)  
[Department of Judaic Studies](#)  
[Department of Modern Languages & Literatures](#)  
Department of Puerto Rican & Latino Studies: [General Education](#) and [Articulation & Transfer](#)  
Speech & Communication Arts: General Education and General Education, Transfer, & Faculty Responsibility for Curriculum  
[SEEK Program](#)  
Theater Department: General Education and General Education, Transfer, & Faculty Responsibility for Curriculum

**The City College of New York**

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Faculty Council  
The Faculty Senate  
Testimony by [Prof. Jamal Manassah](#)

**The College of Staten Island**

[The Faculty Senate](#)  
[History Department](#)

**The Graduate Center of CUNY**

[Doctoral Program in Classics](#)  
[The Doctoral Student Council](#)  
Letter from [GC Language Faculty](#) □

**Hunter College**

[Senate Resolution on Standards](#)  
[Senate Resolution on Transfer](#)

**John Jay College of Criminal Justice**

[The Faculty Senate](#)  
The Department of [English](#)

**Lehman College**

[The College Senate](#) (This resolution was unanimously endorsed by the Lehman College Chapter of the PSC.)  
The [Philosophy](#) Department  
[Health Sciences](#) Department  
Testimony by [Professor Duane Tanabbaum, Chair of the Lehman College Senate Governance Committee](#)  
Testimony by [Professor Rosalind Carey, Secretary of the Lehman College Senate Governance Committee](#) □

**New York City College of Technology**

[The College Senate](#)

**Queens College**

[The Academic Senate](#)  
The [Anthropology](#) Department  
The [Biology](#) Department  
[Hispanic Languages and Literatures](#)  
The [Psychology](#) Department □

**Queensborough Community College**

[The Academic Senate](#)  
**York College**  
[College Faculty Caucus](#)  
[English Department](#)

## **About this Packet**

Compiled by Christina Nadler, University Student Senate Delegate, Graduate Center, CUNY, with help from the Doctoral Students' Council, to distribute to and inform the students of CUNY. The document will be updated as more materials are added. If you have comments or would like to add material please contact me at [uss@cunydisc.org](mailto:uss@cunydisc.org) or visit [opencuny.org/uuss](http://opencuny.org/uuss).