

## Queens College Pathways Implementation Plan

### January 26, 2012 Draft

This is a working draft of the Queens College implementation plan for the CUNY General Education (GenEd) Pathways initiative. It is necessarily incomplete because fundamental issues remain about the Board of Trustees Pathways resolution and the Pathways Steering Committee report of December 1, 2011.

### Open Issues (Pathways)

We begin by noting some internal inconsistencies and other issues with the GenEd portion of the Pathways resolution and report:

- The resolution itself says nothing about laboratory science courses, but the Chancellor's office has set implementation policies that effectively preclude the inclusion of any laboratory course components. Specifically, we have been told that all GenEd courses must be structured with three contact hours and three credits. Since the standard "Carnegie formula" allows only 1 credit for each two hours of laboratory time, there is no way to include a laboratory component in a Pathways course without violating national norms for credit/contact hours.

**Update (Jan 25):** Vice-chancellor Logue circulated a letter today suggesting that the Carnegie formula is not a legal requirement for CUNY, so there may be a "loophole" to allow lab hours to count as normal contact hours.

**Comment:** Federal Law defines credit hours for purposes of financial aid; the definition is explicitly loose, but clear in its intent.

- The resolution is self-contradictory with respect to the college option component. It says that students who start at a senior college ("native students") must complete exactly 12 credits of college option courses, but that a student who transfers to a senior college must take "a maximum of" 6, 9, or 12 credits depending on where they fall in the step function. That is, the college option credits are maxima for transfer students, but a fixed number for natives.
- "Overlay" degree requirements, like our current W requirement, are allowed, provided they do not increase the number of required credits for the degree. No firm guideline is given for the number of overlay requirements we may impose, but we assume the burden of proof, that overlays do not increase required credits, will rest on us.

### Required Core

#### English Composition I

The current English 110 course will be revised to be run as a 3 hr; 3 cr. course to replace its current 4 hr; 3 cr. structure. The English Department will revise the

syllabus so that it explicitly satisfies all the learning objectives developed by the Pathways Steering Committee for this course.

The current “communities” structure will be maintained for native students: each section of English 110 will be paired with a course from the Flexible Common Core (FCC) insofar as possible.

**[Update:** The question of whether English 110 must be recast as 3 hr; 3 cr. is not completely settled.]

### English Composition II

This course will be implemented as a “second semester seminar” in which Queens College rounds out the freshman year experience already begun with the first semester “learning communities” course. All sections of the course will be offered in seminar format, but will vary in their topics.

- Departments will develop “writing within the discipline” courses that are primarily writing courses, but which address the particular writing demands within the discipline, such as discipline-specific research reports or other written structures appropriate to the discipline.
- Divisions will develop “writing within the division” courses that are primarily writing courses, but which address common writing demands across the disciplines within a division.

Courses satisfying either of the two options will be developed so that their syllabi address all learning objectives by the Pathways Steering Committee’s report for this course.

### The W Overlay Requirement

- The current Queens College “writing intensive” overlay will be retained: students must complete three “W” courses. Contrary to current practice, each W course will be reviewed regularly [how often, and by whom] to be sure the syllabus and assignments genuinely satisfy the current W course requirements (number of pages; amount of feedback on writing).
- W courses guidelines will be revised to include a “presentation” component: students taking QC W courses will be required to give one or more graded, in-class, oral presentations based on their writing.

Of the English Composition I and II courses, only the learning community course paired with sections of English 110 will count as W courses: all learning community courses will be W courses. Transfer students who do not take a Flexible Core course as part of a learning community at Queens, will have to satisfy all three W requirements in other ways.

### Mathematics and Quantitative Reasoning

The Mathematics Department will revise the syllabus for Mathematics 110 so that it meets all the learning objectives developed by the Pathways Steering Committee.

Students who place out of Mathematics 110 will be required to take a different math course according to the current college policy. However, students who place into a pre-calculus course or above will no longer be exempt from taking a math course at Queens. Those students will take a course satisfying the current AQR requirements at the college. Since all these courses implicitly have Mathematics 110 as a prerequisite, students are guaranteed to have satisfied the Pathways learning objectives even if their AQR course, in itself, does not address those objectives.

### Life and Physical Sciences

The goal at Queens College is to make sure that students who satisfy this requirement at Queens learn “good science” whether they intend to major in the sciences or not. In keeping with the traditional liberal arts model in which the first few semesters are devoted to exploration rather than specialization, we will make sure that students who take a General Education science course will still be able to transition into a science major without having to take a course that overlaps with their General Education science course.

All courses that satisfy this requirement at Queens, in addition to covering the mandated Pathways learning outcomes, will meet the guidelines outlined in the current QC “Perspectives” requirements.

Students will be able to satisfy this requirement in one of two ways:

- The division of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (MNS) will develop a set of 3 hr; 3cr. general education courses that satisfy the learning objectives of this area.
- Individual departments, not limited to MNS, will develop 3hr; 3cr. general education courses that satisfy the learning objectives of this area.

In addition, individual departments within the MNS division will develop “bridge” courses that provide an entry to the major for students who take a general education course within their discipline to satisfy this requirement.

Students who begin the major in one of the Life or Physical sciences (Biology, Chemistry, FNES, Geology, Physics, Psychology) will satisfy this requirement by completing a 4 cr. laboratory course that is a required or optional part of the major.

Some introductory lab courses will be structured so that students will be able to complete part of the course requirements within the 3 hr; 3cr. limitation, while other students will be able to receive 3 lec; 2 lab; 4 cr. by attending additional class/lab meetings.

### Flexible Common Core

All Queens College courses that satisfy Flexible Common Core (FCC) areas will also satisfy the guidelines outlined in the current QC “Perspectives” requirements. Thus, currently approved Perspectives courses will need only to make sure their syllabi address a sufficient subset of the list of learning objectives for the corresponding Pathways FCC area.

Queens College's Perspectives requirements consist of eight required Area requirements (Appreciating and Participating in the Arts, "AP," 1 course; Culture and Values, "CV," 1 course; Natural Science, "NS" and "NS+L," 2 courses, one of which must include a laboratory component; Reading Literature, "RL," 2 courses; Analyzing Social Structures, "SS," 2 courses), a total of 25 credits. The current requirements also include four Context requirements (World Cultures, "WC;" European Traditions, "ET;" United States, "US;" Pre-Industrial, "PI;" Writing Intensive, "W;" and Abstract or Quantitative Reasoning, "QR"). Students must complete three W courses and one each of the other Contexts. A single course may satisfy both an Area and multiple Contexts.

Mechanically, QC "Contexts" operate like Pathways "overlays" in that they do not require students to take separate courses to satisfy them. However, the Contexts provide an intellectual framework for the curriculum that is not necessarily required by the Pathways mechanisms.

The college plan is to map our existing set of approved Area courses to FCC areas, and to adjust syllabi to be sure they each satisfy the correct number of learning objectives for their given area.

Departments, such as Computer Science, will be encouraged to submit courses to satisfy the Science World area in order to incorporate a degree of rigor in the students' ability to reason about and make effective use of technology in their careers.

Insofar as possible, FCC courses will include a W component in order to reduce the burden of this overlay requirement. The remaining QC Context requirements will no longer be required explicitly, but Mathematics and Quantitative Reasoning will require most students (those who pass out of Mathematics 110) to take a course that satisfies the current AQR Context requirement, while various courses within the FCC will be drawn from courses that, generally, satisfy other current Context requirements.

Students who take all their FCC courses at Queens must take at least two of their six courses from the Social Science division and at least two of their six from the Arts and Humanities division. The same restriction applies to transfer students who take only some of their FCC courses at Queens. This divisional requirement will use the Queens College discipline to division mapping, not whatever mapping might apply at the transferring institution. Implementation of this requirement will be structured so that no student is required to take extra FCC courses because of it. That is, whatever number of FCC courses are left to be completed at QC, the "two from both divisions" requirement will be reduced as necessary to fit within the "six from five areas" FCC structure.

### College Option

All students will be required to satisfy a "culminating experience" requirement. This requirement may be satisfied in one of three ways:

- By completing a capstone course within a discipline. The capstone course does not have to be a requirement for the student's major.
- By completing a cross-disciplinary and/or cross-disciplinary "synthesis" course to be developed by two or more disciplines.
- By completing an field based experiential learning course.

All students will be required to complete a "Language" course along the lines for the fifth FCC area described in the College's response on November 15, 2011.

Students required to take 9 or more college-option credits will be required to take either a second Language course or a Literature course.

Students required to take 12 college-option credits will be required to take a third Language course or a second Literature course.

### Open Issues (QC)

- The university has not yet indicated how it will address the needs of high-credit majors, such as Music and Education. When that policy is clarified, we will have to decide how to apply it at Queens.
- How to evaluate whether transfer students have satisfied all or part of the W requirement needs to be worked out.
- The mapping of current Perspectives Area courses to Pathways FCC courses is likely to be problematic. We currently require two RL courses, and they will not have a natural "home" under Pathways. Unless they can all be fit into the Pathways FCC structure, there will be an "inventory shortfall" (not enough seats to go around) in the Pathways offerings. However, many of the existing RL courses might well be adjusted to satisfy the WC, US, and even AP Pathways areas while still retaining their "Perspectives" rigor.
- The Literature and Language college option courses are not spelled out clearly enough yet, however we have a good set out options to work from in the document from Bill McClure available on the committee's web site.
- The "departments such as Computer Science" phrase is a cop-out: the technical skills and algorithmic/analytic/algebraic/abstract thinking requirements need to be spelled out.
- The "experiential learning" option is still under development. Here is a description of current plans for this option from Yasemin Jones:

As part of the capstone/ synthesis component of QC's optional 12 credits of General Education, we propose the inclusion of a field based learning/reflection course experience. We envision this proposed three credit course or courses as appropriate for all students but especially students who will not have access to a capstone course in their major.

Features of the course will be for students to complete a supervised/mentored field based learning experience connected to their major inclusive of the following in any stand alone or combined iterations of:

- service-learning,
- work-based learning (i.e., internships),
- undergraduate research, and
- international education (i.e, study abroad).

In addition to the "in the field" experience, participating students will reflect on their experiences through guided writing opportunities. It is proposed we enact a course, currently inactive, which sets experiential ed expectations: Co-op 201.3. This course is currently under the direction of Mr. Tesfaye Asfaw (Director of Career Development) and if accepted as part of the optional 12 credits, his guidance will be essential. The course will extend beyond but may include internships and will have a weekly(?) class component. And while the course will be listed alongside capstone and synthesis courses for selection purposes, it would be ideal if it was available to freshmen, sophomores and juniors as well as seniors.