

## **General Education at Queens College**

### **April 1, 2012**

During the past decade, Queens College has been seriously engaged in revitalizing its liberal arts curriculum. The effort has taken the time, energy, and commitment of many faculty and administrators, and has seen a productive collaboration develop between faculty governance and administration. I wish to credit the following Senate curriculum committees for their commitment to the reform of General Education at Queens, and for their efforts to adapt our Perspectives curriculum to the categories and learning outcomes of the Pathways Initiative: Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, chaired by Kenneth Lord; General Education Advisory Committee, chaired by Christopher Vickery, the Pathways Ad Hoc Committee, initiated by Roberta Brody, Chair of the Academic Senate, and chaired by Christopher Vickery.

This document is comprised of two sections: (1) Background of General Education at Queens College – a brief history and overview of the current general education program at the College; and (2) Pathways Implementation Plan – an outline of the new Pathways curriculum at the College, and the procedures to be followed in accomplishing the transition.

### **1. Background of General Education at Queens College**

#### ***President's Task Force on General Education, 2003***

In Spring 2003, Queens College President James Muyskens appointed a Task Force on General Education to evaluate the current general education curriculum at the College, consider the educational needs of a new generation of students, and make recommendations for a curriculum to meet those needs. The Task Force recommendations included four primary goals:

- 1) Provide a meaningful *Entry Experience*
- 2) Develop *Areas of Knowledge*
- 3) Develop *Critical Abilities Through the Curriculum*
- 4) Offer an *Integrative Capstone Experience*

#### ***Academic Senate Resolution on the Perspectives Curriculum***

In April 2006, the Queens College Academic Senate approved the new curriculum, known as **Perspectives on the Liberal Arts and Sciences**. The resolution reasserted the College's commitment to a liberal education in its opening statement: *WHEREAS the heart of the college's mission is to provide students with a liberal arts education, which forms a framework for their individual paths of study and makes possible communications among students and, ultimately, citizens, despite differences in experiences and backgrounds.*

The new General Education curriculum, *Perspectives on the Liberal Arts and Sciences*, was divided into five broad Areas of Knowledge: Reading Literature, Appreciating and Participating in the Arts, Culture and Values, Analyzing Social Structures, and Natural Sciences. All Perspectives courses were to meet the following first two learning goals, and the others, as appropriate:

1. Address how, in the discipline (or disciplines) of the course, data and evidence are construed and knowledge acquired; that is, how questions are asked and answered;
2. Position the discipline(s) in the liberal arts curriculum and the larger society; and
3. Address the goals defined below as appropriate for their subject matter:
  - Be global or comparative in scope;
  - Consider diversity and the nature and construction of forms of difference;
  - Engage students in active inquiry;
  - Reveal the existence and importance of change over time; and
  - Use primary documents and materials.

#### ***Senate Curriculum Committees: UCC and GEAC***

In 2007, under the auspices of the Senate's Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC), the General Education Advisory Committee (GEAC) was formed to oversee the development and approval of new Perspectives courses. The Center for Teaching and Learning was to provide administrative support. Currently, faculty from the four academic divisions are members of GEAC, with the Dean for General

Education, and the chair of the UCC, ex officio. The courses are thus reviewed first by GEAC, then the UCC, and finally the full Senate, before they are sent to the BOT. To date, 145 Perspectives courses have been approved, and, since the implementation of the curriculum in 2009, they are being offered regularly. The overall plan called for all courses to be evaluated and resubmitted after five years.

### ***Creation of an Administrative Structure to Support the College's General Education***

Among the final recommendations of the President's Task Force was the call to establish an administrative structure to support the implementation of the new college-wide curriculum. In Fall 2009, the Office of General Education was created, with an academic dean—as a member of the Provost's staff—as the chief administrator. While decisions concerning curricular changes are emphatically under the purview of the faculty, this office would—and currently does—supervise and coordinate general education activities and implementation, including the Pathways Initiative.

## **2. Pathways Implementation Plan**

In September 2011, the Academic Senate created a Pathways Ad Hoc Subcommittee of the UCC, which was open to the entire college community. The committee was instrumental in responding to the Steering Committee's recommendations on November 15, and has played a crucial role in the deliberations on this implementation plan.

The UCC has developed a plan (see below) for curricular change that follows the College's local governance processes. The UCC, GEAC, and the Office of General Education will develop guidelines for the redesign of existing courses and for the design of new courses to meet the designated learning outcomes for each category. Three additional faculty groups, working in tandem with the UCC, will address other related components of the curriculum: 1) Writing Intensive Sub Committee (WISC), which approves courses to fulfill the three Writing Intensive graduation requirements, which can be fulfilled within the general education curriculum, or within the majors. 2) The Abstract/Quantitative Reasoning Across the Curriculum (AQRAC) committee, which will approve courses to fulfill the Required Core Math/Quantitative Reasoning Requirement. 3) The Director of Composition and Writing at Queens will manage course approval and deployment to fulfill the Required Core Composition II requirement.

### ***The Perspectives Curriculum Adapted to Meet Pathways Categories and Learning Outcomes***

The College is committed to preserving the principal ideas of the new Perspectives curriculum, as we adapt the categories and learning outcomes to the Pathways criteria. What follows is the curriculum plan that was crafted by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, approved by the Ad Hoc Pathways subcommittee, and was then approved by the full Academic Senate on March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The plan includes committee designations for course approval.

### ***UCC Pathways Implementation Report for the Academic Senate 3/29/2011***

| <b>REQUIRED CORE (4 COURSES)<sup>7</sup></b>  |   |
|---|---|
| Composition I (3 cr.)   | ENGL 110  |
| Composition II (3 hr., 3 cr.)   | 1 course from a list recommended by WAQ to the UCC and to the Senate  |
| Math/Quant Reasoning (3 hr., 3cr.)  | 1 course from a list recommended by AQRAC to the UCC and to the Senate  |
| Life and Physical Sciences (3 hr., 3 cr.)   | 1 course from a list recommended by GEAC to the UCC and to the Senate   |
| <b>FLEXIBLE COMMON CORE (6 COURSES) ALL COURSES ARE 3 HR., 3 CR.</b>  |   |
| Unless it would require a student to take an extra FCC course, all students must complete two FCC courses from disciplines in the Arts and Humanities division, and two FCC courses from disciplines in the Social Sciences division. |   |
| World Cultures and Global Issues  | Any course, from any department, that meets the three common learning outcomes required of all Flexible Common Core courses, plus the |
| U.S. Experience in its Diversity  |   |
| Creative Expression   |   |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Individual and Society  | appropriate subset of learning outcomes specific to the particular area, plus the first two characteristics of all current Queens College General Education Perspectives courses <sup>4</sup> at Queens College must be used for these requirements. Courses are recommended by GEAC to the UCC and to the Senate.   |
| Scientific World  |  |
| <b>COLLEGE OPTION</b>   |  |
| 0 credits <sup>6</sup><br><i>Students who complete the college option at another senior college</i>   | None   |
| 3 credits <sup>6</sup><br><i>Students who complete 9 credits of the college option at another senior college</i>  | One Literature course <sup>1</sup> from a list recommended by GEAC to the UCC and to the Senate  |
| 6 credits <sup>6</sup><br><i>Students who transfer to QC with an Associate's Degree or complete 6 credits of the college option at another senior college</i> | One Language course <sup>2</sup> from a list recommended by GEAC to the UCC and to the Senate<br>One Literature course <sup>1</sup> from a list recommended by GEAC to the UCC and to the Senate   |
| 9 credits <sup>6</sup><br><i>Students who transfer to QC with 31+ credits or complete 3 credits of the college option at a senior college</i>                 | One Science <sup>5</sup> course from a list recommended by GEAC to the UCC and to the Senate<br>One Language course <sup>2</sup> from a list recommended by GEAC to the UCC and to the Senate<br>One Literature course <sup>1</sup> from a list recommended by GEAC to the UCC and to the Senate   |
| 12 credits <sup>7</sup><br><i>Students who transfer to QC with fewer than 31 credits; QC Native students</i>  | One Science course <sup>5</sup> from a list recommended by GEAC to the UCC and to the Senate<br>One Language course <sup>2</sup> from a list recommended by GEAC to the UCC and to the Senate<br>One Literature course <sup>1</sup> from a list recommended by GEAC to the UCC and to the Senate<br>One additional course from the following list:<br>- A Literature course <sup>1</sup> as defined above<br>- A Language course <sup>2</sup> as defined above<br>- A Science course <sup>5</sup> as defined above<br>- A Flexible Common Core course<br>- A Life and Physical Sciences course<br>- A Synthesis course <sup>3</sup> from a list recommended by GEAC to the UCC and to the Senate |
| <b>CONTINUATION OF THE CURRENT WRITING INTENSIVE REQUIREMENT</b>  | 3 courses from a list which are designated as Writing Intensive (W) courses, recommended by WISC to the UCC and to the Senate  |

1. A "Literature" course is one which satisfies the criteria for a Reading Literature (RL) course under the Perspectives requirements currently in effect at the College.
2. A "Language" course must meet the learning objectives of the Language Area proposed by Queens College as an added FCC area in its November 15, 2012 response to the CUNY Pathways Steering Committee:  
Students will be able to:
  - Understand and use the concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field.
  - Gather, interpret, and assess information from various sources, and evaluate arguments critically.
  - Solve problems, support conclusions, or defend insights.
Courses must meet at least two of the following additional learning outcomes.  
Students will be able to:
  - a. Differentiate types of language and appreciate their structures.
  - b. Appreciate what is lost or gained in translations among languages.
  - c. Relate language, thought, and culture.

- d. Compare natural languages, formal languages, and logic.
  - e. Understand the processes involved in learning languages.
3. Synthesis courses should offer a culminating experience either in one discipline or across the disciplines. They should offer opportunities for rich intellectual experiences that allow students to integrate knowledge and make connections across cultural, philosophical, scientific, artistic, political, or other issues, while advancing their critical and creative abilities. Synthesis courses should be open to all advanced students, regardless of their major. (*Synthesis guidelines approved by the Academic Senate*)
  4. 1) Address how, in the discipline (or disciplines) of the course, data and evidence are construed and knowledge acquired; that is, how questions are asked and answered;  
2) Position the discipline(s) in the liberal arts curriculum and the larger society; (*Areas Requirements report approved by Academic Senate March 2006*)
  5. Courses that contribute to the goal of understanding the methods, content, and role of the natural sciences should include familiarity with a body of knowledge in the physical or biological sciences, successful study of the methods of science, including the use of observation, the formation of hypotheses and the testing of models, experience and awareness of the impact of science on modern society. (*NS Perspectives Requirements for General Education at Queens College, March 2006*)
  6. All associate-degree students, including A.A.S. students, who transfer to baccalaureate programs will be required to complete the receiving college's College-Option general education credits as follows:
    - 1) Students who transfer with 30 or fewer total credits from any college (including non-CUNY regionally accredited colleges) will be required to earn a maximum of 12 of the receiving college's College-Option general education credits;
    - 2) Students who transfer with more than 30 total credits from any college (including non-CUNY regionally accredited colleges) but without an associate degree will be required to earn a maximum of 9 of the receiving college's College-Option general education credits;
    - 3) Students who transfer with an associate degree from any college (including non-CUNY regionally accredited colleges) will be required to earn a maximum of 6 of the receiving college's College-Option general education credits.

Thus, in order to receive the A. A. or A. S. degree, students will be required to complete a total of 30 general education credits (the Common Core), and in order to receive the baccalaureate, students will be required to complete a total of 36 to 42 general education credits depending on the students' transfer status. Further, no matter how many CUNY colleges any of these students attend, if a student transfers from one CUNY college to another, all general education course credits of all types will be accepted as general education credits of that type without further evaluation, (*B.I.14 - RESOLUTION ON CREATING AN EFFICIENT TRANSFER SYSTEM, Board of Trustees of The City University of New York on June 27, 2011*)

7. A college cannot require a student to take a four-credit course to satisfy any area of the Common Core. In the Required Core, a college must offer enough three-credit courses for all students to satisfy the areas of "Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning" and "Life and Physical Sciences." Thereafter, however, a college may choose to offer optional, four-credit math or science courses to satisfy one or both of these areas. The college submitting such a four-credit course must certify that it satisfies a major degree requirement. The four-credit course would then fulfill the three-credit requirement of "Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning" or "Life and Physical Sciences," and it would also count toward degree requirements, as appropriate. If a student takes a four-credit course but decides not to enter a program in which the course counts toward a degree, the course would still satisfy the three-credit requirement in the Required Core, and the additional credit would count as elective credit. (December 1, 2011 report)

### **Procedures for the Implementation of Pathways**

Using the language of the guidelines for the implementation plan (see below), the **Undergraduate Curriculum Committee** also spelled out the responsibilities of the requisite committees:

Each department will be asked to propose existing and new courses for Required Core, Flexible Core and College Option courses. Each will be reviewed by the appropriate committee as follows:

|  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| • English Composition II                 | Director of Composition and WAQ |
| • Math/Quant Reasoning                   | AQRAC                           |
| • Life and Physical Sciences             | GEAC                            |
| • World Cultures and Global Issues       | GEAC                            |
| • U.S. Experience in its Diversity       | GEAC                            |
| • Creative Expression                    | GEAC                            |
| • Individual and Society                 | GEAC                            |
| • Scientific World                       | GEAC                            |
| • College Option:                        |                                 |
| Science, Language, Literature, Synthesis | GEAC                            |
| • Writing Intensive Overlay              | WISC                            |

### Implementation Plan Timetable

Departments will receive proposal guidelines by March 15<sup>th</sup> for all but the College Option. (College Option courses will be solicited once the Implementation Plan is approved.)

#### Course Submission Deadlines:

| GEAC/<br>AQRAC/<br>WAQ/<br>WISC | UCC     | Senate<br>Executive<br>Committee | Senate   | Core<br>Review<br>Committee | BoT      |
|---------------------------------|---------|----------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------|----------|
| 3/28/12                         | 4/5/12  | 4/19/12                          | 5/3/12   | 7/13/12                     | 9/24/12  |
| 4/25/12                         | 5/3/12  | 8/30/12*                         | 9/13/12  | 9/14/12                     | 11/26/12 |
| 9/5/12*                         | 9/13/12 | 9/27/12*                         | 10/11/12 | 11/2/12                     | 1/28/13  |

\* projected

GEAC (General Education Advisory Committee of the UCC), Christopher Vickery, chair  
AQRAC (Abstract and Quantitative Reasoning Advisory Committee of the UCC), Martin Braun, chair  
WAQ (Writing at Queens (CUE)), Kevin Ferguson, Director  
WISC (Writing Intensive Subcommittee of UCC), Murphy Halliburton and Sue Goldhaber, co-chairs  
UCC (Undergraduate Curriculum Committee of the Academic Senate), Kenneth Lord, chair  
Academic Senate, Roberta Brody, chair

**Final Note:** In addition, the appropriate committees will assure a sufficient number of no-prerequisite courses, as well as the identification of placement strategies for students. Following current practice, students will be placed into an appropriate mathematics course based on their COMPASS math placement exam score, or scores on the Intermediate Algebra & Trigonometry Regents exam, Math SAT, or Calculus Advanced Placement exam.

Development of the College Option is detailed on the full plan. The appropriate departmental committees will review the relationship between general education and the majors.

The College Liaison and member of the CUNY Implementation Advisory Committee (Dean Judith Summerfield), will work with the “Sharepoint” representative (Professor Eva Fernandez), and with the appropriate administrative units to update curriculum-based information, packets/websites, etc., and communicate curricular changes to faculty, staff, and students. Owing to the tight timeframe, the Office of the Provost, together with the Dean for General Education, will survey the departments in April to insure that the proper number of new courses is being developed for each Pathways requirement.