

Senate Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Pathways February 22, 2012 Draft Report

Revised Version

This copy of the Draft Report has been updated to reflect the sense of the subcommittee that the list of possibilities for the fourth College Option course should be expanded, and to leave open the possibility that some College Option courses might carry other than 3 credits.

The subcommittee has neither accepted nor rejected this document. It is a Working Draft.

Preamble

This report is in two parts. The Curriculum Structure section tells how the Pathways “Common Core” and “College Option” components will be structured at Queens College. This, and only this, part of the report will be submitted to the Senate for approval at its special limited meeting on March 29.

The Comments and Background Material section provides additional information that is outside the scope of the Curriculum Structure, but helps provide some context for evaluating that structure.

In addition to the Curriculum Structure that the Senate must approve, the College is required to provide a Pathways Implementation Plan to the Chancellor by April 1. That implementation plan is an administrative document that tells how the College will manage the resource and temporal constraints imposed by the Pathways initiative. President Muyskens has charged Dean Summerfield with preparing that document. The Senate has to work within the time constraints imposed by the Pathways initiative, and the Implementation Plan has to be consistent with the Senate’s Curriculum Structure. But in all other ways, the Curriculum Structure presented here and the College’s Implementation Plan are two independent documents.

Curriculum Structure

Introduction

The report of the CUNY Pathways Steering Committee, adopted by the Chancellor in December, 2011, divided the General Education curriculum at the University into three components, a *Required Core*, which must consist of four 3-credit courses taken in four areas; a *Flexible Core*, which must consist of six 3-credit courses taken in five areas, and a *College Option*, which may consist of up to 12 additional credits taken at a baccalaureate institution. The *Required Core* and *Flexible Core* are together referred to as the *Common Core*.

All Common Core courses must be listed as 3-hour; 3-credit courses, with an exception that allows Mathematics or Science majors to substitute a 4-credit course that is part of their major for one of the Required Core courses. College Option courses may be structured in a number of ways.

By-law Changes

The Senate Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Pathways recommends that the Academic Senate Committee on Governance introduce the following changes to the Senate By-Laws:

Review Subcommittee

All Common Core, College Option, and Overlay courses must be submitted for review and approval by a subcommittee of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC) before being submitted to the Senate for its approval, and subsequent submission to the appropriate university-wide “Pathways Subcommittee” and (in the case of new courses) the Board of Trustees for their approvals.

The voting membership of the Review Subcommittee will consist of two instructional faculty from each of the divisions of Arts and Humanities (AH), Mathematics and Natural Sciences (MNS), and Social Sciences (SS), plus two additional instructional faculty from any division. Faculty members of the subcommittee serve two-year renewable terms, staggered in the usual way.

Up to 6 students may also be elected to serve one-year renewable terms on the subcommittee, with voting privileges. There are no requirements for student members’ majors.

The deans of the AH, MNS, and SS divisions, along with the Dean of General Education and a representative of the Provost’s Office, will serve as *ex-officio* members of the Review Subcommittee.

The tentative name of the subcommittee will be the “General Education Review Committee” (GERC). Members, however, shall not be referred to as “GERCs.”

Assessment Subcommittee

All Common Core, College Option, and Overlay courses must be reviewed every two years by a subcommittee of the UCC to verify that syllabi and student work for approved courses adhere to the appropriate learning objectives and other features established for their requirements.

If the Assessment Subcommittee, UCC, and Senate find that a course does not satisfy the requirements for which it was approved, that course may no longer be scheduled until a revised proposal and sample syllabi are approved by the Review Subcommittee, the UCC, and the Senate.

The tentative name of this subcommittee will be the “General Education Assessment Committee” (GEAC). Not to be confused with the General Education Advisory Committee.

To be determined: whether the Assessment and Review subcommittees are to be separate entities or not.

To be determined: whether the existing WISC subcommittee continues to exist separately from the Review Subcommittee.

Common Core Courses

English Composition I (EC-I)

English 110 is the only course that satisfies the EC-1 requirement at Queens College. Sections of English 110 have no more than 20 students each.

English Composition II (EC-II)

Any department or group of departments may offer EC-II courses at Queens College. Each course that satisfies the EC-II requirement at Queens will have no more than 25 students per section.

Mathematics and Quantitative Reasoning (MQR)

Any department may offer an MQR course at Queens College.

Life and Physical Sciences (LPS)

In addition to the Pathways learning objectives, LPS courses at Queens must meet the NS requirements from the current Perspectives curriculum.

World Cultures and Global Issues (WC)

U. S. Experience in its Diversity (US)

Creative Expression (CE)

Individual and Society (IS)

Scientific World (SW)

In addition to their Pathways learning objectives, all WC, US, CE, IS, and SW courses at Queens must meet the first two characteristics of all courses from the current Perspectives curriculum.

To be determined: whether to require students to take a course in the SW area that incorporates technology-related skills and concepts appropriate to the liberal arts.

College Option Courses

Students may be required to take 0, 3, 6, 9, or 12 College Option credits depending on a number of factors. Those credits will be structured for Queens College students as follows:

Credits Required	Courses
0	None
3	One Literature course
6	One Literature course One Language course
9	One Literature course One Language course One Science course
12	One Literature course One Language course One Science course One additional Literature, Language, Science, WC, US, CE, IS, SW course, or a Synthesis course

As listed above, College Option courses at Queens College will carry 3 credits, but there is no constraint on the structure of the classroom and non-classroom contact hours other than “the usual Carnegie Foundation guidelines.”

To be determined: whether to lift the restriction of all College Option courses carrying precisely 3 credits.

A “Language” course must meet the learning objectives of the Language Area proposed by Queens College as part of its November 15, 2011 response to the CUNY Pathways Steering Committee.

A “Literature” course is one that satisfies the criteria for a Reading Literature (RL) course under the Perspectives requirements currently in effect at the College.

A “Science” course is one that satisfies the criteria for the Natural Science requirement under the Perspectives requirements currently in effect at the College, with the following restriction: the College Option Science course must come from a life sciences discipline (anthropology, biology, FNES, psychology) if the student’s Life or Physical Science course was in a Physical Science discipline, but from a physical science discipline (chemistry, environmental science, geology, physics) if the student’s Life or Physical Science course was in a Life Science discipline. This restriction does not apply to students who complete a major in one of the disciplines of the Mathematics and Natural Sciences division; nor does it apply to students whose Life or Physical Science course crossed life and physical science disciplines.

To be determined: whether to allow students to use any course that satisfies the current Perspectives NS criteria, without restriction, to satisfy the Science course requirement.

To be determined: whether to include a capstone, synthesis, or experiential learning course as an alternative to the additional WC, US, CE, IS, or SW course for students required to complete 12 College Option credits.

Comments and Background Material

In general, the Subcommittee intends the Curriculum Structure to be enabling rather than restrictive. That is, science, writing, oral, and technology requirements are all under-specified because various groups are still, as of the date of this draft, actively discussing options. An example would be the current W requirement: it is not clear at this point whether Queens will adopt the Pathways “overlay” designation for W courses, or will incorporate the College’s current W requirements directly into general education and/or major course requirements.

Some things are omitted from the previous section simply because they do not need to be there. The “learning communities” structure currently used for most English 110 sections is an example: it appears to be a strong component of the current curriculum, and will probably be retained and even expanded in the future. But in itself it is not a Pathways issue. Similarly for options to use a “Second Semester Seminar” model for some, if not all, EC-II courses or a possible “Sophomore Seminar” model for FCC courses.

While the learning communities model is not part of the Pathways curriculum, it must be implemented in such a way that it does not run afoul of the 42-credit Pathways limit. There must be enough learning community options available that satisfy either a Common Core, College Option, or Major requirement so that no student will be required to take extra credits as a result of being required to take part in an English 110 learning community.

The list of courses approved for MQR at Queens will be constructed so that the normal way to satisfy MQR will be by taking a Mathematics course below the calculus level, but to give students who place into calculus the option of taking a course outside the Mathematics department.

The paragraph describing what constitutes a Science course for the College Option would require a student who wants to complete a two-semester sequence in a discipline to take an additional science course to satisfy the College Option requirement.

Common sense says that resources available to the College will not increase because of Pathways. Thus, as a simplistic example, the *average* number of seats per section across *all courses* offered at the College will remain constant. Since current Senate by-laws specify section caps for English 110 and W courses, changing the by-laws to cap the size of additional courses will require increasing sections sizes for other courses at the College in order to keep the overall average the same as now. (The full example would have to take contact hours, teaching assistants, classroom availability, and scheduling constraints into consideration.) Provost Stellar has explicitly stated his commitment to make sure this all works out so that we can accomplish our intellectual and pedagogical goals for the students.