

**Testimony of Glenn Petersen  
Professor of Anthropology, Baruch College  
Before the Board of Trustees of the City University of New York**

**Concerning the Pathways Initiative**

**June 18, 2012**

My name is Glenn Petersen. I am Professor of Anthropology at Baruch College and the Graduate Center. I began teaching at CUNY in 1972, and have been at Baruch for the past 35 years. As Chair of the Department of Sociology & Anthropology, I have engaged in well over one hundred hours of intensive work on the Pathways initiative. I believe I understand the nature of Pathways' impact on our students' education as well as anyone.

I'd like to ask the Board to consider what seems to be a paradox. For years now, the quality of CUNY's faculty has been the centerpiece of advertising campaigns. It is also the case that the Chancellery has insisted from the outset that the Pathways process is "faculty driven." This suggests that it does not consider simply involving the faculty to be sufficient; rather, the Chancellery appears to maintain that if this process is to succeed it is imperative that the faculty believes in and supports it. I assume that the Board, too, understands this to be the case. Why is it, then, that with an overwhelming voice the CUNY faculty as a whole has expressed its opposition to nearly every facet of the process?

I will draw your attention to two instances of this opposition: The Baruch faculty's votes on a resolution concerning Pathways. This resolution states that Pathways is "forcing unforeseen and deleterious changes in general education requirements," that the faculty has been "unable to justify radical curricular changes that will significantly diminish the value of a Baruch College

education,” and that it has been “unable to find sufficient pedagogical merit in curriculum guidelines established by” the program. The faculty therefore resolved that Baruch should “discontinue the process of revising the College’s general education curriculum until a University-wide summit” agrees on a solution to the transfer problems that does not dilute the University’s general education programs.

On March 21, Baruch’s General Faculty—that is, the entire faculty—met at a session called specifically to consider this resolution. Attendance numbers were unprecedented. After all who wished to speak had a chance to convey their views, we voted. The vote was 150-1 in favor of the resolution to withdraw from the Pathways process.

On March 22, the faculty of Baruch’s Weismann School of Arts and Sciences met to vote on the Pathways curriculum its department chairs had spent the previous semester crafting. After considerable discussion, we voted on the same resolution the General Faculty had considered the previous day, the measure calling on the College to abandon all work on Pathways. The resolution was approved by a vote 125-5.

There is a serious disconnect here, and I ask you to consider it. The Chancellery is telling the Board and the public that Pathways is “faculty driven.” At Baruch College this is clearly not the case, and there is every reason to believe that opposition to Pathways is essentially identical throughout CUNY. Please ask yourselves why, if it is important for the Pathways process to be faculty driven, it is moving ahead when it is patently not supported—and indeed, is opposed—by the overwhelming majority of the CUNY faculty.