

February 3, 2014

To: College Presidents and Deans

From: Interim Chancellor William P. Kelly 

Re: Pathways Review

As you will recall, the June 2011 Board of Trustees resolution on Pathways stipulated that all of the "Pathways policies and processes, including the Common Core, be reviewed and evaluated each year for three years beginning in 2013, and every three years thereafter, to modify them as necessary to improve them or to meet changing needs." This year, we did not yet have the data for a full review, but it was possible to consider implementation policies.

To that end, we arranged last fall for an informal review involving faculty members from the key disciplines of the natural sciences, English, and the humanities, as well as representation from the University Faculty Senate. Participants were asked to consider areas in which implementation could be improved at this still-early stage in Pathways adoption while adhering to the original Board resolution. Participants quickly reached consensus on three changes:

- 1) The University will no longer specify a limit on course hours in Common Core areas. The Common Core model calls for a 30-credit curriculum, and this will remain in place. However, beginning in fall 2014, colleges can determine how many hours to allocate to courses in the Common Core and will have discretion to allocate hours to courses as they choose, in keeping with college practices.
- 2) To date, colleges have been able to seek a waiver if a major or degree program cannot be accommodated within the Common Core framework. Such waivers have been generated by the CUNY Office of Academic Affairs. Waivers have been sought in particular in the cases of certain STEM programs or licensed programs of various kinds, where it has proven to be unusually difficult to accommodate 30 credits of general education spread across the eight areas of the Common Core. In such cases, programs can be helped by allowing the designation of particular courses within the Common Core areas or the College Option. This practice will continue; efforts will be made to ensure that every college is fully aware of the waiver process.
- 3) Faculty members serving on the CUNY-wide Common Core Course Review Committee (CCCRC) will be chosen through college governance processes, beginning with those identified to serve during the 2014-2015 academic year.

I believe these changes are consistent with conversations we have had about Pathways. Interim Executive Vice Chancellor Julia Wrigley will be in touch with your chief academic officers to provide additional guidance on implementing these changes. The ongoing review of Pathways will continue next year when more data are available.

c: Interim Executive Vice Chancellor Julia Wrigley
Chief Academic Officers