

Report and Recommendation of the Business Transfer Pathways Committee

This is the Report of the Pathways Committee on Business Majors.

The Committee's charge was to "recommend for approval to the University Office of Academic Affairs no fewer than three and no more than six courses that will be accepted as entry-level courses for beginning the major, or as prerequisites for such courses, by all colleges offering those majors, and by Fall 2013 these courses must be offered and their status as major-entry courses widely publicized at each college offering the major," See Resolution of the Board of Trustees on Creating an Efficient Transfer System ("the Resolution").

The Committee engaged in lengthy and vigorous discussions and debates about how best to effectuate the Resolution's goal of making transfer of credits within CUNY more efficient. The Committee is pleased to report that it has identified five (5) courses (and accompanying learning outcomes) and we recommend that these courses be included in the Pathway to the each of the largest business majors at CUNY.

The Committee's deliberations, however, continue to reveal concerns about the difficulty of achieving uniform educational outcomes and expectations for entry-level courses in light of the differing levels of abilities and achievement that entry-level CUNY students possess. These differences sometimes call for different approaches to teaching, different expectations and a different pace for learning. How best to address this diversity of ability, among the myriad other issues associated with transfer, continues to spur vigorous debate among Committee members.

The Committee also has reservations about the uncertainties associated with implementation of its recommendations. General anxiety about unintended consequences is widespread. The appropriate balance between faculty governance and administrative action needs to be respected.

In receiving its charge, the Committee was instructed that interpretation of the Resolution was the province of this faculty Committee. The Committee has adopted two interpretations of the Resolution:

1. As the Resolution states, inclusion of a course in the Business Transfer Pathway means that (a) each college must offer such a course and (b) each college must accept the analogous course for transfer if that course was taken at another CUNY college. *The Committee does not interpret the resolution to also mandate that each college include each Pathway course as a requirement for each of its degree programs.* The Committee feels strongly that the definition of graduation requirements continues to belong to the faculty of each degree-granting institution.¹

¹ If the Resolution were interpreted or implemented in a way that compelled each college to include each Pathways course in its degree program requirements, the Committee would probably have reported a different, shorter list of courses for the Business Transfer Pathway.

2. The Committee's charge was to identify courses and learning outcomes; the Resolution did not require that the Committee prescribe a set number of credits or hours associated with the courses identified for the Pathway. There is indeed a variation in the number of credits among colleges for the accounting courses to be included in the Pathway. The Committee felt strongly that issues associated with preparedness and the pace of learning (especially as it relates to accounting) augurs for flexibility in assigning credit hours across CUNY campuses.

The Committee also faced a difficult decision about what level of consensus was appropriate for including a course in its Recommendations. The Committee's Recommendations are the product of majority vote. As to all-but-one of the courses designated by the Committee, there was broad-to-unanimous agreement for inclusion. The vote to include the Foundations of Business Management course was closer.

Although there was a clear majority in favor of including the course, the debate was especially vigorous, and there were a significant number of vociferous dissenters. The Committee members who voted against inclusion of the Fundamentals of Business Management course are concerned that inclusion of the course will disrupt their schools' curriculums. They question the merits of the course. They worry about resources. These committee members feel strongly that action across CUNY should only take place if a super-majority, or even unanimity, exists among schools and faculty. They observe that as to inclusion of this course, neither super-majority nor unanimity exists. The majority felt equally strongly that the course is a good entry-level course for CUNY students contemplating a degree in business.

These reservations and concerns aside, the Committee believes that its work will benefit both CUNY and CUNY students. The common learning outcomes in this Report and Recommendation will create greater harmony in areas where differences now exist.² These learning outcomes will be a valuable guide to faculty throughout CUNY, and it is useful guidance to students as to what competencies they are expected to have when they complete the base business courses. Education at CUNY will benefit as our higher level courses are able to build from a more-common base.

The annexed Exhibit A contains the course names, descriptions and learning outcomes.

² It should be noted that existing differences are in fact minor, and that harmonization already exists across broad swaths of the entry-level business curricula at CUNY.