Committee members present:
- Michelle Anderson, Dean and Professor of Law, CUNY School of Law (Committee Chair)
- Paul Attewell, Distinguished Professor of Sociology, Graduate Center
- Michael Barnhart, Professor of Philosophy, Kingsborough Community College
- Laird Bergad, Distinguished Professor of Latin American and Caribbean History, Lehman College
- Theodore Brown, Professor of Computer Science, Queens College
- Katherine Conway, Associate Professor of Business Management, Borough of Manhattan Community College
- Mona Hadler, Professor of Art, Brooklyn College
- Patricia Mathews-Salazar, Professor of Anthropology, Borough of Manhattan Community College
- Elizabeth Nunez, Distinguished Professor of English, Hunter College
- Neal Phillip, Professor of Chemistry, Bronx Community College
- Elizabeth Beck, Student, LaGuardia Community College
- William Fritz, Provost, College of Staten Island
- Anne Lopes, Dean of Undergraduate Studies, John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Committee members telephoning in:
- Edward Grossman, Professor of Mathematics, The City College of New York

Central Office staff support present:
- Erin Croke, Director of Undergraduate Education Policy
- Erika Dreifus, Director of Communications for the Office of Academic Affairs
- Dave Fields, University Dean and Special Counsel to the Chancellor

Central Office staff support telephoning in:
- David Crook, University Dean for Institutional Research and Assessment

Dean Anderson called the meeting to order at 10:04 p.m.

I. Announcements and distribution of materials

- The Pathways website has been redesigned and may be consulted at http://www.cuny.edu/pathways. The summary of the committee’s July 27, 2011, meeting has been posted there.
Dean Anderson directed the committee’s attention to some updated materials, including a corrected chart of liberal-arts requirements in selected programs at CUNY community colleges. This corrected chart is also available on the Pathways website.

II. Standing rule #1 on remote voting

Dean Fields, parliamentarian, introduced a proposed standing rule #1 to allow Steering Committee members to vote by phone or videoconference: “Be it resolved, that members of the steering committee of the Pathways project may attend, make motions, vote and be counted toward a quorum from remote sites provided that: 1) Such members can connect via videoconference or teleconference technology that allows all persons participating in the meeting to hear each other at the same time and, if a videoconference, to see each other as well and 2) Remotely located members say, ‘I would like to speak,’ in order to seek recognition from the Chair of the meeting to obtain the floor.

Standing rule #1 passed unanimously.

III. Committee discussion on how to proceed in terms of approaches to learning outcomes and definition of curricular areas, via a cross-curricular approach or an areas approach.

Dean Anderson explained that colleges and universities typically do this work by following one of the two approaches summarized on the document, “Background for Steering Committee Discussion, August 19, 2011” (available at http://tinyurl.com/3kkd3au).

For the Committee’s purposes, approach #1 was defined as a “cross-curricular approach.” This approach would not, initially, focus on outcomes for specific academic areas. It would focus first on defining broader cross-curricular outcomes. The Task Force would then identify multidisciplinary areas of the Common Core and then map the cross-curricular learning outcomes onto these areas. More specific outcomes might be needed and added to each area, but the cross-curricular outcomes would remain a touchstone. This approach expands on the LEAP model, which tends toward overarching learning outcomes but does not address how to define areas and allocate credits among them, tasks essential to the Pathways project and the Task Force’s charge.

For the Committee’s purposes, approach #2 was defined as an “areas approach.” This approach would first identify the multidisciplinary areas of the Common Core and then develop learning outcomes by area. It was noted that the general education components of all CUNY baccalaureate colleges already converge on a cluster of six courses/18 credits (2 courses in English/Speech, 1 course in mathematics, 1 science course, 1 social science course, and 1 humanities course), and that there are further commonalities upon which the Task Force should model the multidisciplinary areas of the Common Core. The committee will build the 30-credit framework with those components as a starting point.
Before moving into discussion of the pros and cons of each approach, Dean Anderson invited Steering Committee members to share general reflections. Comments included the following ideas: 1) we should be careful to pitch the learning outcomes at an appropriate level for students completing general education courses at CUNY; 2) numbers of transfers between CUNY and SUNY might suggest that the committee give special consideration to the SUNY model (although the Committee learned that relatively few students transfer between the two systems); 3) language matters: “learning goals” differs from “learning outcomes” because the latter are intended to be measurable and the Board of Trustees resolution uses “learning outcomes”; 4) no matter what approach the committee chooses, courses might meet learning outcomes in more than one area; 5) given the large number of immigrant students at CUNY, the Task Force may want to include some requirement in American government or history; and 6) many of the same questions must be addressed regardless of what approach the Steering Committee chooses—what will differ will be the sequence of the work.

Through discussion that included every member of the Steering Committee, the group identified the following “pros,” or advantages, to approach #1: 1) the approach builds on what have been identified nationally at colleges and universities as a best practices method (LEAP); 2) it maximizes potential for innovation; 3) it acknowledges and provides flexibility for the state of knowledge today, with so much taking place between and across traditional disciplines; and 4) it provides a layered approach that has the potential to be more visionary; 5) its flexibility would allow colleges to retain innovation and uniqueness in their current core curricula.

The committee identified the following “cons,” or disadvantages, to approach #1: 1) it may be difficult to map onto multidisciplinary areas; 2) it adds a layer of complexity and time with the additional scaffolding that it requires; and 3) learning outcomes, as a central concept, are not always embraced or understood.

The committee identified the following “pros” for approach #2: 1) it is rooted where the University is now and focuses on the areas; 2) it holds the potential for more of a shared intellectual experience across the campuses; and 3) it is easier to understand.

The committee identified the following “cons” for approach #2: 1) it might stifle innovation; 2) it might be perceived as reaffirming the status quo; and 3) students may not find it engaging.

After full discussion, Dean Anderson asked if there were any others pros and cons to either approach to consider. Hearing none, she called for a vote. By a vote of 9-5, the committee approved approach #1.

IV. Committee discussion of agenda for the August 26 retreat with Working Committee members.

Dean Anderson distributed a draft agenda for the retreat using approach #1.

The committee members asked to learn more about the working committee. There was a specific question about whether additional students as well as additional faculty will be involved. Dean Anderson indicated that there would be more
students on the Working Committee, and they the list of members was being finalized and would be distributed the following week.

- Dean Anderson proposed that by the end of the day-long retreat, a draft set of cross-curricular, University-wide learning outcomes should be developed for further discussion and refinement.
- There was discussion about how the day might be structured, how discussion groups might be organized, and how tasks should be articulated. There was also discussion about how to bring Working Committee members up to speed on the process and integrate them fully into it.

V. Next steps
- Review binder materials and reflect meaningfully on the process we will undertake at the retreat.
- Review materials to be distributed electronically before the retreat (including a revised draft agenda for comment and revision).

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.