Background for Steering Committee Discussion
August 19, 2011

Approach 1: Cross-curricular approach

- Learning outcomes can be framed at different levels, from the very abstract to the concrete and specific. The LEAP model adopted at many American universities tends toward overarching learning outcomes that transcend curricular areas. Examples include: the learning outcomes adopted by the University of Massachusetts and those adopted by CSI. Similarly, the Lumina Foundation has adopted broad learning outcomes in its Degree Qualifications Profile. The underlying concept is that a university should specify the competencies that students should acquire from a liberal education without tying outcomes to specific academic content.

- A cross-curricular set of learning outcomes would stand alone as an overall statement of our learning commitments at the University. We would then determine the interdisciplinary areas of the Common Core, and then map the cross-curricular learning outcomes onto those areas. More specific outcomes might be needed and added to each area, but the cross-curricular ones would remain a touchstone to maximize integration across the curriculum.

Approach 2: Areas approach

- Another approach would be to develop learning outcomes more tied in the first instance to the academic content of the interdisciplinary areas. Examples include: University of California at Irvine and SUNY. Committee members would determine first which broad curricular areas that they think should constitute elements of the Common Core, break into groups associated with those areas, and develop learning outcomes specific to those areas.

- At whatever point the Task Force defines the interdisciplinary areas, similarities across CUNY’s existing general education models could provide a jumping off point to help define them, if the team would find that useful.