

## Lehman College Senate Resolution on General Education

Whereas the Lehman College Senate is determined to ensure that Lehman College students obtain a high quality education, including appropriate courses in General Education, and that nothing should be done to compromise the quality and value of a Lehman College degree; and

Whereas Lehman College, under the leadership of President Ricardo Fernández, has improved its academic quality and reputation, as demonstrated by its listing as a Tier 1 institution ranked among the top 50 public colleges in the Northeast by *U.S. News and World Report*; and

Whereas, the City University of New York, under the leadership of Chancellor Matthew Goldstein and the Board of Trustees, has substantially improved CUNY's academic standards and reputation in recent years despite the additional burdens imposed on CUNY, especially its community colleges, by the fact that the New York City Public School system is not preparing many of its students adequately for college; and

Whereas the current Lehman College General Education curriculum is an integral part of what New York State Assemblywoman Deborah Glick recently described in the *Albany Times-Union* (January 16, 2011) as the "main mission" of CUNY and SUNY: "honing critical thinking and exposing students to new areas of study and interest"; and

Whereas the current Lehman College General education curriculum supports CUNY's and the College's mission, standards, and reputation by exposing students to the shared intellectual heritage of our diverse culture; teaching critical thinking; encouraging accurate and effective communication; emphasizing the integration, synthesis, and application of knowledge; and, through the study of the liberal arts and sciences, helping all undergraduates develop the multiple views and general intellectual abilities that provide a foundation for independent, responsible living; and

Whereas the CUNY Office of Academic Affairs has proposed a "Draft Resolution on Creating an Efficient Transfer System" which, under the guise of creating a more efficient transfer policy, would significantly reduce the General Education requirements of the CUNY senior colleges to no more than 6 credits beyond those credits required in the community colleges; and

Whereas said resolution would eliminate the ability of the Lehman College Senate, comprised of faculty, students, and administrators, to establish and maintain the General Education curriculum which it determines best fits the needs of Lehman College students; and

Whereas 30 or 36-credits in General Education may be appropriate for the CUNY community colleges, where all credits should fit within the total of 60 credits required for graduation, and students should be able to complete all such requirements in two years of fulltime study, or its equivalent; but such a limitation, even with the allowance of an additional 6 credits, is not appropriate for Lehman and the senior colleges, where students have four years of fulltime study, or its equivalent, to complete the 120 credits required for graduation; and

Whereas members of the Lehman College Senate understand and appreciate the many obstacles faced by our students in obtaining their undergraduate degrees in a timely manner, and admire their perseverance.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Lehman College Senate believes that the transfer and General Education issues are separate matters that need to be considered separately, that changing the General Education requirements at Lehman and the other senior colleges will not solve the problem of students accumulating excess credits, but will, instead, take time and resources away from resolving the real issues causing problems for transfer students.
2. The Lehman College Senate supports efforts to improve students' degree completion in a timely manner, as long as the means adopted are compatible with existing academic standards.
3. The Lehman College Senate believes that CUNY students are entitled to clear, consistent and timely recognition of transfer credit across CUNY. We believe that transfer problems can be addressed more effectively by enhancing academic advising, upgrading SIMS and CUNYFirst to allow faculty to see transfer students' whole transcripts, making the TIPPS system workable for the entire curricula, continuing articulation as well as dual-joint degree efforts, and by clarifying for students the role, function, and transferability of the University's associate degrees (AA, AS, and AAS). The Lehman College Senate recommends that a CUNY-wide committee, including members nominated by local college governance authorities, be appointed to develop plans to monitor and improve CUNY's performance in these areas.
4. The Lehman College Senate supports the activation of university-wide discipline councils to help faculty in both senior and community colleges come to a consensus about the level of work that is expected from students in general education courses.
5. The Lehman College Senate recommends that if a task force is convened to create "a common general education framework for the undergraduate colleges," said task force should include representatives nominated by local college governance authorities.
6. The Lehman College Senate reaffirms its authority over the college's curriculum, including the right to determine the appropriate number of General Education credits for Lehman College students to hone their critical thinking skills and explore new areas of study and interest.

Copies of this resolution should be sent to the CUNY Board of Trustees, Chancellor Goldstein, Executive Vice Chancellor Logue, Assemblywoman Deborah Glick, Senator Kenneth LaValle, and Governance bodies at all CUNY Colleges.