

As the Natural Sciences faculty at Lehman, we write to express our concerns regarding the Pathways initiative, and to outline the steps we feel must be taken to achieve a positive overall outcome from this process.

We applaud the effort to make it easier for students to complete their degrees. Establishing clear CUNY-wide general education requirements is an important step in this direction: it will streamline the transfer process, reduce the number of excess credits taken, and enhance the overall graduation rate. It will be particularly helpful for students who transfer from community colleges.

We are concerned, however, that Pathways achieves its goals by forcing the senior colleges to lower their academic standards. Reducing the present general education requirement to a 30-credit Common Core is a drastic retrenchment, and as Natural Sciences faculty, we are particularly concerned about the reduction in the Natural Sciences requirement to a single 4-credit course.

The years 2005 to 2015 have been designated the "Decade of Science" at CUNY, for reasons that are compellingly described in the attached article. With a CUNY-wide expenditure of approximately \$1 billion on science facilities, it would be ironic indeed if the Decade of Science culminated with a decision to slash science requirements.

More importantly, for many reasons, this reduced Natural Sciences requirement will have a negative effect on the quality of education at Lehman.

1. Courses in the Natural Sciences are uniquely suited to providing the sort of rigorous intellectual training which should be expected of a college graduate.
2. Science and technology play a crucial role in today's world. A familiarity with the concepts of science and scientific reasoning is essential to the development of informed and aware citizens.
3. Regrettably many students arrive at Lehman with no exposure to the natural sciences. For some of these students, an introduction to scientific concepts will spark the interest that leads them to join the next generation of scientists and engineers. Lehman is the leading institution in the Bronx that can provide this exposure, making it imperative that we offer it to our students.

A single course in the Natural Sciences, which is all that would be required under the proposed Core, is not adequate to address these vital educational needs.

To this end, we believe that Lehman should take full advantage of the flexibility provided by the 12-credit College Option. We feel strongly that an additional four to six credits of courses in the Natural Sciences should be required as part of the College Option. Although this would merely maintain Lehman's science requirement at its current level, it goes far beyond what is required by Pathways,

and it would do much to preserve the quality of education which our Lehman students both demand and deserve.