

From: Paula Berggren  
Sent: Tuesday, November 15, 2011 11:10 AM  
To: 'pathways@mail.cuny.edu'  
Subject: A response to the Pathways Initiative

To the Pathways Steering Committee:

In 1978, the just graduated editor of the Yale Daily News published an op-ed article in the New York Times decrying the slack curricular rules at Yale University, which made it possible for students to graduate without ever having read Marx or Freud, without having a solid foundation in two sciences, and so on. The article was written at a moment when the prestigious universities that had been so permissive were instituting core curriculums that militated against the instinct of teenagers to shy away from difficult courses and the acquisition of cultural literacy. At CUNY, the same movement was underway and I had the privilege of working on the common core at Baruch that we have refined for over thirty years and that provides a foundation for our often ill-prepared students to build upon. I am puzzled at the decision that has been taken to throw out all this hard work when more careful advisement of students who wish to transfer from community colleges could ease the loss of credits when they do so. I regret to say that the new core recommendations also fail to recognize the needs of these students when they find themselves in a more rigorous academic environment than they have been used to. I would hope that the wisdom of each college's faculty will be able to surmount the unnecessary difficulties that the Pathways revisions will cause.

Thank you for your attention.

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