

Dear Lexa,

Please accept the below as an open letter to you, with a copy to President Call, from the Pathways English Majors Committee.

Yours truly,

Josh

Joshua Wilner  
Professor of English and Comparative Literature  
City College and The Graduate Center  
The City University of New York  
Senior Faculty Advisor for Undergraduate Education, CCNY  
Chair, Pathways English Majors Committee

September 18, 2012  
Alexandra Logue  
Executive Vice-Chancellor and University Provost  
The City University of New York

Dear Vice-Chancellor Logue,

As members of the committee which the University empanelled to recommend a sequence of major level entry courses for all students intending a major in English, we write to unanimously register our astonishment at the totally disproportionate administrative response to the vote of the English Department at Queensborough Community College not to reduce instructional hours for English Composition courses from four to three.

All of us harbor, to varying degrees, reservations about the Pathways framework and the process by which it has been established. Notwithstanding these reservations, we agreed to work on proposing an entry-level curriculum for English majors because we held the interests of our students first and were prepared to enter into a dialogue with the University about its goals and concerns. Last Thursday's threat at QCC to cancel all offerings in English Composition, require students to pursue their English coursework elsewhere, and decimate the English Department faculty showed neither concern for students nor a disposition to resolve conflicts through dialogue. Its concern was rather with preserving administrative power against any challenge to its authority.

We note that the seed for the present controversy was planted when the Central Office declared that all Pathways courses, with very limited exceptions for STEM courses,

must be limited not only to 3 credits, but also 3 hours. The latter restriction was required neither by the resolution of the Board of Trustees nor by recommendations of the Task Force which designed Pathways. Subsequently the Central Office, at the urging of some faculty charged with overseeing General Education curricula, wisely saw fit to adopt a more flexible policy for STEM courses, so as not to place at a disadvantage students pursuing those majors. While the current crisis may have, most immediately, arisen solely out of decisions of the QCC administration (this is unclear to us), we call on the Central Office to show now leadership in working with faculty and the administrators at QCC to resolve the impasse through thoughtful and respectful dialogue. Whatever lines of communication between faculty and administration about Pathways remain open within what is already a very polarized situation have been strained to the breaking point by the events at QCC. It is incumbent on the Central Office to speak and act now in a way that restores at least a limited degree of trust.

Respectfully yours,

Grace Russo Bullaro (Lehman College)

Duncan Faherty (Queens College)

Hildegard Hoeller (College of Staten Island)

Martha Nadell (Brooklyn College)

Allison Pease (John Jay College)

Linda Reesman (Queensborough Community College)

James Tolan (Borough of Manhattan Community College)

Barbara Webb (Hunter College)

Joshua Wilner (City College)

Susan Young (LaGuardia Community College)