The School of Professional Studies’ (SPS) has issued a letter of intent for a new on-line baccalaureate degree in anthropology for those who have dropped out of college (a so-called “completers” degree). The proposed major does not concentrate on archeology or physical anthropology.

Vice Chancellor Schaffer, in response to concerns raised by the UFS and the PSC, has changed the proposed CUNY Bylaw revisions in several significant ways. The language change making college senates advisory and not determinative was removed. The deletion of the GC governance structure was also reversed. The clause that gave college presidents the power to remove a member of a departmental P&B committee was modified to make that power contingent on the request of a majority of that department P&B committee. Some problems remain. As currently constituted, the proposal still removes the degree requirements for faculty titles. The requirement for an earned doctorate for the professorship is no longer listed.

CUNY is establishing Domestic and International Travel Guidelines for student travel. The guidelines deal with technical issues such as insurance, procedure for approval and implementation of a sponsored trip.

CUNY is will move the Chancellery and associated offices, now at E. 80th Street, to East 42nd street inside the Pfizer Building. The date of the move is not clear, but some ex-pect it before the end of the academic year.

The Board of Trustees has passed the Pathways Resolution, transferring the bulk of control over curriculum for both general education and for the most popular majors to committees that are named by the Chancellery with the advice of the UFS. Vice Chancellor Logue asked the UFS to provide such names, but coupled that request with the stricture that these people be supportive of the Pathways process. The UFS provided the chancellery with the names of people involved in a newly formed UFS curriculum committee that is composed of people experienced in the generation of general education curricula and experienced in evaluation issues. No member of this curriculum committee was selected for either the Pathways steering Committee or the Pathways Working Committee.

In passing the Pathways resolution at this time, the Board of Trustees ignored the resolutions of the UFS and all senior college senates. Excepting the Board Chair, individual Trustees who sit on the Board Committee on Academic Policy, Programs and Research also declined to exchange views on the subject prior to the vote. The Board Chair, Benno
Schmidt, a leader in for-profit secondary and higher education, stated that his mind had been made up on the topic prior to his meeting with Faculty Governance Leaders.

The Pathways resolution was promoted by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs in a manner that made it clear that even minor changes in the program were not welcome, and that the senior and community college senate resolutions on the topic were going to be ignored. In response, the UFS Executive Committee decided that it had lost confidence in her leadership and in that of her office. This reflects a hugely unfortunate break in the otherwise mainly good relationships that had characterized governance in CUNY.

The Chair of the Pathways Steering Committee, Dean Anderson of the CUNY School of Law, has written college presidents that the Committee’s ’chief responsibility is to recommend to the Chancellor a structure for the 30-credit Common Core by December 1, 2011.’ This will abrogate the core that is now determined by Lehman College’s Senate.

She goes on to write that Pathways committees are to develop a completed draft of common core recommendations by November 1. She asked the presidents for a single campus response in two weeks, by November 15. The Pathways Steering Committee is to analyze campus responses and make possible revisions before December 1.

The Pathways Steering Committee, in one of its first actions, has voted to endorse the LEAP model for curriculum. LEAP (Liberal Education & America’s Promise) is a program of the Association of American Colleges and Universities. LEAP lists necessary “Intellectual and Practical Skills” that include quantitative literacy. Mathematics is not included as a skill; it falls under the rubric of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World.

The vote of the Pathways Steering Committee supporting LEAP was addressed in a message from the chair of the CUNY Mathematics Discipline Council (MDC) to VC Logue. Warren Gordon, Chair of Mathematics at Baruch College wrote that ”The MDC is concerned about the apparent lack of distinction being made between quantitative literacy and mathematics competency by the Pathways Steering Committee.

I know you are very concerned about the mathematics preparedness of our students, and well understand the major differences between QL and math competency. Rather than having to fix any problems that may result later on, it may be best to advise the committee now of the differences between the two so they may take appropriate action. This will be especially important to students who will transfer to another CUNY college and want to major in a quantitative or STEM discipline."

At the June 6 Board Committee on Academic Policy, Program, and Research, Chancellor Goldstein said that the curricular changes engendered by Pathways would be “faculty-driven.” Yet, at the June 20 Public Hearing of the Board, the faculty who signed up in advance and were first in line for the hearing at Hostos Community College were forced to wait while a group of students, who had been helped in their presentations by CUNY officials, were allowed to testify. The first faculty member was allowed to testify only 1 1/2 hours into the hearing.
Yet another group set up by VC Logue, the Working Group on Remediation, while directly addressing issues relevant to the community colleges, made a number of recommendations that affect the senior colleges. One of them states that "CUNY's remedial pathways tend to prepare students for college algebra, a course that many students do not need to take to satisfy requirements for general education or the major. Students should have the option to pursue developmental course work that prepares them for non-STEM math. ..."

The Working Group on Remediation included no faculty members, but is now being referenced to faculty groups for comment. See http://www1.cuny.edu/mu/academic-news/files/2011/08/ReportoftheRemediationWorkingGroup.pdf

The Working Group on Remediation builds on the 2006 Report of the CUNY Task Force on Retention (which had very few faculty members). That report advocated "fixing the areas in the curriculum that are flawed (developmental education, math, science and other “killer courses,” General Education requirements) ...." See http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/middle-states/repository/files/standard-8/CUNY%20RetentionReportFINAL.pdf