



Legislation Details (With Text)

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Res. No. 1845

Resolution calling upon CUNY to postpone the implementation of the Pathways Initiative.

By Council Members James, Williams, Chin, Wills and Rodriguez

Whereas, In June 2011, the City University of New York (“CUNY”) Board of Trustees approved the adoption of the Pathways Initiative, also called Pathways to Degree Completion or Pathways, which establishes a new general education and credit-transfer system across the University; and

Whereas, Pathways is scheduled to begin in Fall 2013; and

Whereas, Pathways requires that all CUNY students complete a “Common Core” curriculum consisting of 30 credits and those in baccalaureate programs can be required to take an additional 6-12 credits defined by each college within the CUNY system; and

Whereas, Under the new Pathways transfer policy, courses taken for general education credit, major credit, and elective credit are guaranteed to be transferable, which eases student transfer between CUNY colleges; and

Whereas, According to CUNY's current general education requirements, associate degree-seeking students must complete a minimum of 60 credits and baccalaureate students must complete a minimum of 120 credits; and

Whereas, In February 2013, the New York State Board of Regents approved CUNY's new Master Plan, including the Pathways Initiative; and

Whereas, However, Pathways has received strong opposition from the Professional Staff Congress ("PSC"), the union representing CUNY faculty members, stating that the new requirements are too restrictive and lower CUNY's academic standards; and

Whereas, The PSC and student advocates against the program are concerned that the number of classroom hours students receive in critical foundation courses will be reduced, according to *The Nation*; and

Whereas, *The Nation* also reported that reducing basic requirements needed for graduation, including scaling back courses in Math, Science, Foreign Languages, Literature, and English Composition ensures a second-class education for students; and

Whereas, Furthermore, by reducing general education courses that traditionally demand four contact hours a week to three, Pathways denies students valuable time with their professors; and

Whereas, Although Pathways would facilitate easier transfer between CUNY campuses, student advocates argue that it would simultaneously limit the opportunities for any student leaving CUNY for another institution; and

Whereas, The advocates also argue that Pathways renders CUNY's core curriculum incompatible with general education standards at most other universities, forcing students exiting CUNY to start at a new institution at a huge disadvantage; and

Whereas, In support of CUNY faculty, the American Association of University Professors ("AAUP") sent a letter to CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein and Board Chair Benno Schmidt in January 2012, expressing concern for the quality and effectiveness of the Pathways Initiative as well as concern for the lack of

academic governance; and

Whereas, The AAUP letter indicated that “[f]aculty members have called into question the academic and educational soundness of the Pathways Initiative and raised concerns about the potential academic freedom implications of the changes mandated under the Pathways process”; and

Whereas, In March 2012, the PSC and CUNY’s University Faculty Senate (“UFS”) filed a lawsuit against the University, arguing that the CUNY administration exceeded its authority in matters of curriculum and failed to follow University by-laws and faculty governance procedures in the development of Pathways; and

Whereas, Subsequently, in August 2012, the PSC and UFS filed a second lawsuit, arguing that the administration’s efforts to implement Pathways are in violation of New York State’s Open Meetings Law; and

Whereas, Furthermore, the PSC launched a campaign to repeal Pathways from May 9 through May 31, 2013, asking all full-time faculty members to vote no confidence in the Pathways referendum; and

Whereas, Given the outcry from CUNY’s faculty, the University should seriously consider postponing Pathways until the majority of the CUNY community can agree to a curriculum that is best suited for its students; now, therefore be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon CUNY to postpone the implementation of the Pathways Initiative.

LS #4732  
5/29/13  
1:00 p.m.  
TC