Summary of Second Round Research on Majors

for a New Community College

May 29, 2009

The City University of New York
Office of Academic Affairs
535 East 80th Street
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Summary of Second Round Research on NCC Majors May 29, 2009

The New Community College Planning Team is moving ahead into the development stage with twelve majors, far fewer than are offered in most community colleges. These majors were considered in the context of:

• Student interest;
• Jobs, and the sufficiency of the Associate Degree credential;
• Transfer opportunities;
• Degree of difficulty;
• Facilities needs.

Other questions considered by the Planning Team included:

• Did the proposed program prepare students to be active participants in developing and sustaining the future of NYC?
• Is the proposed program a good fit with other majors, and does it lend itself to interdisciplinarity?
• Will it be possible to develop external partnerships that would support field-based learning?

This second round of research came at the end of a year-long process, which considered responses to the original survey regarding the new community college and to the Concept Paper. We also had further consultations with CUNY faculty and staff with expertise in these areas, faculty and staff at community and senior colleges across the country, and potential employers and labor market analysts. We fully intend to engage faculty in the development of the majors. Whether all twelve proposed majors are in fact approved, a subset of those majors, or still other majors that may yet be proposed and considered are still all open questions.

In order to meet the challenges of developing and approving multiple majors by the time the college opens in 2011, we are recommending that we proceed with nursing, medical informatics, business administration, information technology, urban studies, environmental sciences and liberal arts degrees when the college opens and to seek approval to offer the other majors as soon thereafter as possible.
This table gives an overview of the majors and how we would organize them within the college.

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The following Programs of Study are also of interest.

Pharmacy Technician – as a free standing major

Disability Studies – as a free standing major or as a concentration within Liberal Arts or Human Services

Geographic Information Systems – as a concentration within Urban Studies, Environmental Sciences, and/or Information Technology (to be considered in the future as a free-standing major)

The pages that follow provide a brief summary of the rationale for each major based on a template of the key questions we considered before deciding to move ahead.
NURSING

What can we say about student interest in the major or field of study?

According to the American Association of Community Colleges, Health Professions (specialties and technologies) is the highest enrolled career cluster area at community colleges. At CUNY, Nursing is one of the three most popular choices of a major at registration, surpassed only by Liberal Arts, and at some colleges by Business.

What challenges does this major present?

Of the thousands at CUNY who register as Nursing students, only hundreds succeed. Many are unsuccessful in the pre-clinical courses (e.g. anatomy and physiology, microbiology) and therefore never actually enter a Nursing program. Some who are qualified are not able to enter a Nursing program at their college because of the limited capacity of the program. Still others who are accepted into the program have difficulty with the clinical work. The new community college takes these challenges into consideration and is being designed to help mitigate them.

Do labor market projections suggest that students will be employable with a living wage upon graduation with an associate degree in this area? If this is a transfer program are there jobs that the graduate might hold while working toward a baccalaureate degree?

A report issued in March 2009 by The Center for Health Workforce Studies, The Health Care Workforce in New York, 2007, projects 13.4% growth in the need for registered nurses in New York City between 2006 and 2016. The report realistically states that, while “[T]he current economic downturn clearly has the potential to adversely affect the state’s health industry ... future economic recovery will likely result in a return to health sector job growth and ... an increase in supply/demand gaps ...” This projection, based on NYS Dept. of Labor projections, is reinforced by other workforce research organizations, which cite demography and the importance of the health sector to the economy of the city and state. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average annual median wage for registered nurses in Nassau-Suffolk and the New York Metropolitan area (as of May 2008) is $77,260. The range from the 10th to the 90th percentiles is $52,700 to $101,800 respectively.
Is this major a transfer program, and if so what is the outlook for employment for graduates with a baccalaureate degree in this area?

Although there is some indication that hiring preference is given to nurses with baccalaureate degrees, according to the 2007 Workforce Advocacy Survey of the Healthcare Association of New York State, 55% of registered nurses hold associate degrees. There has been discussion of raising the educational requirement for registered nurses. William Ebenstein, the University Dean of Health and Human Services, has indicated that should this happen, nurses will have 10 years to finish the degree. Dean Ebenstein has also indicated that at this time there is little salary differential between RNs holding associate degrees and those holding baccalaureate degrees.

What are the potential joint programs, or articulation agreements, with senior colleges in the CUNY system, for this program?

It is unlikely that the new community college, at its inception, would seek a joint program in nursing. More research is needed to determine the possibilities of an articulation agreement between an AAS program in Nursing and a baccalaureate Nursing program. For students who do want to go on, programs are available at Hunter, Lehman, NYC College of Technology, Medgar Evers and York.
SURGICAL TECHNOLOGY

What can we say about student interest in the major or field of study?

According to the American Association of Community Colleges, Health Professions (specialties and technologies) is the highest enrolled career cluster area at community colleges. This is borne out by strong enrollment numbers in the Allied Health areas at CUNY as well. These programs often appeal to students who are attracted to the health professions but are not interested in offering palliative care. Kingsborough is the only CUNY community college that offers Surgical Technology; the program has had no difficulty recruiting students, some of whom originally intended to pursue Nursing.

What challenges does this major present?

Surgical Technology shares some challenging classes with Nursing (e.g., microbiology, anatomy and physiology), and while the program is different it’s not considered easier. A student cannot begin KCC as a Surgical Technology major but must pass the co-requisites in order to be admitted to the program. (Nationally, some programs require separate application.) Like Nursing, the capacity of a Surgical Technology program would be limited by the availability of faculty and of clinical sites.

Do labor market projections suggest that students will be employable with a living wage upon graduation with an associate degree in this area? If this is a transfer program are there jobs that the graduate might hold while working toward a baccalaureate degree?

Both the NYS Department of Labor and a report issued in March 2009 by The Center for Health Workforce Studies, The Health Care Workforce In New York, 2007 project a 10% growth in the market for surgical technologists in New York City between 2006 and 2016. A 13.3% rise is expected in New York State. While NYS does not mandate certification at this time for surgical technologists, certification is available and preferable. Students completing an accredited program would be more likely to achieve certification and consequently more likely to find employment. Like other jobs affected by the economic downturn in early 2009, jobs in the health sector are likely to increase once again as the economy recovers. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average annual median wage for surgical technologists in
Nassau-Suffolk and the New York Metropolitan area is $46,330. The range from the 10th to the 90th percentiles is $34,790 to $62,310, respectively

Is this major a transfer program, and if so what is the outlook for employment for graduates with a baccalaureate degree in this area?

This is not a transfer program. The employment outlook is very favorable for an associate degree graduate.

What are the potential joint programs, or articulation agreements, with senior colleges in the CUNY system, for this program?

It is unlikely that the new community college would seek a joint program for this career-oriented degree. Further research within the CUNY system might determine possible articulation agreements, contingent on courses taken either as part of the associate degree or upon transfer to a senior college. Relevant baccalaureate degrees might include Nursing, Biology, and Psychology.
MEDICAL INFORMATICS

What can we say about student interest in the major or field of study?

Medical Informatics is usually considered a health-related major. It combines interest in the non-palliative aspects of health care with interest in computers and technology. Health Sciences and Technology are both heavily enrolled majors at community colleges in general and at CUNY as well. The Health Information Technology program at BMCC has been well-enrolled, holding steady between 130 and 140 in the last few years. A degree in this area is also beginning to show up in for-profit colleges, suggesting increased interest on the part of potential students.

What challenges does this major present?

The curriculum usually includes anatomy and physiology, statistics and other challenging courses, as well as a range of computer-oriented courses. With appropriate support students who can think logically and are comfortable with computers should be successful. Graduates take a certification exam administered by the American Health Information Management Association.

Do labor market projections suggest that students will be employable with a living wage upon graduation with an associate degree in this area? If this is a transfer program are there jobs that the graduate might hold while working toward a baccalaureate degree?

In 2004 President Bush established the position of a National Coordinator for Health Information Technology in the Department of Health and Human Services. President Obama has also promoted a national health IT agenda to improve patient care and benefit public health and biomedical research. The NYS Department of Labor projects 7.6% growth in the area of medical records and health information technicians in New York City through 2016, and 10% in New York State. An associate degree graduate is likely to find jobs with titles such as: health data analyst, records technician specialist, patient information coordinator, etc. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average annual median wage for health information technicians in Nassau-Suffolk and the New York Metropolitan area (as of May
2008) is $38,400. The range from the 10th to the 90th percentiles is $25,940 to $59,160 respectively.

**Is this major a transfer program, and if so what is the outlook for employment for graduates with a baccalaureate degree in this area?**

Although this is not conceived as a transfer program, and the employment outlook is very favorable for a graduate with an associate degree, there are baccalaureate, masters and even doctoral degrees in this area. Salaries and responsibilities rise with educational attainment.

**What are the potential joint programs, or articulation agreements, with senior colleges in the CUNY system for this program?**

Although this program would be offered as an AAS degree, articulation agreements might be possible, contingent on completion of the necessary prerequisites for a baccalaureate program either in the community college or upon transfer. Options might include: Community and Environmental Health at Hunter, Health Promotion Management at York, or Health Services Administration at Lehman or NYCCT. A baccalaureate in Health Information Management is in the pipeline at Medgar Evers and there are several private colleges (and SUNY Downstate Medical School) that offer higher degrees in Health or Medical Informatics.
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

What can we say about student interest in the major or field of study?

According to the American Association of Community Colleges, the second most enrolled major by career cluster (about 17%), is “Business and Related Fields.” At CUNY too, Business Administration/Business Management is one of the three most heavily enrolled majors (with Liberal Arts and Nursing). A recent article in the New York Times (April 12, 2009) suggested that there has been a decrease in the jobs, money and social respect that attracted young people to business, particularly finance. While this may be true temporarily, it is likely that young people will drift back to business-related areas as the economy recovers.

What challenges does this major present?

Students planning to transfer must achieve a satisfactory GPA in several challenging courses including accounting, economics, math (calculus) and statistics. Work in math at the new community college will begin very early, and students will be able to take advantage of a range of support services.

Do labor market projections suggest that students will be employable with a living wage upon graduation with an associate degree in this area? If this is a transfer program are there jobs that the graduate might hold while working toward a baccalaureate degree?

There are a range of options for a graduate with an associate degree in Business. One graduate, for example, might start his or her own business. Another might work as a real estate sales agent (that market too will likely turn around); still another might become a bookkeeper or an accounting clerk. Using the latter as an example, the NYS Department of Labor projects 8% growth in New York City for bookkeeping, accounting and auditing clerks through 2016. The annual median wage in Long Island and the NY metropolitan area is $38,110. While the starting pay is low ($24,670 at the 10th percentile), it rises to $53,640 at the 90th percentile (May 2008).
Is this major a transfer program, and if so what is the outlook for employment for graduates with a baccalaureate degree in this area?

The graduate with a BBA has a wider range of options (and his/her earning potential would increase substantially). If, for example, the graduate transfers to Baruch, he or she would concentrate in one of the four business areas Baruch offers: Accounting, Entrepreneurship, Finance, and Real Estate. Again, consider just one example. The outlook for accountants and auditors in New York City is very favorable; growth is projected, through 2016 at 15.8%. The annual median wage last year was $72,440, ranging from $47,460 at the 10th percentile to $135,050 at the 90th percentile. By the time the first cohort graduates, the economy should be in recovery, and long-term trends in almost all business areas are robust. If it is true, as suggested by the Times article referred to above, that today’s graduates are choosing public service over business, then there will be more slots to fill for the new college’s Business graduates.

What are the potential joint programs, or articulation agreements, with senior colleges in the CUNY system, for this program?

Baruch College has articulation agreements with all 6 CUNY community colleges. Students who maintain the appropriate GPA in 8 specified pre-business courses transfer smoothly to Baruch. With some help from Baruch it ought to be possible to design curriculum in this major to facilitate articulation. Business-related programs (particularly Accounting) can be found, as well, at most of the other senior colleges, including Brooklyn, Hunter, Medgar and Queens.
ENERGY SERVICES MANAGEMENT

What can we say about student interest in the major or field of study?

The one CUNY program that directly addresses alternative energy issues (at BCC) is too new to have developed a track record. However, a recent article (May 8, 2009) in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* was headlined, “Colleges Offer New Alternative-Energy Degrees, Fueled by Student Demand.” Conversations with faculty and staff in other urban community colleges (e.g., Columbus State Community College, Lansing Community College) have suggested substantial demand in this area. This particular program’s attraction is its combined focus on energy, the environment and business. Since this is relatively new, a creative marketing effort will be important, to inform high school and NCC students about potential careers in energy services.

**What challenges does this major present?**

This program would combine science, math and business. Students will study economics, business law and ethics, accounting, selling and marketing, as well as science courses specific to energy and sustainability. Many of these courses are challenging, but with appropriate support a student should be able to complete the program in a timely manner. The Partnership for Environmental Technology Education (PETE)—funded largely by the U.S. EPA and NSF’s Advanced Technology Education program—offers support for community colleges in this area, including an Energy Services & Technology Curriculum.

**Do labor market projections suggest that students will be employable with a living wage upon graduation with an associate degree in this area? If this is a transfer program are there jobs that the graduate might hold while working toward a baccalaureate degree?**

The “green jobs” area is too new to have generated labor market projections. Anecdotally, we have been told that an associate degree is a sufficient credential for a number of jobs in this emerging area, including: energy auditor, energy sales representative, energy cost analyst, etc. A 2008 ATEEC (Advanced Technology Environmental and Energy Center) report lists a broad range of technician jobs (a technician is defined as a person who “applies knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform scientific, technical, communication, and regulatory tasks …”). The report notes that typically technicians complete a two-year associate degree in
an applied technology program. A NY Times article regarding the demand for energy efficient data centers (6/17/08) stated, “... some data managers with only a degree from a two-year college can command a $100,000 salary.”

Is this major a transfer program, and if so what is the outlook for employment for graduates with a baccalaureate degree in this area? This major has not been conceived as a transfer program. However, students who choose to pursue a baccalaureate degree will substantially increase their employment options and salaries.

What are the potential joint programs, or articulation agreements, with senior colleges in the CUNY system, for this program? Articulation agreements that specify the expectations of the sending and receiving colleges may be possible for this career-oriented program. CUNY senior colleges with Environmental Science programs include Queens, Hunter, Brooklyn, City, York and Medgar. Given the nature of the program, the most interesting possibility might be an agreement with Baruch, which offers minors in both Environmental Studies and Environmental Sustainability, with courses taught by faculty in the Weissman School of Arts and Sciences and the Zicklin School of Business.
SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

What can we say about student interest in the major or field of study?

Since Supply Chain Management has not been offered at CUNY, we cannot infer student interest from past experience. Conversations, though, with faculty in other urban community colleges have indicated both strong student and industry support. The combination of business-related courses and technology and computer-related courses, plus the environmental implications of Supply Chain Management should make the program attractive. A creative marketing effort to inform high school and NCC students about potential opportunities will be important.

What challenges does this major present?

Required courses may include math, accounting, computer applications, geographic information systems, business law, contract administration and economics, plus specialization courses such as operations management, transportation and distribution, purchasing, inventory management, etc. While these courses require sophisticated math, reading and writing skills, appropriate support should enable students to complete the program in a timely manner.

Do labor market projections suggest that students will be employable with a living wage upon graduation with an associate degree in this area? If this is a transfer program are there jobs that the graduate might hold while working toward a baccalaureate degree?

Supply Chain Management is sometimes called a “hidden profession.” Businesses, educational institutions, retail operations and government offices are all involved in purchasing goods, controlling inventory, building products, moving freight, and managing relationships. There are many different job titles in this field, and only a few are represented by DOL classifications. The data shows some entry-level positions, such as customer service representative, with a very favorable outlook: 15% growth in New York City, through 2016 (average median salary, $34,440). Others, such as procurement clerk (average median wage, $38,500) are expected to decrease (by 3.5%). Whatever the entry-level job, the employee must learn as much as possible about the business or organization, since advancement is based on performance and experience.
Is this major a transfer program, and if so what is the outlook for employment for graduates with a baccalaureate degree in this area?

Supply Chain Management is not conceived as a transfer program, though this possibility should not be discounted. Although larger companies often have training programs that enable employees to advance, some do give preference to those with bachelor’s degrees. Higher level jobs for which NYC data is available include: logistician, projected to increase 9.3% through 2016, with a median annual wage (May 2008) of $75,730; purchasing manager, projected to increase 3.2%, with a median annual wage of $110,430; and transportation, storage and distribution manager, which will hold fairly flat, with a median annual wage of $94,500. Managers at these salaries supervise people at lower wage levels with lesser credentials.

What are the potential joint programs, or articulation agreements, with senior colleges in the CUNY system, for this program?

No CUNY senior college offers a program in Supply Chain Management, although there are bachelor’s and master’s degree programs in many other colleges. Nevertheless, articulation agreements might be established with business or accounting programs, available in most of the senior colleges. As with other AAS programs, it would be important to work with the receiving college on required course-taking and expectations for student achievement.
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

What can we say about student interest in the major or field of study?

According to the American Association of Community Colleges, the Computer and Information Technologies career cluster accounts for 15% of community college enrollment. The only majors offered by more community colleges, nationally, are in business and health-related programs. Since the dot-com bust, enrollment in technology-related programs in the U.S. had been declining, raising serious concern among business leaders. Last year however for the first time in six years, enrollment in Computer Science programs increased, according to an annual survey conducted by the Computing Research Association. All of the CUNY community colleges but one and all of the comprehensive colleges offer computer-related majors, but no other CUNY community college offers a degree in Information Technology.

What challenges does this major present?

Students will need to take math courses, but the outcomes employers seek are related more to the ability to think logically and analytically than to facility in advanced mathematics. Students need communication and customer service skills as well as technical skills. Many students who find academics difficult enjoy and gain self-confidence by learning and using the technical and employability skills necessary to succeed in this major.

Do labor market projections suggest that students will be employable with a living wage upon graduation with an associate degree in this area? If this is a transfer program are there jobs that the graduate might hold while working toward a baccalaureate degree?

Computers are an integral part of everyday life, at home, in school and in the workplace. Whereas Computer Science graduates often become software developers, professionals in Information Technology support an organization’s technology infrastructure and the people who use it. They troubleshoot, select and install systems, and may even design Web sites and networks. An entry level employee might begin as a computer support specialist. Employment prospects through 2016 in New York City for computer support specialists are very favorable, with a 12.2% rate of growth. The annual median wage in New York City according to the NYS Department of Labor is $54,570. According to the BLS, the median wage in New York, Northern
New Jersey and Long Island is $50,970 ($32,990 to $82,600 at the 10th and 90th percentiles, respectively). Information Technology is one of the targeted industries in the US Department of Labor’s High Job Growth Training Initiative.

**Is this major a transfer program, and if so what is the outlook for employment for graduates with a baccalaureate degree in this area?**

This major is not conceived as a transfer program. Job promotions usually depend more on performance than on formal education. However, students who choose to pursue a baccalaureate degree will increase their employment options and salaries.

**What are the potential joint programs, or articulation agreements, with senior colleges in the CUNY system, for this program?**

Computer-related baccalaureate programs are available at every CUNY senior and comprehensive college. Advisors will work closely with students, who are interested in pursuing a bachelor’s degree in a computer-related field, to ensure that they are aware of senior college requirements and plan a program of study with those requirements in mind.
TEACHER EDUCATION

What can we say about student interest in the major or field of study?

According to the American Association of Community Colleges, Education accounts for 7% of the enrollment in community colleges. Almost half of all community colleges in the U.S. offer an Education major. At CUNY, Early Childhood, Childhood Education and the more generic “Education Associate” or “Educational Studies” are robust majors. There may be some fall-off in enrollment in the next few years, as the economic downturn has impacted the hiring of new teachers in New York City. However, interest will rebound, as it always has, especially if a decline in Education graduates leads to concerns about a teacher shortage.

What challenges does this major present?

It must be clear to the student that to be a teacher, at any level of education, he or she will have to pursue a bachelor’s degree and, within a set period of time, a master’s degree as well. In all baccalaureate programs, students major in a discipline and complete a required sequence of education courses, including student teaching. Education majors will need to work closely with an advisor to select courses that will facilitate transfer into a baccalaureate program.

Do labor market projections suggest that students will be employable with a living wage upon graduation with an associate degree in this area? If this is a transfer program are there jobs the graduate might hold while working toward a baccalaureate degree?

Certainly there are jobs for which a graduate with an associate degree would be qualified and for which he or she would be selected over someone with no degree. These jobs include (using BLS job titles) child care worker, recreation worker, teacher aide or teacher assistant, and all these areas are projected to have strong growth in NYC through 2016. There are also jobs in after-school programs, community organizations and with families needing nannies or babysitters. For the Education major these jobs should be a means to an end.
Is this major a transfer program, and if so what is the outlook for employment for graduates with a baccalaureate degree in this area?

Teacher Education would provide a student with the first two years of a transfer program leading to a baccalaureate degree in a liberal arts major, with a co-major in education. Although the economic downturn has affected hiring by the NYC Department of Education, labor market analysts suggest that the case for Education is “iron-clad.” Like health and social services, education has little exposure to the financial industry and is likely to bounce back when the economy does. In fact, despite the downturn, the education sector gained jobs in NYS between January 2008 and December 2008. Growth is expected in every category in NYC and at every level of education through 2016. The market, for example, for primary, secondary and special education teachers is projected to grow 8.7% (almost 4,000 average annual openings). The annual median wage in May 2008 (excluding special education) in New York, Northern New Jersey and Long Island was $63,350 ($43,220 to $99,620 earned by the lowest 10% and the highest 90% respectively).

What are the potential joint programs, or articulation agreements, with senior colleges in the CUNY system, for this program?

Several CUNY community colleges have jointly registered programs in education with senior colleges (e.g., BMCC and CCNY, KCC and Brooklyn, QCC and Queens). The articulation model will require careful alignment of the coursework at the new community college and the receiving institution, as well as common understandings regarding student achievement.
HUMAN SERVICES

What can we say about student interest in the major or field of study?

According to the American Association of Community Colleges, Social and Government services (unfortunately not disaggregated) accounts for 7% of community college enrollment. Most CUNY community colleges and NYCCT offer associate degrees in Human Services, most with continuing strong or rising enrollment. This is a major that appeals to the instincts of young people eager to fulfill a societal mission, sometimes to “give back” to their community.

What challenges does this major present?

Coursework in human social services theory and practice would be supplemented by classes in communications, psychology, sociology, ethics, etc. Some programs offer concentrations, e.g., in gerontology, substance abuse, disability studies. Depending on the student’s interest, he or she might also take classes in anatomy and physiology, pharmacology, nutrition, or child development. Support will be available, if needed, to help students complete this program in a timely manner.

Do labor market projections suggest that students will be employable with a living wage upon graduation with an associate degree in this area? If this is a transfer program are there jobs that the graduate might hold while working toward a baccalaureate degree?

Although Human Services should be a transfer program, the associate degree provides an academic background for entry-level positions. Human Services jobs, even at entry levels, are growing faster than average due to the expansion of facilities and programs for the elderly and disabled, the homeless, substance abusers, etc. Social/human service assistant is a generic term used by BLS for a range of Human Service employees, all of whom usually work under the guidance of social workers, psychologists, and other professionals. The projection through 2016 is for growth in NYC of 17.4%. The salaries at this level are relatively low—$28,640 was the annual median wage in May 2008 in New York, Northern New Jersey and Long Island (from $19,010 to $44,000 at the 10th and 90th percentiles respectively).
Is this major a transfer program, and if so what is the outlook for employment for graduates with a baccalaureate degree in this area?

Although students who major in Human Services may want to begin work immediately, a baccalaureate degree is necessary for advancement. Social work, for example, requires at least a bachelor’s degree and the gold standard in public health is a master’s degree. Graduates who pursue further education will have increased responsibilities, career opportunities and the higher pay of a licensed professional. The BLS lists a number of different social work specialties, all with very favorable employment prospects in NYC through 2016, where growth is projected from approximately 4% to 24%. Median annual wages range from about $40,000 to about $53,000 and top out between $78,000 and $84,000. The social services sector is one of the three largest industry sectors in the City and has been one of the most stable through past recessions.

What are the potential joint programs, or articulation agreements, with senior colleges in the CUNY system, for this program?

Course work prepares students for higher education in Social Work, Psychology, Public Health and other areas of Human Services. NYCCT has a baccalaureate degree in Human Services and there are many senior college programs in Psychology and Sociology. Lehman, CSI, York, and most recently Medgar Evers have baccalaureate programs in Social Work. York also offers Gerontological Studies and Services, and Hunter has an undergraduate program in Urban Public Health.
URBAN STUDIES

What can we say about student interest in the major or field of study?

Urban Studies is an alternative to a traditional liberal arts degree, the most popular major at CUNY’s community colleges. It would fulfill the same general transfer function for students interested in studying a wide range of subjects, and for students planning to earn a baccalaureate degree but undecided as to what career they want to pursue. Urban Studies would enable students interested in meaningful careers in public and community service to focus their interdisciplinary course selection on issues relevant to some of the large challenges of society.

What challenges does this major present?

Urban Studies will provide students with a rigorous liberal arts education and an introduction to the research tools used by a variety of social science disciplines. It is the quintessential interdisciplinary program and is consistent with the inquiry-based learning that is at the core of the new community college’s educational model.

Do labor market projections suggest that students will be employable with a living wage upon graduation with an associate degree in this area? If this is a transfer program are there jobs that the graduate might hold while working toward a baccalaureate degree?

There are jobs that a community college graduate with this degree might be offered over an applicant with no degree, including for example jobs in sales and hospitality and administrative support positions. While the current job market is depressed, long term projections in these areas are quite favorable. A baccalaureate degree, however, will generate more opportunity and more earnings and the graduate will be less vulnerable to future economic downturns.
Is this major a transfer program, and if so what is the outlook for employment for graduates with a baccalaureate degree in this area?

The Urban Studies major should be designed to provide the first two years—including general education requirements—toward completion of a baccalaureate degree. This will ensure appropriate background for transfer into many majors, including Urban Studies, that can lead to rewarding careers. Urban professionals work in planning, designing, managing and operating public services. They also plan for effective use and protection of public resources, parks and mass transit. Disaster preparation, zoning, recreational facilities, various social services and city governance all fall within their scope. A student who goes beyond the baccalaureate degree might consider a career in urban planning, law or business. Students will want to consider potential employment options when selecting a senior college major.

What are the potential joint programs, or articulation agreements, with senior colleges in the CUNY system, for this program?

A program in Urban Studies associated with a related program at a CUNY senior college would make the new community college truly unique in the metropolitan area. Hunter and Queens offer baccalaureate degrees in Urban Studies. Hunter describes its program as “built around a systematic introduction to contemporary urban life and problems.” The Queens program encourages students to develop a concentration such as Public Sector Management, Community Planning and Development, Criminal Justice, Health, Social and Economic Policy. To reiterate, though, there are many other senior college majors that a new community college Urban Studies graduate might pursue.
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

What can we say about student interest in the major or field of study?

There is little data on Environmental Sciences in urban community colleges. However, there are several public high schools with environmental themes that are now attracting more applicants than available slots, and interest in issues such as climate change and alternative energy are generating student clubs in many high schools. The No Child Left Inside act, recently introduced in the House and Senate, if passed, will authorize funding for high-quality, K-12 environmental instruction and will likely generate further interest at the secondary school level. At CUNY, BCC offers a program in “Earth and Environmental Sciences.” Although it is a small major, the courses are popular with students seeking to fulfill distribution requirements. A creative marketing effort would help to inform high school and new community college students about how this major resonates with their interest in environmental and sustainability issues as well as potential careers.

What challenges does this major present?

One reason these programs tend to be small, in both community and senior colleges, is students’ concern about the rigor of the curriculum, particularly math and science (e.g., geometry, physics, calculus, chemistry, trigonometry, and statistics). But study of the environment, particularly the urban environment, lends itself to the interdisciplinary, inquiry-based learning that is the core of the new community college’s educational model. Work in math at the new college will begin very early, and a range of support services will be available for all discipline areas.

Do labor market projections suggest that students will be employable with a living wage upon graduation with an associate degree in this area? If this is a transfer program are there jobs that the graduate might hold while working toward a baccalaureate degree?

It may be possible to build-in courses that would enable an associate degree graduate to get a job in environmental technology. Growth in the market for environmental science and protection technicians, through 2016 in NYC is projected to be 21% (annual median wage: $40,380). Since these numbers are small to begin with and it appears that many of these jobs
are now going to people with baccalaureate degrees, we believe Environmental Sciences is a transfer major.

Is this major a transfer program, and if so what is the outlook for employment for graduates with a baccalaureate degree in this area?

There are many options for the graduate with a baccalaureate degree (and still more for a graduate with a master’s degree). Environmental scientists work in government agencies, consulting businesses and a range of specialty areas. The outlook for environmental engineers and environmental scientists and specialists is very favorable. Median annual wages in New York, Northern NJ and Long Island for environmental scientists and specialists is $67,730 ($40,640 through $103,370 at the 10th and 90th percentiles respectively).

What are the potential joint programs, or articulation agreements, with senior colleges in the CUNY system, for this program?

Several CUNY senior colleges offer programs that prepare students for professional as well as for graduate work in related fields. Queens College has a School of Earth and Environmental Sciences; Hunter, Brooklyn and Medgar Evers offer programs in Environmental Studies or Environmental Science; Lehman is planning to launch a program in Interdisciplinary Environmental Science in fall 2009, and Baruch offers minors in Environmental Studies and Environmental Sustainability. CCNY has a program in Environmental Engineering.
LIBERAL ARTS

What assumptions can we make about student interest in the major or field of study?

Liberal Arts, or Liberal Arts and Sciences, is by far the most enrolled major at CUNY’s six community colleges. It is favored by students who are planning to earn a baccalaureate degree, who are interested in studying a wide range of subjects, or who are simply undecided as to what career they want to pursue.

Does this major present challenges to the students’ goals and/or the institution’s goals?

The Liberal Arts student may select from a wide range of courses. In addition to conveying content, these courses will help to develop the student’s communication, analytical and critical thinking skills. More students graduate with degrees in Liberal Arts than with degrees in any other major.

Do labor market projections suggest that students will be employable with a living wage upon graduation with an associate degree in this area? If this is a transfer program are there jobs that the graduate might hold while working toward a baccalaureate degree?

There are many jobs for which a Liberal Arts graduate is likely to be considered over an applicant with no college degree, including jobs in retail, sales, hospitality and various administrative support positions. But the person who has earned an associate degree in Liberal Arts should seriously consider earning a baccalaureate degree, which over a lifetime will generate more opportunity and earnings. The baccalaureate degree graduate will also be less vulnerable in times of economic downturn.

Is this major a transfer program, and if so what is the outlook for employment for graduates with a baccalaureate degree in this area?

In a baccalaureate program, the new community college Liberal Arts graduate should choose a major that reflects his or her interests and holds the promise of a satisfying career. The baccalaureate degree may lead to careers in the sciences, social sciences, health professions, education, journalism, public service, engineering, technology, and the law. While
some jobs may require education beyond the baccalaureate degree, there are truly a multitude of possibilities.

**What are the potential joint programs, or articulation agreements, with senior colleges in the CUNY system, for this program?**

The student who works closely with an advisor should be able to transfer to any college in the CUNY system with their general education courses intact. If the associate degree program is planned carefully, taking into consideration from early on the specific requirements of the college to which the student wants to transfer, it should be possible to enter that college as a junior.