

Weissman School of Arts and Sciences

There are several important issues facing Arts and Sciences as it works to achieve its mission of quality undergraduate and graduate education in an atmosphere of financial restriction, major curriculum change, faculty retirements and recruitments, and a "freeze" or a "chill" on staff positions. The contribution of the school to scholarship and the arts as well as to teaching and service to the community in this atmosphere is commendable and certainly up to the established standards of the school.

From the beginning of the concerted effort at Enrollment Management Weissman has been vitally concerned. For the past two years the school has aimed to admit more qualified freshmen students so that we could have confidence in the quality of education provided the first and second year students. For those who would major in the liberal arts, the quality of their general and specialized education would meet their needs and our ambitions. For those who would major in the business disciplines we could be sure that we had given our best to make it possible for them to succeed and realize their aspirations. The college has also made major efforts to attract and educate the greatest number of CUNY Honors College students; liberal arts faculty welcome the opportunity to teach these young people and have been active in the CHC project. The students, graduate and undergraduate, continue to improve in terms of qualifications for admissions--the SAT scores have increased by 50 points in just the last year and the numbers of students who have taken advanced placement courses is considerable. Those who choose Baruch by reputation, no matter what they major in, find an excellent education in Weissman even in time of scarce resources. The qualifications of the admissions to the four graduate programs in Weissman are steadily improving and the numbers admitted and graduated are growing, despite the lack of resources other than non-tax levy.

The total number of sections taught in the fall semester of 2003 in WSAS is 914 with a total enrollment of 25,652 with the average class size 28.07. The total number of independent study enrollments is 153. The Weissman school FTEs for the fall were off slightly with 25,805 students in Fall 2003 for a drop of 1.9% over all from Fall 2002 of 26,227. Certain departments with planned reductions actually reduced (Education, Health Education, Tutorials in Mathematics). The enrollments in the graduate programs in Industrial/Organization psychology and in Business Journalism suffered important losses though the enrollments in the graduate programs in Applied Financial Mathematics and Corporate Communications increased in quality and in numbers. Shortage of faculty (full and part time) explains the other dips in enrollment in departments of political science, philosophy, fine and performing arts and history. Without basic resources it is difficult to meet the targets set for the Weissman school, but we did an excellent job, certainly in keeping with the other units of Baruch.

The support, tax levy and non-tax levy, for scholarship, teaching and service, has been curtailed in the current financial crisis. There were fewer faculty receiving research reassigned time for the spring semester (approximately 60 in all), fewer dollars in travel and research funds, and severely cut back funds for graduate assistantships which are absolutely necessary for the teaching and research of productive scholars. The Weissman visiting professorships, which have enriched the teaching and scholarly life of the school,

have also been cut to merely one in the fall semester of 2003. This situation is likely to be repeated in the current year. Furthermore, the freeze that was declared in response to the budgetary needs of the college (and the university) reduced the number of students (Ph.d. and MA/MS) receiving some sort of financial assistance; the assistance that the school was able to offer was non-tax levy or employment. Undergraduate student employment was cut as well with the burden of maintaining effort in offices of departments falling to faculty and staff or falling by the wayside.

As the college administration prepared for the financial difficulties of this year, college-wide inquiries were undertaken, including task forces on student aid/employment, student services, entrepreneurship, and productivity. Despite the scarcity of resources, improved teaching by full time and part time faculty is the goal. Improvement of student tutorial services, particularly in English and mathematics, better advisement, evaluation and testing, a strong immersion program for entering and ESL students was and is the mission and one which was borne by each of the three schools and all the administration across the campus. Deeper engagement by all the college has come to the fore as a major goal measured in many ways. Extraordinary efforts were expended on increasing the earnings of the college through more summer school offerings. As the fall semester began the block programming of the past three years moved to another level with the creation of learning communities in Weissman. Two blocks of at least four courses have coordinated activities and content for students in the hope of realizing positive outcomes of learning for these freshmen. If the pilot is successful, and thus far it appears to be realizing some of the goals, it will be expanded.

The major curriculum change of the past few years by which all students minor in the liberal arts with the intention of strengthening communication skills and realizing stronger general education goals for Baruch graduates has begun to take hold. The unfortunate coincidence of the launch of the new curricular requirements with major financial difficulties intensifies the alarms sounded when the curriculum first passed. A manageable number of students have already taken their first TIER III courses. Simultaneously, the departments of English and mathematics have undertaken important studies of the delivery and learning outcomes of students in basic courses of composition and algebra and calculus. For both departments an honest realization of goals will require new hires for next year. Psychology is the department which has the most declared minors of all those in the liberal arts. The department has been undergoing a serious self-study project to sharpen the focus on the needs of professions and vocations as well as student interests. Communications studies and English are, thus far, major areas of choice for Tier III as well. There is still much work to be done.

The faculty is responsible for fine-tuning the curriculum and the bulletin to truthfully and realistically reflect the abilities and the desirability of each department to offer particular courses. In the past curriculum in Weissman reflected the desire of disciplines to have a good FTE profile to gain resources that were measured out in terms of the number of majors per discipline. The focus of the school on general education separate from the particular disciplines is the subject of limited discussion and one which must be undertaken if this mission (ours, CUNY's, Middle States') is to have positive results. The confrontation of the issues involved particularly the focus on learning outcomes, crossing disciplines,

and strengthening critical thinking, team work, and communication skills is yet to be addressed by a substantial portion of the faculty.

On the bright side, twelve good recruits came to Weissman this fall in the fields of English, Fine and Performing Arts, Modern Languages, Natural Sciences, Psychology, Black and Hispanic Studies, Sociology and Anthropology, History, and Math. For the first time, and one of the reasons that such strong hires were made in the social sciences, cross-discipline and cross-school search committees were created. The cooperation of SPA and Weissman in the social sciences, including a search for an immigration specialist, was exemplary. Three visiting professors--the Harmon writer-in-residence, a Weissman professor and a distinguished mathematician--joined our ranks for the semester. Eight substitutes were hired to maintain the full time efforts of the school; three were given by the provost to enable Weissman to meet the student demand for liberal arts courses. Two searches failed or were postponed and may end more happily this year. The tenure process is not yet complete but Weissman advanced seven candidates to the College Personnel and Budget committee.

In terms of scholarship and achievements the Weissman faculty have continued to distinguish themselves. Professor Cynthia Whittaker edited the catalogue volume accompanying the New York Public Library exhibition on *Russia Engages the World, 1453-1825* bringing together an exciting collection of documents and works of art. The catalogue includes essays by some of the leading scholars of Russian history and culture to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the founding of St. Petersburg. Peter Hitchcock's latest volume, *Imaginary States: Studies in Cultural Transnationalism* has been published by Illinois University press. Hector Cordero, the chair of Black and Hispanic Studies, has edited a study on *Migration, Transnationalization, and Race*, published by Temple University. Tansen Sen of History published *Buddhism, Diplomacy and Trade* with the University of Hawaii press. William Boddy's *Fifties Television* was published by the University of Illinois Studies in Communications. Distinguished professor John Brenkman has launched a US-Europe seminar addressing some of the issues of the cultural and political divide that have surfaced in the last year. The seminar is sponsored by Weissman and the Graduate Center and has held a first meeting. The dean's office opened discussion of Women and Work issues in an informal seminar that promises to be a worthwhile initiative crossing the frontiers of the three schools. Professor Athelstan Canagarajah of English has been named the editor of the TESOL Quarterly, an important recognition of his scholarship and a vital support to the work that he and the university does in this area. April Bernard has joined our faculty this semester as the Harmon poet in residence, succeeding Anita Desai who was Harmon writer in residence in the spring. This year Karen Lyness of the Psychology department was awarded the Rosabeth Moss Kanter Award for Excellence in Working Family Research for an important article in the Journal of Applied Psychology and for lifetime achievement. The number of faculty applying for PSC Cuny awards is up at least ten per cent for the coming semester. The Baruch Performing Arts Center has now offered a wide-ranging program for an entire year and a quarter, leading students and faculty alike to share the vision now that we have appropriate space of the potential of the arts in the liberal arts at Baruch.