

WEISSMAN SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, SPRING 2005

The School's mission is to engage all Baruch students with the learning of the liberal arts and sciences to prepare them to lead responsible and fulfilling lives as individuals, as professionals, and as citizens of the city and the country--an important role in a professional school of business and public affairs and a vital one in an urban public institution of enormous diversity.

The School is responsible for the first two years of undergraduate education as well as for the minors for the vast majority of our students. Two policy decisions—one to maintain the current overall enrollments in the College to ensure qualified students the benefits of professional education and the other to shift undergraduate student numbers to the liberal arts and to public affairs insofar as possible to maintain essential tuition income—have added to that responsibility. Weissman itself urged greater numbers of first and second year students believing that an integrated general education curriculum at Baruch would improve the education of each student and create a community of learners for students and faculty. This last year Weissman taught almost 4000 more students over the previous year (2500 more in spring over two years ago in spring)--this number 4000 includes the additional students from last summer and school year. It also includes the students whose Tier III requirements brought them to the liberal arts for junior and senior courses.

Some of the best planning for the educational future of the school and for the future success in general education, skills and broadening discipline-based learning has proceeded despite financial exigency. The provost's support system of tutoring math and English skills buttresses WSAS efforts. This task is college-wide and supported by college and CUNY central initiatives in communication and analytical skills. Baruch has made some important achievements.

At the same time Weissman has recruited in a three-year period 25 new faculty, each of whom is living up to the expectations of the careful hiring process. These are not new lines; rather they are replacements for retirees. This year's recruiting is not yet completed; searches are still ongoing for an expert in aging (Psych/Soc), for an art historian, for a writing expert to join the three writing teachers hired last year. Replacements for retirees next year, depending upon the financial exigencies of 2005-6, may assist communications studies, political science, English, modern languages. The achievements of junior faculty hired in the past three or more years testify to the

quality of current hiring in the liberal arts. The much-prized Whiting awards for excellent teaching and the humanities awards from the Graduate Center are indications of the quality of faculty. The contract supports junior faculty research and scholarship and WSAS has been able through private funds to triple the amount of research reassigned time this year. We have not yet returned to the levels of the past when as many as 70 faculty could count on research reassigned time. Unless private donors emerge to replace adjunct budget as a source of funds it is not likely that next year will match this year but with some assistance from faculty development money in the provost's office more travel and research funds have been available than in the previous year. (With greater numbers of students the need for adjuncts is escalating with each semester.) This year the president's efforts with the Baruch College Fund have enabled a small number of graduate and undergraduate students to receive some assistance for their studies, some have become graduate assistants to scholars and editors.

The organization of student learning in the learning communities—now three years old—is a demonstrable success—a better qualified student body, greater student retention and higher graduation rates in fewer years from Zicklin, SPA or Weissman. Beginning with two learning community groups from the bloc programming of two years ago, proceeding to a dozen LCs last year, this coming year there should be fourteen to sixteen learning communities in the Baruch Academy. The entire range of faculty and students were included—honors, scholars, ESL, general students—and the results have been commendable, even remarkable. Many new faculty have joined with veteran excellent teachers to lead learning communities. The coming year, Fall 2005, will see an increase in the number of learning communities and even greater cooperation between Admissions, Advisement and WSAS.

From the beginning the School has been vitally concerned with the entire process of enrollment management, especially with admission and advisement of more qualified students and we have good results from this policy—the retention rates have gone up and the number of years to graduation have gone down. The College has a fine reputation in the city; our pass rates are the best in CUNY. When the Zicklin numbers declined with the new requirements, the students appear to be staying at Baruch at WSAS and SPA. We have a large and successful CUNY Honors College cohort—the largest in the system for several years in a row--and the college's own honors program, an important part of the learning communities--is steadily growing.

The quality and vitality of the students shows in the student-initiated activities. There can be no doubt that the Ticker has returned to its importance on campus. The Model United Nations, the Cine series, the Oxford debate, new sports and new clubs, political, religious, and ethnic clubs, the official school plays as well as the student directed and performed plays, are all indications that though Baruch is a unique institution there are many aspects of a traditional liberal arts college here. There are also many more signs, graduate and undergraduate, of the professional orientation of our college. The cooperation of the three schools is evident in the Baruch American Humanics connection, newly formed and promising many opportunities for students to intern in not for profit, service learning opportunities.

The faculty of the School as a whole is deeply involved in the necessary evaluations and planning for Middle States accreditation. It is a time for measuring where we are, where we want to go, and even get a sense of achievement in how far we have come. The faculty is in every department and in the curriculum committee examining learning goals for the general education offerings—one by one faculty have shifted emphasis from what they as professors teach to what students as learners learn. Assessing that learning has been the focus of many useful and some stimulating discussions. Every venue—classroom, department, curriculum committee and joint curriculum committee, administration and faculty—are engaged to a degree in questions of goals and assessments. Interdisciplinary programs, which were underemphasized in the new curriculum, have taken up much of the thinking of this last semester and will for the semester to come: a women's studies program, the Latin American and Caribbean program, the Asia-Asian American program, and explorations in Urban Studies are just a few of the interdisciplinary initiatives. Some headway has been made on planning for an economics and social policy minor as well as preliminary considerations of visual studies across several departments.

There are increases in three of the graduate programs of WSAS: in Industrial Organization Psychology, in Corporate Communications, and in Financial Mathematics. With the creation of the new school of journalism at CUNY, scheduled to open in 2006 with a track of business journalism, the program at Baruch will be phasing out. Baruch's program has attracted journalists of outstanding reputation and in its life here at the School it has contributed much to the intellectual life of the College as a whole. The faculty will be incorporated to varying degrees in the new school and will continue to enrich Baruch's undergraduate program in journalism. The I/O Psychology master's program has worked with Zicklin to develop overseas offerings in Asia.

Of course, most Weissman graduate teaching is the teaching and scholarship in the disciplines of the Graduate Center. The Weissman faculty teach there and mentor those same students here as graduate students enter our departments as teaching fellows.

There have been several important gifts to the Weissman School this year to add to the influence of the performing arts. These include the gift of the Engelman family to name the concert hall, of the Nagelberg family to name the theatre, of Marvin Antonowsky to name the arts complex and to provide for the greater impact of the arts on students and on campus life. The Kanner family has recently made an important gift to support the Women's History and Women and Work seminar. And always the generous gift of George and Mildred Weissman to the educational and intellectual foundations of the school has contributed immensely to the importance of the liberal arts and sciences at Baruch. The bright side of 2005-2006 for WSAS focuses on the future, a future made and brightened by its people—faculty, staff, students, and alumni.