

Weissman School of Arts and Sciences

There are several issues facing Arts and Sciences as it tries to achieve its mission of quality undergraduate and graduate education in an atmosphere of financial restriction, major curriculum change, and faculty retirements and recruitments. The contribution of the school to scholarship and the arts as well as to teaching and service to the community in the six months since the last General Faculty report is commendable and certainly up to the established standards of the school.

The financial restrictions, particularly those in the non-tax levy funds, has resulted in fewer faculty receiving research reassigned time for the spring semester, fewer dollars in travel and research funds, and severely cut back funds for graduate assistants who are absolutely necessary for the teaching and research of productive scholars. Further, in the tax levy funds these cutbacks and the freeze that has been declared in view of budgetary needs have reduced the number of students and the number of hours they are able to work in the offices for faculty and staff. Each of the three schools is dealing with these difficulties. Weissman has greatly increased the number of summer school offerings in the hopes of contributing substantially to the college's revenues and positively to the students who will need to acquire as much of their education as they can before tuition increases.

The major curriculum change though is the good news, or promises to be the good news, because all Baruch undergraduates are required to take their minor in the liberal arts. Some are already doing so; others will follow in summer and spring. This curriculum change offers the student the opportunity to deepen their understanding of an arts and sciences discipline and to improve their skills in writing, speaking, reading and general analysis. Simultaneously, the departments of English and mathematics are undertaking important studies of the delivery and the learning outcomes of students in basic courses of composition and algebra and calculus. Three departments are undergoing self-study—English, Sociology-Anthropology, and Psychology-- which promises to sharpen the focus on the needs of professions and vocations as well as student interests. The outcome of these self studies will influence the strategic planning of the school in terms of allocations of lines and resources.

The school curriculum committee and those of many departments have much work to do in terms of matching offerings to student needs and interests, to their vocational and professional concerns as well as to their general education. The faculty are the ones who are responsible for fine tuning the curriculum and the bulletin to truthfully and realistically reflect the strategic plans of each department, offering new faculty places for their specialization and removing courses we are unable to offer, and perhaps unsuited to offer because we have lost faculty in the last years. In all of the efforts of departments

and school there is a determination to improve the quality of offering to students, graduate and undergraduate, and improve teaching.

Weissman has been vitally concerned in the entire process of Enrollment Management which has for the past couple of years focused on admitting more qualified freshman students so that we could have confidence in the quality of education of the first and second year students. The new pre-business requirements may, of necessity, revise this approach to one which makes strenuous efforts to inform our community college feeder schools of those requirements and to exert some influence into the content of community college math and English courses. This is a realistic policy and is part of the improvement of the skills of our students. Nevertheless, to the degree that it is possible to follow the policy we have been following of admitting more freshmen that meet our standards Arts and Sciences urges that we continue it because we have demonstrable good results from this policy. The same is true of the major efforts this college has made to attract and educate the greatest number of CUNY Honors College students. The first two cohorts of CUNY Honors College students totaling 200 greatly strengthen the student body and this year's applicants may add another 80 to that number. This year the school was financially handicapped in its offerings to attract these students, but they still have many reasons for coming here.

The students, graduate and undergraduate, continue to improve in terms of the qualifications for admissions—SATs and high school averages or in the case of the graduates in the quality of their undergraduate education and their GREs. For the graduate programs the numbers are increasing in Corporate Communications; they remain steady but are much better qualified in the Masters in I/O Psychology; the Financial Mathematics masters is limited to 20 and the students' stats are excellent; there is a drop off in applications for Business Journalism but external factors seem the most important variable in that drop. For the undergraduates the numbers of students who are coming to Baruch to major in the arts and sciences are slowly increasing, in part as the result of the reputation of Baruch as a prize in the CUNY system. The burden of the efforts of the Weissman School has always been to educate students who have chosen business as their future so the move to raise the quality of the admissions to Baruch and raise the bar for admissions to Zicklin (and to SPA) will have a major impact on the entire College. The School is already part of efforts to tighten the administration of probation and dismissal, strengthen advisement, raise the standards of all courses and programs, particularly to pay attention to fundamental requirements of good teaching and informed advisement.

The School of Arts and Sciences has allied with the School of Public Affairs in the vital area of immigration and urban issues. We have held several meetings with each other with a purpose to make Baruch the home of a strong program of study of the impact and evolution of immigration in this city and vicinity. At one of the meetings representatives of all the campuses of CUNY contributed to the discussions of our two faculties. This promises to be significant for Baruch and for CUNY.

Arts and Sciences has almost completed its search and hire process this year with the result that we have hired 12 new faculty and have three still pondering our offers. One of the factors which led to strong hires this year has been the creation of cross-discipline and cross school search committees. We have attracted excellent people and look forward to their arrival. Six faculty advanced to tenure. In addition, we have a number of substitute appointments who are highly qualified faculty.

A number of people have won prestigious awards and published books: Grace Schulman won the Aiken-Taylor Award in Modern American Poetry, Alison Griffiths of Communications new book Wondrous Difference received the Kovacs award and she received the NEH summer stipend award for scholarship. Carol Berkin's A Brilliant Solution, a study in the forming of the US constitution, was published and she has appeared on television a number of times this year discussing this and other historical issues. In all, fifteen volumes have been published by Weissman scholars, three edited, seven of our faculty are the editors of important journals, and five of our faculty have made creative contributions in the world of art. Further, in the past nine months the center has mounted concerts, plays, readings, poetry celebrations, performances, comedy and variety shows, in short a wide variety of arts and entertainment. The Fine and Performing Arts department, the Student Activities, and the BPAC staff headed by visiting Professor Eric Krebs have, in a very short time, given the college a taste of the potential of that beautiful space and interested faculty and staff to enrich our lives with art, music, and theatre.

These kudos are important to the School of Arts and Sciences—recognition for one's professional accomplishments is heart-warming and inspiring. At the same time the day to day achievements of a dedicated faculty and the striving for improvement is the true merit that the faculty, students and staff have earned.