

Report to the General Faculty of Baruch College
President Kathleen Waldron
September 2005

Welcome

I am delighted to begin my second year as president of Baruch College and to begin the new academic year. Classes started on Monday August 29th with enrollment of 15,500 students this year, comparable to enrollments from last year. Our freshmen class is a high performing group of 1600 new students with average high school grades of B+, nearly one third are from the top of their graduating classes and their average SAT scores are 1107 compared to 1104 last year. We welcome a number of new tenured or tenure-track faculty colleagues, including Daniele Artistico, April Allen, John Maciuika, Loren Naidoo, and Michael Staub in the Weissman School of Arts and Sciences; Suparna Chakkraborty, Julius Cherny, Paquita Davis-Friday, Micki Eisenman, Mary Kern, Sang Young Song, Ana Valenzuela, Ko Wang, and Susan Young in the Zicklin School of Business; and Katherine Shelfer in the Newman Library. We also welcome a new Vice President of Student Development and Enrollment Management and Dean of Students, Ben Corpus; a new Associate Dean of Continuing Education, Ann Clarkson; and Acting Dean of the School of Public Affairs, David Birdsell.

Strategic Planning

Progress on our strategic planning process, begun earlier this year, continues apace. Towards the end of the spring semester, several of the planning committees delivered preliminary reports to the President's cabinet; these included reports from the Facilities, Student Affairs, Productivity, and Human Resources committees. These reports are available to the Baruch College community through our strategic planning Blackboard site, which can be accessed through a distinct tab at the top of all Blackboard users' opening pages.

On June 7 and 8, the College hosted a major planning retreat, involving members of the Strategic Planning Council and members of each of the planning committees and task forces. Over 70 participants, including faculty, administrators, students, and alumni, gathered the week after Commencement at JPMorgan Chase's corporate conference center to discuss the future of Baruch College, and strategies for making our collective dreams realities.

Throughout the summer, committees and task forces have continued to meet – both in person and electronically – to prepare recommendations on topics that include curriculum, faculty research, excellence in teaching and learning, student affairs, finance and productivity, enhancing the College's visibility, and improving the physical campus. The leadership and members of each of these groups is, again, available via the Blackboard site, and we encourage any member of the community who has ideas on these topics they would like considered as the process is underway to be in contact with the

committee chairs. Each of these committees will be presenting their recommendations to the Strategic Planning Council later in September. During October, the Council will synthesize these recommendations into a draft of a strategic plan, which will be released, campus-wide, as a draft by November 1.

Once the draft is circulated, there will be ample opportunity for both formal and informal feedback. There will be town hall meetings for students as well as faculty and staff. Presentations and discussions will be held throughout the fall at regular faculty meetings, including those of each of the schools and the faculty senate. Meetings with student leaders, the leadership of the Baruch College Fund, and the central administration of CUNY will be held to ensure all constituencies have the opportunity to be heard. In addition, written comments and discussion will be solicited through the Blackboard site.

Our goal is to have a College-wide strategic plan in place by February 1, 2006.

The Physical Campus

Over the next several years, one of the College's most significant undertakings will be the renovation of 17 Lex, or the Larry and Eris Field Building. While we originally did not anticipate being able to begin even a planning phase for another three to five years, I am delighted to announce that we will begin a south campus master plan process during this academic year, with the design phase for the building to begin in 2007, and construction to begin during the 2008-09 academic year.

The renovation of 17 Lex will allow the College to expand its classrooms, faculty offices, student spaces, and administrative spaces. The potential exists for us to build modern science facilities, performing arts student space for academic study (e.g. small music studios), and more modern classrooms – of which we are presently short, as you all know so well. In addition, we be able to redesign our large auditorium (currently the largest facility not only on campus, but in the Flatiron/Gramercy Park district), build space for our expanding undergraduate honors program, and consolidate the senior administration of the College, now spread out over three buildings.

The building will probably serve the Weissman School more prominently than any other. The existing building on 22nd Street, today called the Administration Building, will become the School of Public Affairs building, and we will so name it soon. We also seek a naming opportunity for the administration building, and for the School of Public Affairs.

The 17 Lex building, as many of you know, is located on a historic site, though the building itself is not historic. It sits on the site of the Free Academy, established in 1847, the first institution of free higher education in the United States. We will attempt to preserve the importance of the site through a symbolic architectural design that connects the history to the present. Our preliminary architect had an idea about using the internet to “show” education in action “free” to the world. There is a good possibility that a very prominent architect – a name you would all recognize – will play a role in the design of

the building; if this happens, 17 Lex could become a landmark building in New York City.

The already existent Facilities Committee will be charged this year to become the planning group for the 17 Lex renovation.

Academic Life of the Campus

Last month, the Department of Education of New York State approved the new undergraduate BBA degree in business real estate to be offered by the Zicklin School of Business. We are very pleased with this approval which now allows us to advertise the program, enroll undergraduates, finish developing the curriculum and creating a first class real estate degree program at Baruch College. The College now has a new Department of Real Estate, a continued degree in Real Estate and Metropolitan Development offered by the School of Public Affairs, a popular real estate certificate program offered through Continuing Education and the Newman Real Estate Institute, and three new business faculty in real estate who joined us this fall, including the Newman Chair of Real Estate, Professor Ko Wang.

The fall term began with over 25 Learning Communities, cohorts of 20 freshmen each who take classes together to build school spirit, friendships and a common academic experience during their first semester at college. In addition, our Honors Program continues to thrive with over 80 new acceptances into the CUNY Honors program at Baruch and an additional 100 students into the Baruch Scholars Program, another honors program for highly gifted students.

Graduate students enrolled are at an all time high although credit hours taken declined, partially in response to a 17% tuition increase mandated by CUNY this fall. The MBA and MPA student counts, however, are good despite a trend in the U.S. for MBA enrollments to decline. The full time MBA program continues with its spring ranking of 64th in the nation, while our part-time MBA program continues to be among the top 25 in the country according to *U.S. News and World Report*. Our undergraduate business program, still the largest in the country, is ranked 47th in the nation. The MPA program is ranked 51 in the country, a good standing since most of the higher ranked institutions are Ph.D. awarding schools and we are not. Baruch College was named as one of the top 200 schools in the Northeast by the *Princeton Review*. Finally, for the seventh year in a row, the College was named the most diverse college in the United States. While we do not want to give undo importance to commercial rankings, we believe they reflect the move toward excellence the College continues to make.

This summer, the College received a “highly satisfactory” report from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education during its five-year review of our activities based upon a 138-page report we submitted in June. The report provides a thorough academic review of the College, its quality of education and faculty, as well as its finances. The Middle States reviewer did question the overall financial status of the College because of the decline in reserves and state appropriations. We believe we addressed those concerns and

noted the increase in endowment and commitment on the part of alumni to support the College.

Support from the Baruch College Fund

Last year, the Baruch College Fund provided \$13 million to support Baruch College. This fiscal year, the Executive Committee of the Fund approved support of \$14.5 million. In January, the Fund designated \$200,000 for expenses related to the development and implementation of Degree Works, an on line degree audit system to help students select courses needed for graduation. Degree Works, already in place at other CUNY colleges, allows students to plan their course schedules and understand requirements to graduate more quickly. Degree Works is now in its pilot stage and we expect it to be fully operational for the spring term. Without the additional funding, the programming for the system would have taken another 12 to 18 months.

For FY 2006, the Baruch College Fund has allocated \$500,000 in new monies for faculty development, in support of teaching and scholarship. A memorandum outlining the details of these funds will come from this office shortly.

We are grateful for the Fund's support as we focus on projects that can have the most impact on as many students as possible as well as benefiting faculty.