

Weissman School of Arts and Sciences, General Faculty Report, Fall 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, 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 values the fact that it is responsible for the first two years of undergraduate education for a culturally diverse student body and faculty and staff. It is committed to making those two years a transforming experience, to creating a community of learners, and as a liberal arts school to render service by developing individuals who can communicate, can process information, can make informed judgments and interpretations of the world around them and who can appreciate and contribute to the body of knowledge.

WSAS has contributed to scholarship and the arts, to teaching and service, in ways that are commendable, professional, and recognized, which is a testimony to the fine faculty of the school. Their efforts and initiatives, and the support of our colleagues in the administration, in Zicklin and in Public Affairs indicate the commitment of the entire college to the learning and the skills of the arts and sciences. This commitment is a worthy one—one that requires a stronger and broader learning in the arts and sciences than was required previously. This commitment carries some difficulties, for example, the effect of the Tier III minor (welcomed as further opportunity to work with the majority of our students, but easily recognized as difficult to fulfill given resources and obligations to majors and to scholarship). Success in English, mathematics and communications is a prerequisite for entry to Zicklin and strenuous efforts are being

made in WSAS to improve the connections with SACC, the Schwartz Institute, and to intensify the faculty training in pedagogy in general.

WSAS has been as vitally concerned with the entire process of enrollment management, focusing on admitting more qualified students, particularly at the freshman level because we believed we could offer an integrated, quality general education curriculum. We have had demonstrably good results from this policy, higher retention rates, better graduation rates, the best CPE pass rate in the university, and the general sense among our faculty that their classes are ready and eager for learning. There are more majors in WSAS than ever before, and of course, by requirement more minors; students who are unable to enter ZBUS choose to stay at Baruch in numbers much higher than might have been expected.

Some of the best planning for the educational future of the school and for the future success in general education, skills, and broad discipline based learning has proceeded with the support of the provost's office and of CUNY Central—Gen. Ed. initiative. The numbers have increased exponentially partly as a result of the Tier III minor requirement and partly because the admissions requirement for Zicklin have encouraged students to complete even more of their liberal arts requirements before taking up the business disciplines. This last year Weissman taught almost 4000 more students over the previous year. For summer, we have the number of seats filled (and we assumed taught) and that was 6287.

The organization of the student experience around the learning communities is a demonstrable success—entering its third year, moving from two communities, to the present fifteen—WSAS was actually unable to fill demand to be a part of the freshman

learning community. The cooperation of Admissions, Advisement, Student Development and WSAS veteran, junior, and adjunct faculty is required and is forthcoming. The increase in the numbers of Scholars (honors students admitted to Baruch but not in the CUNY Honors College) is recognition of the power of the College's reputation. It also holds out the promise of the continued improvement of the quality of learning. An initiative undertaken by each of the schools in cooperation is the undertaking of American Humanics, a not for profit internship program which will provide training, pay and certification by the organization of a level of skills which will benefit our students, help them to secure positions, all the while providing a service to the community. This initiative will be administered in the WSAS Dean's Office but the curriculum will be acknowledged across the three schools. The School looks forward to more cooperation of this sort and to a deeper, stronger relationship with Student Development.

Finally, and first, not last we welcome four new tenure track faculty, twelve substitutes. The recruitment for this year will include the departments of philosophy, political science (urban politics), an Islamicist, and a writing director for the department of English. There is also a search for the director of the Bernard L. Schwartz Communication Institute if the importance of communication skills at Baruch needs to be underlined. Should financial resources allow there are other areas of recruitment we need to pursue.

As the College and the School meets to plan strategically, it is clear that there are sources of excellence within the School whose work will be strengthened in every possible way.