



UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT GOVERNMENT OF BARUCH COLLEGE
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GENERAL FACULTY REPORT - FALL 2014

Accomplishments

Although we have only been in office for two months, the Undergraduate Student Government at Baruch College has major accomplishments we would like to announce to the faculty. One major accomplishment is that we have registered over 500 students to vote at Baruch College through successful tabling efforts almost every day. A second accomplishment is that we have increased awareness on campus of USG through our frequent use of social media, our increased outreach efforts to students through informative pamphlets on USG, and our transparent relationships with the 126 undergraduate student organizations and clubs at Baruch College. We maintain an open philosophy to hearing student concerns and working on them as elected student representatives. We hope to build on these accomplishments and look forward to working with the faculty here today on making Baruch College a better place. We would like to discuss with the faculty some of our programming and updates from our Academic Affairs committee.

Academic Initiatives

CUNY Pathways and the Elimination of the Tier 3 Minor

The implementation of CUNY Pathways in Fall 2013 has caused several issues at Baruch College for students. In addition to lowering the high standards of our degrees, there is a more long term problem: the elimination of the Tier 3 Minor. The consequence of terminating such a requirement is that Baruch College graduates do not have the chance to become more well-rounded students in areas that do not pertain to their major. This could hamper their employment prospects and could threaten the number of credits some of the College's schools acquire.

If students do not need to minor, enrollment in 3000- and 4000-level courses could potentially drop, resulting in classes being cut and less of a diverse class selection. The Undergraduate

Student Government also sees this threatening a school's ability of becoming a top school in its respective category. It is our hope that we will be able to work with schools such as the School of Public Affairs and the Weissman School of Arts & Sciences to promote minor programs to CUNY Pathways students.

Center for Teaching and Learning and Hybrid Classes

At the beginning of the semester, representatives from the Undergraduate Student Government met with Dr. Lucas Waltzer, Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, where we discussed how hybridization represents the direction that the school is going. Since the College is facing issues with growing capacity constraints, we believe that hybrid classes can be used to relieve space and provide a convenience factor to students who work during the day and/or may have other commitments.

Since hybridization requires professors to rewrite their syllabi and change the way they teach, we understand that the general faculty has some concerns about the effectiveness of these types of courses. In our conversation with Dr. Waltzer, we recognize that his staff is training professors to adjust. With his guidance and our insight, we anticipate that the student body and USG will be playing a major role in furthering the roll-out of hybridization by assembling focus groups to meet with him to figure out what works and what does not.

Faculty Meetings

The Undergraduate Student Government has an important job of representing students from all three schools. Besides hearing concerns from students, we want to hear what issues faculty members have, too. By acting as a liaison between students and faculty, we have the ability to help resolve conflicts by addressing these concerns with the faculty--similar to how we are doing here in this report.

It is our intention to make an effort to attend all faculty meetings as they are regularly scheduled. We recognize that not all faculty meetings are open to students, however. To develop an open relationship with all three schools, we look forward to working with schools toward allowing few USG members to attend, hence giving us the chance to hear the grievances of faculty members.

EVENTS

Mental Health Awareness

In May 2014 during Finals Week, a student committed suicide on campus. Following the incident, Baruch College administration sent out an email and asked students who need to seek help to visit the Counseling Center. Baruch College's Counseling Center is fantastic at providing mental help to students, but the Undergraduate Student Government believes that our community should do more to highlight mental health awareness among students.

USG is planning a Mental Health Initiative starting this semester. This will be comprised of multiple efforts and three specific events:

1. **“Out of the Darkness Walk” for the American Suicide Prevention Foundation**

On October 26, we represented Baruch College in the “Out of the Darkness Walk” organized by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP). The Walk took place at Robert F. Wagner Park in downtown Manhattan. Initially, the Baruch Honors College formed a team for Baruch College, and the Undergraduate Student Government worked with the Office of Student Life to reach students to march with us and raise proceeds towards the AFSP.

2. **ExSTRESS Shops**

During weeks when midterms are given in November, we aim to provide coffee and snacks to students on their way to class on the 2nd floor of the Vertical Campus and on the first floor of the Library Building. This is an activity that USG participates in every year and is appreciated by students due to its convenience.

3. **Midnight Breakfast**

“Midnight breakfasts” are communal meals served at colleges and universities across the United States. USG hosted two of these events last year at the end of each semester during finals week, where we were able to supply tasty waffles to students outside the Library Building as a way to destress from often intense studying and emphasize the importance of community on our campus.

In addition to these events, we plan to distribute wristbands and pamphlets to remind students that they have a community that can help them in times of high stress. We also plan to work with the Office of Student Life, the Health and Wellness Center, and the Counseling Center to host workshops on how to reduce stress during midterms and finals. We ask the faculty and departments here today to help advertise these events and remind students about these important resources.

Santander Sponsored Events

We are impressed with Santander Bank’s involvement with sponsoring many programs at the College including the International Education Week Club Challenge and the Portfolio Trading Challenge. These public-private partnerships are important for our school as we gain private funding in the midst of uncertainties during the crafting of the New York State Budget.

Besides Santander’s involvement, we would like to see more public-private partnerships from Santander and other private businesses that sponsor more initiatives from the College. The Undergraduate Student Government believes that this is a tremendous way to diversify and work with other companies to form partnerships that address the needs of students.

Academic Integrity Event with Provost David Christy

Since the beginning of July, the Undergraduate Student Government has been involved with discussions with administration regarding some of the major items on their agendas that require assistance from us. One meeting we had in August with Provost David Christy led to the planning of events focusing on academic integrity. We met with the Provost multiple times in order to figure what events would best reach out to students and to curb academic dishonesty. These discussions blossomed into what is known as the Academic Integrity Event and will take place on Tuesday, November 4 at 12:30 p.m.

The vision for this event is for students and clubs to submit short videos of around 30 to 60 seconds about an issue on academic integrity approximately three to four weeks before the event. The topics can range from social loafing during group work to plagiarizing a paper or copying someone's mathematics homework. One week before the event, the Provost and a panel of judges will select three videos as winners of the video competition.

During the event, students who attend will participate in an exercise that will focus on group equity. The Provost will host the event and make brief comments about academic integrity during the exercises.

The event will conclude with the Judging Panel showcasing the top videos and providing those winners with a prize.

All submitted videos would become property of Baruch College and they can use it as they see fit. Besides being an interactive event, having these videos will be an asset for faculty. In addition to having students to read and understand the academic policies of the College, these videos can show examples what would be considered academic dishonesty. We are asking faculty to encourage students to participate in the event either by submitting a video or attending the event.

We look to organizing more events with the Provost and plan to work on our own projects, too. One would be incorporating academic integrity into the Bearcat Awards that we provide to the Baruch community. Also, it came to our attention that the last time an academic integrity pamphlet was published was in 2004. The USG is rewriting the pamphlet and will make it more accessible and reasonable to students in the age of technology.