

WEISSMAN SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES GENERAL FACULTY REPORT (Spring 2015)

At the midpoint of the 2014-15 academic year, there is reason for guarded optimism about enrollments in Weissman courses, as the Pathways-related attrition that some had predicted failed to materialize. On the contrary, Weissman filled over 1,500 more seats in the fall 2014 semester than in either fall 2013 or fall 2012, and while four departments did see enrollments below those of the previous two fall semesters, the other nine experienced substantial increases. With the approval of a new Weissman College Option, which parallels those of the other two schools, and a new Pre-Weissman Core, which must be completed by all prospective Weissman majors, the school took important steps toward fashioning a curriculum that both upholds its high educational standards and adheres to CUNY guidelines. Weissman will almost certainly make further adjustments to the Pathways curriculum; however, it now seems less likely that the sweeping changes to the University's general education curriculum that have taken effect over the last two years will substantially lessen the number of students in our classes.

New Projects, Gifts, Awards, and Events

Dean Peck has launched an initiative to develop High Impact Practices as a pedagogical signature of the Weissman School. High Impact Practices include such programs as writing-intensive courses, undergraduate research experiences, learning communities, global learning, service learning, internships, capstone courses, and common intellectual experiences. Recent research supports the contention that these programs improve students' academic performance, especially when students have the benefit of two or more such experiences in conjunction with one another.

The first competition for the Weissman Teaching award will take place this spring. Continuing a tradition begun over a decade ago with a grant from the Whiting Foundation, the competition is now sponsored by the Weissman School itself and will award released time from teaching to an outstanding member of the junior faculty, who will be asked to devote the time to furthering his or her scholarship and progress toward tenure. In this year's competition, the Weissman Chairs will select five finalists based on written materials, and then a smaller Selection Committee will visit the classrooms of the finalists during the spring semester (or, in the case of online courses, review transcripts of teaching activity).

The Master of Arts program in Arts Administration has been approved at the state level and will admit its first class of students in the fall. Housed in the Weissman School, the program is a genuinely inter-school effort, including classes offered by the Zicklin School and the School of Public Affairs. The interim Director of the program is Bruce Payne, Distinguished Lecturer in Communication Studies at Baruch and former President of the Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation.

The Baruch College Fund has received \$10,000 as an initial gift for a new undergraduate Leadership and the Arts program housed in the Weissman School and designed by Bruce Payne, Distinguished Lecturer in Communication Studies and interim Director of Baruch's new graduate program in Arts Administration. The initial planning grant is from Tim Walter, who is

former CEO of the Association of Small Foundations, an artist in Durham, North Carolina, and one of Professor Payne's former students. Mr. Walter plans to contribute additional funds and matching gifts as the program develops. The grant has thus far been used to provide off-campus experiences for students in PAF 3810 (Arts in Public Life); COM 4101 (Leadership in Organizations); and a Macaulay Honors seminar on the arts in New York City. The new program will invite applications from faculty in any field for small grants to support tickets and other expenses for courses offered in spring 2016, and an advisory committee of faculty and arts professionals is being formed.

The undergraduate major in Financial Engineering proposed by the Department of Mathematics has been approved at the college level and forwarded to CUNY Central for review.

Thanks to a generous gift from Hedwig Feit, the Paula Berggren Enrichment Fund for Student Scholarships and Class Activities has been established. The Fund has two main purposes: to assist students who wish to enroll in courses in the humanities at Baruch but lack the financial means to do so; and to enable classes in the humanities at Baruch to participate in co-curricular activities that enrich students' intellectual experience and understanding of their coursework.

Thanks to a generous gift from Mildred Weissman, the Weissman School has created a program that allows students to travel to Poland. Professor Jessica Lang of the Department of English, who is also Director of the Sandra Kahn Wasserman Center for Jewish Studies, led the inaugural group.

The Weissman School's Cuba program, which allows a group of undergraduates to travel to the island nation during the January intersession, resumed this year under the leadership of Andrea Gabor, Bloomberg Professor of Business Journalism in the Department of Journalism and the Writing Professions. Professor Gabor's students produced a range of articles, videos, and slideshows on entrepreneurship in Cuba, which have been published online in *Dollars & Sense* magazine. With recent developments in U.S.-Cuba relations and the ensuing groundswell of interest in all things Cuban, it is expected that the program will be in even greater demand than it already is.

Professor Karen Shelby of the Department of Fine and Performing Arts has been awarded a Fulbright fellowship. She will spend one semester of the next academic year teaching at the University of Ghent, Belgium.

The Weissman New Faculty Brown Bag Lunch Series has continued with talks by Professor Mark Rice of the Department of History and Professor Steven Young of the Department of Psychology on October 28th; Professor Stephen Gosnell of the Department of Natural Sciences and Professor Allison Curseen of the Department of English on December 2nd; and Professor Allison Hahn of the Department of Communication Studies and Professor Jonathan Gilmore of the Department of Philosophy on February 19th.

Weissman as a Center of Cultural Life

This spring's Sidney Harman Writer-in-Residence is Elif Batuman, author of *The Possessed: Adventures with Russian Books and the People Who Read Them*, as well as numerous articles in

The New Yorker and other prominent publications. Ms. Batuman read from her work on March 24th in the Asriel and Marie Rackow Conference Room of the Library Building.

The Silberman Series continued in the Engelman Recital Hall with pianist Sara Davis Buechner on Monday, March 9th. Ms. Buechner, who is both pianist and educator, is best known for her interpretations of Gershwin, Bach, Dvorak, and Brahms. She has also recorded CDs of works by a variety of modern composers.

On February 19th, the Weissman Talks Onstage Series, in collaboration with the Jewish Studies Center, hosted Dr. Ingo Zechner, who presented “Ephemeral Films: National Socialism in Austria.” The Series continued on March 5th with “Conversation with Cartoonists: Arnie Levin, Sam Gross, and Richard Gehr.”

The Joel Seagall Great Works Reading Series presented *Hedda Gabler* by Henrik Ibsen from March 2nd through March 5th in the Engelman Recital Hall.

The CUNY Creative Arts Team sponsored *See Saw*, a play written and performed by high school students under the direction of CAT Youth Theatre, a division of the CUNY Office of Academic Affairs. *See Saw* ran from February 20th through March 1st in the Nagelberg Theatre.

Encompass New Opera Theater offered *Paradigm Shifts: A Music and Film Festival* on March 19th -29th in the Engelman Recital Hall.

Sponsored by the New York Flute Club, Katherine Fink of the Grammy-nominated Borealis Wind Quintet performed an array of pieces by modern composers on February 22nd. On March 15th, the Club offered a performance by Claire Chase, a 2012 MacArthur Fellow. Ms. Chase is a soloist, collaborative artist, and activist for new music.

On March 13th, the New York City Classical Guitar Society presented a concert by Xuefei Yang, China’s premier exponent of the classical guitar.

The National Yiddish Theater-Folksbiene continued their staged readings of plays in Yiddish with Russian and English supertitles. A special Purim festive reading of the *Megiles Esther* took place on March 4th, followed by a concert.

The Mishkin Gallery collaborated with Baruch Professor C. J. Suzuki of the Department of Modern Languages and Comparative Literature to present the exhibition *World of Shōjo Manga: Mirrors of Girls’ Desires* from February 4th through February 27th. The exhibition, along with an accompanying symposium, was sponsored by the Japan Foundation. Entitled “Globalized Manga Culture and Fandom” and organized by Professor Suzuki, the symposium was held on Thursday, February 19th, in the Vertical Campus. During the show, the Gallery provided talks and workshops for the Honors Program and other Baruch classes.

The *small works Baruch* exhibition opened on March 26th. This show is a juried exhibition of artists selected by Richard Timperio, who is Director of the Sideshow Gallery in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Baruch professors and staff members as well as other local artists competed to have their work shown.