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DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM
AND THE WRITING PROFESSIONS

March 5, 2021

To: Anita Dwyer, Baruch President's Office
From: Eugene Marlow, Ph.D., MBA
Chair, Baruch Educational Technical Committee
Re: Fall 2020 Semester Report of Activities

Following is a report of the Baruch Educational Technology Committee for Fall 2020.

Members of the committee are: Krista C. Dobi (Natural Sciences), Arthur Downing (BCTC), Stephen Gosnell (Natural Sciences), Shulamith Gross (Information Systems and Statistics), Joseph Hartnett (Library), Eugene Marlow, Chair (Journalism), Michael Richichi (BCTC), Charles Terng (Library/Data Services Librarian).

The committee met three times during the course of the semester. Following are the issues of concern to committee members:

1. "One size does not fit all": In response to the recently released Phase 2 "President's Report on the Future of Baruch" Professor Dobi referenced the proposal that professors' desktops be substituted for laptops. She pointed out that standard laptop screens would not be practical for her research purposes. Prof. Marlow referred to the needs of accounting professors and students in Zicklin who might need larger screens for viewing spreadsheets.
2. The committee's recommendation is the college needs to survey each department to determine who (i.e., professors) might need detachable larger screens for both research and pedagogical activities.
3. Communication: Several committee members raised the issue of "more effective communication" as proposed in the President's report. Several members of the committee pointed to the web site created by the committee where professors can go to identify electronic technology resources, especially in this time of distance learning. Prof. Marlow pointed out he did not know of this resource and it is probable many faculty members also do not know of this resource.

4. The committee's recommendation is this resource web site needs broader promotion, i.e., in addition to using Dennis Slavin's good offices to disseminate information about this web site, the committee could communicate to the larger faculty via other routes, such as directly to the three deans and perhaps even to department chairs directly for further distribution.
5. Short-Term vs. Long-Term: Professor Gosnell asserted that the committee needs to take a look at Baruch's educational technology needs both in the short-term and the long-term. While it is unofficially certain distance learning at Baruch will continue in the spring 2021 semester (short-term), what will happen in fall of 2021 and beyond is still somewhat uncertain. Several factors are in play: the outcome of the forthcoming November 3 election, Baruch's student enrollment approaching 20,000, the President's vision of using distance learning as a permanent means of pedagogy in addition to in-class teaching, looming budget constraints balanced by Baruch rising enrollment, et al.
6. The future technological needs of students, faculty, and staff warrant much further discussion.
7. Zoom cameras on or off? Professor Marlow suggested the committee recommend to the President to, in turn, recommend to CUNY administration that the policy of allowing students to turn off their Zoom cameras works against pedagogical effectiveness. While there will certainly be exceptions (e.g., a student working from a sick bed), allowing students to turn off their cameras as a matter of course interferes with the student-professor relationship. Professor Gross pointed out, however, that her recent experience with distance learning via Zoom has actually enhanced and made more efficient her "office hours" activities.
8. Immediate technology issues: Arthur Downing reported that on October 20, 2020 Baruch signed an agreement with T-Mobile to provide router-like devices to faculty to enhance Internet connectivity. An official announcement to the Baruch community at large is forthcoming.

On December 9, 2020 the Committee met with Professor Nanda Kumar, Ph.D., an Associate Professor of Information Systems at the Zicklin School of Business. He is the academic director of the Master of Science program in Business Analytics. Dr. Kumar is also a member of the

CUNY level committee apprising the future of Blackboard technology. He reported that CUNY is examining the pros and cons of similar technologies for use throughout CUNY. It was concluded a decision would likely be made in 2021 regarding this software and that implementation of either an upgraded Blackboard or a software of similar attributes would occur possibly in the 2021-2022 AY or 2022-2023 AY.

The committee plans to meet again throughout the spring 2021 semester to further discuss educational technology issues facing Baruch students, faculty, and staff.

Respectfully submitted,

Eugene Marlow, Ph.D., MBA
Professor, Department of Journalism and the Writing Professions
Baruch Educational Technology Committee, Chair