

Baruch College

General Faculty Meeting Minutes

October 22nd, 2020

The meeting was called to order via Zoom at 12:39 pm by President S. David Wu, presiding.

1. The following members of the Baruch College faculty and administration were in attendance: (Zoom usage report)
2. Approval of the minutes: Minutes of the meeting of October 24th, 2019 **were approved**.
3. Approval of the Agenda. The Agenda **was approved**.
4. Communications and Announcements: None.
5. Report from President S. David Wu:

Distance Learning

The vast majority of courses (98%) at Baruch have been held in distance learning format during the Fall 2020 semester. Considering the challenges of the online format, there have been comparatively few glitches. In the Spring 2021 semester and until there is a vaccine in place for COVID-19, this situation is unlikely to change, especially given the vertical configuration of Baruch's campus. However, there has been no formal announcement from CUNY Central as of yet.

Enrollment and Budget

CUNY is down overall approx. 5%. At City College enrollments are down over 14%; senior colleges are up 0.8%. At Baruch College, enrollment has increased by 5.4% as compared with last year. Still, the College is not expecting the same numbers for Spring 2021.

New York Gov. Cuomo has withheld approximately 20 percent of state funding to CUNY's budget, which translates into a \$9.9 million reduction for Baruch College. The stimulus package may turn this percentage into something more manageable but there will be no change until after the U.S. presidential election in November or until January.

Baruch's Task Force for the Future

Baruch's Task Force for the Future, a College-wide advisory group that President Wu charged in May to assess the way we deliver education and provide student services in the post-Covid environment, has a plan to move forward on its recommendations. A virtual town hall will be held on October 29 to discuss the recommendations from its Phase 2 Report as well as results from the two staff surveys. The Phase 2 Report examines Baruch's long-term future, in response to both the pandemic and the underlying forces that have been driving higher education before Covid-19 emerged.

Institutional Transformation

Baruch needs to direct its attention to diversity, inclusion, and equity at all levels. The College is already a highly diverse place, but we clearly have more work to do on our path forward to institutional transformation to make Baruch a model of equity. Baruch also needs to have the tools to thrive and innovate with a focus on how to support faculty and staff. Some of the first stimulus package can be used to accomplish this high-priority task. One of

our priorities is our multiyear effort to expand our instructional modalities, including high-quality forms of face-to-face and synchronous virtual learning, online proctoring, and so forth. This requires investment in our infrastructure, and we hope to receive some support from CUNY Central. Likewise, we already have a student-centric culture at Baruch, but we need to coordinate further. As a first step, we have in place a consolidated website for students, with all services on one page.

6. Q&A

Prof. Thomas Heinrich, Chair of the Department of History, raised the question of faculty consultation in the transition to/from online teaching. President Wu replied that faculty are involved in the Task Force (with a townhall meeting scheduled), and that Baruch would stay an in-person instructional place but that there are programs conducive to online teaching.

Prof. Glenn Petersen, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, asked whether the declining enrollment at other colleges was related to the increase in enrollment at Baruch, to which President Wu responded that the senior colleges have seen an 4,5% increase while the community colleges have seen a significant decrease, arguing that community colleges may be hit harder because students may pause their enrollment to wait out the pandemic. This not possible at four-year colleges.

Prof. Karl R. Lang, Paul H. Chook Department of Information Systems and Statistics, inquired whether there would be more fundamental changes, with students and faculty desiring additional flexibility. According to President Wu, Baruch needs to be prepared for a situation in which working from home and remote learning are a standard, especially because Baruch was already running out of space before the pandemic, but that the infrastructure for this needs to be built in a scalable manner.

Regarding jumbo sessions, Prof. Heinrich observed that we cannot simply raise the caps of these sessions but that more people need to be hired who are able to impart online teaching. President Wu responded that there is a learning curve and that we do not want to lose what is special about Baruch.

The chair of the PSC Baruch Chapter, Professor Vincent DiGirolamo, Department of History, asked who was going to replace Mona Jha, the former College's Chief Diversity Officer, especially since there is the perception of there being no initiative at the top to make the college more diverse. President Wu's response was that the process for her replacement will give us a chance to rethink the office, and that diversity, inclusion and equity need to be embedded in our instructional culture. The approach should not consist of quick quotas but in the creation of a grassroots understanding of what is needed and the improvement of longstanding practices. To this Prof. Lang added that other colleges do not address only recruitment but also look at syllabi.

7. Written Reports from Faculty Committees: see attachment

Interim Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs James McCarthy announced that CUNY students cannot be obligated to participate in an online exam with remote proctoring. An alternative would have to be offered. He noted that Proctortrack has been put on hold and that CUNY will not have a CUNY-wide system for online proctoring. Some courses with more than a thousand students would lend themselves to online proctoring but no one is required to use tools like Proctortrack. Prof. Kristin Sommer, from the Department of Psychology, commented that some students resent it as an invasion of

their privacy. Others prefer it because it makes it more difficult for all students to cheat. In terms of reappointments, Provost McCarthy added that out of 83 adjunct faculty considered, 77 were given a three-year reappointment, five a one-year, and one was rejected.

8. Nominations and Elections.

Prof. Kimmy Szeto, Baruch College Library, presented the slate of nominees, which was approved by general consent. He reminded the faculty at the meeting that the elections would be conducted using Qualtrics during the next two weeks.

9. Old Business:

Prof. Mindy Engle-Friedman, the Baruch College Ombudsperson, reminded the participants that the Ombuds office is open.

10. New Business: None

11. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was approved and the meeting ended at 2:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Max Kramer

Assistant Professor and Secretary of the General Faculty