

Baruch Faculty  
Senate Plenary  
December 3, 2020  
Minutes

A total of 100 members of the faculty senate, general faculty, staff, and students logged into the Zoom meeting.

Professor Samuel Johnson, Chair, Baruch College Faculty Senate, convenes the meeting at 12:30 p.m.

- I. Approval of the Agenda:** The agenda is approved by assent without additions
- II. Approval of the Minutes:** The minutes of the November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020 meeting is approved by assent and without additions

**III. Report from the Chair, Professor Sam Johnson:**

Professor Johnson welcomes all to the December Senate Plenary and wishes everyone a safe and productive final few weeks of the semester. Professor Johnson announces the following webinar experience with the following title: “Managing Work-Life Balance in Uncertain and Challenging Times.” The event is described as the following:

In recognition of the difficulties in work-life balance that these unprecedented times present to our faculty, staff and students — particularly those who are primary caregivers, we are providing a webinar experience designed to bring together leading academic voices to discuss parenting, motivation, and developing human potential. There will be presentations, moderated Q&A and breakout room opportunities.

Registration for the event can be found here:

<https://baruch.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMufuqtrTguG9UPtXrIUmjuZOHSbdIp7sD4>

**IV. Reports from College Officers**  
**a. President Wu**

President Wu thanks the Senate for giving him the opportunity to once again offer his remarks. This has been a challenging year by any measure. Faculty and staff have done a heroic job to pull through both the fall and the spring semesters. President Wu takes this opportunity to express his gratitude and to acknowledge the tremendous hardship experienced by faculty, staff and students and especially those that come from communities affected disproportionately by Covid-19. Our community has been profoundly resourceful and resilient and it is important that we continue in that spirit. It should be noted that those that those serving within the Executive Compensation Plan (ECP) will be furloughed five days this fiscal year and that the contracted 2% raise will be delayed. The CUNY system is experiencing a 20% budget shortfall with \$14Million being held back in state resources. We have been fortunate however to have sustained a fairly significant enrollment increase of 5.8% and these enrollment numbers offer some

offset from the budget shortfall. President Wu expresses his frustration at not being able to meet everyone face to face and looks forward to resuming these normal operations in the near future. In our Townhall Meetings the president has shared with us some of the priorities in terms of where we concentrate our resources moving forward. Within the six major priorities President Wu wishes to highlight the following two:

i. *Enrollment*

Graduate enrollment has gone up and is likely associated with offering programs online or in hybrid mode. While we do not want to turn into an online university the president is initiating a multiple year expansion of instructional modality into the online domain.

ii. *Degree Completion Initiative*

This for-credit initiative is directed at adult learners and potentially involves several programs across the three schools. In particular, we are looking at an online and hybrid MBA program at Zicklin. Offering students the opportunity to complete an MBA is in the interests of both the student and our college.

Building enrollment capacity into our future infrastructure is vital if we are to maintain our gains in enrollment this past semester.

President Wu notes that the college is also investing in various areas of support for faculty as they experience difficulties in work/life balance. In particular the *Center For Teaching and Learning* is offering on a consistent basis support for developing online modalities in instructional capacity in various training sessions. VP Arthur Downing continues to offer ways to develop and enhance the use of technology at the college. The college is also focused on enhancing communication with faculty.

*Question and Answer*

Professor David Jones asks about the degree completion initiative as the political science program of which he chairs is one of the departments that's been approached about this and that is actively discussing it. Has any research has been done about best practices in terms of the format of the program? For example, students may end up taking courses over seven weeks instead of fourteen. What is available to attest to whether or not this new time frame improves learning, comprehension, and degree completion? Also what is the profile of these anticipated students, their expected career paths and current job status? President Wu responds that he has previous experience with developing such degree completion programs. Some 100,000 people in NY City alone fall into the category of those who for some reason have not completed their degree programs. One of the greatest obstacles for these potential students is the flexibility needed to complete any future degree programs as these students are juggling full time work obligations and family. In particular these responsibilities makes it impossible for them to come on to campus. As a modular program the Zicklin MBA program offers a model for intense learning over periods of time much shorter than the semester long course work currently offered. This coursework is admittedly common in the business and technology fields rather than political science. So for example instead of the three start dates to any one program you might get six to eight in any one year . Granted there will be a learning

curve to teach and operate in this environment, but it has been shown to be effective. Professor Kronebusch voices his skepticism for the modular course design, but hopes that rigor will be maintained in the coursework given the short time frame. Professor Gordon notes that the Masters in Financial Engineering program offers seven week courses for one-and-a-half credits each. So effectively you have these modules and students get the credits over seven weeks. However, you can't do 14 weeks of credit in seven weeks. Dean Lang asks everyone to think of the timeframe in terms of a summer or winter intersession class. There are precedents for offering coursework over these shorter time frames.

Professor Frank asks about the support for faculty through CTL programs and if there is still a budget devoted to supporting face to face instruction as there seems to be an overemphasis given to online and hybrid instruction. The president responds that these initiatives are fairly modest compared to the overall volume of instruction being offered. It is necessary to provide support however in areas of instructional design in these online and hybrid programs. Most instruction however, will of course return to face to face. Associate Provost Slavin notes that the college did not hold back when faced with the immediate need to provide support for faculty when it was known that we would shift instruction to online. The 2013-18 strategic plan also advanced a need for support services to online and hybrid instruction. Provost McCarthy reports that the CARES Act will support services directly related to online learning although we are to receive funds in that area. We have not yet received a budget yet from CUNY to bolster personnel in CTL and the Schwartz Institute.

Professor DiGirolamo asks about the furlough within the executive compensation plan and whether or not the withholding of the 2% raise is permanent or temporary. The President notes that the furlough is permanent, but to his knowledge the withholding of the raise is temporary.

#### **b. Vice President Gorman on Enrollment**

(A copy of VP Gorman's slideshow presentation can be found on the Faculty Senate website under the tab *Agenda*, and the following summarizes that presentation)

Enrollment is at an all-time high with an official fall headcount at 19,733. From the graphs you can see we increased in both undergraduate and graduate enrollment. But the real pronounced growth is in the graduate level this year. Beginning in the fall of 2018 we began enrolling more first year students than transfers at the undergraduate level. The most notable feature this year is that for the first time in a very long time we have almost as many new graduate students as new transfers. We welcomed over 5600 new students this semester. That's up almost 500 over last year in the midst of a pandemic. The average GPA for entering freshmen remains steadily at about 88. The average SAT score for regularly admitted freshman moved up again this year after a tiny dip last year, the exact number remains around 1294 this year. For the coming semester, we will not be using standardized test scores in our admissions decisions. It remains to be seen what the university will choose to do long term. But for now, we're certainly not alone. Many institutions are choosing to go test-optional this year, given the difficulties with the

testing administration during the pandemic. We know without a doubt however, that a high school GPA predicts actual performance in college classes. This has been demonstrated nationally and by our own Baruch specific data. We remain challenged in the short term for predicting yield outcomes in this completely new environment, but the long-term upside may very well be both a more diverse student body and one with higher graduation rates. The other big challenge for us this year is a temporary loss of the common app. Last year we started using the common application as one of two possible paths to applying for our new undergraduate students. It gave us a large bump. We also saw a doubling of our, admittedly small, out of state applicant pool through the common application. Then the pandemic hit. We did not yield those students in great numbers, not surprisingly, but it gives us a hint of what could come from this in the future. Regarding our transfer students you can see more than two thirds of them are from within CUNY but fewer than half of them are actually coming from community colleges.

Regarding race and ethnicity data as CUNY reports it, we are at 41.7% Asian, 11% Black, 18.8% Hispanic, and 28.4% White. We are at 12% international students. In terms of new graduate students by school the chart speaks for itself. We have 390 grad students in Weissman, 817 in Marxe, and 2749 in Zicklin. The ethnicity data on graduate students for last fall reveals very tiny numbers of Native American students, 40.8% Asian, 10.8% Black 11.6%, Latino, and 36.8% White.

Moving from the slides VP Gorman offers a few updates. It looks like the spring enrollment will not be as large as fall. That is usual that we are a few hundred students shy of our fall enrollments. However, come the spring we may be more than a few hundred into several hundred lower than right now. We are currently running behind by about 1.5% in our spring enrollment numbers. We are down 4.8% in terms of returning undergraduates, but on the other hand we are up 14.5% in graduate enrollments. Last year, we introduced a navigation tool to our website to assist with integrated student services. We launched it this fall with undergraduate academic advisement. The SEEK office, the honors program, and our student success team are all on the platform and using it. The next piece to roll out will be graduate advisement. So the three schools advising offices will have access to the tool. We will eventually get to the point where those of you who do advising for majors in your department will have the ability to make use of this tool. It has the ability to make appointments, to message out to your majors, and to keep notes so that if more than one faculty member in your department is doing advising, you can see what your colleague may have said to a student the last time they met with the student.

#### *Question and Answer*

Professor Frank asks if there are any numbers relating to the Fall2008-9 graduate enrollment as enrollments may be affected in times of economic uncertainty. VP Gorman notes that we did not see anything close to what we are seeing now. Professor Lang asks in terms of diversity, how closely does the current student body reflect the diversity of the larger population we serve? VP Gorman notes that the student body is not nearly as well represented as we would like it to be. Black and Latino students are underrepresented in our student population. President Wu reports that Baruch College just recently received a

\$1 million gift from Bank of America to fund comprehensive new initiatives supporting education and career development programs that prepare Black and Latino students to enter the professional workforce, and to embark on a path to success.

## **V. Old Business**

Professor Johnson reports that given the increasing seriousness of the pandemic in New York, the provosts office has informed us that the college has decided not to try to hold any final exams on campus during finals week. Given this new development the resolution introduced at last month's plenary recommending the suspension of in-person exams for online courses during the COVID-19 pandemic is moot and has been withdrawn.

## **VI. New Business**

### *a. Technology Fee Committee*

VP Arthur Downing is seeking nominations from the Faculty Senate for someone to serve on the *Technology Fee Committee*. The following nominations were approved by assent:

Technology Fee Committee

Prof Christina Christoforatu

Prof Terry Martell

Prof Kamiar Rahnama Rad

### *b. Taji Sanders, VP of Academic Affairs from the Student Government*

VP Sanders brings to the senate a concern from the student body and reports that a faculty member has been holding classes over the Thanksgiving break and requiring student attendance. The professor in question has received multiple complaints from students without an action taken by the administration. Students then have stopped reporting their complaints. Associate Provost Slavin urges students to report their grievances to both the professors in question and the respective chair of the department. Complaints can also be forwarded to Associate Dean of Students Annie Virkus-Estrada.

### *c. Proctoring Software*

Professor Gordon asks if there is any update on the proctoring software as there is still evidence of cheating happening during online exams. Provost McCarthy is not aware of any updates.

### *d. Credit / no credit policy*

To refresh everybody's memory Provost McCarthy notes that in the midst of the interrupted semester last spring, CUNY with approval from the Board of Trustees, and on the advice of the Chancellor instituted a "credit / no credit policy." This policy was in effect only for Spring semester and not renewed for the Fall. However, we have been hearing from many students and through a petition from the USG about restarting that policy at Baruch. One thing to note here is that this was a CUNY policy voted on by the Board of Trustees and it was a CUNY policy that was not renewed. We cannot ourselves initiate a credit / no credit policy. As an additional complication it came to the Provosts attention that Hunter has long had a limited credit / no credit policy (limited to a finite number of courses through a student's academic career). But that said, every student at Hunter has had the option of taking credit no credit a limited number of times, so that

when CUNY withdrew its policy of widespread credit / no credit Hunter was able to immediately resurrect their pre-existing policy. We don't have such a policy. So all we can say at this point is that we will certainly begin discussions with faculty about the possibility of reconsidering this policy. We will be bringing this policy to the various curriculum committees and begin the process of discussing what the what the appetite for such policy might be. Professor Gordon asks about our existing pass/fail policy. Associate Dean Gary Hentzi notes that there is a great difference between the existing pass / fail policy and the credit / no credit policy in that the pass / fail policy asks students to declare this option in the first two weeks of the semester.

## **VII. Adjournment at 2pm**

Professor Johnson wishes everyone the best of the for Holidays and a successful end of the semester.

Respectfully submitted  
Richard Wilkins, PhD  
Faculty Senate Secretary