

Baruch Faculty  
Senate Plenary  
November 4th, 2021  
Minutes

A total of 86 members of the faculty senate, general faculty, staff, and students logged into the Zoom meeting.

Professor Terry Martell, Chair, Baruch College Faculty Senate, convenes the meeting at 12:30 p.m via Zoom.

- I. Approval of the Agenda:** The agenda is approved by assent and without additions.
- II. Approval of the Minutes:** The minutes of the October 7, 2021 meeting is approved by assent with corrections made to the numbers reporting student seats in classes at Baruch for the Fall 2021 term (39,000 instead of 40,000).
- III. BFS Reports**

Professor Martell introduces President Wu who will offer his remarks early.

**a. President David Wu**

President Wu notes that at the recent *General Faculty Meeting* he made a lengthy presentation and that his remarks here will be brief. The campus is transitioning well to a greater physical presence for the spring semester. President Wu refers to the recent emailed message from the CUNY Provost of the 70-30 mandate (70% in-person classes and 30% online). The President notes that our higher education peers have already established a greater physical presence and its in our interests to move in this direction. This is also not simply a return to normal, but a *new* normal with the integration of new innovations and technologies into our campus operations. BCTC has enabled us to provide workplace accommodations that did not exist before—snow-days are a thing of the past with our ability to now “flip a switch” and to offer the same levels of excellence through our online modalities. The campus is currently operating at about 60% of our physical staff and we are likely to see this percentage increase in the spring. VP Cobb will report that all our various physical plant comply with all the various safety measures and the ventilation report has been posted to *Baruch Forward* website. As a final note, the President encourages us to begin considering our longer-term future with the current campus-wide strategic plan expiring in 2023.

**b. Professor Terry Martell, Chair of the BFS**

Professor Martell notes that there are still structural problems that remain with our campus budget going forward. A presentation was made to the Student Government body and the intention is that the SGA will pass a resolution over the budget similar to the one passed last May.

**c. Standing Committees of the BFS**

- i. Professor Kevin Frank, Chair, Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

Today I will just give a brief regarding the Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility's charge of overseeing what happens with non-vaccinated students dropped from in-person courses.

Provost Essig indicted VP Mary Gorman is the point person regarding those students and Mary has so far been forthcoming with information, including that just last week, "CUNY gave the go ahead to withdraw COVID [vaccine] noncompliant students from in-person courses. Baruch has 93 such students, the great majority (75) of whom will receive a WA in only one section; 16 more are being withdrawn from two in-person sections. The CUNY Board of Trustees passed a resolution on Monday night authorizing tuition refunds for these classes for those who paid out of pocket. We are working individually with students to mitigate as much as possible any adverse financial aid impact as well."

As this suggests, the earliest withdrawal of the students in question would have occurred was last week, which means the committee now looks forward to further communications from Mary regarding the demographics, when available, of these 93 Baruch students. In addition, among other things, we look forward to details about how many students were moved from fully in-person or hybrid to online, and in what courses, Academic advising's work with dropped students about their options to make sure they stay on track for timely degree completion.

Per what we have been made aware of so far, I think it is fair to say a general committee view is that Baruch administration has been doing as much as possible to help students at risk of being dropped.

Some questions did come out of committee. The first is, "Are noncompliant students prevented from registering for in-person or hybrid classes in the spring?" The answer to that is yes: VP Gorman confirmed students are able to register regardless of status, and I found, per Baruch's Academic Calendar, they have up to Jan. 14 to upload vaccination verification, and if that's not done WA grades would be assigned by Feb. 27.

The other questions are, "What happens when students, who are attending in-person classes, find out that they have been exposed to someone with COVID? Do they know about the requirement for quarantine and testing, as well as the need to inform the campus liaison should they test positive? And how does this affect attendance policies and in-person classes?"

I've asked VP Art King to respond to these, and he has graciously agreed.

What happens with nonvaccinated dropped from classes. Provost indicated VP Gorman is the point person and been forthcoming with information. Last week 93 students, 75 will receive a WA in one section. 60 more students are being withdrawn from two ... board issued tuition refunds for those students who paid out of pocket. Working with students with any adverse financial aid. We would like demographics, details from in-person to fully online. General committee view is that the Baruch has been helping those students that have been dropped. Are non-compliant students prevented from registering... students able to register regardless of status ... up to Jan 14<sup>th</sup> with vaccine verification Feb 27<sup>th</sup> WA grades would be assigned to them. The other question is when students are exposed to covid positive what happens.

#### **IV. Reports from College Officers**

##### **a. Provost Linda Essig**

The Provost's Innovation Fellows and the Innovation Seed Grant Participants have been announced.

The Hybrid and Online Advisory Council has been doing good work: they have held ten town halls and focus group meetings with faculty, staff, and students since September 10 and have developed draft guidelines and definitions that will be posted on the website soon.

Spring 2022 course modalities: Last May, then Interim Provost Lee provided guidance to schools for spring 2022 scheduling that called for a 65% in-person semester with 20% hybrid and 15% online. A short time ago, we received a mandate from CUNY saying we needed to be 70% in person and 30% hybrid or online. Our spring 2022 mix will look a little different on its face, but positions us well for the future while also meeting (albeit arguably) the CUNY mandate. For spring 2022 we have a mix of 59% in-person, 21% hybrid, and the remainder online. Hybrid here is true hybrid, so with about half of the sessions being in-person and the other half online, we enter the spring with 70% in-person contact time and 30% online contact time. Thus, I am not requesting (nor would I approve) modality changes because students have already begun working with their advisors to build their schedules; changes now would be harmful to students. Further, this schedule positions us well for a more hybrid future. It is very important to remember that faculty must teach in the mode of instruction listed in CUNY First.

You've probably also heard that CUNY is mandating all full-time faculty teach at least one in-person class; this is something we're keeping track of so we can respond to inquiries from CUNY central but our approach at Baruch is more conceptual than prescriptive: we expect all full-time faculty to participate in our vibrant campus community. We have many faculty who are teaching one class *only* or have taught online for years prior to the pandemic, or who have a schedule that just worked out to be online. Faculty who are seeking health accommodations, however, will need to do so through the normal HR accommodation process.

Fall 2022 modalities: First, *it is very important to understand that all of our degrees are registered with the state DOE and accredited by our accrediting bodies as in-person programs*. The current pandemic exceptions expire May 2022 and all indications are that there will be no further exceptions. Being mindful of this, and the differing pedagogic needs and preferences of graduate students, we are differentiating for Fall between the undergraduate mix – where faculty indicate students (especially freshman) do better face-to-face – and graduate students who are more advanced in their studies. For Fall, the undergraduate modality mix will be 70% in-person, 15% hybrid, and 15% online. The graduate student mix will be 55% in-person, 15% hybrid, and 30% online. Course scheduling will need to be done in such a way to assure that students take at least 50% of their coursework in-person. (For example, one could schedule so that core courses are mostly in-person and electives online.) Once our new Associate Provost for Assessment, Accreditation and Institutional Effectiveness is on board, we can start the process of adding “distance education” as a modality in our existing programs, but department curriculum committees can begin to look at that now. As we move forward, I underline again the importance of teaching in the mode of instruction published in the schedule of classes on CUNYFirst – our accreditation depends on it.

Updates and reminders:

- a. CUNY travel policy has been updated: For nearby states and level 1 or destinations both domestic and international, it's now a "notification process" for vaccinated travelers. There is a new form – notification is Part A. Unvaccinated travelers or travelers to level 3 or 4 destinations need to fill out Part B and receive approval. School business managers have all the details.
- b. Please get your Spring textbook orders in – these are already late.
- c. The newest issue of "Assessment Review" is available and it included valuable information on student learning assessments.

<https://assessatcuny.commons.gc.cuny.edu/2021/11/from-the-assessmentreview-editorial-staff-vol-3-issue-1/>

### *Question and Answer*

Professor Elizabeth Minnei asks whether or not the newly mandated 70-30 teaching modes includes hybrid? The Provost notes that we currently have 59% all in-person classes and 21% hybrid. Hybrid does count for an in-person class. Professor Minnei follows up that given the limited space at Baruch and its vertical configuration how will we managing the social distancing issues? The Provost suggests that in order that we meet the accreditation requirements we will need to use hybrid modalities and this will be part of the new use of technologies moving forward. It is also noted that a fully vaccinated student body does not need to maintain social distancing and that a mask mandate will remain in place. All classes will meet consistently in the same room and that future uses of space will make a smart use of hybrid teaching. Professor Marious Koufaris notes that students can expect to do some of their degree requirements online and that there remains a lot of flexibility in our programs. The Provost notes that we need to apply to have an increased presence for online teaching in the accreditation process. By 2023-24 the exceptions for covid will expire and 51% of our courses must thereafter be in person. Professor Glenn Peterson references the comments about a "vibrant campus community" and suggests for faculty that this too is important. However, we are outnumbered three-to-one by an adjunct teaching body which in all likelihood is not so attuned to this vibrancy as it is all too transitory compared to the full-time faculty body. Professor Martell makes it clear that we do not have enough full-time faculty. The Provost notes that this feature of our campus climate is not a flaw and that yes, fulltime faculty hires are a priority. Professor Peterson also asks that entering textbook information into CUNYfirst can and should be made easier. Associate Provost Slavin will look into additional options for entering textbook information.

### **b. Kathy Cobb, VP Administration & Finance**

VP Cobb presents on the current campus budget and this presentation can be found here:

[PowerPoint Presentation \(cuny.edu\)](#)

It is noted that a multi-year budget plan covering the years 2022-24 is in the works that it is hoped that 2024 will be more oriented to a revenue-producing budgetary model. A debate ensues over the question for the "need" for Baruch College to seek growth for the objective of seeking additional revenue pitched with the desire to welcoming a new student body that clearly have a stated need for our broad reputation for offering excellence in teaching and learning. Are there ways to manage the additional demand for our services while realizing our space constraints? It is hoped that the BFS can be introduced to the new infrastructure plans that BCTC are developing and how that new infrastructure can be used to meet the needs of our future student body.

### **c. Art King , VP Student Affairs**

VP King presents on the array of measures in place for the health and safety of our student body. VP King refers everyone to the Baruch Forward Website and its current iteration on health and safety for 20-21. The guidance on reporting covid positive cases and the protocol in place for quarantining can be found here:

[Baruch Forward | Baruch College - \(cuny.edu\)](#)

**V. Old Business**

None

**VI. New Business**

**a. Professor Lehr-Samuels, President's Advisory Council**

Professor Lehr-Samuels presents on the current progress of the Hybrid Online at Baruch Advisory Council (HOBAC). This presentation can be found here:

[PowerPoint Presentation \(cuny.edu\)](#)

**VII. Announcements**

**VIII. Adjournment: 2.20pm**

Respectfully submitted  
Richard Wilkins, PhD  
Faculty Senate Secretary