

Baruch Faculty  
Senate Plenary  
March 2, 2023  
Minutes

A total of 96 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.

- I. Approval of the Agenda:** The agenda is approved by assent and without additions.
- II. Approval of the Minutes:** The minutes of the February 2, 2023 meeting is approved by assent.
- III. BFS Reports**
  - a. Chair's Report: Professor Terry Martell**

Professor Martell reports that the President and Provost have approved a pilot program for research release time (RRT), aimed at supporting active researchers who carry a full 18 credit load. The Faculty Senate has been advocating for increased research support, and the college's goal this year is to provide such support. Professor Martell is pleased that the pilot program is being implemented, recognizing that it is a step towards supporting research at the college in the long term. It is also recognized that we are currently faced with a 8.4 million dollar budget cut for Baruch and a bigger budget cut CUNY writ large. It is important to note that the program is a pilot and that procedures and processes will need to be developed and refined as the program progresses. Professor Martell thanks the President, Provost, and Faculty Senate for their efforts in implementing the pilot program.

**IV. Report from President Wu**

President Wu expresses his gratitude to Professor Martell and the BFS Executive Committee for their input on the pilot Research Reassigned Time (RRT) project, which we are eager to experiment with. As you are aware, we are in the midst of a strategic planning exercise, and the plan is expected to be launched in Fall 2023. It appears that faculty research and scholarship is emerging as one of the themes of the plan. If this is the case, we will move forward with even more intention and systematically promote faculty activities. This is a good time to start with the pilot and learn from the necessary lessons as we move towards this direction.

Moving on to the budget, President Wu provides a larger context. You may have heard from colleagues across different community colleges about the budget issue that is currently affecting the system. This is partially due to the overall downturn in enrollment, except for Baruch, as well as some structural deficits that have accumulated over time.

As you may know, the State budget process starts every year with the Governor's Executive Budget, followed by the legislative proposal from the Senate and the House, and eventually, they reconcile and agree on a state budget. The Governor has released her executive budget, which includes an overall increase in the CUNY budget, but the most notable aspect is the lack of parity between CUNY and SUNY. We have started lobbying efforts with the Legislature, pointing out this disparity and requesting

additional funding. For example, SUNY will receive nearly 975 million dollars in transformative funding, but there is nothing comparable for CUNY.

Another significant chunk of funding is known as endowment matching funding. This program in the Governor's budget puts forward something in the order of 500 million for SUNY as a way of a 2-to-1 match. However, there is no comparable component in the CUNY budget, and we are requesting this to be added. This is particularly relevant for Baruch, given our supportive donor base, and the endowment match program is a tremendous incentive for donors.

In addition to the parity issue, there are some structural deficits, which are broken down into three main categories: collective bargaining committed amount, salary increments for faculty and staff, and OTPS inflation or mandatory cost increase. Although we have over 14 million dollars in reserve, most of it will be depleted with the collective bargaining and salary increment commitment in three years. Therefore, this is always a significant source of funding drain for us.

President Wu thanks the senate for our attention and is happy to provide more details as needed.

Professor Martell notes that the BFS Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate recently convened with VP Kathy Cobb and AVP Mary Rivers, and they have asked me to convey their gratitude for the informative and comprehensive briefing provided to them.

During the meeting, the committee discussed several pressing issues, including the need to prevent class size increases. Provost Essig is currently working to avoid such an outcome, as our average class size at Baruch is already higher than the CUNY average. While there may be an argument for tuition increases in this regard, this remains a contentious issue.

The Governor's budget allocates 97 million dollars to SUNY and only 31 million to CUNY. Nevertheless, the committee acknowledges that the 31 million dollars would provide some relief to address our ongoing structural deficit issue. The lack of ability to raise funds to cover mandatory cost increases, coupled with the absence of a research university comparable to Stony Brook or Binghamton, poses a significant challenge.

The committee recognizes the importance of having excellent research universities and the need for balanced allocation of resources. However, the current allocation of resources in the budget for CUNY, with only one and a half billion dollars for four institutions, poses a significant challenge. This remains a contentious issue that requires thoughtful consideration and advocacy.

### **III. BFS Committee Reports (cont'd)**

#### **b. Professor Myung-Soo Lee: CUNY Transfer Credit Policy**

Professor Lee reports that on February 15th, 2023, the CUNY Board of Trustees passed a resolution regarding seamless transfer from community colleges to senior colleges within the CUNY system. This resolution states that students who complete a program at a community college within the system should be granted junior status when transferring to a senior college in the same program. Additionally, the resolution calls for the creation of a system-wide transfer system to be completed and presented to the Board of Trustees by December 31st, 2024, under the leadership of the Executive Chancellor. To this end, a working group has been formed. The rationale behind this policy is twofold: first, to rectify the inequity experienced by students who lose credit, momentum, and financial aid when transferring between

colleges, and second, to address the business imperative of managing the large scale of transfers within the system. The transfer policy is particularly important given the projected low enrollment rates across the CUNY system due to demographic changes. There are currently several measures being developed to streamline the transfer process, with representatives from various disciplines on the working group.

### *Question and Answer*

Professor Gordon notes that community colleges do not require exams in-person expresses the concern over the integrity of coursework at the community colleges.

#### **c. Professor Andreas Grein, Strategic Planning Committee and the Blue Beyond Consulting Group**

The senate then moves into an hour-long strategic planning session which involved Introduction, Strategic Planning Update, Baruch's Strategic Planning Framework (Activity 1), Goals and Initiatives in Breakout Groups (Activity 2), Discussion, and Next Steps. Those present are asked to write in responses to the current draft plan found [here](#), and then are broken into groups to discuss particular aspects of the draft plan. The senate promised a debriefing at a later date.

#### **V. Old Business**

None

#### **VI. New Business**

Professor Lehr Samuels reports that yesterday, the Zicklin School's Dean Davis Friday sent an email to members of the school, informing them that one of their esteemed colleagues, Eva Montiel from the Management Department, has been reported missing. The news has deeply saddened the community, and an official message has been released by the school authorities. Additionally, friends and family of the missing faculty member have set up a GoFundMe page to support the search efforts. We will share the link in the chat for those interested. If anyone from the department would like to express their thoughts or feelings on this matter, they are encouraged to do so. However, the news has been incredibly distressing for everyone. Thank you.

Professor Engle Friedman announces the *Inaugural Conference on Climate Research, Teaching, and Collaboration* on Friday, March 10 from 10:00 am–5:15 pm. Conference registration and agenda can be found here: <https://baruch.cuny.edu/climateconference/>

Professor Kathy Pence announces the *CUNY-Wide Undergraduate Research Celebration* on May 31, 2023. The deadline for applications is March 27; the event will take place on May 31. Faculty in all fields are encouraged to nominate Baruch undergraduates who have completed or are working on an individual or group research project to be considered to be among select students from across the 20 CUNY campuses to display their research at the May 31 event! This CUNY event will take place at BMCC, where students will display a research poster. Faculty mentors are welcome. Ten students will be selected by Baruch's new Undergraduate Research Steering Committee. The CUNY Office of Research will choose which of the 10 will represent Baruch at the event. To apply, professors or students may fill out [this application form](#) including a 250-word abstract and 2-minute video of the student describing the work. Tips on abstract writing can be found [here](#).

Provost Essig announces the the *Provost Innovation Fellows* applications are due May 1

Up to three Provost's Innovation Fellows will have the opportunity to work with the provost on key strategic priorities, leading faculty task groups, creating programs, and building community partnerships. To learn more and apply, please visit [the website](#). Application deadline: **Monday, May 1**.

## **VII. Adjournment**

The meeting is adjourned at 2:15pm