

Baruch Faculty
Senate Plenary
May 4th, 2023
Minutes

A total of 70 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 without additions
- II. Approval of the Minutes:** The minutes of the March 30, 2023 meeting is approved by assent and without additions
- III. Professor Richard Wilkins, BFS Secretary:** Elections to the 2023-25 Baruch Faculty Senate Executive Committee

Election Summary

The following members of the Baruch Faculty Senate were voted onto the Senate Executive Committee for the term 2023-25:

Professor Andy Grein (Mkt), Chair
Professor Richard Wilkins (CommStudies), Secretary

Professor Carla Bellamy (Anthropology) Vice Chair
Professor Myung-Soo Lee (International Business) Vice-Chair
Professor Terry Martell (Fin), Vice-Chair
Professor Chandrika Kulatilleke (NatSci) Vice-Chair

Professor Stephen Francoeur (Lib), Senator-at-Large
Professor Christina Christoforatos (English), Senator-at-Large
Professor Armen Hovakimian (Fin), Senator-at-Large
Professor Allison Lehr-Samuels (Management) Senator-at-Large

IV. Chair's Report: Professor Terry Martell

Professor Martell announces the appointment of a new Chair to the Baruch Faculty Senate. The executive committee has still a few vacancies that require attention, and the newly formed committee will address these matters during the summer. Their recommendations will be presented for approval at the September meeting.

Moving on to the chair's report, Professor Martell notes that an update on the budget negotiations reveals the approval of an additional \$103 million for CUNY. Although specific details were not available at that moment it was acknowledged that the outcome fell short of the expectations set by the Assembly and Senate Budget proposals. Nonetheless, the \$103 million was considered a positive development. Further updates are expected in the coming weeks.

Expressing gratitude, Professor Martell took a moment to acknowledge several individuals who had made substantial contributions to the success of the Baruch Faculty Senate. The efforts of Matthew LePere in

ensuring the security and professionalism of the meetings, particularly after a past incident, were commended. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee's dedication and regular meetings were recognized for their pivotal role in achieving some of Baruch's organizational goals such as prioritizing faculty research and enhancing support for faculty. Appreciation was extended to Professor Richard Wilkins, the BFS Secretary, for his instrumental assistance in maintaining the smooth operation of the organization.

A positive working relationship with Baruch administration was also highlighted, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and open exchange of ideas. The readiness and responsiveness of President Wu in attending meetings and fostering open communication were recognized as positive factors in the interaction. Provost Essig's commitment to shared faculty governance and engagement with the Faculty Senate in academic matters were acknowledged, along with her consistent provision of necessary resources.

Vice President Gorman's collaboration with the *BFS Enrollment Management Committee* and the guidance provided in that regard were noted, as were the contributions of Vice President Kathy Cobb and Associate VP Mary Rivers in sharing financial information and engaging with the Faculty Senate.

The elected members of the Faculty Senate were sincerely thanked for their active involvement, attendance, and valuable contributions. The willingness to express thoughts and engage in meaningful discussions was considered a significant aspect of the organization's work.

The report also included recognition of two individuals who were retiring. Professor Elliott Axelrod, who had served as the chair of the Law Department and the School of Business, as well as an active member of the Faculty Senate, was commended for his significant contributions to Baruch and the Faculty Senate. Well-wishes were extended for his future endeavors. Additionally, a farewell was bid to Author Downing, the Vice President for Information Services and Dean of the Library. VP Downing's instrumental role in maintaining top-notch information technology and library services at CUNY was acknowledged, along with their impact on the organization's culture. The support provided to the faculty in terms of research and technology was appreciated.

Concluding the report, gratitude was expressed to all attendees for their attention and support throughout the outgoing chair's tenure. The opportunity to serve was deeply appreciated, and optimism was expressed for the positive changes and progress that the organization would experience in the future.

V. Report from President Wu

President Wu thanks Professor Martell his contributions to the Faculty Senate. Despite not always agreeing on everything, their partnership and ability to engage in productive debates have led to effective resolutions. President Wu appreciated Terry's leadership and acknowledged that such a spirit is not always common in other institutions.

President Wu then provided a quick update on the ongoing strategic planning process, which is nearing its final stage. A campus survey was completed, and the overall feedback from faculty, staff, students, and alumni has been positive. The framework of the strategic plan received significant agreement, including the mission and vision statements, core values, and strategic priorities. The speaker emphasized that these results are not final and encouraged further feedback and comments from the community.

Acknowledgements were made to the planning committee and co-chairs for their hard work in engaging the community throughout the process. President Wu also addressed the request for access to the college gym Fitness Center and assured that they are looking into it, considering various aspects, including the taxable benefit of a membership program. President Wu emphasized the importance of health and well-being in building a strong community at Baruch College.

Regarding the budget, President Wu mentioned that Baruch College was spared from the CUNY budget savings plan due to not having a structural deficit. Instead, they were asked to provide a five-year projection of a balanced budget with a reserve of 5% or more, which they successfully achieved. President Wu commended the hard work of the staff and faculty in maintaining a healthy financial position and highlighted that some peer institutions have faced significant impacts from budget saving plans.

Question and Answer:

Professor Glenn Peterson notes that due to security concerns, access to the restrooms in faculty office spaces have been under the control of faculty and staff. Professor Peterson notes that a plaque was placed in the restrooms that all persons regardless of gender identity have the rights to restrooms and wonders if someone who read this has the right to access the restroom. President Wu promised a thorough investigation of the implications of the plaque and its wording. President Wu clarified that the language on the plaque adheres to a guidelines provided by the CUNY Central office, specifically addressing gender identity and restroom use. Notably, the college has been actively engaged in creating and converting gender-neutral bathrooms across the campus, with approximately 40 single-use bathrooms already transformed into inclusive facilities within different buildings. This initiative is expected to alleviate some of the concerns expressed. Furthermore, the campus maintains a restricted access system with turnstiles and a dedicated public safety team, which enhances security measures. Although certain security-related matters may still require attention, the signage's purpose is to address gender-based access concerns. Ultimately, the availability of gender-neutral bathrooms is anticipated to contribute to a sustainable long-term resolution.

VI. BFS Committee Reports

a. Professor Carla Bellamy:

The following resolution is introduced recognizing Professor Terry Martell's service to the Baruch Faculty Senate

Whereas Professor Terrence Martell has been instrumental in promoting true shared governance at Baruch College over multiple terms as Chair and in collaboration with numerous Baruch presidents and their respective cabinets;

And whereas his leadership has consistently improved working conditions for Baruch faculty and the learning environment for Baruch students;

And whereas his commitment to innovative means of supporting faculty governance has run the gamut from lawsuits to sandwiches;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Faculty Senate of Baruch College expresses its gratitude to Professor Martell for his profound commitment to faculty governance and the well-being of Baruch College;

And be it further resolved that the Faculty Senate remains grateful for his continued willingness to serve as a member of the Executive Committee.

The resolution is adopted by assent.

b. Professor Carla Bellamy: Update on Student Complaint Portal

Professor Bellamy reminds the senate of the existence of an anonymous complaint portal for students to report faculty-related issues without fear of retaliation. The intention behind setting up this portal was to provide students with a secure space to voice their concerns. However, there have been concerns among faculty members that the portal, accessible to anyone with an internet connection, could potentially be misused for political or other purposes to target faculty members. To address this issue, discussions were held involving the Dean of Students Art King, Associate Dean Vergas-Estrada, and legal counsel Olga Dias. The objective was to find a solution that protects both students and faculty while maintaining a positive classroom environment at Baruch College. Based on the latest conversation with Art King, it appears that a decision has been made to remove the option for anonymous complaints about professors through the current form of the portal. Instead, students wishing to make anonymous complaints will be advised to contact the Ombuds office. Professor Bellamy notes that it may be possible to clarify on the portal that complaints made through the Dean of Students office are handled with discretion to protect students. This approach is expected to encourage students to share their concerns with the Dean of Students office.

Question and Answer

Professor Mindy Engle-Friedman notes that the Ombuds office, in its design, does not take action on nor resolves official complaints and students should be advised of that.

VII. Reports from College Officers

a. Report from Provost Linda Essig

Provost Essig thanks Professor Martell for his leadership as the Senate chair. Provost Essig notes that she has already worked with the incoming Chair Professor Andy Grein on various committees and projects and anticipates a good working relationship going forward. Provost Essig acknowledges the Senate's priority on research and proceeds to provide highlights from a recent Provosts report presented to the President's Cabinet. The report, in part, focused on promoting faculty research, scholarship, and creative activities to enhance the intellectual environment at the college. The reports notes the following:

- (i) the protocol processing through IRB has been reduced significantly with increased transparency through published statistics. The recruitment for a new IRB liaison was also mentioned.
- (ii) The office of the Provost supported research travel mini-grants and a pilot program for research reassigned time for associate and full professors. Research reassigned time was awarded to 48 associate and full professors and will receive this reassigned time next year. The second *Annual Cross-College Faculty Research Symposium* had more presenters and attendees compared to the previous year, and small research awards were provided to presenters through a grant from CUNY's office of research. The speaker encouraged marking the calendar for next year's symposium. Collaboration with Wendy Steinberg, the VP who joined in December, was emphasized for promoting public science and faculty research achievements.

- (iii) The hiring of an associate Provost for faculty affairs, research, and innovation, Rachel Fitch, was acknowledged.
- (iv) The Provost expressed enthusiasm for continuing to promote faculty research and scholarship as an integral part of the new strategic plan. The *Strategic Planning Committee* had their final meeting, primarily focused on metrics to measure success.

b. AVP Jenny Quarles, *Learning Management System* transition from Blackboard to Brightspace (D2L).

For additional information on the Brightspace (D2L) learning environment:

hetrynow.brightspace.com

<https://www.cuny.edu/academics/brightspace-transition/>

Create the acct here: <https://www.d2l.com/get-started-for-free/>

AVP Quarles presents the Brightspace (D2L) learning environment and refers throughout her presentation to the web links above.

Question and Answer

Professor Gareis thanks AVP Quarles for the presentation on the anticipated implementation of Brightspace (D2L), which would offer new possibilities for our teaching at Baruch. Professor Gareis references a survey conducted by the Baruch PSC Chapter on technology migrations and shared that the majority of respondents found the Interfolio and email migrations disruptive. They predicted that the upcoming blackboard migration would be even more disruptive. While some faculty members don't use learning management systems extensively, others expected the process of transferring their classes to take significant time, ranging from 40 to 80 or more hours. Professor Gareis mentioned the lack of concrete plans and support for the transition scheduled for the spring of 2024. Professor Gareis emphasized the need for adequate one-on-one help and additional support to teach and conduct research during the transition. The survey revealed faculty members' requests for reassigned time, extra pay, one-on-one assistance, and overtime pay for certain roles.

AVP Quarles clarified some key points regarding the scheduling and implementation timeline. She mentioned that the full implementation of Brightspace is scheduled for the Fall of 2025 (not 2024), and in the meantime, Blackboard will still be running in the spring of 2024. AVP Quarles directed the participants to the provided links, which contain information about the implementation plan. She emphasized that the plan includes details about transferring materials from one platform to another. Provost Essig assured Professor Gareis that information is available on the CUNY website and mentioned that she would copy the information onto a local website for easier access. Additional conversation also covered topics such as integration with Top Hat, troubleshooting support, and the lessons learned from previous system transitions. It was acknowledged that there are limitations and challenges imposed by the state purchasing system and external factors beyond the college's control.

c. Report from VP Mary Gorman: Enrollment Management

VP Mary Gorman's enrollment report can be found [here](#)

Question and Answer:

During the discussion, VP Mary Gorman mentions that it is too early to determine whether the revenue targets will be met through our current enrollment numbers. Graduate student enrollment plays a significant role in meeting these targets, so they need to ensure those numbers increase. However, at this

point, it is too early to provide specific details. Professor Terry Martell expresses confusion about why graduate program rankings are high but applications are down. VP Mary Gorman explains that Zicklin graduate applications have decreased by 8% so far this year. Provost Linda Essig highlights the opportunity to promote the graduate programs with rising rankings. Professor Sanders Korenman asks about transfers and whether they primarily come from community colleges. VP Mary Gorman confirms that about 45% of transfers come from community colleges and 30% from other senior colleges. She mentions that applications are down only about 2.5%, which is good considering the decline in community college enrollment due to the pandemic. VP Mary Gorman also discusses the Business Academy Model with BMCC, LaGuardia, and Queensborough community colleges, which aims to attract more community college students. VP Mary Gorman adds that adjusting the enrollment mix, including growing graduate enrollment and targeting international and out-of-state students, can help meet revenue targets.

VIII. Old Business

a. Proposed Resolution on increasing accessibility and participation through remote attendance options

At the March 30 Plenary the following resolution was proposed:

Baruch Faculty Senate Resolution
Presented at the March 30, 2023 Baruch Faculty Senate Plenary
Adopted by the Baruch Faculty Senate Executive Committee

Increasing Accessibility and Participation through Remote Attendance Options

Whereas, the Baruch College community consists of individuals with diverse needs and circumstances that may make in-person attendance at meetings difficult or impossible;

Whereas, remote attendance options can increase accessibility and participation for all members of the college community, including those with disabilities, caretaking responsibilities, or other obligations;

Whereas, technological advancements have made remote attendance options easier to implement;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Baruch Faculty Senate supports the increased accessibility and participation of all members of the college community by implementing remote attendance options for routine committee and faculty meetings;

Be it further resolved that remote attendance options may include online platforms such as Zoom, or Teams, as well as simple speaker phone set-ups to allow participants to call in.

Discussion

Professor Gorden asks whether or not this applies to P&B meetings. Professor Terry Martell explains that the resolution ensures the ability to call into or join meetings remotely, regardless of the platform used and that it is still up to those committees to decide on their preferences. Professor Nanda Kumar shares his experience of managing both in-person and remote meetings simultaneously and suggests giving departments the flexibility to choose the best option. Professor Martell agrees and suggests a simple

solution of placing a cell phone on the table for remote attendees to dial in. Professor Bellamy highlights that the intention of the resolution is to prioritize in-person meetings whenever possible, with remote attendance being an option for individuals with diverse needs or challenging circumstances. Professor Nanda Kumar acknowledges the need to accommodate people's needs, but also mentions the practical difficulties they have encountered. Professor Martell reassures that using a phone for remote attendance should not be a problem.

The resolution is approved by assent.

IX. New Business

Professor Mindy Engle-Friedman expresses gratitude to Dean Lang for the upcoming launch of a new climate change website. The website was initially designed through Weissman but will now be a Baruch College website. Everyone is invited to visit the website, provide feedback and suggestions, and encourage faculty members involved in climate change, whether through teaching, research, or personal interest, to join and contribute to the website.

Professor Mindy Engle-Friedman also notes that a large number of faculty members have voiced interest in forming a climate consortium. A group of faculty had already met to discuss the consortium's purpose, which includes collaborative research, teaching, and developing the workforce to educate students about climate change. The focus is on leveraging New York as a coastal community and using its understanding of economics and finance to prepare students for the decarbonized economy. Professor Mindy Engle-Friedman highlights the expertise of Zicklin in finance and economics and calls for contributions from experts across various disciplines in the consortium, including philosophy, environmental justice, and journalism.

8. Adjournment

The meeting is adjourned at 2:15pm