July 26, 2018

Understanding Unconscious Bias, Upcoming Events, and Alumni News

Dear Colleagues,

As chief diversity officer, I have the privilege to lead discussions and efforts that help ensure diversity, inclusion, and cultural competence throughout the Baruch College community.

For this month’s e-newsletter, I would like to explore one hurdle to our shared goals, unconscious bias, because it is particularly harmful to recruitment and hiring. Hiring managers and search committee members in particular need to be aware of unconscious biases. After all, the ultimate goal of recruiting/hiring is to find the most-
qualified candidates from a search process that is both fair and impartial. We owe it to ourselves and our campus community to minimize decisions based upon biases.

Recognizing Unconscious Bias
Research has shown that if we have a normal, functioning brain, we have unconscious biases. Our brain has a tendency to categorize and group people based upon:

- Our own personal connections with them ("affinity bias")
- Information that we receive that confirms our preexisting perceptions and then blocks acquiring additional evidence ("confirmation bias")
- Biases embedded in our organization or culture ("systemic bias")

Overcoming Bias
Practical steps can help us overcome bias. Baruch has established practices and training to mitigate unconscious biases, including:

- Search committee members are asked to take the Project Implicit bias test as a step toward becoming aware of our brain’s reaction to fill in blanks with incomplete data. Read about and take the test here.
- Practices that mitigate against judgments based upon biases include (1) reviewing résumés based on job description, which establishes a consistent, objective standard for evaluating the candidate pool, and (2) asking the same interview questions of all candidates. Additionally, search committees and hiring managers are taught questions that are illegal and must not be asked.

Questions? Please contact us at diversity@baruch.cuny.edu or at 646-312-4538.

Upcoming Diversity & Inclusion Events

Coalition to Undo Racism at Baruch (CURB) Meeting
When: Tuesday, July 31, noon to 1 pm
Where: Newman Vertical Campus, Room 2-290
CURB members—Baruch employees who have participated in the Undoing Racism® Community Organizing Workshop at the College—will share proactive strategies for undoing institutional racism.

When: Wednesday, September 5, noon to 2:30 pm
Where: Newman Vertical Campus, Simon Conference Room, 14-220
Richard Rothstein, research associate of the Economic Policy Institute and fellow at the Thurgood Marshall Institute of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, will offer remarks, answer questions, and sign copies of his book The Color of Law. Lunch will be served. Sponsored by the Office of Diversity, Compliance, and Equity Initiatives.
**Film Screenings and Discussions of 13th, a Netflix documentary**

**When:** Tuesday, September 25, 12:30 pm  
Tuesday, October 2, 12:30 pm  
Tuesday, October 9, 12:30 pm  

**Where:** Newman Vertical Campus, Room 2-290  

Titled after the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which abolished slavery, this award-winning 2016 documentary argues that slavery is in fact being perpetuated through mass incarceration of people of color and the prison-industrial complex. Sponsored by CURB, with discussions to follow. Note: If you are a CURB member and interested in facilitating discussions, please email Robert Kunicki.

**Workshop: Center for Ethnic, Racial, and Religious Understanding (CERRU)**

**When:** Wednesday, September 26, noon to 3 pm  
**Where:** Newman Vertical Campus, Room 14-250

The Center for Ethnic, Racial, and Religious Understanding (CERRU), based at Queens College/CUNY, will provide a workshop for Baruch staff on building and fostering cultural competency through the use of dialogue and undoing-bias techniques. Sponsored by the Office of Diversity, Compliance, and Equity Initiatives.

**Peace Corps Panel**

**When:** Tuesday, November 13, 12:30 to 2 pm  
**Where:** Newman Vertical Campus, Room 14-270  

Teresa Liu, associate director of international events, has organized a panel of returned Peace Corps volunteers who work and teach at Baruch. The event, which will take place during the College’s International Education Week (November 12–16), offers a discussion of service and a Q&A with panelists Teresa Liu (RPCV-East Timor), Anna D’Souza (Marxe School, RPCV-Senegal), Brian Kane (College NOW, RPCV-Honduras), and Cheryl de Jong-Lambert (Office of Communications, Marketing, and Public Affairs; RPCV-Guinea-Bissau). Faculty and staff are invited to attend. Co-sponsored by the Office of Diversity, Compliance, and Equity Initiatives.

**Workshop: CERRU**

**When:** Thursday, February 14, 2019, noon to 3 pm  
**Where:** Newman Vertical Campus, Room 14-250  

CERRU’s workshop (*described above*) will focus on faculty, although faculty members are welcome to attend the September 26 event. Sponsored by the Office of Diversity, Compliance, and Equity Initiatives.

**Alumni News**
Congratulations to Marxe alumna Joanna Hernandez (EMPA ’17), who was named the director of inclusion and diversity at the University of Florida College of Journalism and Communications.

In conclusion, I encourage you to share your news and events with me, and I thank you for your continued support of diversity and inclusion at Baruch.

Sincerely,

Mona Jha, Esq.
Chief Diversity Officer