June 1, 2018

Upcoming Events and Initiatives at Baruch College and in the Community; Notable Alumni

Dear Colleagues,

As chief diversity officer, I thank you for your continued support in fostering diversity and inclusion at Baruch College and the City University of New York (CUNY). I would like to take a moment to consider what constitutes “inclusion.”

The Association of American Colleges & Universities begins with the guiding principle “Making Excellence Inclusive.” It defines inclusion as the “active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity—in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect—in ways that increase awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions.”

Borrowing from the Ford Foundation’s discussion on inclusion, the result is that we create a “culture of belonging by actively inviting the contribution and participation of all people.”
Consistent with this message for building inclusion, I bring your attention to the **Percy E. Sutton SEEK (Search for Education Elevation Knowledge) Program**. We thank the director of the SEEK Program, Kristy Perez, PhD, for providing details of the program, which was established by the New York State Legislature in 1966 to be housed in each of the senior colleges of CUNY. SEEK accepts low-income students who would not otherwise be admitted due to lower SAT scores and lower GPAs than regularly admitted students.

SEEK was the first program of its sort at four-year colleges in the United States. It became a model and a prototype for Higher Education Opportunity Programs (HEOP) across the country. Most State University of New York schools now have their Equal Opportunities Programs (EOP), and many private colleges have HEOPs. These programs would not exist, and many talented students would not have a college degree, were it not for SEEK.

SEEK is aware that the achievements of our incoming students do not yet reflect their ability. The program offers a unique and supportive educational opportunity to students who have the intellectual potential to succeed in college. The Percy E. Sutton SEEK students at Baruch receive individual attention and support in a variety of capacities including counseling, academic support, and financial aid. The SEEK Program further strives to enrich the lives of its students beyond the scope of their academic coursework. As they develop a relationship with their counselor as well as connect with peer mentors and academic tutors, students learn to see themselves from a new perspective and thereby shape their own lives. The program’s goal is to graduate students who will offer a unique and substantial contribution to the world they help diversify.

Currently, the program has 667 students and expects 160 incoming first-year students in the upcoming Fall 2018 semester.

Baruch’s SEEK Program is considered one of the best programs of its kind. Its retention rates and graduation rates are comparable or higher than the College’s overall: its retention rate is 94 percent and six-year graduation rate is 82 percent. Each year, our students distinguish themselves as student leaders, scholars, professionals, and civic leaders.

For more information about Baruch College’s SEEK Program, please feel free to visit its [website](#) or its office located at the Newman Vertical Campus in Room 2-230.

**Self-Identification**

In March, the College sent an announcement requesting that you fill out the self-identification information on CUNYfirst. We are following up with that request at this time.
CUNY collects identity information about its faculty and staff to comply with affirmative action and equal employment regulations and for institutional planning purposes. Specifically, we collect information related to gender, ethnicity, ancestry, veteran status, and disability status from CUNY’s tax-levy employee population, both full-time and part-time.

As a result of past requests, virtually all CUNY employees have identified their gender and ethnicity. However, fewer employees have provided information on ancestry, veteran status, and disability status. We hope you will consider providing this information. Not only will this help CUNY comply with federal regulations, this information is useful to us as we fulfill our commitment to creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community.

Providing self-identification information is voluntary. Your answers are maintained confidentially and are used to create mandatory reports and to develop effective affirmative action and/or diversity programs. Please see these FAQs for additional details including technical instructions on accessing the related forms on the CUNYfirst self-service portal. In most cases, you will need fewer than ten minutes to update your information. If you need help accessing the screens or recording your responses, please contact the Office of Human Resources at 646-660-6690. If you have further questions regarding self-identification, please contact my office at 646-312-4538.

**Upcoming at Baruch College**

“Free Speech Crisis: Protect First Amendment Rights and Students’ Demands to Maintain an Inclusive Community”

**When:** Wednesday, June 6, at 2 pm  
**Where:** NVC Room 14-270  
The Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Initiatives along with the Office of Communications, Marketing, and Public Affairs are sponsoring a webinar and discussion on the “Free Speech Crisis: Protect First Amendment Rights and Students’ Demands to Maintain an Inclusive Community.” Space is limited. Please RSVP to my office.

**Coalition to Undo Racism at Baruch (CURB) Meeting**

**When:** Tuesday, June 12, noon  
**Where:** NVC Room 11-217  
CURB will be holding its next meeting in June at which members will discuss proactive strategies for undoing institutional racism. CURB members are Baruch employees who have participated in the Undoing Racism® Community Organizing Workshop at the College. The next such workshop, sponsored by the Office of Diversity, Compliance, and Equity Initiatives along with the Office of Enrollment Management and Strategic Academic Initiatives, will take place on Wednesday, July
25 and Thursday, July 26. Please contact Robert Kunicki, assistant director for student success, assessment, and enrollment initiatives, for more information on the workshop.

“Promoting Equality in an Age of Austerity: The Role for State and Local Governments”

When: Tuesday, June 12-Wednesday, June 13, all-day events
Where: NVC Room 14-220
This National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) Social Equity Leadership Conference on “Promoting Equality in an Age of Austerity: The Role for State and Local Governments” will examine best practices designed to achieve racial, gender, and economic equity in the current climate of reduced federal budgets. It is co-sponsored by NAPA’s Standing Panel on Social Equity in Governance and the Marxe School of Public and International Affairs. Please RSVP to Angelina Delgado, senior director of finance and administration at the Marxe School. Learn more.

Upcoming in the Community

Black Women’s Blueprint Counseling Programs

When: August 2018
Black Women’s Blueprint, a civil and human rights organization for women of African descent, is creating counseling programs scheduled for the beginning of August. “Sister Circle,” one such program, is for female survivors of sexual assault who are over the age of 18. Please contact 646-647-5414 for more information.

Notable Alumni

The Network Journal and Morgan Stanley honored Carla Hunter Ramsey (MPA ’08) as one of the “25 Influential Black Women in Business.” Ms. Ramsey is the senior global director for supply chain and corporate social responsibility at New York utilities giant National Grid. She earned a bachelor’s degree from Queen’s College and a master’s degree in public administration from Baruch College. She also holds an Inclusion and Diversity Executive and Diversity Leader Black Belt certification, with which her skills can be expanded to impact the field of diversity and inclusion.

In the spirit of community, I thank you for making Baruch College’s and CUNY’s commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunity a priority.

Sincerely,

Mona Jha, Esq.
Chief Diversity Officer