

BARUCH: FALL 2020 AND BEYOND

A secondary report of Baruch's Task Force for the Future

September 2020

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I. INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the Baruch “Task Force for the Future”, we are pleased to submit our second report. This report builds on our first report issued early in July (<https://president.baruch.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2020/07/TFF-Preliminary-Report-July-9-1.pdf>). That first report focused explicitly on matters closely related to the College’s reopening at the beginning of September. Immediately after submitting that report, the Task Force pivoted to longer term consequences for the College of the COVID pandemic, and to an examination of what the long-term future of Baruch should be, in response both to COVID and the underlying forces that have been driving higher education before COVID emerged.

As readers will see immediately on reading this report, we build very strongly on many of the key concepts that emerged when the Task Force launched and that are reflected in our first report. And we continued the same methodological approach we developed when the Task Force was announced and launched in June. The foundation on which this report is built is very explicitly the one we established when we wrote the first report.

This report, however, reflects one important structural change we made in response to comments received after our first report was released. A number of readers proposed that – in addition to sub-committees focused exclusively on faculty and students, we add a fifth Task Force sub-committee charged with focusing on the unique needs of Baruch’s staff, whom we recognize as being essential to Baruch’s past, present and future success. The Task Force concurred enthusiastically with this suggestion and the new Staff Sub-Committee has joined the other four. Results of their deliberation are included in this report.

We recommend that readers of this second report start by reviewing the “Charge to Baruch’s Task Force for the Future”, issued by Baruch’s new President, S. David Wu, before he took office formally on July 1, 2020 (<https://president.baruch.cuny.edu/task-force-for-the-future/>). This Charge applies equally to the work that culminated in our first report and to the work we report below.

We also recommend that current readers also review Section IV of the first report, a short section that presents “SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS,” and that leads directly to the current report.

We organize this report in a manner quite similar to the prior one; the following “Table of Contents” reflects the structure of the current report:

- I. INTRODUCTION
- II. PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE REPORT
 - a. The shape of instruction for Baruch’s future
 - b. Supporting Baruch’s present and future faculty
 - c. Supporting Baruch’s present and future students
 - d. Supporting Baruch’s present and future staff
 - e. Effectively communicating Baruch’s goals, aspirations and actions in support of the entire College

III. DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS FROM TASK FORCE SUB-COMMITTEES

As before, in the interest of transparency and in the interest of reporting sub-committee conclusions in their own words, we present excerpts from all recommendations made by each of the sub-committees and include them in this section.

IV. TASK FORCE SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS FOR FALL 2020 AND BEYOND

We also include in the body of the report, complete copies of each full report submitted by the sub-committees.

APPENDICES

- I. Membership and Staff of the Task Force for the Future, and of Task Force Subcommittees
- II. Links to Task Force Website
 - a. Resources Consulted
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 - c. Agenda and Minutes of Task Force Meetings

II. PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

a. The shape of instruction for Baruch's future

The first sub-committee sets out a clear vision of the future of instruction at Baruch that embraces both continuity and change.

The short-term continuity is clearly represented in the sub-committee's recommendation that— because of practical limitations associated with the COVID pandemic – Baruch should “continue to deliver the vast majority of . . . courses fully online”. This approach should prevail at least through Spring term 2021, and until COVID conditions make more in-person education possible.

The sub-committee's longer term view also represents a preference for a return to the continuity that has prevailed for “more than half a century,” namely Baruch's “focus on in-person education.”

The sub-committee does not prefer in the “post-pandemic world” Baruch's “moving to a place [in which] a very large proportion of its courses [would be] fully online.”

But the sub-committee is far from mired in the past; it embraces both continuity and focused change when it recommends that “Baruch should move judiciously, deliberately, and efficiently to identify courses and programs that can be effectively taught in new and exciting online and/or hybrid formats.”

The sub-committee specifically recommends that Baruch should “Design specific online programs to meet specific needs” and “Develop [selective] fully online programs.”

A particularly powerful recommendation states that “Baruch should investigate ways to utilize online instruction as a means to increase graduation rates among students who are having difficulty completing their degrees.”

The sub-committee specifies processes the College can and should follow to achieve these overall goals. These are described in detail in Section III of this report.

Finally, the sub-committee does not limit its vision simply to the continuum of educational modalities from in-person to fully online. It also clearly recommends that Baruch should “Leverage New York City's vibrance to reimagine graduate and undergraduate education.” Specifically, “...Baruch should explore ways to get students out of the classroom and into the City, through education partnerships with businesses and non-profit entities.” The sub-committee concludes this recommendation by writing that “This is an area where synergies are ripe for development.”

b. Supporting Baruch’s present and future faculty

Provide greatly enhanced human resources (i.e. more staff in critical areas)

We start with a very strong recommendation that emerged – independently – from three of the four original sub-committees identified to carry out the Task Force’s work. The Faculty, Technology, and Student sub-committees each listed among their highest priorities investing in additional staff for the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), the Baruch Computer Technology Center (BCTC), the Schwartz Communication Institute, and the Writing Center. We report these recommendations first in the category of support for present and future faculty, but **we emphasize in the strongest possible terms that support for these recommendations was ubiquitous.** The “Faculty” and “Technology” sub-committees each specifically recommended that adding at least four positions each to BCTC and CTL were among their highest priorities. In so doing, they acknowledged the serious financial challenges the College faces, but still made these recommendations even if they required transferring funds from other parts of the College.

Over the longer term, as the College embarks on the evolution of its instructional structures – described in the previous section of the report – the Task Force strongly recommends that substantial and specific additional human resources will be needed in just about every aspect of the College’s work, including support for faculty as they embark on implementing the instructional innovations posed above. Extensive and specific accounts of the human resources required are presented below, in the detailed recommendations and reports of the Faculty, Technology and Student sub-committees. Each of these recommendations has merit and each is deserving of serious consideration.

As a result, undoubtedly the most serious challenge facing the College as it implements the Task Force’s recommendations will be the development of processes prioritizing these recommendations and linking them with the financial realities the College faces. These are the most challenging “Next Steps.”

Providing greatly enhanced technology resources

Again, recommendations for greatly enhanced technology resources are presented in the reports from the Faculty, Technology and Student sub-committees.

The recommendations include:

- Creation and equipping of production space for technology-supported instruction;
- Enhancing classroom teaching technology;
- Infrastructure upgrades;
- A particularly interesting recommendation to eliminate faculty desktops and provide all faculty with laptops to serve as their sole piece of computer hardware; and

- Expanding access of both faculty and students to effective tools for remote learning (hardware and software).

This extensive list of recommendations endorsed by most of the Task Force sub-committees presents the same fundamental challenges presented above in reference to recommendations about enhanced human resources, namely establishing clear and detailed priorities and linking those priorities to the financial realities faced by the College – now and likely in the future. We would urge the College leadership (the President as well as the Provost and the Deans), in the following and in subsequent years, to give highest priority to this full set of recommendations, which the Committee views as critical.

c. Supporting Baruch’s present and future students

In addition to the student-related recommendations made in the above three sets of recommendations, there are a number of unique recommendations made by the Task Force’s Sub-committee on Students.

- The sub-committee led off with an extensive series of recommendations on ways in which communications between the College and students – and among students could be enhanced. The key themes behind this first recommendation were repeated throughout the full set of recommendations offered by the sub-committee. The essences of these recommendations is that better communication generates strong connections which in turn enhance student success.
- In the short term, the sub-committee also recommended an increase in and greater visibility of virtual programming from the Office of Student Affairs.
- The sub-committee made a particularly strong recommendation for increased investment in academic advising. They supported their recommendation with simple, but powerful evidence: In the Baruch College Office of Undergraduate Advisement and Orientation, the ratio of advisors to students is 1:1,700; the national recommendation is 1:300.
- The sub-committee also recommends the First Year Seminar be updated and redesigned, partly to recognize new distant learning contexts.
- The sub-committee made a number of other specific recommendations, including:
 - Establishing safe spaces for students to study and to access needed technology;
 - Providing consistent remote access to technology such as Wi-Fi access and access to needed applications;
 - Providing easy access to health and mental health facilities;
 - Expanding the Campus Intervention Team;
 - Increasing emergency support services;
 - Developing robust care communities allowing students to gather and build community; and
 - Promoting enhanced support for students served by the Office of Student Disability Services.

As has been the case with all other sub-committees, the recommendations provided to enhance the student experience and student success are extensive – and expensive.

Once again, the next steps in the process that began with the establishment of the Task Force are difficult; these recommendations must be prioritized; detailed implementation schedules must be developed; and funds must either be reallocated or acquired from new sources.

d. Supporting Baruch’s present and future staff

Because the Task Force’s explicit focus on issues uniquely relevant to College staff has been more recent than our attention to other specific groups, this sub-committee’s findings and recommendations at this point are still very much a work in progress.

In spite of the recency of this focus among the Task Force, the Staff Sub-committee in fact identified issues of broad relevance to all the other issues the Task Force has discussed, reinforcing the overall “conclusion” that critical issues cross sub-groups across the College.

In the coming weeks, after gathering more data from College staff, the sub-committee has set out recommendations for specific workshops that would be of considerable value to staff (and likely others as well) on two critical issues:

- Mental health awareness, and
- Work-life balance.

Early in its deliberations, the sub-committee defined these two issues as being essential to staff well-being and success, particularly as a result of working remotely, which can result in isolation, and severely blurred work-life boundaries.

In addition to recommending the development and implementation of specific staff training opportunities in these two areas, the sub-committee also recommended strong and regular communications on these issues both from divisional leaders and that these themes be featured regularly in the Monthly HR Newsletter.

Going forward, the present sub-committee is in the process of soliciting more direct information from staff, and will be making additional recommendations in the coming weeks.

As you will read in our next and final category of this section of the report, the Staff Sub-committee has focused clearly and convincingly on the value of broad and effective communication, so much so that we include “communication” as the overriding theme of our final recommendation in this report.

e. Effectively communicating Baruch’s goals, aspirations and actions in support of the entire College.

Although our Task Force did not specifically address the challenge or even the concept of communication as one of the foci of our envisioning and ensuring Baruch’s future, we did – perhaps not surprisingly – come to recognize the roles that communication – or non-communication – have played and will play in the College’s future. Since we did not devote any significant time or attention to communication issues, for example we did

not establish a specific communication sub-committee, we have no specific recommendations about the shape of the College's approach to and structure of communication activities. But we do conclude that effective communication around the recommendations set out above will be essential, and that as the College embarks on the "next steps" set out in the above four categories, we recognize that each of the above "next steps" move from ideas and proposals to actions and changes, each of these "next steps" must be accompanied by a comprehensive communication effort that reaches out to both internal and external College constituencies to insure that all are aware of and supportive of these new efforts and directions. We point out that, in addition to the Staff sub-committee, Sub-Committee one also included a specific recommendation relating to external communication concerning the value of in-person liberal arts education. The report from the Student sub-committee further specified a number of important formal and informal, as well as internal and external communication initiatives that were seriously needed to enhance student success.

III. DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS FROM TASK FORCE SUB-COMMITTEES

Recommendations from Task Force Sub-committee 1: Academic Instruction for Fall 2020 and Beyond

- Continue to deliver the vast majority of Baruch's courses fully online: The subcommittee recommends that Baruch continue to deliver the vast majority of its courses in the manner that those courses are scheduled to be delivered during the fall 2020 semester—fully online. The subcommittee does not believe that any other option—including the option of requiring, or even encouraging, the creation and delivery of any significant number of hybrid courses—is practical or desirable at the present time. The principal factors involved considerations of practical pedagogy and basic equity. The simple truth is that it is difficult to conceive of, and almost impossible to practically implement, an individual course that is offered *both* in a hybrid instructional format *and* in a fully online instructional format in the same semester. Yet, until such time as the college is willing to require that students attend at least some number of classes during the semester in person, every course that would be offered in a hybrid format would also need to be structured in such a way as to provide students with the option of taking that same class fully online.
- Maintain a focus on in-person education: After now more than a half-century as a senior college in the CUNY system, Baruch has a well-earned reputation for providing excellent—indeed, life altering—undergraduate and graduate level instruction to students who are not wealthy or well-connected and are often the first in their family to have the opportunity to take advantage of higher education. It would be the height of recklessness for Baruch to jeopardize that stellar reputation by too quickly and too energetically moving to place a very large portion of its courses fully online in the post-pandemic world. Instead, Baruch should move judiciously, deliberately, and efficiently to identify courses and programs that can be effectively taught in new and exciting online and/or hybrid formats, while maintaining for the foreseeable future a focus on in-person education.
- Design specific online programs to meet specific needs: There is now ample evidence to establish that certain students may benefit from specific forms of online instruction. Such online instruction may be particularly valuable in assisting students whose path to graduation has, for one reason or another, become stalled. Baruch should investigate ways to utilize online instruction as a means to increase graduation rates among students who are having difficulty completing their degrees.
- Develop fully online programs where desirable: Fully online programs can surely be an important, valuable, and profitable part of Baruch's overall instructional repertoire. Particularly at the graduate level, Baruch should examine the feasibility of creating fully online degree programs in various fields. Such programs could draw on the experience and

expertise of Baruch faculty who teach in one of Baruch's many in-person graduate programs.

- Leverage New York City's vibrance to reimagine graduate and undergraduate education: Everyone hopes and expects that in the post-pandemic world New York City will rapidly return to the pre-pandemic levels of energy and vitality that made it unique in the world as a place where driven individuals come to pursue their dreams and develop their talents. Within practicable limits, and never losing focus on academic rigor, Baruch should explore ways to get students out of the classroom and into the city, through educational partnerships with businesses and non-profit entities. This is an area where synergies are ripe for development.
- Work to develop criteria for approval of online courses: There's no use in closing the barn door once the horse has left to roam the countryside. Remembering always that academic freedom is the *sine qua non* of any university, and that professors should always enjoy the maximum liberty to teach what and how they want, the time is now for the college to undertake serious discussions about the requirements of a legitimate online course, including student attendance and instructor participation. These discussions should begin at the departmental level and percolate up through school curriculum committees and beyond. This should not be imposed on departments or instructors by the administration.
- Focus on Instructor and Student Connectivity: In the old days—that is, the pre-pandemic days—students would walk into a physical classroom at a given time, the instructor would be there, and learning would take place. Now we have fully online courses that are taught either synchronously or asynchronously and that often incorporate Zoom sessions that may include all or part of the given class at various times during the semester. Negotiating this new “virtual learning space” can be difficult for students—and for instructors, as well. Procedures should be put in place that enable students to know with certainty when a class will meet at all times during the semester and how communication will take place between the instructor and students. To be sure, this information should be on every instructor's syllabus, and that syllabus should be made available to every student before the first day of class. But there may be a need for follow-up to ensure that students and instructors are connecting in the ways detailed on the syllabus provided by the instructor. Ideally, this would happen at the departmental level, with appropriate additional funding provided if it is required.
- Search out “Best Practices” to emulate: As this report is being finalized, in September of 2020, virtually every college in America, and numerous colleges and universities around the globe, have had months to experiment with online education in all shapes and sizes and modalities. We would expect that such experimentation has produced a huge variety of pedagogical practices that include the good, the bad, and the ugly. Baruch College should establish a committee or a task force whose mission is to seek out and explore the best practices in regard to online education, and to assess the feasibility of adopting those

practices here. There is a universe of data available for analysis, and countless best practices waiting to be discovered.

- Communicate to the public the value of traditional, in-person, liberal-arts education: Perhaps as a result of the pandemic and the massive increase in online education it has caused, there is abroad in the land a pernicious and growing notion that education beyond high school should be *principally* focused on teaching individuals specific skills which they desire to learn in order to increase their job prospects or marketability. This seems to be the model embraced by organizations like Coursera and EdX.com, which provide a cafeteria-style array of courses that individuals can pick and choose from to build their résumés, after paying the appropriate fee. There is surely something to be said for this model and for so-called life-long learning. But if institutions like CUNY are to survive, the case needs to be made that college level instruction—especially instruction that is traditional, in-person, and liberal-arts oriented—is not only an individual good but a public good as well, insofar as it teaches the skills that free individuals need to remain free individuals—skills involving critical thinking, effective communication, and the ability to intelligently evaluate claims across a variety of fields.

Recommendations from Task Force Sub-committee 2: Faculty Support Services for Fall 2020 and Beyond

- Invest in human resources needed:
 - Note: In our opinion, the first bulleted positions under BCTC and the first two under CTL should be the absolute priorities, with the other positions in those organizations best prioritized internally. The Schwartz position is a pressing need for the Marx School.
 - BCTC:
 - One Senior Level Classroom Support person
 - Several additional technologists in BCTC that are critical for College operations
 - Additional help desk personnel
 - Full-time/part-time personnel to handle logistics of hardware allocation to faculty/students
 - Dedicated full-time academic software specialist
 - Full-time documentation and training specialist
 - Additional part-time staff to be able to provide on-demand phone support for instructors, staff, and students in online courses and work
 - CTL:
 - Associate Director for CTL
 - FT specialist in synchronous online teaching
 - *At least* two full-time positions in CTL (specialist in synchronous online teaching, specialist in asynchronous teaching/production specialist, specialist in accessibility)
 - At least two additional full-time instructional designers dedicated to helping faculty with their courses

- Bernard L. Schwartz Communication Institute:
 - Fill the vacated Assistant Director for Writing in Public and International Affairs position. (Note: this position requires no new funding. The position is funded by MSPIA and the Schwartz Institute.)
- Invest in technical resources needed:
 - Invest in creating production spaces and providing technical resources for faculty to be able to create quality asynchronous content for their courses. This can include studios spaces at the College and/or loanable resources (camera, green screen, etc.) for use at home
 - Acquire classroom technology that will allow a combination of in-person and online instruction simultaneously.
 - Transition to laptops for all faculty/staff
 - Acquire better remote access solutions for faculty/staff
 - Peripheral support for faculty/staff (e.g., printers, scanners, whiteboard tablets, etc.)
 - Building in support for Apple devices
- Invest in additional resources needed:
 - Additional technical personnel and resources for various units in the College, such as Admissions, ISSC, SACC, TfCS, the Writing Center, Zicklin Tech, etc. (some of which are discussed in **Appendix A**).
 - In addition, better governance structure for communicating the technical needs of all departments, academic and administrative.
- Explore the possibility that the appearance of all members of the class on video along with the instructor might be agreed upon beforehand: Subgroup #2 recommends that the college explore the possibility that, in at least some classes in Spring 2021, the appearance of all members of the class on video along with the instructor might be agreed upon beforehand. The dynamism of exchange in face-to-face discussions, ideally conducted in person but at least plausibly approximated by conferencing software, is an irreplaceable teaching tool, and many students have made it apparent that they prefer it to all other modes of online instruction. There is a broad consensus among both students and faculty that synchronous face-to-face exchange is the gold standard in online classes that include discussion.

Recommendations from Task Force Sub-committee 3: Technological Assistance for Fall 2020 and Beyond

- Invest in human resources needed:
 - CTL:
 - Assistant Director for CTL

- *At least* three full-time positions in CTL (specialist in synchronous online teaching, specialist in asynchronous teaching/production specialist, specialist in accessibility)
 - At least two additional full-time instructional designers dedicated to helping faculty with their courses
 - BCTC:
 - One Senior Level Classroom Support person
 - Several additional technologists in BCTC that are critical for College operations
 - Additional help desk personnel
 - Full-time/part-time personnel to handle logistics of hardware allocation to faculty/students
 - Dedicated full-time academic software specialist
 - Full-time documentation and training specialist
 - Additional part-time staff to be able to provide on-demand phone support for instructors, staff, and students in online courses and work
- *Invest in technical resources needed:*
 - Invest in creating production spaces and providing technical resources for faculty to be able to create quality asynchronous content for their courses. This can include studios spaces at the College and/or loanable resources (camera, green screen, etc.) for use at home
 - classroom technology that will allow a combination of in-person and online instruction simultaneously.
 - Several RESO-A projects have been earmarked but are incomplete, but they need to be completed because they address critical infrastructure needs for the College
 - Infrastructure upgrades, including:
 - Network switches
 - NAPs
 - Transition to laptops for all faculty/staff
 - A better remote access solution for faculty/staff
 - Peripheral support for faculty/staff (e.g., printers, scanners, whiteboard tablets, etc.)
 - Building in support for Apple devices
- *Invest in additional resources needed:*
 - Additional technical personnel and resources for various non-academic departments in the College, such as SACC, Zicklin Tech, Admissions, etc.
 - In addition, better governance structure for communicating the technical needs of all departments, academic and administrative.

Recommendations from Task Force Sub-committee 4: Student Support Services for Fall 2020 and Beyond

- Develop Baruch Forward, into a comprehensive “Student Information” application and link on the Baruch College website that is prominently visible, accessible, and sharable via social media platforms.
- Update notifications sent to students via emails in a timely and clear fashion.
- Standardize the delivery of information across offices and departments.
- A series of online orientations and resources for undergraduate and graduate students to support them in their transition into the remote learning environment
- Update and expand “Coffee & Chat” faculty and student initiative within the virtual context environment
- Increase visibility and virtual programming from the Office of Student Affairs.
- Connect both first-time and transfer students with peer mentors.
- Build on our student orientation and transition programs.
- Connect students with alumni and professional development mentors.
- Increased investment in regular, student-centered pedagogical training for faculty at every level such as trainings facilitated by the CTL, Schwartz Institute, and the Writing Center
- Establish safe spaces for students to study, and to access technology including printers, and library resources.
- Provide consistent, remote access to technology (e.g., Wi-Fi access and applications).
- Institutional recognition of teaching excellence and innovation as critical to professional promotion and advancement.
- Engage students about the best practices to communicate and deliver remote academic content.
- Increase distribution of remote learning tools and tips.
- Develop robust care communities, such as virtual lounges and community spaces for students to gather, build community, and receive guidance from more advanced students (in conjunction with TEAM Baruch and Student Governments).
- Offer live and open and seasonal information sessions, modeled on College Town Hall.
- Deliver short informational videos from every sector of the college community.
- Promote targeted support for students served by the Office of Student Disability Services.
- Increase emergency support services.
- Provide easy access to health and mental health services.
- Update and redesign first-year seminar curriculum to facilitate academic and college success within distant learning contexts
- Increased investment in Academic Advising. Currently the College is significantly understaffed in this vital area: Weissman has no advisor for more than 350 graduate students; the College offers undergraduate advising at the ratio of 1:1700, while the national recommendation is 1:300.
- Invest and expand the Campus Intervention Team.
- Invest in the CTL and BCTC.

- Develop opportunities for practicum and service learning across the disciplines.
- Invest in post-graduate career services and mentoring.
- Establishment of a **Student Success Center and digital Portal**, one that consolidates all access to academic and student support, and foregrounds communication in the service of (1) transitions to the Baruch College Community, of (2) academic excellence, and of (3) student support.

Recommendations from Task Force Sub-committee 5: Staff Services for Fall 2020 and Beyond*

* Please note that these are the staff sub-committee's *intermediary* recommendations. The sub-committee's *final* recommendations will be an addendum to the Task Force documents in November 2020.

- Mental Health Awareness Workshop in collaboration with EAP Corporate Counseling Associates
- “Managing in a Virtual Environment” Workshop for managers, directors, senior leadership
- Divisional leaders should send communications reinforcing work-life balance while remote working
- The Monthly HR Newsletter should have a regular feature on work-life balance tips/articles

IV. TASK FORCE SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS FOR FALL 2020 AND BEYOND

SECOND REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION FOR FALL 2020 AND BEYOND

“Risk is our business.”

Captain James T. Kirk
USS Enterprise
“Return to Tomorrow”
Season 2, Episode 20

The ongoing mission of this subcommittee is to advise the President’s Task Force on what the proper blend of in-person, hybrid, and fully online learning should look like in the academic year 2020-21 and beyond, and also to provide guidance regarding what aspects related to the delivery of university education need to change, and to remain the same, in the coming decades as Baruch forges a path toward its new future in the post-pandemic, twenty-first century world.

With respect to the first of these tasks—that of providing immediate guidance in regard to the proper blend of in-person, hybrid, and fully online learning for the current academic year—the subcommittee’s recommendation is simple and direct: until the pandemic is over, and the university is once again comfortable requiring students to attend classes in person (as was the case in our pre-pandemic world), the subcommittee recommends that Baruch continue to deliver the vast majority of its courses in the manner that those courses are scheduled to be delivered during the fall 2020 semester—fully online. The subcommittee does not believe that any other option—including the option of requiring, or even encouraging, the creation and delivery of any significant number of hybrid courses—is practical or desirable at the present time.

In making this recommendation the subcommittee considered numerous factors, including the apparent difficulty state policy makers have had in arriving at a consistent position with respect to the exact requirements of “social distancing”—requirements which have changed considerably during the weeks leading up to this report, and which may well change at any moment in the future. We will discuss those requirements at some length below.

But the principal factors the subcommittee considered in making this first recommendation were not related to social distancing policies as such. Rather, the principal factors involved considerations of practical pedagogy and basic equity. The simple truth is that it is difficult to conceive of, and almost impossible to practically implement, an individual course that is offered *both* in a hybrid instructional format *and* in a fully online instructional format in the same semester. Yet, until such time as the college is willing to require that students attend at least some number of classes during the semester in person, every course that would be offered in a hybrid format would also need to be structured in such a way as to provide students with the option of taking that same class fully online. What percentage of students would avail themselves of the option of taking such a course fully online? What percentage would feel even a subtle pressure to risk their health coming to Baruch at the times such a hybrid course met on campus, thinking that their grade might suffer if they were not physically present in class when other students were? We just do not know the answer to these questions. Indeed, it’s not clear we could really know the answer to the second question. Thus, the subcommittee is convinced that the demands of practical pedagogy and basic equity compel its above recommendation regarding the spring semester of 2021.

The good news is that moving from a *synchronous* fully online course to a hybrid (or even a fully in-person) course is much easier and considerably less disruptive than what we witnessed in the spring of 2020: the movement from fully in-person and hybrid courses to fully online courses. Thus, the subcommittee is confident that in the unlikely event that conditions with respect to the pandemic improve in the very near future to the point where Baruch feels comfortable once again requiring in-person attendance of students, the college could react quickly and efficiently to make the transition to hybrid, or even in-person, courses in the spring 2021 semester—or during whatever part of that semester may remain after conditions have improved.

The bottom line is this: A time of pandemic is a time of great risk and great uncertainty. Because of that, it is also a time of great anxiety. Baruch has in its power the ability at least to reduce the level of uncertainty involved in the delivery of its courses during the spring 2021 semester. At the present time, the most prudent option for the college is to offer virtually all of its courses fully online during the spring of 2021.

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The following pages provide a fuller explanation of the factors and the reasoning the subcommittee used in developing the aforementioned recommendation, and eight additional specific recommendations the subcommittee offers as a way of helping to ensure Baruch’s continued success in the coming years and decades.

Pedagogy in a Time of Pandemic

Risk is an unavoidable aspect of the human condition. Still, most individuals probably do not desire to embrace risk at the same level as do the fictional crewmembers of the USS Enterprise and its intrepid captain—whose business is risk. Nonetheless, in regard to what John Stuart Mill famously labeled “self-regarding acts”—assuming there are such things—individuals remain free to decide for themselves what level of risk is acceptable in their lives. But so-called “other regarding acts” are different. Where such acts are concerned—and where democratic governance exists—democratically elected leaders, in consultation with relevant experts, decide for a given population what level of risk is acceptable to achieve a particular benefit.

The elected leaders of New York State have apparently decided that the benefits to in-person college education are outweighed by the risks posed by Covid-19, *unless social distancing can be maintained at all times while students, professors, and staff are on campus*. As of July 9, 2020, New York State health regulations explain that: “A person shall be considered as maintaining social distancing when keeping at least six feet distance between themselves [sic] and any other persons, other than members of such persons’ [sic] household.”¹

What would such mandated social distancing look like in the real world? Apparently, even the state officials charged with answering this question have a difficult time pinning down the exact requirements of this regulation. During some of the time that this subcommittee was working on the present report, state guidelines seemed to interpret this six-foot social distancing mandate as requiring roughly 113 square feet of “floor space” per person. The thinking, apparently, was that each individual would be surrounded by a giant imaginary bubble, with its center fixed roughly on a person’s face—since the concern is with that person’s inhalations and exhalations, even if she or he is wearing a mask—and extending six feet in all directions. The 113 square feet of floor space was (apparently) prudently arrived at by dropping the circumference of this bubble to the floor and calculating the area of the

¹See, https://regs.health.ny.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/emergency_regulations/Enforcement%20of%20Social%20Distancing%20Measures.pdf

resulting circle. With a radius of six feet, and using the formula for calculating the area of a circle (area = πr^2), that area works out to approximately 113 square feet.

But, as this report was being written, new guidelines came down, indicating that the mandated social distancing had reverted to its earlier requirement of approximately 36 square feet. This figure was apparently arrived at by adopting a radius of three feet, instead of six, in recognition of the fact that for two individuals to maintain a physical distance of six feet, the radius of each one of their giant imaginary bubbles would only need to be three feet. The area of a circle with a radius of 3 feet is approximately 28 square feet. What accounts for the extra 8 square feet in the new 36 square foot social distancing requirement? Well, the smallest square whose four corners are the centers of four non-overlapping circles with a radius r , will have an area equal to $(2r)^2$. But—and this is critical— $r^2(4-\pi)$ of that area will fall outside of any of the four circles. This area—which amounts to roughly 8 square feet, where r is equal to 3 feet—is not occupiable by any human under the rules of social distancing, even though it is *not* within any imaginary bubble. To calculate the social distancing square footage needed by each individual requires the *addition* of this approximately 8 square feet of floor space to the approximately 28 square feet of floor space determined by the bubble (with a radius of 3 feet). This addition nicely produces a figure *exactly* equal to 36 square feet.²

All this mathematics might seem either daunting or delighting, depending upon one's intellectual predilections. But there is something surreal perhaps, or maybe just plain fatuous, about trying to imagine a student, professor, or staff member, clad in her or his protective mask, walking around the Newman Vertical Campus, encased in a giant imaginary bubble, trying valiantly to make sure that her or his bubble does not invade the space of someone else's bubble. And while it is not clear by what percentage—a half, a third, maybe more—the current social distancing requirement would reduce the occupancy rate for a typical classroom in Baruch's Newman Vertical Campus (say, room 6-119, which can normally accommodate 28 students), it is clear that these social distancing requirements, and the imaginary bubbles they mandate, would obliterate the possibility of any group work within the particular classroom, lest students be reduced to shouting at one another from within their respective bubbles.

But it gets worse. Baruch College is unique in that its principal classroom building, the majestic Newman Vertical Campus, while an inviting beacon of learning during normal times, was simply not designed to work as an educational environment in a time of pandemic, especially with the current rules of social distancing that are now in force. Most obviously, the aptly named “six pack”—the bank of six jumbo elevators that lift eager scholars to their classrooms several stories above Manhattan—has been reduced to a ghostly shell of its former self, given social distancing rules. Jumbo elevators that once accommodated two dozen or so students comfortably can (even under the current social distancing rules) now accommodate fewer individuals than could fit in your average suburban minivan. This massive restriction on student mobility within the Newman Vertical Campus would lead either to unacceptable wait-times at elevators—students might arrive at their classes just as the professor was wrapping up the day's instruction—or to the unavailability of classrooms above the first few floors in the Newman Vertical Campus. In either event, hybrid or in-person instruction would be infeasible, because there simply would not be enough useable space for it to take place within.

As mentioned earlier, the subcommittee took these social distancing considerations into account when formulating its recommendation that virtually all spring 2021 courses be delivered fully online. But these considerations were not the principal factor that determined the subcommittee's recommendation, for even if, through some act of magical intervention, sufficient classroom space and elevator capacity were made available in the Newman Vertical Campus for classes to be held in a hybrid format, two other concerns alone would justify the recommendation of this subcommittee that Baruch

² Total social distancing square footage = $\pi r^2 + r^2(4-\pi) = \pi r^2 + 4r^2 - \pi r^2 = 4r^2$. For an r of 3 this equals 36.

continue to deliver the vast majority of its courses online. Both of these concerns were discussed in the first report of this subcommittee, delivered on June 24, 2020.

The first concern centers on what one might call practical pedagogy. To be blunt, in a time of pandemic, half-measures are unacceptable. Thus, it makes no sense to require, or even encourage, the creation of hybrid classes at this time, precisely because it is unclear how one would even begin to assess the differential level of risk involved in requiring a student to travel to campus for a full fourteen-week semester versus requiring that student to travel to campus for two weeks or three weeks or four weeks or however many weeks a hybrid course would run. To be sure, the risk involved in taking a hybrid course is obviously *somewhat* less than the risk involved in taking a course that meets for the entire semester. But to a student who must take public transportation to Baruch, and who has an elderly parent or grandparent at home, every bus or subway ride risks a potential catastrophe. The only acceptable solution would be to offer every hybrid course in such a way that it could also be taken fully online by those students who wished to do so. But, as was noted in the first report of this subcommittee: “attempting to design a hybrid course in such a way that it could be taken for the exact same credit by a student who never wished to be present in class would tend to defeat the whole purpose of a hybrid course and would present nearly insurmountable pedagogical challenges.”

The second concern that militates against the offering of hybrid courses at the present time, even if classroom and elevator space were available in the Newman Vertical Campus, centers on *basic equity*. As was noted in the first report of this subcommittee, many professors are worried “that offering a course in a hybrid format—even if students were given the option to take that exact course fully online—would (perhaps subtly) pressure some students who did not wish to travel to campus to make the journey nonetheless, out of fear that their grade would suffer if they were not physically present in class.”

Once again, risk is central to the analysis. Even if the Newman Vertical Campus could be made a (physically) safe space for student instruction, a significant percentage (perhaps the majority) of students would still need to take public transportation to access the campus. Is it just to require students to take that risk to get to campus? And how should that risk be weighed against the very real risk that a student who does not learn well online will see her or his education suffer significantly from not having the ability to enroll in hybrid courses at least? Truth be told, it is not clear that this second question has received the attention it deserves. Thus, the subcommittee is aware that there may be very significant risks associated with implementing the recommendation it has made—risks associated with negative educational outcomes for some students. However, it is the view of this subcommittee that a focus on technology and training, for both professors and students, could serve to mitigate the very real negative impact online instruction might have on the education of some students.

For all of the foregoing reasons, until such time as the college feels comfortable requiring students to attend classes in-person, as was the case before this pandemic, the offering of even hybrid courses, not to mention fully in-person courses, will remain infeasible and undesirable. This explains the subcommittee’s rationale for the recommendation that has been discussed in this first part of the present report.

Critically, however, this recommendation *incorporates all of the online learning recommendations that were contained in this subcommittee’s first report of June 24, 2020*. Those now incorporated herein recommendations are that:

- *The College should adopt an “Online Plus” approach to fully online courses*: Specifically, the College should develop a plan that would allow students to reserve rooms on campus where they could create video presentations for their courses. Such rooms could also be used by instructors who wish to meet with students during office hours, but who might not have an office to do so.

- *The College should adopt more Detailed Nomenclature with respect to fully online courses:* Specifically, the college should identify in the course bulletin those fully online courses that would be taught using a completely asynchronous instructional format, and those which would be taught using a synchronous instructional format.
- *The College should assist those departments which house the few courses that must be taught in a hybrid format:* There are relatively few courses that must be taught in a hybrid format. The method of delivery for those courses should be determined by the instructor and other departmental personnel. The college should assist in meeting the needs of the instructors of these courses.

Given the conditions that obtain as this report is being submitted, it is prudent to predict that the spring 2021 semester will *probably* look very similar to the fall 2020 semester. Again, it is *possible* that conditions with respect to the Covid-19 pandemic will improve so dramatically in the next few months that it will become feasible to teach courses in a hybrid, or even in-person, format for all, or even some, of the spring 2021 semester. This is a development fervently to be wished for and fondly to be imagined. In the meantime, however, there is some comfort in the knowledge that, in the fullness of time, this pandemic *will* end. As we await that glorious inevitability, it is wise to begin thinking now about what college education could—and should—look like in a post-pandemic world. The next section of this report engages that issue and offers some recommendations which it is hoped will help to ensure Baruch’s continued success in the years and decades ahead.

After the Pandemic: The Future of College Education

In his famous *Letter to Monsieur d’Alembert on the Theatre*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau worried that the youth of his beloved Geneva (which was then a comparatively small city) would be seduced to abandon the life of their fathers and instead embrace the delights of Paris, once they saw its ways represented on stage, in the theatre. Rousseau was keenly aware of the fact that novelty and fashionableness have a powerful influence on the young. But he also believed that what is new is not always what is best.

Some individuals believe that online education is the inevitable trajectory of much (if not most) of college education in this country. They think this is what students want. Others are more circumspect in their assessment of the promise and perils of this new method of instruction. Obviously, no one knows for certain what the future of college education will look like in America years, and even decades, after the current pandemic is over. Hence, it is best to proceed in a judicious manner toward a reasoned analysis of the ways in which higher education may change in the next few years and beyond. With that in mind, the subcommittee offers the following recommendations as to how Baruch College specifically should begin thinking about the new—and the old—in the manner of educating students and keeping college relevant and vital in the twenty-first century.

- *Maintain a focus on in-person education:* After now more than a half-century as a senior college in the CUNY system, Baruch has a well-earned reputation for providing excellent—indeed, life altering—undergraduate and graduate level instruction to students who are not wealthy or well-connected and are often the first in their family to have the opportunity to take advantage of higher education. It would be the height of recklessness for Baruch to jeopardize that stellar reputation by too quickly and too energetically moving to place a very large portion of its courses fully online in the post-pandemic world. Instead, Baruch should move judiciously, deliberately, and efficiently to identify courses and programs that can be effectively taught in new and exciting online and/or hybrid formats, while maintaining for the foreseeable future a focus on in-person education.

- *Design specific online programs to meet specific needs:* There is now ample evidence to establish that certain students may benefit from specific forms of online instruction. Such online instruction may be particularly valuable in assisting students whose path to graduation has, for one reason or another, become stalled. Baruch should investigate ways to utilize online instruction as a means to increase graduation rates among students who are having difficulty completing their degrees.
- *Develop fully online programs where desirable:* Fully online programs can surely be an important, valuable, and profitable part of Baruch’s overall instructional repertoire. Particularly at the graduate level, Baruch should examine the feasibility of creating fully online degree programs in various fields. Such programs could draw on the experience and expertise of Baruch faculty who teach in one of Baruch’s many in-person graduate programs.
- *Leverage New York City’s vibrance to reimagine graduate and undergraduate education:* Everyone hopes and expects that in the post-pandemic world New York City will rapidly return to the pre-pandemic levels of energy and vitality that made it unique in the world as a place where driven individuals come to pursue their dreams and develop their talents. Within practicable limits, and never losing focus on academic rigor, Baruch should explore ways to get students out of the classroom and into the city, through educational partnerships with businesses and non-profit entities. This is an area where synergies are ripe for development.
- *Work to develop criteria for approval of online courses:* There’s no use in closing the barn door once the horse has left to roam the countryside. Remembering always that academic freedom is the *sine qua non* of any university, and that professors should always enjoy the maximum liberty to teach what and how they want, the time is now for the college to undertake serious discussions about the requirements of a legitimate online course, including student attendance and instructor participation. These discussions should begin at the departmental level and percolate up through school curriculum committees and beyond. This should not be imposed on departments or instructors by the administration.
- *Focus on Instructor and Student Connectivity:* In the old days—that is, the pre-pandemic days—students would walk into a physical classroom at a given time, the instructor would be there, and learning would take place. Now we have fully online courses that are taught either synchronously or asynchronously and that often incorporate Zoom sessions that may include all or part of the given class at various times during the semester. Negotiating this new “virtual learning space” can be difficult for students—and for instructors, as well. Procedures should be put in place that enable students to know with certainty when a class will meet at all times during the semester and how communication will take place between the instructor and students. To be sure, this information should be on every instructor’s syllabus, and that syllabus should be made available to every student before the first day of class. But there may be a need for follow-up to ensure that students and instructors are connecting in the ways detailed on the syllabus provided by the instructor. Ideally, this would happen at the departmental level, with appropriate additional funding provided if it is required.
- *Search out “Best Practices” to emulate:* As this report is being finalized, in September of 2020, virtually every college in America, and numerous colleges and universities around the globe, have had months to experiment with online education in all shapes and sizes and modalities.

We would expect that such experimentation has produced a huge variety of pedagogical practices that include the good, the bad, and the ugly. Baruch College should establish a committee or a task force whose mission is to seek out and explore the best practices in regard to online education, and to assess the feasibility of adopting those practices here. There is a universe of data available for analysis, and countless best practices waiting to be discovered.

- *Communicate to the public the value of traditional, in-person, liberal-arts education*: Perhaps as a result of the pandemic and the massive increase in online education it has caused, there is abroad in the land a pernicious and growing notion that education beyond high school should be *principally* focused on teaching individuals specific skills which they desire to learn in order to increase their job prospects or marketability. This seems to be the model embraced by organizations like Coursera and EdX.com, which provide a cafeteria-style array of courses that individuals can pick and choose from to build their résumés, after paying the appropriate fee. There is surely something to be said for this model and for so-called life-long learning. But if institutions like CUNY are to survive, the case needs to be made that college level instruction—especially instruction that is traditional, in-person, and liberal-arts oriented—is not only an individual good but a public good as well, insofar as it teaches the skills that free individuals need to remain free individuals—skills involving critical thinking, effective communication, and the ability to intelligently evaluate claims across a variety of fields.

There is no question that higher education is in a state of flux today. The foregoing recommendations represent this subcommittee’s efforts to equip Baruch College with ideas and analysis that will enable it to chart a successful course for the future and to boldly go wherever the next few months, and the post-pandemic world, may take it.

Respectfully submitted by:

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**SECOND REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE SUBCOMMITTEE ON FACULTY SUPPORT SERVICES FOR FALL 2020 AND
BEYOND**

We believe that the success of Baruch College beyond the fall 2020 semester will hinge on its investment in faculty through two mechanisms. First, pedagogical and technological support provided by the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) and BCTC (Baruch Computing and Technology Center), respectively; and second, supplemental academic support to students and faculty from the Bernard L. Schwartz Communication Institute, the International Student Service Center (ISSC), the Student Academic Consulting Center (SACC), the Writing Center, and the Tools for Clear Speech program. Without significantly increased investment in these units, the College will be unable to pursue its mission.

It is our belief that by reallocating funds strategically to support the BCTC, CTL, ISSC, Schwartz Institute, Writing Center, SACC, and TfCS, the College will be able to address these key goals in the near future:

- Increase access to its courses and programs to all students, and particularly more students from underrepresented groups.
- Create innovative and attractive new programs that will be delivered primarily or entirely online and that will generate new revenue for the College, which can be used to support its current programs (and therefore its mission of providing all New Yorkers with an affordable, high quality education).
- Bolster its ability to adjust to the “new normal.” Even after the COVID19 crisis subsides, many courses will continue to be provided online; increasing this support strategically also will help alleviate the space constraints the College has faced.

See **Appendix A** for a brief overview of the relevant faculty development activities in several of the units mentioned above.

The three schools have taken the following actions to support faculty during the fall 2020 semester:

Marxe School of Public and International Affairs

The Marxe School has taken several steps to address the concerns expressed in the bullet entitled “Faculty in Need of Technical and Other Assistance” in the report from Subgroup #2.

- First, a survey went out to discover faculty needs for teaching in the fall. The school sent these results to the BCTC and Arthur Downing. The school continues to send updates in response to expressed needs.
- Second, the school’s tech team has been conducting Blackboard and Zoom training for faculty, which will continue into the fall.
- Third, for most of the summer, the school’s weekly faculty seminar series has covered different aspects of pedagogy in the context of distance education and diversity and inclusion, with faculty and staff providing training and discussions across different areas of interest and expertise.
- Fourth, faculty were invited to participate in CUNY’s online teaching training, which a number have now completed.
- Last, many Marxe school faculty have volunteered, going all the way back to March, to assemble resource pages or host information sharing on MS-Teams, Slack, and other platforms. The

school will also be seeking in-course support for Zoom management in at least the Executive MPA program, with an eye to broader deployment as demand and resources permit.

Weissman School of Arts and Sciences

The Weissman School has taken several steps to address the concerns expressed in the bullet entitled “Faculty in Need of Technical and Other Assistance” in the report from Subgroup #2 of the Task force for the Future. First, the chairs of all thirteen departments in the school were invited to survey their faculty to determine who needs assistance and what kinds of assistance they need. Assistance with equipment needs is being provided by VP Arthur Downing and BCTC. Assistance in the form of instructional support or faculty development is being provided in four different forms:

- Arrangements are being made for technical staff from BCTC to assist faculty in setting up fall courses.
- Each department has designated one or more faculty mentors, who will receive released time from the Provost’s Office to work with individual faculty members.
- Work-study students with technical expertise will be hired and assigned to groups of faculty members.
- Faculty members who are especially in need of what the report calls “remedial” help are being assisted directly by the Weissman School’s own technical staff.
- The Weissman School’s technical staff have trained the department secretaries, who are now available to provide further assistance to faculty.

Zicklin School of Business

The Zicklin School has implemented the following processes to address the concerns expressed in the bullet entitled “Faculty in Need of Technical and Other Assistance” in the June 2020 report from Subgroup #2.

- The seven Zicklin department chairs submitted responses to VP Arthur Downing’s Task Force Initial Recommendations – IT spreadsheet, including full-time and adjunct faculty needs for laptop loans, peripherals, software, and student assistants.
- Zicklin Tech staff have loaded GlobalProtect on the equipment of all faculty (and staff) members who requested it so that they can access their campus computers.
- The Zicklin School has arranged for faculty to retrieve equipment from their offices, for example monitors, and in some cases desktop computers, for use at home.
- The Zicklin Dean’s Office has requested that each department recommend one person who can be designated a Zicklin teaching mentor. The chosen faculty member will receive workload reassigned time and will manage a team of seven Graduate Assistants who will be assigned to each department.
- The Zicklin Office of Graduate Programs is administering a Graduate Teaching Assistant (TA) program, funded by Academic Excellence Fees, that allocates one TA to each course section with enrollment of 65 and two TAs for sections with enrollment of at least 100. The responsibilities of Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) may include, but are not limited to, assisting faculty in administrative support of online class sessions, monitoring online discussion boards, answering student emails, advising students, and proctoring exams.

- The Zicklin School is recruiting six graduate students to be assigned to the Student Academic Consulting Center to offer tutoring services for three required Zicklin graduate courses (ACC 9110/9112, FIN 9770, STA 9708).

Below we provide some specific recommendations for the College on how increased investment can be allocated:

Human resources needed:

Note: In our opinion, the first bulleted positions in BCTC and CTL should be the absolute priorities, with the other positions in those organizations best prioritized internally. The Schwartz position is a pressing need for the Marx School.

- BCTC:
 - One Senior Level Classroom Support person
 - Several additional technologists in BCTC that are critical for College operations
 - Additional help desk personnel
 - Full-time/part-time personnel to handle logistics of hardware allocation to faculty/students
 - Dedicated full-time academic software specialist
 - Full-time documentation and training specialist
 - Additional part-time staff to be able to provide on-demand phone support for instructors, staff, and students in online courses and work
- CTL:
 - Associate Director for CTL
 - *At least* three full-time positions in CTL (specialist in synchronous online teaching, specialist in asynchronous teaching/production specialist, specialist in accessibility)
 - At least two additional full-time instructional designers dedicated to helping faculty with their courses
- Bernard L. Schwartz Communication Institute:
 - Fill the vacant Assistant Director for Writing in Public and International Affairs position

Technical resources needed:

- Invest in creating production spaces and providing technical resources for faculty to be able to create quality asynchronous content for their courses. This can include studios spaces at the College and/or loanable resources (camera, green screen, etc.) for use at home
- Acquire classroom technology that will allow a combination of in-person and online instruction simultaneously.
- Transition to laptops for all faculty/staff
- Acquire better remote access solutions for faculty/staff
- Peripheral support for faculty/staff (e.g., printers, scanners, whiteboard tablets, etc.)
- Building in support for Apple devices

Additional resources needed:

- Additional technical personnel and resources for various units in the College, such as Admissions, ISSC, SACC, TfCS, the Writing Center, Zicklin Tech, etc. (some of which are discussed in **Appendix A**).
- In addition, better governance structure for communicating the technical needs of all departments, academic and administrative.

Academic Integrity

One of our recommendations in June 2020 read as follows:

Academic Integrity concerns should be addressed and resolved as soon as possible. There are concerns regarding the use of webcams at home and concerns regarding the administration of online exams: The main academic integrity concern relates to exams, including final exams. With the perception that spring 2020 saw widespread cheating in some courses, notably in Math, many members of the faculty would like to be allowed to monitor exams via laptop cameras or by making use of online proctoring systems that draw on artificial intelligence to point to possible cheating. Another issue related to academic integrity concerns is that of using cameras built into computers to monitor students in class. Some members of the faculty would like to be able to require that all students appear live (versus via still photos or just their names) on their Zoom (or other) screens at all times—using virtual backgrounds if they prefer—both as an aid to attendance and to facilitate class discussion. Some faculty include attendance as part of the grading process; there is a perception that many students post photos and promptly disappear until the class is over.

Our follow-up in August 2020 does not address all of these concerns (issues of attendance, for example, have been addressed via memos distributed to all faculty).

Addressing and resolving academic integrity concerns is an ongoing process. We need first to acknowledge that such issues exist at Baruch at levels that correspond to national norms. (See **Appendix B** for a PDF of the report of Baruch’s 2006 results on the national survey administered through the Center for Academic Integrity.) While the move to online teaching and the absence of most proctoring has exacerbated some of these issues (at Baruch and elsewhere), they exist in the face-to-face environment as well. Finally, it must be said that while *trusting* our students, especially during unprecedentedly difficult times, must be the basis of an effective teaching and learning relationship, *blind trust* serves no one well: ignoring academic dishonesty undermines the learning process and is unfair to students who practice academic honesty. In the long run, turning a blind eye to academic dishonesty would subvert learning and harm our students by lessening the value of a Baruch degree. The ongoing work referred to above, includes successful efforts in some of our departments last spring to minimize cheating on final exams. Two that have come to our attention that might to some degree be generalizable to other departments took place in the Accountancy and Economics/Finance Departments. In Accountancy 3200 (Cost Accounting), several members of the faculty created “algorithmic questions” to produce different exams for each student. In the end they identified 10% of their students as having cheated on the final (see **Appendix C**). Faculty teaching the ten sections of Economics 1001 (Micro-Economics) also devised a system of different exams that resulted in scores well within historical norms (**also Appendix C**). As mentioned above, faculty in the Math Department believe that in Spring 2020 a significant amount of cheating occurred in final exams in Spring 2020. **Appendix C** also contains a draft of a letter to the Math faculty from their Chair. (Note that the letter was written before the announcement about online proctoring that appears below as **Appendix E**.) Faculty in Economics devised and administered a survey that asked students during Summer 2020 about issues related to academic integrity, including what they believed the motivations were of students who cheated (**see Appendix D**). Anxiety about high-stakes exams figured prominently among their responses: easy access to previous exams might help address that issue, insofar as they would help convey clearly the expectations of the instructors. As might open-book tests that emphasized class assignments or discussions that would not lend themselves to googling. The time period should be short enough that, if the student hadn’t done extensive preparation for the test, it would be impossible to do well—but long

enough that knowing where to go for references, if needed, is allowed. The goal would be to tap into learning as process and product. Oral exams, with appropriate alerts, could be viable for some classes. As for what else might be done to forestall cheating, many students in the survey (**Appendix D**) affirmed the efficacy of students writing and signing pledges attesting to their adherence to the precepts of academic integrity in taking the exam. Research supports the effectiveness of this approach, see Dan Ariely, *The (Honest) Truth About Dishonesty* (HarperCollins 2012).

Finally, many members of the faculty have asked for access to remote proctoring software. In normal f2f semesters we ask members of the faculty to carefully proctor exams that they administer. There are students who find that proctoring suggests a lack of trust on the part of faculty. Others have made clear that an absence of careful proctoring signals that the faculty member does not care if her or his students cheat; and many students point out that this leads to an uneven “playing field” in which those who do not cheat are at distinct disadvantage. In a strictly online environment, proctoring is obviously a great deal more difficult, especially if faculty are not allowed to require students to turn on their cameras. In late August, our faculty were informed (via CUNY’s “Update #20 Guidance on Academic Continuity”—see **Appendix E**) that remote proctoring systems very likely will be available by the time of midterms and final exams. This is hardly a panacea—as colleagues have pointed out, students who can afford multiple online systems (e.g., home computers and smart phones) may have access to websites and means of communicating with each other that will facilitate academic dishonesty regardless of proctoring systems—but will address some of the issues and will allow faculty to require the use of webcams for the exams. Discussion is already underway about facilitating on-campus test taking for students whose classes will make use of online proctoring but whose access to technology might interfere with that process.

Statement on Video Conferencing Policies

Subgroup #2 recommends that the college explore the possibility that, in at least some classes in Spring 2021, the appearance of all members of the class on video along with the instructor might be agreed upon beforehand. The dynamism of exchange in face-to-face discussions, ideally conducted in person but at least plausibly approximated by conferencing software, is an irreplaceable teaching tool, and many students have made it apparent that they prefer it to all other modes of online instruction. There is a broad consensus among both students and faculty that synchronous face-to-face exchange is the gold standard in online classes that include discussion.

It is equally clear that this experience may be compromised when the images of some members of the class are replaced by black screens with names on them that may not even be the students’ own. A good teacher reads the faces in a class, but the black screen makes it difficult to tell whether a student is actually present or has simply checked in and then departed. The latter possibility undermines meaningful attendance-taking, and if the class session is being recorded—a best-practice for the convenience of everybody—the ability to review the session later in private only increases the temptation for students not to participate. The overall effect is to diminish the sense of community in a class and so to diminish the effectiveness of discussion.

The reasons that have been given for why students cannot be asked to turn on their video cameras do not seem insurmountable. The charge that they may not want to be seen on camera is oddly oversensitive for an institution that normally requires them to appear in person. The charge that they may not want their living conditions made visible is addressed by the feature on conferencing software that allows the user to choose an artificial background or to blur the background. Even the charge that some students may not possess adequate equipment is in the process of being met by the college’s

efforts to provide students with Chromebooks, a Google product that allows users to blur the background when used in conjunction with Google's own conferencing software (Google Meet).

We propose that the college should consider offering some synchronous classes in which students are notified at the point of registration of a requirement to appear on video. Students with unreliable video feeds should not be excluded from these classes; however, they should make this issue known to their instructors ahead of time, and their instructors should not penalize students who make a good faith effort to be present onscreen. To avoid any misunderstanding, all students who register for designated sections of synchronous, discussion-oriented courses might be asked to sign a statement acknowledging that they are aware of the requirement and are prepared to meet it to the best of their abilities. If this arrangement can be implemented for the spring semester (registration begins in late October), it would have the advantage of giving instructors a small measure of control over the conditions under which they are being asked to teach—conditions that have already been degraded by forces beyond anyone's control.

APPENDIX A: Faculty Development in the Provost's Division of Teaching and Learning

Our report at the end of June did not refer specifically to this issue—a lacuna that we wish to address here.

While teaching-related faculty development (versus research-related) occurs to some degree in many locations and contexts throughout the college—some of which are mentioned further below—the two most significant venues are the college's Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) and Bernard L. Schwartz Communication Institute.

Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

Formed in 2013 with the specific charge to aid in the development of online and hybrid learning at Baruch, the CTL's mission has broadened considerably over the years to include all aspects of teaching-related faculty development. Nevertheless, its early emphasis and expertise on online teaching and learning and the two signature technologies that the CTL develops and houses (Vocat and Blogs@Baruch) have been crucially helpful to the college since classes moved online in March 2020. Faculty development needs have dramatically increased: whereas the CTL ran 34 faculty development workshops on a variety of subjects from August 2019- February 2020, the CTL has run 165 workshops from March - August 2020, most to support the shift to distance learning. Vocat, the video oral communication assessment technology that the CTL administers and maintains, was used in 87 courses in Fall 2019, more than 241 in Spring 2020, and is on track to match or exceed that number in Fall 2020. Since March 2020 the number of Blogs@Baruch sites (a platform that allows members of the faculty to develop highly customizable web sites to use instead of or in addition to Blackboard) has increased by 28% and the number of new account users increased 111%.

The current FT staff of the CTL are barely able to meet the dramatically increased needs for current programming and technology and are not sufficiently staffed to be able to meet the needs that have arisen owing to the new awareness of issues posed by online teaching. Part-time staff do not have sufficient for project management. Now that many more faculty have had the experience of teaching online, we see the demand for additional resources increasing for the foreseeable future.

Recommendation: As mentioned elsewhere in our report, the need for additional FT positions in the CTL has become inescapable. Several are needed at this juncture in Baruch's online history:

- an associate director who can take on responsibility for project management in multiple areas;
- a specialist in synchronous online teaching and learning;
- a specialist in asynchronous teaching and learning who can function as a production specialist; and
- one or more instructional designers to work directly with faculty on their courses.

Bernard L. Schwartz Communication Institute

Winner in 2008 of TIAA’s prestigious national Hesburgh Award for faculty development, the Schwartz Institute continues to be an essential locus for development focused around communication skills at Baruch. To develop communication-intensive teaching practices, courses, and curricula, the Institute works directly with faculty, in engagements ranging from semester-long seminars to one-on-one consultations. The Institute also works directly with students in course-embedded partnerships across all three schools, often facilitating tailored in-class workshop curricula and offering supplemental student support for undergraduate and graduate students to practice and develop core course-embedded communication skills. In AY19-20, the Institute provided pedagogical development programming to 295 faculty members, and course-embedded support to 5,393 students and 103 faculty.

Most recently, the Institute designed and facilitated a faculty seminar on “Remote Communication-Intensive Teaching” to prepare instructors for fall teaching online. More than 100 faculty, full- and part-time, participated. And this fall, Meechal Hoffman is leading the Institute’s Seminar on Inclusive Pedagogy for the first time with a cohort of Zicklin Faculty. There have previously been two cohorts of the Seminar at Marxe (2017 and 2018), and one at Weissman (2019).

In response to a request from the faculty of the Marxe School to support student communication skills (both directly and through the curriculum), the school has supported a FT appointment housed within the Schwartz Institute of an Assistant Director for Writing in Public and International Affairs. The holder of that appointment for the previous three years was named in Spring 2020 as Associate Director of the Schwartz Institute. The Marxe position is currently vacant.

Recommendation: that the position of Assistant Director for Writing in Public and International Affairs, which has the strong support of the Dean of the Marxe School, be filled in Fall 2020. In addition, we recommend that in light of the Institute’s work directly with our faculty and students in support of the college’s mission, the college’s support for the Institute overall not flag during financially difficult times.

Other Faculty Development Efforts

As mentioned above, faculty development efforts take place in numerous venues (including, supported by the provost’s BCF funding, within individual academic departments). But several units that more often are thought of as offering support to students, also support faculty. For example, the **Writing Center** runs in-class workshops (now by Zoom) and can visit online classes to provide a 10-minute overview of services; their workshop lesson plans and handouts are available to faculty for adapting to classes; and, as trained professionals, their staff is available for consultation about writing pedagogy. **Tools for Clear Speech** is available to help with pronunciation, fluency, and pragmatic abilities of English language learners and non-native English speakers among both students and faculty—of particular value at a college in which many of both groups are non-native speakers. The importance to the college’s mission of the **Student Academic Consulting Center**, a peer tutoring center that concentrates on exactly the courses with which students have the most difficulty (undergraduate and graduate) speaks for

itself. That it is available as a precious source of information to faculty whose students are tutored there is perhaps less obvious. Still less obvious is that preserving the SACC budget keeps the peer tutors—among our highest-achieving Baruch students—financially afloat; many of the tutors had second jobs that they lost, and their SACC job is now their only source of income.

Recommendation: that during this difficult time, maintaining support for these mission critical units that support both students and faculty—allowing them to serve faculty and students well—remains a major priority for the college.

Baruch College

Promoting Academic Integrity

Don McCabe – Rutgers University

Research Chronology – 1990 to 2006

■ College

- 135,00+ students at >140 schools
- 14,000+ faculty at >90 schools
- Baruch survey – 1,528 students & 153 faculty

Methodological issues

- Self-report data
- Low response rates

2002-2006 Surveys

- Canada

- Students, faculty, TAs, first year students
- 16 participating schools

- United States

- Students, faculty, TAs, first year students
- 84 participating schools

Some major findings

- Campus norm is key; honor codes important
- Business majors are #1
- Males used to report more test cheating, but females have closed the gap; females report more cheating on written work except most explicit forms
- Those with significant time commitments – e.g., caring for dependent, job, athletics

Self-reported cheating - Undergrads

	<u>U.S. Sample</u>		<u>Baruch</u>	
	<u>Biz</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Biz</u>	<u>Other</u>
Test Cheating	27%	20%	36%	30%
Written Cheating	50%	45%	44%	42%
	(54%)	(48%)	(47%)	(46%)
N	12,079	49,025	833	343

Test cheating more of an issue at Baruch – quant emphasis?

Self-reported cheating – Grad Students

	<u>U.S. Sample</u>		<u>Baruch</u>	
	<u>Biz</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Biz</u>	<u>Other</u>
Test Cheating	11%	9%	11%	9%
Written Cheating	38% (39%)	29% (31%)	31% (32%)	34% (34%)
N	1,330	7,938	213	129

Student motivations for cheating

- Pressure to succeed/excel – job market, grad school, etc.
- Fairness (“Others do it.”)
- Material is trivial/irrelevant.
- Courses too hard/faculty unreasonable.
- Sense of “entitlement” seems important.

Motivations for not cheating

The peer environment on campus... “because students are most affected by the social environment around them.”

Self respect. Upbringing (values & morals).

The consequences for cheating or dishonesty.

Desire to truly learn.

Overview of Baruch Student Comments

A number of comments suggest things are OK, but not perfect, and not much can be done.

Questions about understanding/behavior of international students.

Many have observed cheating – ‘some’ to ‘rampant.’
Less in MBA program due to policies?

Typical concerns with reporting.

Miscellaneous – faculty, education, penalties, etc.

Faculty

How faculty & students learn of policy

	<u>Undergrads</u>		<u>Faculty</u>	
	<u>U.S.</u>	<u>Baruch</u>	<u>U.S.</u>	<u>Baruch</u>
Faculty	63%	75%	41%	32%
Handbook	26%	31%	51%	56%
Orientation	20%	39%	25%	24%

42% of Baruch faculty cite campus website.

Note: Students - % noting they learned a lot from the source.

Faculty – % who used source, no rating of how much learned.

% Faculty observing cheating*

	<u>US**</u>	<u>Baruch</u>
Plagiarism	58%	59%
Test/exam cheating	27%	41%
Collaboration	60%	53%

* % noting they observe behavior often or very often.

** US numbers from 2005-2006 survey only – N = 1,709.

Faculty role

- Education vs. detection? Use tools for education?
- Don't let plagiarism software detection lull you into a false sense of security. (e.g., will it detect material from MS Autosummarize?)
- Help convince students it matters.
- Don't give up/change assignments.

Faculty role

- We must remain vigilant – at least out of a sense of fairness for honest students.
- Students seem to want ‘some’ change – we need to encourage them.
- More faculty need to come forward. (40% in US ignore some cases; 43% at Baruch)
- Key issue – What’s the right balance among promotion, deterrence and punishment?

U.S. \$8.50
CANADA \$10.50

Change

THE MAGAZINE OF HIGHER LEARNING

Plus:
FOSTERING
STUDENT
HONESTY

MAY/JUNE 2004

“Ten (Updated) Principles of Academic Integrity”

McCabe & Pavela

May/June 2004

Principles of academic integrity for faculty.

Forget (new) reporting requirements

- Most students are simply unwilling to report peers.
- Does lack of enforcement weaken whole code?
- Should we consider confrontation? It's important that we get students to accept some community responsibility here.

Give students the primary role

- Students need to have, and sense, ownership
- Orientation – peer to peer
- Boards – at least the majority vote
- Let them build a ‘new’ tradition

Emphasize education vs. punishment

- Maryland model

Work on campus culture

Peer culture seems to be a key

Continued student involvement seems to be critical

Let them co-opt faculty and staff

Tough to build a strong enough culture to deal with take-home exams?

MBA Students

“Academic Dishonesty in Graduate Business Programs: Prevalence, Causes, and Proposed Action”

AMLE, Vol. 5, No. 3 (September), 294-305

McCabe, Butterfield, & Trevino

MBA Students

- 2002/3 & 2003/4 AYs
- 32 schools w/ MBA programs – 21 US
- 5,331 responses – 13% (MBA = 623)
- Evaluated 5 test cheating behaviors & 8 relevant to written work/projects

Behaviors evaluated

- Tests:

Copy from other (2), use of crib or cheat notes, help other cheat, get pretest information

- Written work/projects:

Internet plagiarism (2), written plagiarism (2), fabricate bibliography, submit work of other, unpermitted collaboration, unauthorized helping of other

Relative levels of cheating

Business	429	56%
Engineering	237	54%
Science	376	50%
Health Professions	393	49%
Education	498	48%
Law	104	45%
Arts	145	43%
Soc Sci/Humanities	562	39%

Key results

Test cheating

- ❑ Business – 23% vs. Others – 18%
- ❑ Driver is pretest info (20% v. 14% others)

Written/project cheating

- ❑ Collaboration (28% vs. 23%) and internet 'cut & paste' (33% vs. 22%) are big issues

APPENDIX C
Selected Course or Departmental Approaches to Academic Integrity Issues,
Spring–Fall 2020 (lightly edited)

Accountancy 3200 (Cost Accounting - Spring 2020)

Professors Subprasiri Siriviriyakul, Heedong Kim, and Heemin Lee (Siriviriyakul is no longer at Baruch) created unique exams for each student in the multiple sections of ACC 3200.

“We wrote our exam in Connect. Our exam has both short-answer questions and multiple-choice questions. We have a unique identifier based on a combination of (1) signals, (2) company names, (3) numbers/dollar amounts on the questions, and (4) the order of the multiple-choice questions.

We used different company names for each section and different numbers and signals within each section (we wanted to have as many variations as possible). This way we could quickly identify who was posting the exam on Chegg.com (a tutoring website that gives online solutions to students) after the exam.

For short-answer questions, we created “algorithmic questions,” where the random numbers used in the questions are auto-generated by Connect within the range we set. Note that the numbers could be identical (although unlikely) to two students. In such cases, we cannot use this alone to identify cheating students. For multiple-choice questions, we randomize the order in which the choices appear. We have 5 choices, so the possible combination (5!) is a lot combined with the variation we have described above.”

“...when we designed this, originally we thought of it as more of a preventive measure rather than a detection measure. We made sure to tell our students multiple times before the exam that we had a system in place to detect cheating [and that if caught cheating, students would receive an F for the course.]

Nevertheless, by the methods out lined above, they determined that approximately 10% of their students had cheated. “... it seems to have an effect on students who enrolled in the subsequent semester. Based on discussion with Prof. Sockovic, who is the class coordinator in the summer, there seems to have been much less cheating going on in the summer.”

“We are happy to share with other faculty our common tactics (e.g., using a combination of different signals/company names/numbers) as well as the features/functions that Connect provides to create customized exams.”

Economics 1001 (Micro-Economics, Spring 2020)

Professors Tracy Henry and Theodore Joyce (and others) created different versions of the final exam for the ten sections of ECO 1001. The following was written by Prof. Joyce:

“Professor Henry worked with me to organize the common final exam for the spring. She and I discussed how to design and execute the common final in order to minimize cheating. We also agreed that all 10 sections of E1001 would start the exam at the same time and follow the same protocol. Each member of the faculty teaching a section was asked to create 10 questions and two distinct versions of each. The two versions were of the same difficulty but varied in minor ways such as the numbers needed for calculations or the curve that was shifted; they had different answers. From this pool Professor Henry made two versions of the test, A and B. Within each version she randomized the order of the questions and the order of the answers. Thus, if a student taking test A sent a screen shot to another student taking test B, the receiving student would be unable to find the exact same question or answer on his/her version. As an additional defense against cheating, students had no idea which version of the test they were given.”

“... the test came off smoothly. There was also little evidence of cheating. [Whereas] students in many other classes scored way above historical norms, suggesting that students had access to test bank questions and or students worked collaboratively during the exam, the average grade across all sections of ECO 1001 was 70 percent, well within the norms from past exams. Professor Henry deserves a great deal of credit for this outcome.”

Math Department Statement to Faculty from Warren Gordon, the Chair (Fall 2020)

“There is no doubt one of our challenges is to ensure our students maintain academic integrity. No matter what we do there will be students who cheat. Even if the university adopts a secure software, (which looks likely this fall) there will be students who will find ways to circumvent it. The question is what can we do?

Easily available internet tools like Wolfram Alpha and Symbolab among others, will answer most standard math questions in courses ranging from elementary algebra through differential equations, the inexpensive subscription versions will also provide the intermediate steps to the solution. Some of our CUNY colleagues are working on creating a library of what they *call internet resistant* questions. The internet programs are bad at a few things: word problems, extracting information from tables or graphs, and interpreting a solution. Using *internet resistant* questions like these may reduce the usage of these programs (but not programs like Chegg). These types of questions work best for upper level courses. While a limited number of these question may be appropriate in lower level courses, most of the questions will need to be of the usual type to examine student understanding of the basic concepts and their computational facility.”

[The substance of the following paragraph is included in the Math message, but this version includes elaboration from Prof. Joyce.]

Professor Joyce and a former Information Technology (IT) fellow have been researching cheating over the past few semesters in the online Excel module that is part of four introductory business courses. Roughly 5,000 students are enrolled in the modules each semester. Students build a spreadsheet and upload it into the software for correction. The software embeds a unique code into each spreadsheet such that if a student copies another student's spreadsheet, the software identifies both the user and sharer of the spreadsheet. As part of the experiment, students were randomly assigned into two groups, A and B, within each course. The syllabus of both groups contained an explicit warning about the software's ability to detect cheating. One week before the assignment was due, students in Group A were sent an email encouraging them to do their own work. They were explicitly warned again that the software could detect cheating. Any student caught using another student's work would be put on a watch list for subsequent assignments. Despite the warning given to group A only, the cheat rate was approximately 10 percent in both groups. The students who cheated were told they were on a watch list. This lowered the cheat rate dramatically on subsequent submissions. Conclusion: Warnings don't work, Action does!

"As we don't use software like the above Excel module, a possible course of *action* is the following: if you have students who you believe have been cheating, you have two options (1) you can report the incident to the Dean of Students, in particular, you should contact Annie Virkus- Estrada at annie.virkus-estrada@baruch.cuny.edu or (2) give the students a warning, and if they persist, then contact Annie Virkus-Estrada. In either case, you could let your class know that you have referred cases to the Dean of Students – make sure no names are mentioned!

There had been some discussions about faculty following up exams with oral exams to randomly chosen students. There are issues with this policy, however effective it may appear, so it may not be used. If you do have suspicions about a student cheating, you may want to discuss it with student before moving forward, this discussion could include a student explaining how they obtained their results.

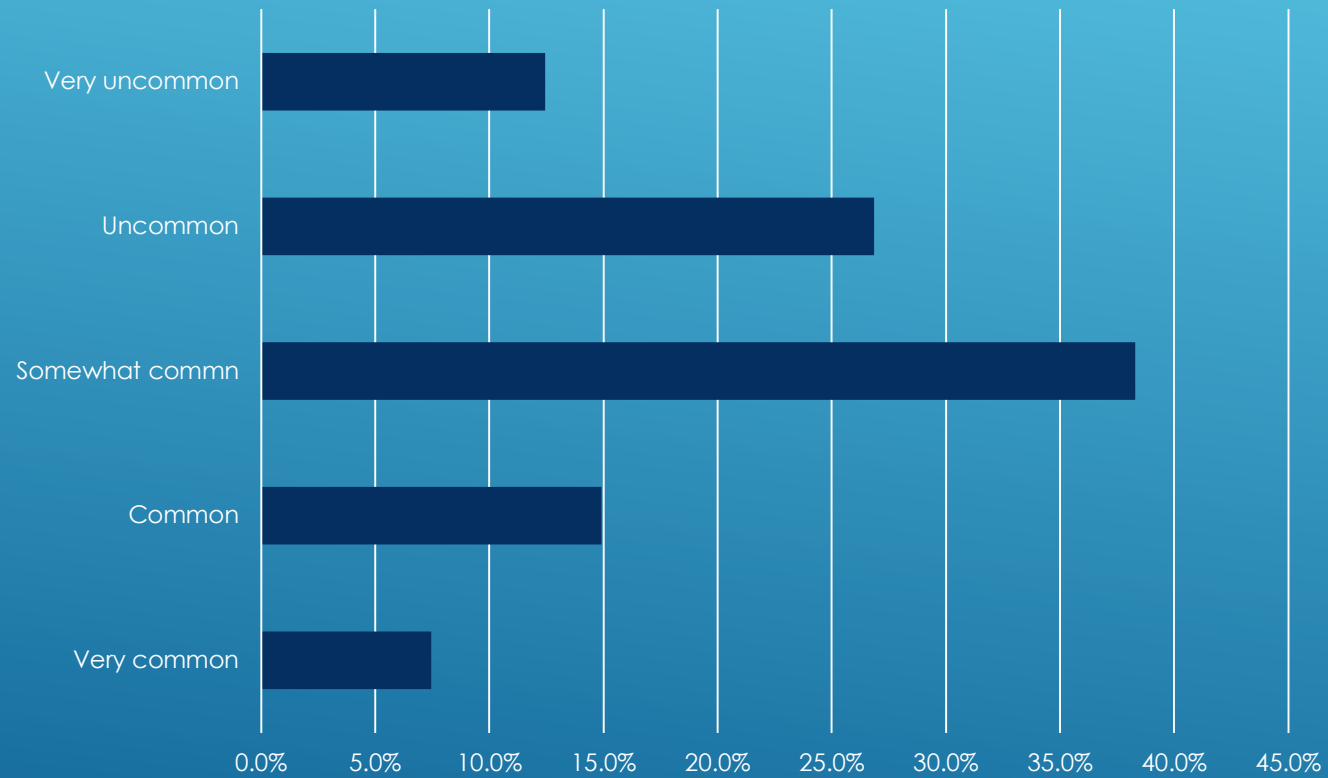
Make sure your course policy [i.e., syllabus] indicates the sanctions for students who have been found guilty of cheating, for example, "academic sanctions in this class will range from an *F* on the assignment/exam to an *F* in this course, and in some cases a recommendation for suspension or expulsion. A report of suspected academic dishonesty will be sent to the Office of the Dean of Students. Click on [Additional information](#) for more details."

I recommend that each exam begin with a pledge indicating that [the student] will do their own work during exams. As an example, *I affirm that I neither will give nor receive unauthorized assistance on this exam. I further affirm that I will not use any impermissible items, and that all work on this exam is mine alone.* No student can take an exam until they have electronically agreed to the pledge."

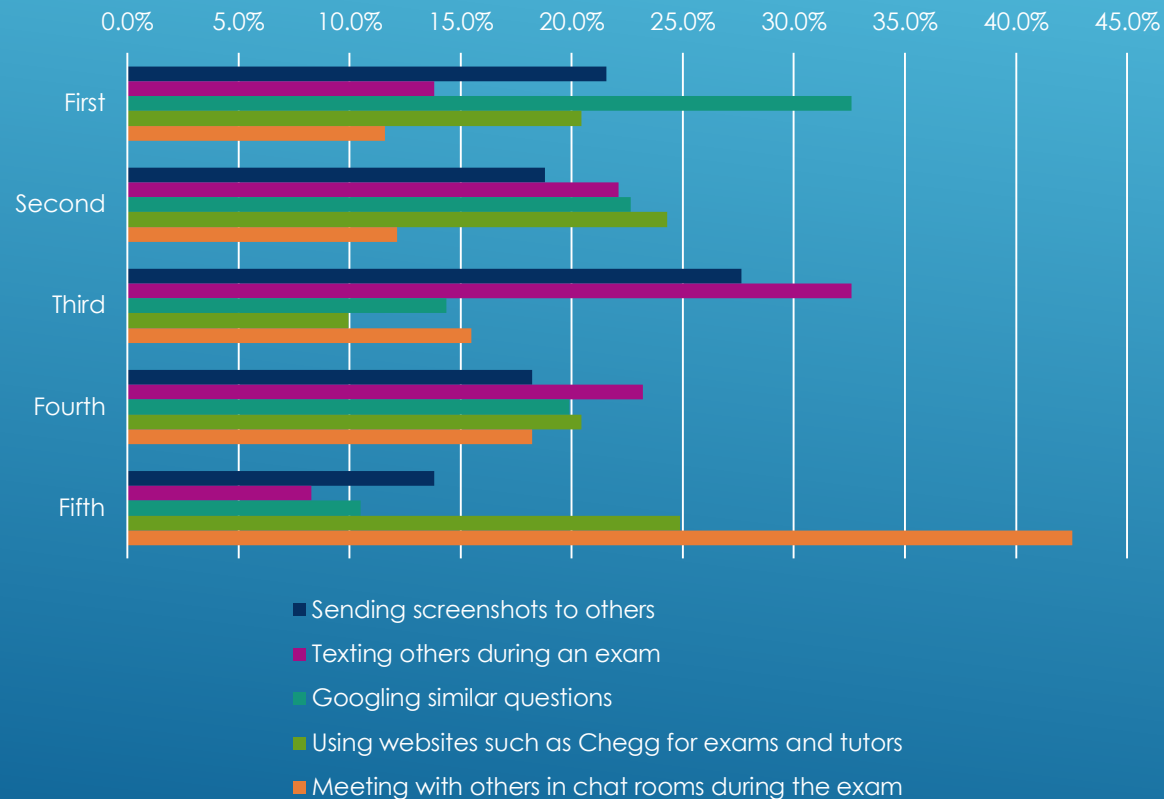
COMBINED RESULTS FROM SUMMER I AND II SURVEYS OF KEY QUESTIONS

Ted Joyce
August 2020

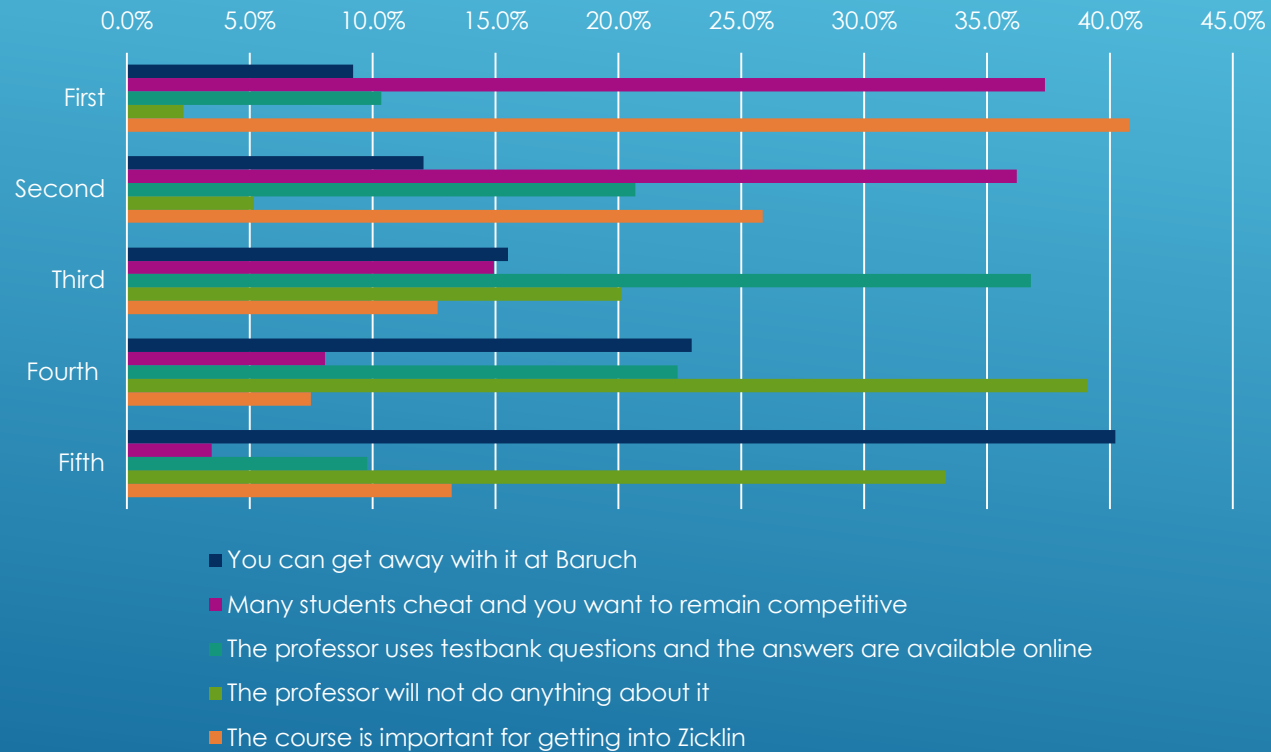
EXAMS: In your experience with online courses this summer and past spring, how common do you believe cheating is with regard to online exams (n=201)?



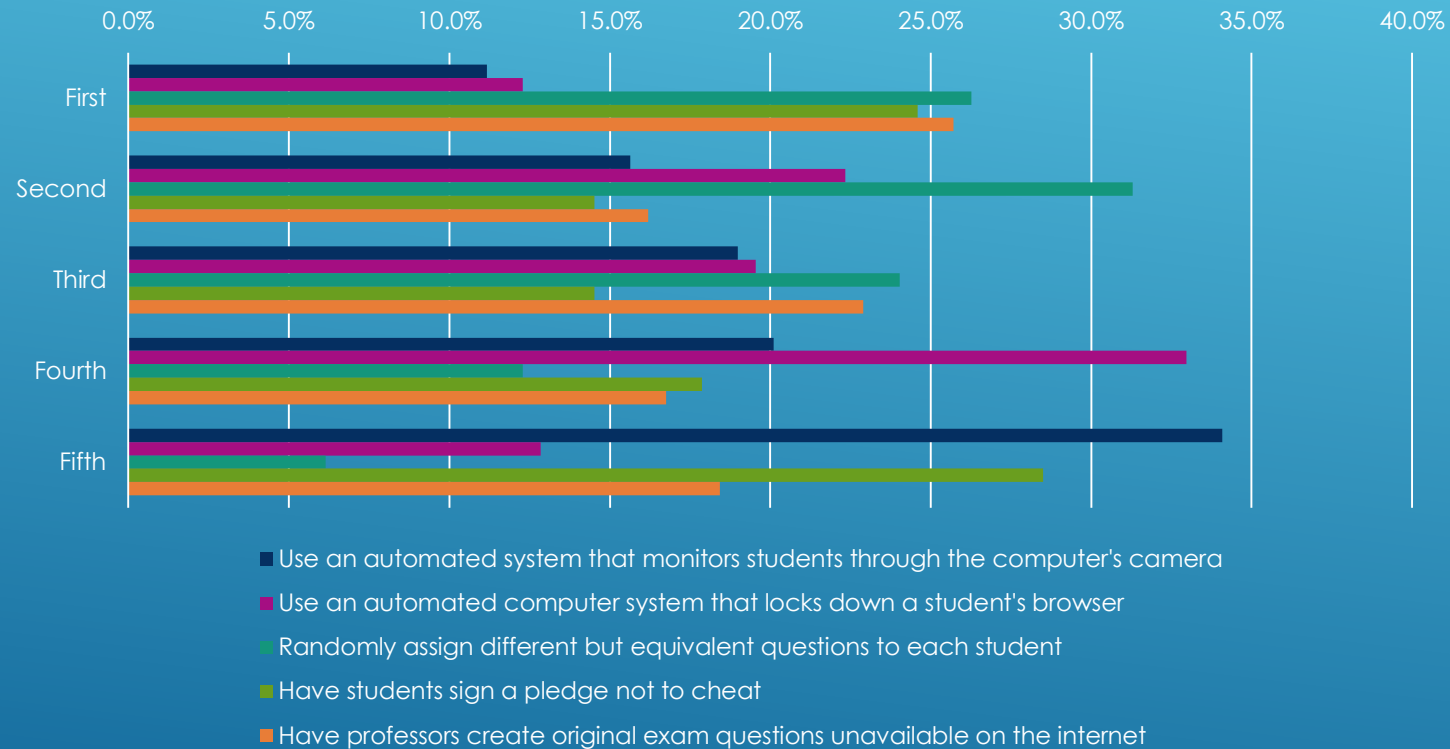
EXAMS: Rank the ways you think students cheat on online exams with the most common being ranked 1 and 5 being the least common (click the response and move it to the desired rank, n=181).



Rank the reasons why you think students at Baruch cheat on online exams with 1 being the most common reason and 5 being the least common



EXAMS: Rank what you think might be the most effective way to prevent cheating on online exams with 1 being the most effective and 5 the least effective (n=179).



APPENDIX E

Remote Proctoring Solutions

UPDATE Remote Proctoring Solutions: Towards the end of the Spring 2020 term, the University established a system-wide taskforce, including members from our Committee on Academic Technology, Council of Academic Affairs, University Faculty Senate, and Council of Chief Information Officers, to provide forward-looking recommendations on remote proctoring solutions for Fall 2020.

The taskforce presented its recommendations on June 29, 2020, stating that, whenever possible, alternative methods of assessment such as papers, presentations, annotations, or e-portfolios should be the default method. But also recognizing that there are several courses across the University, including in specialized and licensure programs, that rely on traditional testing approaches and need an online proctoring solution. To serve these courses, the taskforce identified some commercial tools that the University has since been pursuing for possible procurement and implementation.

The University is making good progress in contractual negotiations with both [Respondus](#) and [Proctortrack](#) and are very optimistic that we will have at least one, if not both, of these solutions enabled and accessible for use by faculty and students on or before midterm season (late September – mid October). In the case of Respondus, we are planning for a University-wide deployment via Blackboard, while in the case of Proctortrack we are working to secure a significant number of licenses that would be allocated to campuses as needed. More information will be forthcoming. In the meantime, thank you for your patience — the data privacy, student liability, indemnification provisions, hardware compatibility, and cost considerations in question are quite complex and we are working as purposefully and thoughtfully as possible, fully understanding the sense of urgency involved.

* * * * *

From CUNY’s “Update #20 Guidance on Academic Continuity,” available online at <https://www.cuny.edu/coronavirus/academic-continuity/guidance-on-academic-continuity-to-campuses/>

**SECOND REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE SUBCOMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE FOR FALL 2020 AND
BEYOND**

We believe that the success of Baruch College as it adjusts to the new normal beyond the fall 2020 semester will hinge on a heavy investment in two critical departments: The BCTC (along with each School's technology team) and the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). Without a significant increase in investment in these two departments, the College will experience a sharp and immediate decline in its ability to deliver on its mission.

It is our belief, that by shifting funds to technology, teaching support, instructional design, and related resources, the College will be able to address these key goals in the near future:

- Increase access to its courses and programs to all students, e.g., more students from underrepresented groups, a large population of New Yorkers (and beyond) who are missing courses for degree completion.
- Create innovative and attractive new specialized programs that will be largely or entirely online and that will generate new revenue for the College, which can be used to support its current programs (and therefore its mission of providing all New Yorkers with affordable, top quality education).
- Bolster its ability to adjust to the "new normal," even after the COVID19 crisis subsides, where many courses will continue to be provided online; something that will also help alleviate the space constraints the College has been facing.

Below we provide some specific recommendations for the College on how increased investment can be allocated to the BCTC and CTL:

Human resources needed:

- CTL:
 - Assistant Director for CTL
 - *At least* three full-time positions in CTL (specialist in synchronous online teaching, specialist in asynchronous teaching/production specialist, specialist in accessibility)
 - At least two additional full-time instructional designers dedicated to helping faculty with their courses
- BCTC:
 - One Senior Level Classroom Support person
 - Several additional technologists in BCTC that are critical for College operations
 - Additional help desk personnel
 - Full-time/part-time personnel to handle logistics of hardware allocation to faculty/students
 - Dedicated full-time academic software specialist
 - Full-time documentation and training specialist
 - Additional part-time staff to be able to provide on-demand phone support for instructors, staff, and students in online courses and work

Technical resources needed:

- Invest in creating production spaces and providing technical resources for faculty to be able to create quality asynchronous content for their courses. This can include studios spaces at the College and/or loanable resources (camera, green screen, etc.) for use at home

- classroom technology that will allow a combination of in-person and online instruction simultaneously.
- Several RESO-A projects have been earmarked but are incomplete, but they need to be completed because they address critical infrastructure needs for the College
- Infrastructure upgrades, including:
 - Network switches
 - NAPS
- Transition to laptops for all faculty/staff
- A better remote access solution for faculty/staff
- Peripheral support for faculty/staff (e.g., printers, scanners, whiteboard tablets, etc.)
- Building in support for Apple devices

Additional resources needed:

- Additional technical personnel and resources for various non-academic departments in the College, such as SACC, Zicklin Tech, Admissions, etc.
- In addition, better governance structure for communicating the technical needs of all departments, academic and administrative.

SECOND REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE SUBCOMMITTEE ON STUDENT SUPPORT FOR FALL 2020 AND BEYOND

Our position to advise the President’s Task Force on key aspects of student success builds on Baruch College’s notable achievements. By all measures, Baruch College students persevere and succeed at rates that far exceed those at institutions across the nation with similar student bodies. Our first year retention rate of 89.1% is 15.7 points higher than CUNY’s senior college average. Our most recent six-year graduation rate, 69.9%, is almost 17 points higher than the university’s senior college average. Most impressive, the gap between actual and predicted rates of graduation at Baruch, based on the socio-economic characteristics and academic preparation of the students served, is a whopping 14.3. As we face evolving modes of instruction and changes to the way we engage and serve our students, it is imperative that we not only maintain, but also build on this history of success.

These accomplishments reflect the consistent collaborations between every department and office of the College working in the service of CUNY’s mission to create opportunity, access, and quality education for all of our extraordinary students.

In this environment of social distancing, economic hardship, and calls for equity and justice, we face new challenges. Support for student success requires a holistic approach, one that attends to academic needs as well as to every day concerns for survival.

As noted in our initial report, we continue to stress the following core values as central to planning the future of Baruch College:

- Students are central to everything we do.
- Communication is critical.
- We are responsible for creating accessible transitions to the Baruch College community.
- Compassion and ease of use should be integral to all systems and processes.
- A community culture of empowerment, trust, and respect sustains academic success.

Communication is the Cornerstone of Student Support.

To accomplish any and all of these, the college must provide clear, direct and timely communication. According to *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, “One of the key differences that contributes to how well a college moves forward [through a crisis] is the quality of its communication, with both internal and external audiences.”¹ We recommend that the College enhance its student support system by organizing its key elements—transitions to the Baruch College community, academic success, and student affairs—within one organic communications structure.

In the past, the College has utilized multiple communication tools and platforms to inform and support students. Emails, website updates and limited use of text messaging have been the primary pipeline for information to reach students. However, this process has been inconsistent, in timing and delivery, which has led to a lack of trust. We recommend developing a clear and comprehensive student-focused communication plan which utilizes multiple platforms for the timely and accurate distribution of accurate information. A comprehensive communication plan would increase the confidence necessary to empower student achievement.

Our short-term recommendations build on the work of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Enrollment Management to:

- Develop Baruch Forward, into a comprehensive “Student Information” application and link on the Baruch College that is prominently visible, accessible, and sharable via social media platforms.
- Update notifications sent to students via emails in a timely and clear fashion.
- Standardize the delivery of information across offices and departments.

Our longer-term recommendations culminate in the establishment of a **Student Success Center and digital Portal**, one that consolidates all access to academic and student support, and foregrounds communication in the service of (1) transitions to the Baruch College Community, of (2) academic excellence, and of (3) student support.

Transitions to the Baruch College Community

We are privileged to join our students in their college journey and to support their transitions into our Baruch College community. We understand that, in order to build on our achievements in retention and graduation rates, we must be even more intentional about creating connections and forming supportive relationships for our students. We recommend:

- A series of online orientations and resources for undergraduate and graduate students to support them in their transition into the remote learning environment
- Update and expand “Coffee & Chat” faculty and student initiative within the virtual context environment
- Increase visibility and virtual programming from the Office of Student Affairs.
- Connect both first-time and transfer students with peer mentors.
- Build on our student orientation and transition programs.
- Connect students with alumni and professional development mentors.

Academic Success

Quality education calls for training in the traditional academic disciplines coupled with the kinds of experience that teaches the flexibility, adaptability, and confidence that enables preparation for a social world in constant flux. To support the whole student’s academic achievements, our recommendations include:

- Increased investment in regular, student-centered pedagogical training for faculty at every level such as trainings facilitated by the CTL, Schwartz Institute, and the Writing Center
- Establish safe spaces for students to study, and to access technology including printers, and library resources.
- Provide consistent, remote access to technology (e.g., Wi-Fi access and applications).
- Institutional recognition of teaching excellence and innovation as critical to professional promotion and advancement.
- Engage students about the best practices to communicate and deliver remote academic content.
- Increase distribution of remote learning tools and tips.

Student Support Services

The CUNY mission of access and opportunity demands complete student support services that respond to the total and full range of students' needs. Baruch's exemplary success in retention and graduation rates is contingent on its commitment to support students' in their individual as well as their collective concerns and challenges. We recommend the following:

- Develop robust care communities, such as virtual lounges and community spaces for students to gather, build community, and receive guidance from more advanced students (in conjunction with TEAM Baruch and Student Governments).
- Offer live and open and seasonal information sessions, modeled on College Town Hall.
- Deliver short informational videos from every sector of the college community.
- Promote targeted support for students served by the Office of Student Disability Services.
- Increase emergency support services.
- Provide easy access to health and mental health services.
- Update and redesign first-year seminar curriculum to facilitate academic and college success within distant learning contexts.

Future, Longer-term Recommendations

In the long-term, future planning for the holistic approach to academic success should reflect a universally-integrated **Student Success Center and Portal** that offers in-person, remote, and hybrid support services to all students. This Student Success Portal and Center would communicate easy access to critical student services such as Academic Advising, the Writing Center, Tutors, Technical Assistance, SEEK, Macaulay, BMI, services for Veterans, Transfer Student Services, Financial Aid, Emergency Services, Health and Wellness, etc. More specifically, the Student Success Center and Portal includes:

- Increased investment in Academic Advising. Currently the College is significantly understaffed in this vital area: Weissman has no advisor for more than 350 graduate students; the College offers undergraduate advising at the ratio of 1:1700, while the national recommendation is 1:300.
- Invest and expand the Campus Intervention Team.
- Invest in CTL and BCTC.
 - Develop opportunities for practicum and service learning across the disciplines.
 - Invest in post-graduate career services and mentoring.

SECOND REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE SUBCOMMITTEE ON STAFF SUPPORT FOR FALL 2020 AND BEYOND

The Staff Sub-committee, formed in late July, has the goal of developing recommendations on how best to support Baruch College staff during this time of uncertainty. It was agreed that the work of this committee is to bring the staff experience to the forefront, professionally and empathetically gathering data to inform the recommendations that will be put forth.

The sub-committee's first course of action is to survey all of the staff, including buildings and grounds and public safety, to assess staff experiences up until this point and to assess immediate, short-term, and long-term needs. Two surveys will be issued during the month of September. An announcement was sent to part-time and full-time staff announcing the surveys. The first survey is the Technological Experience Survey which will assess staff technology-centric remote working experiences and needs. The second survey will assess the general experience of staff including the challenges of working remotely, work/life balance and professional development and support. Special outreach will be made to encourage and support the participation of staff from buildings and grounds, public safety and the mailroom who are on the frontlines. The committee would like to take this opportunity to thank our front-line workers for their commitment to the College during this difficult period.

The committee is working with Rachel Fester, Assistant Provost for Assessment, Accreditation and Institutional Effectiveness, who is assisting with the administration of the survey and the assessment of the data which will be aggregated. The Committee will generate long term recommendations based on this data. In the meantime, the committee has formulated short-term recommendations for actions that can be administered immediately:

- Mental Health Awareness Workshop in collaboration with EAP Corporate Counseling Associates
- "Managing in a Virtual Environment" Workshop for managers, directors, senior leadership
- Divisional leaders should send communications reinforcing work-life balance while remote working
- The Monthly HR Newsletter should have a regular feature on work-life balance tips/articles

The University's new employee assistance program, [Corporate Counseling Associates](#) (CCA), which will be an important resource for staff who may have issues that require immediate attention. The committee encourages staff to reach out to CCA directly should they have any immediate concerns.

Staff Sub-Committee

Members from the Taskforce for the Future:

Kristy Perez, Director of SEEK

Damali Tolson, Director of Student Life

Larry Manganello, Assistant Vice President for Campus Operations

Bang Lu, Data Support Coordinator, Zicklin School of Business

Cabinet Champions:

Katharine Cobb, Vice President for Administration and Finance

Olga Dais, Assistant Vice President, Legal and Labor Relations

Kenya Lee, Chief of Staff



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Final Report of the Staff Sub-committee of the Taskforce for the Future

Staff Sub-Committee Membership

Bang Lu, Data Support Coordinator, Zicklin School of Business
Larry Manganello, Assistant Vice President for Campus Operations
Kristy Perez, Director of SEEK
Damali Tolson, Director of Student Life
Katharine Cobb, Vice President for Administration and Finance
Olga Dais, Assistant Vice President, Legal and Labor Relations
Kenya Lee, Chief of Staff

The Staff Sub-committee, formed in late July, had the goal of developing recommendations on how best to support Baruch College staff during this time of uncertainty. It was agreed that the work of this committee is to bring the staff experience to the forefront, professionally and empathetically gathering data to inform the recommendations that will be put forth.

The sub-committee's first course of action was to survey the staff to assess staff experiences particularly during the pandemic and to assess immediate, short-term, and long-term needs. Two surveys were issued during the months of September and October. An announcement was sent to part-time and full-time staff announcing the surveys. The first survey was the Technological Experience Survey which assessed staff technology-centric remote working experiences and needs. The second survey assessed the general experience of staff including the challenges of working remotely, work/life balance and professional development and support.

The Staff Subcommittee wholeheartedly acknowledges the integral role the staff of Baruch College play in upholding the mission of the College, which ultimately is to ensure the success of our students. We acknowledge especially our essential workers, the individuals who have remained on the frontlines since the very beginning of the pandemic: our public safety officers, custodial staff, buildings and grounds, campus operations, the staff of the mailroom, central receiving and BCTC.

We thank those who participated in both the Staff Technology Concerns and the Staff Experience During COVID Surveys. The results have informed the recommendations that the committee puts forth in this final report.

The main goal of the surveys was to provide an opportunity for staff to express their concerns and to provide insight into their challenges and experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. For this reason, both surveys were longer than what is considered ideal. It must be acknowledged that not everyone's experience is reflected in the survey results, only the experiences of those who participated in the survey are reflected.

We thank Rachel Fester, Assistant Provost for Assessment, Accreditation and Institutional Effectiveness for assisting the committee in deploying both surveys and preparing the final survey reports.

There were three emerging themes from the Staff Experience survey:

1. Communication
 - Staff would like to hear more directly and more frequently from the college leadership and receive communications that reflect staff perspectives, needs and concerns.
2. Compassion
 - Staff members have challenges that impact work/life balance like eldercare, childcare, health concerns, burnout/stress and lack of empathy from supervisors during a time full of challenges and uncertainty.
3. Community
 - Collectively the Baruch community cares about each other.

Additionally, the results of both surveys revealed:

- Survey participants had the equipment they needed to work remotely but could benefit from equipment improvement and technology training. Some have experienced challenges that include hardware failure and unreliable internet that require(d) assistance from the College to help improve internet connectivity.
- Staff have proven they can work remotely efficiently and effectively, and the hope is that the University will recognize this and create a remote work/telecommute policy when we reopen the campus.
- The staff are able to establish and maintain strong digital processes that are more efficient than some of the antiquated paper-based processes.
- Running programs remotely, while challenging at times, has extended the capacity and capability to reach more stakeholders.

Recommendations

I. Professional Development/Workshops Ideas

(Plan out workshop schedule for the year)

- Managing the current political and social realities - Ways to balance the constant news cycle with the realities of working from home
- Managing seasonal depression while working from home
- Mental Health/Depression
- Managing in a Virtual Environment (Compassionate Leadership In Crisis)
 - Make it mandatory for managers, directors, senior leadership
- Time Management
- Health/Fitness classes for staff
- Technology Training
 - a. Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)
 - b. Office 365 (SharePoint, Teams, OneDrive)
 - c. Dropbox
 - d. Outlook calendar/scheduling skills
 - e. Time management/organizational skills
 - f. Video conferencing (Zoom)
 - g. Blackboard
 - h. CUNYfirst
- Guidance for setups of an effective home office
- Development opportunities specifically for middle managers
- Development and support opportunities specifically for members of campus operations
- Professional Development Conference/Week for Staff
 - a. Identify Committee to Execute
 - b. Call for Proposals to give staff opportunities to facilitate sessions (Providing a space for people you know to get out of their day to day and share their talents).
 - c. Supplement with CCA workshops
 - d. Wellness, Professional Development, Networking

II. Highlighting Resources

- Resources for areas of concern such as elder care, childcare and financial difficulties. Corporate Counseling Associates (EAP), PSC and NYC have resources such as landlord and housing issues.
- Skill based trainings provided by Baruch and CUNY. Excel, Zoom, Teams, etc.
- Baruch or CUNY vendor discounts on software and WFH items, such as desks, lamps, etc.

- Management and Leadership Resources for managers/directors/chairs
- Mental Health support (Corporate Counseling Associates)

III. Communication

- Additional opportunities to express concerns
 - Open forum with Labor relations, HR or finance
 - Discussions around matters of concern, changes in policies, procedures
- More direct messages to staff only
 - Focus on matters that affect the staff (the staff survey revealed that staff feel that many messages address the faculty and students, and omit the needs and concerns of the staff)
- More transparency, more empathy in communications
- More communications on CCA's resources (standalone so not lost in a larger message.)
- Student services staff should be kept abreast of what is being communicated to students in order to avoid confusion and miscommunication as they work to serve students.

IV. Opportunities to Build Greater Sense of Community

- a. Collectively create a set of values that become ingrained in the institutional culture
- b. Create opportunities for affinity groups, connection across common interests and experiences
- c. Book clubs/discussions
- d. Create a chat room for staff to share their experiences, particularly during the pandemic
- e. Create volunteer corps for staff

V. Expand the work of the Staff Sub-Committee as part of ongoing effort

- a. Develop a cross-campus initiative of constituents to continue the work of providing opportunities for staff and supporting the staff
 - i. HR-Labor Relations-Campus Operations-Office of the President - Communications and Marketing
 - ii. Reps from all of the divisions

VI. Staff Recognition

- More robust initiative to recognize the staff
- Virtual recognition ie. Rollins College's Recognize a Co-Worker: <https://www.rollins.edu/service-excellence/service-excellence-awards/acknowledge-a-coworker.html>
- 1-2 Questions Survey/Focus Group to find out how staff want to be recognized
- Initiative/Campaign to recognize the essential workers
- *Schools to Glean From:* <https://www.rollins.edu/service-excellence/>

V. Celebrating the Holidays

- Virtual ugly sweater contest
- Venue to share international holiday recipes.
- \$15 Dunkin Donut gift cards for all essential workers (Estimated: \$5000)

VII. Proposed Workshops to be offered by Corporate Counseling Associates

Winter 2021

Stress Management Strategies (2-3 sessions)

Strategies for Working Remotely (2-3 sessions)

Telecommuting for Managers (2-3 sessions)

Identifying and Addressing Mental Health Issues in the Workplace (1)

Management Essentials: 3 part series

Spring 2021

Dealing with Challenging People

Dynamics of Change Management

Stress Management for Managers

Caregiving

Managing Priorities to Maximize Your Day

Managing Your Money in Tough Times

(Estimated \$20,000)

VIII. Implementation

The Cabinet Champions will work on an implementation plan in alignment with the AY21 College Focus Goals, collaborating with partners across the campus.