



Message from the Office of Diversity, Compliance, and Equity Initiatives

February 2, 2022

Statement on Events of January 2022 and Support for the Baruch Community

Dear Baruch College Students and Colleagues,

January 2022 was a challenging month for all of us.

On January 9, 17 people, including 8 children, lost their lives in a terrible five-alarm fire at Twin Parks North West, a 19-story, high-rise apartment building in the Bronx. Many other residents and visitors were hurt in this terrible tragedy, including some who were hospitalized with life-threatening injuries. We later learned that a CUNY student Sera Janneh, a Lehman College sophomore, died as a result of the fire. As we share in the profound sadness of our CUNY colleagues at Lehman College, our Baruch College community offers our sincere condolences to the Janneh Family and acknowledges the pain and suffering of everyone, particularly members of the Gambian and Gambian American communities who lost family members and loved ones.

Later that week, on January 15, all New Yorkers, particularly commuters who use the subway daily, were horrified when Michelle Alyssa Go was shoved in front of a New York City subway car and killed. In addition to expressing our concern for Ms. Go's family and her loved ones, we must also pay close attention to the shameful rise in the number of anti-Asian attacks over the course of the last two years in New York City as well as across the nation as reported by the New York Police Department (NYPD) and the United States Department of Justice (USDOJ), respectively. Further, as concerned members of the Baruch College community, we must strive to fully understand the failure of certain law enforcement and mental health policies and also condemn the rising violence impacting Asian and Asian American communities.

During the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday weekend, we were relieved to learn that the terrifying hostage situation at Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, Texas

was resolved with no lives lost among the hostages. In remembrance of Dr. King's activism against racism and anti-Semitism during the Civil Rights Movement, Baruch College community members must continue to educate ourselves about racism and anti-Semitism and identify individual and collective ways to support struggles against oppression, discrimination, and exclusion.

More recently, during the last two weeks, we witnessed a number of disturbing incidents of gun violence in New York City, including the January 19 shooting of an 11-month old infant who is still recovering from her injuries. Less than a week later, two New York City police officers and CUNY graduates, Officer Jason Rivera and Officer Wilbert Mora, were shot while responding to a domestic dispute on January 21. Officer Rivera died at the scene, and Officer Mora succumbed to his injuries days later on January 26.

Although we are a community of people who are dedicated to listening, learning, and understanding, the violence and loss of life at the beginning of 2022 has been extremely difficult for many of us to comprehend. Further, we struggle to understand the events of January 2022 within the context of a global pandemic that has impacted so many throughout our beloved New York City and the world. During this difficult time, it is understandable that the events of January 2022 may have caused many in our Baruch College community to experience undue stress, pain, anxiety, and even trauma.

With all of this in mind, please note that our Baruch College community is here to support you. As we begin the Spring 2022 term, protecting the health and well-being of the Baruch community should be an important priority for all of us.

For a comprehensive review of services and support, including mental health resources and information, our Baruch College colleagues are encouraged to visit the Office of Human Resources' [Wellness Corner](#). Our Baruch College colleagues are also reminded to take advantage of resources available from the College's employee assistance program, CCA@Your Service (call 800-833-8707 or visit myccaonline.com and use company code "CUNY").

Students are encouraged to explore the support services offered through the Baruch College [Counseling Center](#). The center offers free and confidential individual and group counseling and support sessions.

In short, as we begin the Spring 2022 term, please take good care.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Best regards,

Elliott Dawes

Executive Chief Diversity Officer

[Baruch College Office of Diversity, Compliance, and Equity Initiatives \(ODCEI\)](#)

[BC ODCEI Twitter: @Baruch_ODCEI](#)

[BC ODCEI LinkedIn Group](#)

[**baruch.cuny.edu**](http://baruch.cuny.edu)

