

17 Lex Society Reception
September 14, 2022

Hello! I am David Wu, president of Baruch College, and it is my pleasure to welcome everyone to campus—first time in person since 2019—for this very special event. It has been wonderful to mingle around and finally meet so many of you “in real life,” instead of on a Zoom screen. It’s just a whole different level of energy, don’t you think?

It’s hard to believe that I am starting my third year as president of Baruch, and I still remember my first impressions of the College. It seemed to me—and indeed, it *truly is*—that Baruch is where aspiration and ambition connect with opportunity. Baruch is not just a *place* but it represents a *spirit* that empowers students to pursue and accelerate their dreams.

Recently, one alumnus told me, “I love Baruch,” because it represents everything that is right about America: hard work, opportunity, inclusion, fairness, compassion, and generosity.

And I sensed this spirit right here. We are able to do what we do thanks to you—the 17 Lex Society—*your* generosity and enduring support help to connect aspiration with opportunity.

In just my time here, the campus has realized so many improvements that you helped make possible, and I am happy to hear that some of you visited these special places earlier today:

- The Allen G. and Mary E. Student Center, a beautiful modern space where Bearcats can hang out, study independently, or collaborate in groups. I stop by once a while to check on the students studying in there.
- The Clivner=Field Plaza, a landmark for our urban campus that gives the whole neighborhood a much-needed outdoor space to enjoy. It is our favorite place to bump into colleagues and stop by to chat with students.
- The renovated 17 Lex lobby, which is now both stunning and ADA compliant.
- And the newest addition: the Baruch One Stop Shop—affectionately known as The BOSS—which is a place that unifies all student services in one convenient location.

This is just a short list of some recent milestones. While it would be hard to enumerate everything the 17 Lex Society has done for Baruch, it is easy to see the tremendous

impact the Society had on the College, in so many different ways, since the Society was founded in 2006.

- As Electra Economopoulos so beautifully described earlier, your involvement with **mentorship programs** such as Executives on Campus, and the Financial Women's Association, directly influences our students and helps shape their futures in immeasurable ways.
- And it would be impossible to calculate the number of lives that have been transformed by the **scholarships** you provide or the programs and facilities you have sponsored,
- For many students, your support makes the difference that allows them to stay in school... study abroad... participate in valuable internships that are otherwise out of reach... and this is what allows them to graduate with the education and experiences they need to transform their future, their professions, and their communities.

All of this, in turn, helps Baruch to grow its reputation. This success is reflected in our strong rankings and in our positive enrollment trends.

- *Money Magazine* ranks Baruch #1 public college in New York State. *Princeton Review* ranked Baruch the #1 best public institution in the Northeast for value, and #8 in the country — marking a seven-position jump from 2021. The ranking is based on stellar academics, affordable cost, and strong career prospects for graduates.

In August, we hosted our first in-person Student Convocation since Fall 2019.

- We welcomed about 2,600 students — which is among our largest first-year classes ever.
- An additional 1,800 new transfer students, and 1,200 new graduate students, also joined our vibrant campus community — which now buzzes with about 20,000 students!

This fall, we also had a strong recruitment cycle for faculty, with 58 top scholars joining our ranks in all three schools. This was the largest addition to the faculty in recent history, and we *already* hope to top it with 67 new full-time faculty recruits next year.

Having a dynamic community of scholar-educators is essential to our mission. Engaged faculty motivate and elevate one another, and they support and challenge our students. Together, they also allow us to reinforce our core academic disciplines *and* invest in competitive, interdisciplinary pursuits that our students need, such as:

- Strategic Entrepreneurship and Innovation;
- Cybersecurity, Data Science, and Informatics;

- And, Environment and Climate Crisis.
- We are also strategically positioning Black, Race, Ethnic, Disability, Gender, and LGBTQ Studies as a connector theme across curricula.

[NOTE: Mindy and Erica are scheduled to be at the Reception. If so, you could give them a shoutout.]

In support of our renewed emphasis on projects that involve faculty from all three schools, I would like to thank the 17 Lex Society—and congratulate Mindy Engel-Friedman, Associate Professor of Psychology, and Erica Richardson, Assistant Professor of English. They each earned Provost Innovation Seed Grants that were made possible by the 17 Lex Society.

- Mindy is leading a cross-College initiative titled, “Baruch Experiential Learning: Sharing Climate Change Information with NYC Council Districts to Prepare for Heat Resiliency”
- And Erica is curating the interdisciplinary project, “Black Life Futures: African Social Research and Diasporic Black Ecologies.”
- Congratulations to you both. I am excited to see these projects unfold!

All in all, these are exciting times at Baruch! And I am thrilled that you continue to be an active part of the Bearcat community. As pandemic restrictions hopefully continue to ease, I look forward to many more opportunities to get together, both at Baruch and around our global alumni network.

Thank you again and enjoy the rest of the evening!

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