

## Changemakers Awards Dinner

September 15, 2022

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Thank you, Janet, for that kind introduction and for helping to organize such a special and fitting event: our inaugural Changemakers Awards Dinner. It is wonderful to see so many alumni Bearcats and their supporters on our amazing campus—in person, rather than on a Zoom screen.

Leading change—and inspiring changemakers—is at the core of what we do at Baruch College. It is our legacy, our enduring mission—and our very exciting future.

- With our roots in the Free Academy of 1847, we were changemakers from the start: pioneering for free public higher education in a nation where higher learning was reserved for the privileged few.
- By making rigorous, high-quality college education accessible to all who are willing to work hard to attain, Baruch College galvanizes change across our communities and the society at large. Instead of the privileged few, we serve the privileged many.
- As alumni, our Changemaker honorees know that Baruch demands academic standards and rigor comparable to any top U.S. institution, while delivering access and outcomes to many students who might not otherwise attend college.
- 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.
- This, in turn, gives the College our signature diversity: students who represent more than 150 different nations, and speak over 100 languages in their homes. Many are the first in their families to go to college, and all have the grit and tenacity to succeed.
- By educating—and motivating—one of the most diverse student populations in the United States, Baruch is a force multiplier for meaningful change in a society that values opportunity for all.

Our namesake founder—Bernard M. Baruch—was also a legendary changemaker.

- A millionaire by the age of 30, Mr. Baruch started out as a “runner” on Wall Street, and then, for a half-century, was an advisor to U.S. Presidents, from Woodrow Wilson to John F. Kennedy.
- He was a talented diplomat who represented the United States on the world stage for many decades.

- Later on, Bernard Baruch became known as the “Park Bench Philosopher,” because of his penchant for sitting on park benches in Central Park and Lafayette Park in Washington, DC to discuss the issues of the day with those who passed by.

Clearly, changemaking is in our DNA! And our reputation in this important arena continues to speak volumes to prospective students. 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.

Continuing to build a dynamic community of scholar-educators is essential to our work as changemakers. Engaged faculty not only motivate and elevate one another, but they also support and challenge our students. Together, they allow us to reinforce our core academic disciplines *and* to 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.

Change and forward momentum also thrives across our campus. I hope you had some time to walk around and see the many great changes everywhere. Within the tight confines of an urban campus, we continue to move our physical spaces forward:

- 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 our 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.

And the list goes on! In honor of the College's longstanding legacy for making meaningful change, we have created our own Changemaker Awards, and I look forward to this becoming an annual tradition.

For this first-time event, we are thrilled to honor nine Baruch graduates for their contributions to their companies, organizations and to society at large. Together, they represent:

- Classes from 1977 to 2015,
- A great range of different backgrounds,
- And varied academic and professional pursuits.

We are eager to hear more about each of our honorees, and to get us started, I am pleased to introduce Provost Linda Essig!

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