

# Message from the President

March 23, 2020

## Thank You: Historic New Era at Baruch Underway

Dear Faculty and Staff,

I want to thank you for your extraordinary efforts during this unprecedented and stressful time of change for our College. Perhaps not unexpectedly, several members of the Baruch community have now tested positive for the COVID-19 virus, and I know you join me in wishing them a swift return to good health.

As you are aware, Governor Cuomo's [PAUSE executive order](#) went into effect at 8 pm last night, thereby further reducing access to all Baruch buildings. Indeed, while our distance learning efforts continue in full effect, the physical campus is effectively closed since we all have been asked to stay at home. I am pleased to report, however, that the Baruch administration had anticipated this, and we were ready.

## Your Heroic Efforts Paid Off

Since the onset of March, your collaboration, ingenuity, and accomplishments have been absolutely awesome! The Baruch community—students, faculty, and staff—was asked to change profoundly and very rapidly in response to the virus threat, and you have delivered.

- Baruch's Center for Teaching and Learning, together with BCTC and faculty who were already experienced in remote course-delivery methods, worked tirelessly and collaboratively to train the entire faculty in distance education methods.
- Staff who were already knowledgeable in business collaboration tools helped one another come up to speed on Office 365, Microsoft Teams, Dropbox, Zoom, and other co-working platforms that CUNY presciently made available across the University during the past year.
- All administrative departments and business functions are now operating remotely, including financial aid, admissions, and human resources.
- The Starr Career Development Center and Zicklin's Graduate Career Management Center, both already leaders in online student support, quickly pivoted to offer all services remotely.

## The Results? Amazing.

- Little more than a week ago, only 22 percent of Baruch's 2,765 undergraduate and graduate class sections were offered either in fully online or hybrid forms. This week, *every single one of them* is operating in full distance learning mode.
- In addition, all of our administrative services have transitioned online, and with them, nearly all of our administrative staff are now working in remote environments.
- The Baruch campus was safely closed down in phases and will undergo deep cleanings prior to resuming classes in the future.

## Navigating the New Normal

As we settle into a wholly new working environment, effectively bringing our work into our homes, it is critical that we all strike a healthy balance between our two worlds, and that we all maintain our physical and mental health during this stressful time. To that end, I would like to share the below resources with you.

- Work-life balance is always critical, but in the work-from-home environment, it can be challenging to set a schedule and establish boundaries. "[How to Work From Home if You've Never Done it Before](#)" has helpful suggestions.
- It is equally important to recognize and manage stress during these extraordinary times. Deer Oaks, CUNY's employee assistance program, is offering an on-demand seminar, "[Build Psychological Immunity During the Coronavirus Outbreak](#)," and Baruch's Department of Psychology is hosting [stress-reduction sessions](#) for faculty and staff on Tuesdays and Thursdays from noon to 12:25 pm.

Tomorrow, the College will resume publication of our weekly e-newsletter, *This Week @ Baruch*, where we will offer additional resources related to the coronavirus situation—as well as updates on faculty, staff, and College accomplishments and other good news that we are all eager to hear.

I will continue to be in communication with you as this situation evolves, which it undoubtedly will. Although this was hardly the way that I anticipated spending my last semester as president of Baruch, I am deeply grateful for everything that you are doing to uphold the College's mission to meet the needs of our amazing and highly deserving students.

Sincerely,

Mitchel B. Wallerstein, PhD  
President, Baruch College

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