With the retirement of Myrna Chase after a highly productive five-and-a-half year tenure as Dean, the Weissman School reached the end of a period that saw the founding and rapid expansion of the Freshman Learning Communities program, the creation of a new Department of Journalism and the Writing Professions, the development of a new major in Journalism as well as five new Tier III minors, and the hiring of well over sixty full-time faculty members or almost a quarter of the current full-time teaching staff, not to mention several key positions in the Dean’s Office and the Baruch Performing Arts Center. Over the ensuing six months, Acting Dean David Dannenbring put the finishing touches on several of these initiatives; and on August 4th the Weissman School welcomed incoming Dean Jeffrey Peck at a moment when it could boast more declared majors than ever before in its history, an array of new programs, and a teaching and support staff enriched by the most plentiful infusion of talent that Baruch College has seen in more than three decades. It is truly a propitious moment in the history of the school.

**The Project of Assessment**

With the College’s reaccreditation process beginning in earnest this fall, Weissman has prepared for the Middle States review by establishing and continuing to refine sets of learning goals in nine different categories (oral and written communication, critical thinking, quantitative skills and scientific inquiry, technological skills, civic awareness, ethical awareness, global/cross-cultural awareness, aesthetics, and information literacy) for the core curriculum as well as a set of goals for each of our majors. The Curriculum Committee has overseen initial assessments of oral and written communication, and in the spring of 2008 the subcommittee charged with the project of assessment developed an instrument for the assessment of ethical awareness, which was successfully piloted and will be used in a larger study this fall. In the coming year, the subcommittee intends to continue with assessment of the common core curriculum, to invite the departments to revise the learning goals that they have drafted for the individual majors, and to work with the departments on assessments for each major.

**Freshman Learning Communities in Fall, 2008**

This fall, the Weissman School has again fielded the largest cohort of freshman learning communities that it has attempted thus far: forty communities, which are serving over half of the incoming freshman class. Each community is supervised by two faculty members, and once again faculty from all three schools are participating, including no less than 71 from Weissman alone (for the second year in a row, that number includes representatives from every department). In studies of previous cohorts of freshmen, including a major study of the fall 2006 cohort, the Office of Institutional Research has
amassed a substantial amount of quantitative data which demonstrates that students who have had the benefit of learning communities have consistently shown higher retention rates and posted average GPAs almost two-tenths of a point higher than their peers in non-learning community scheduling blocks. In addition, the Office of Institutional Research has completed an innovative study of purely qualitative materials from the fall 2007 cohort, which concluded that “at the end of the semester almost three-quarters of students expressed feeling acquainted with the Baruch environment and infrastructure as consequence of being part of the Learning Community Program. Students also reported feeling more prepared to manage the remainder of their college careers.”

**Recruitment of New Faculty and Students**

The Weissman School enjoyed another very successful hiring season, filling seventeen lines in nine different departments, including two at the rank of Associate Professor, as well as five substitute lines and one visiting professor. Together with the twenty-seven lines filled last year, these 44 new hires constitute the most extensive replenishment of the faculty that the school has enjoyed since the early 1970s.

Majors in the Weissman School are as healthy as they have been at any time in recent memory, with over 2500 students either completing or working on Weissman majors at the end of the spring semester. As of graduation, no less than 500 students had either were pursuing one of the tracks within the Business Communication major; over 250 more were completing the Psychology major; another 120 were working on Mathematics and Actuarial Science majors; and almost the same number had chosen Political Science. The impressive totals in these most popular majors are supplemented by numbers almost as striking in English, Journalism, Management of Musical Enterprises, History, and the Biology ad hoc major, all of which could claim between fifty and a hundred students apiece at the end of the spring semester. In our graduate programs, the numbers of applications currently range from the respectable to the stupendous, with the MS program in Financial Engineering receiving over 500 last spring and admitting more students than ever before, while at the same time maintaining its extraordinarily high standards (an average quantitative GRE score of 780).

**Faculty Achievement and Support for Scholarship**

In the past year, the Weissman School has received well over a million dollars in grant and fellowship money, including support from such prestigious sources as the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the National Cancer Institute, the McCormick Tribune Foundation, the New York Times Company Foundation, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, and the Hermann Lissner Foundation. In addition to these outside grants, three faculty members in Natural Sciences were awarded $125k in CUNY Graduate Research and Technology Initiative (GRTI) grants. Moreover, in support of scholarly activity among our faculty, the Weissman Committee on Reassigned Time and the Dean of the Weissman School approved seventeen requests for Research Reassigned Time for the fall ’08 semester. As in past years, the School will also be offering support to faculty for travel to academic conferences and other scholarly purposes in the coming
academic year and will be making Graduate Assistantships available to selected faculty members who have a demonstrable need for assistance with their research. Although we appear once again to be entering difficult economic times, the Weissman School remains committed to supporting the scholarly activities of its faculty and will continue to make such support a priority.

**Promotion of Cultural Activities**

In the past six months, the Antonowsky Performing Arts Center, in collaboration with the Weissman School, has presented a range of performing arts events, which have enriched the life of Baruch College and of New York City. The Aaron Silberman Concert Series offered two concerts of chamber music this past spring, including a concert of twentieth-century works performed by the Alexander String Quartet. As part of its now over two-decade long residency at Baruch College, the Quartet also presented the fifth and sixth concerts in its cycle of the complete Beethoven String Quartets. The Milt Hinton Jazz Perspectives Concert Series hosted a rousing performance by the McCullough Sons of Thunder Brass Band, and the Sydney Harmon Writer-in-Residence this past spring was the newly-named Poet Laureate of the United States, Charles Simic. Professor Simic, who is without question one of the most distinguished poets currently writing in the English language, gave a reading of his work to a standing-room-only crowd on March 18th and fielded questions from the audience. There were also three performances in the Great Works Reading Series, including short plays and adapted short stories by David Auburn, Donald Barthelme, Raymond Carver, Dave Eggers, and others. Finally, in spring 2008, the Antonowsky Performing Arts Center launched a new concert series of contemporary music for the students of Baruch College and beyond, titled 55 Underground. Each semester, the series will regularly feature young emerging New York City based musicians playing acoustic, alternative, folk, country, rock, rhythm & blues and jazz music. 55 Underground is a special contemporary concert series for students that represent the needs and interests of the students’ generation. We in the Weissman School can only be delighted that our educational activities have been so effectively supplemented by performing arts events and that the Antonowsky Performing Arts Center continues to gain stature as a forum for high quality performances of all kinds.