



# UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT GOVERNMENT

Baruch College, Suite 3-275, 55 Lexington Ave. New York, NY 10010

## General Faculty Report

Fall 2011

The Undergraduate Student Government (USG), as a whole, is excited to be representing the student voice for the 2011-12 academic year. In addition to simply representing the student body, this year's student government is committed towards making the student experience at Baruch College better than it is already. In order to accomplish this objective of improving Baruch for the students, we have set out a course of action that will allow us to reach our goal.

Please take time to read through our plans and strategies which we believe will allow us to improve the student experience at Baruch College.

### **Building Community**

Upon entering office, the USG quickly identified the desire and the need for a greater community, both within Baruch and in the surrounding neighborhood. As a course of action, we have simultaneously looked to the past and thought about the future, all with the concept of bringing people together in mind.

#### **Club Connect:**

The clubs and organizations on campus are vital for a vibrant college atmosphere. In order to ensure that they can build the skills they need to succeed in their post-graduate careers, we've begun a new initiative called *Club Connect*. This new program will allow clubs and organizations of all sorts to come together and begin collaborating on new and exciting events for students. Using the experience of the more than 12 former club leaders elected to USG this year, we will be involved in the planning process to ensure it runs smoothly and brings about the events and programs that Baruchians want to see.

This program will exist in two mediums. The first will be through face-to-face interactions where club leaders can voice the issues facing their organizations and converse about potential solutions. The second will tailor to the generation of students that exists today and in the future. It will consist of a forum on our website, [BaruchConnect.com](http://BaruchConnect.com), which will allow students to bounce ideas off each other no matter what time they sign on.

#### **Internal Community:**

While we have created a framework for collaboration amongst clubs and organizations, we have also set out to improve the community between USG, students as a whole, faculty, staff and administration. We have made efforts to be more a part of the conversation among all these groups so that we can foster the bonds needed to make this school better.

While we launched BaruchConnect.com last year, this year we have in progress a revamp of the website. BaruchConnect 2.0 will provide students with easier navigation of the site which will in turn allow them to more easily see many of the opportunities available to them throughout the school.

This year, we have made it a top-priority to ensure student representation in as many of the college-wide committees and boards as possible. We are working towards getting as many students as possible involved on these, and our own internal committees, so that they can truly be active citizens of Baruch. Frankly, we consider ourselves to be in a fortunate position to accomplish this goal with the process of putting together the college's Strategic Plan underway, which will provide more opportunities for students to engage with faculty, staff and administration.

USG consistently has presence at Faculty Senate meetings in order to show support for issues facing them and to gain insight on the larger picture at the college. Through this, we have been able to assist with issues such as CUNY Pathways and Operating Budget concerns.

Additionally, we would like to see the fulfillment of our long-term goal of bringing about a Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities. As a document of shared beliefs in regards to students, we wish to work with the faculty to get this document established. Although we understand that historically, students and faculty have had a great relationship at this college, we see this set of values as a celebration of this relationship and we hope to see it adopted by the college as a whole.

### **External Community:**

Perhaps equally as important to building community within Baruch is the idea of building relations throughout the community in which Baruch College resides. As an institution with over 18,000 students and the staff, faculty and administration needed to support them, we believed that it was time Baruch College made its presence known in the neighborhood.

Last year, USG launched a new program entitled *Baruch District* which has brought together the Baruch student consumer and the neighborhood merchant via a mutually beneficial discount agreement. This year, we have continued this program and, in fact, have already begun expanding it. Whereas last year it was limited to a 10% discount and focused mainly eateries, this year we have better negotiated with business to garner larger discounts and interest from non-food businesses.

In addition to our work with the local businesses, we have also begun to engage with local residents. On the first Senate meeting of the USG, we voted to appoint a Senator to lead a dual-focus committee entitled the *Arts & Community Outreach Committee*. This committee has been tasked with ensuring the surrounding neighborhood recognizes that Baruch students take pride in going to school in this area of the city and that we wish to be a larger part of it. Already, the committee has participated in the Kips Bay Community Day and the Kips Bay Halloween Reading Day. Aside from this, the committee, in conjunction with our *Legislative Affairs Committee*, has worked hard to amass a large representation at every Community Board 6 meeting in regards to the plan for turning 25<sup>th</sup> Street into a public plaza.

## **Improving Baruch's Physique**

In order to achieve the prestige of a top-level university, Baruch College needs to become a leaner, stronger and healthier institution. This goes to speak both about the physical campus and infrastructure itself, as well as the individuals found within it. We have committed ourselves towards the improvement of all these areas and we are excited to be able to implement our ideas.

### **Student Space:**

Since the referendum for the Student Center Building fully passed through the CUNY approval process, USG members have been involved in every subsequent step. Over the summer, the College Association, with full student representation, met several times to discuss the plan for purchasing a building for a new Student Center. Typical of Baruch students, we questioned and analyzed the proposal until finally, we agreed that it was the best for the students and the school. We have since entered the design phase of the process and we hope our dream of having more space comes true, sooner rather than later.

In addition, we have set out plans to continue to improve the space we already use. We have committed ourselves towards putting together a plan to liven up areas that students currently use by targeting what could be improved and researching viable options for improvement.

### **College Infrastructure:**

We commend the college's leadership for their efforts towards fixing the escalators in the Vertical Campus and the 24<sup>th</sup> street entrance canopy. As student leaders, it is our job to explain to students exactly what is happening so they do not get frustrated during the process and to simultaneously point out to the college leaders other areas that can use improvement. Over the summer, we held conversations in regards to easing congestion on the elevators and we're hopeful a working plan will soon be adopted. In addition, we have begun compiling proposals to improve on the cleanliness of the bathrooms and are excited at the prospect of making them better.

We also continue to meet with the Task Force on Sustainability to develop plans towards making Baruch a greener campus. We are looking at potentially expanding the newly created recycling program by placing more recycling containers around the school and, more exciting, instituting a new, innovative recycling program for products not normally recycled.

### **A Healthy Baruch:**

Already this year, we have promoted a healthier lifestyle by giving out organic fruit to students for free and by promoting and being a part of the PAWS Health Week program. Looking forward, we aim to further promote a healthy lifestyle for Baruch students by expanding on intramurals, launching a health awareness campaign and providing students with events that are more active rather than sedentary.

## **Looking Forward**

For the rest of the year USG, has planned many exciting events and programs. Some will incorporate many cultures (*Interfaith Holiday Party*) while others will simply be to celebrate life and a good year (*Baruch Bash*).

One program that we are extremely passionate about is our idea of *Baruch Symposium*. This will be a multi-speaker event that will include students, faculty, professionals and other speakers that are capable of bringing exciting information and original ideas to the world. Through this, we hope to showcase the intellectual capacity of Baruch students, the forward thinking of our faculty and the creativity and intuitiveness of professionals.

In order to fulfill a long-standing desire for Baruch students, we are working hard in order to produce a concert that students will enjoy and never forget. We believe that by combining resources from clubs and organizations, the University Student Senate, other CUNY campuses and our own budget, we will be able to bring about a stand-out event which will raise the bar for events even years down the line.

Overall, we are extremely excited about the remainder of this academic year and are completely honored to be in our position. We understand the hard work it will take to get it all done, but we are resolved in our focus and we are motivated by the Bearcat spirit. We hope you see the value of our plans and ideas and are excited by the promise of them. With that said, your support would be greatly appreciated and truly valuable.

Sincerely,

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