

**WEISSMAN SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES  
GENERAL FACULTY REPORT (Fall 2011)**

Last spring, it was already apparent that the current academic year would be marked by a climate of fiscal austerity, and although the most alarming predictions have not materialized, the college has nevertheless felt the effects of serious shortfalls in funding. More recently, a rather different set of numbers has come to the fore, altering our sense of the situation and underscoring the need to adjust our planning accordingly. For the first time, Baruch College has become an institution of more than 18,000 students, having witnessed a sudden and unexpected leap in undergraduate enrollment that stands in notable contrast to the experience of several other CUNY campuses. Measures are being taken to reduce that number; however, they cannot be realized in time to avoid the near-term effects of such an increase on our offerings. Equally striking but less widely noticed is the information that the Weissman School now boasts almost 3,000 majors (2,933 at last count), with six disciplines—Economics, English, Communication Studies, Mathematics, Political Science, and Psychology—showing figures in triple digits, and five more—Biology, History, Journalism, Music, and Sociology—reporting between sixty and ninety active majors apiece. Add to these unprecedentedly high undergraduate numbers the continuing vigorous turnout for our graduate programs, and it seems apparent that shortfalls in funding are not being offset by any shortfall in demand for the arts and sciences at Baruch.

Ample or even (in the case of the student body as a whole) bloated enrollment figures are one important feature of our current situation; another is the impending implementation of the CUNY Pathways initiative, which will transform the role of the Weissman School in ways that are impossible to specify without more information than we possess at this moment. A draft of the proposed new Common Core curriculum will be made public on November 1<sup>st</sup>, and members of the CUNY community will have just two weeks to offer comments and suggestions for revision. The finished product will be delivered to the Chancellor by December 1<sup>st</sup> and each college asked to submit plans for its implementation by April 1<sup>st</sup> of next year. Clearly, our faculty will have important decisions to make in the intervening four months, decisions whose ramifications we will be living with for years to come.

In response to these various developments, the Weissman School has taken an equally various set of measures, raising class sizes when necessary and academically feasible, but also adding sections and positions when possible. We are pleased to be able to say that none of our majors has seen his or her progress toward graduation slowed by any unavailability of seats in key upper-division courses, nor have we been prevented from fulfilling our obligation to the rest of the college by an insufficiency of seats in base-curriculum courses. We have continued to award released time to our faculty, who have once again secured a commendable array of fellowships, grants, and awards. And we have made a significant contribution to the cultural life of the campus and of the surrounding community by hosting a rich assortment of arts events.

**New Positions, Ongoing Initiatives, and Special Events**

Thanks are once again due to Hedwig Feit, current Chair of the Dean's Advisory Council of the Weissman School of Arts and Sciences and adjunct faculty member in the Department of Black and Hispanic studies, whose gift of an endowed chair has now been rewarded by a successful

search. This fall, Professor Ana Yolanda Ramos-Zayas joined the Weissman faculty as the Valentín Lizana y Parragué Professor of Latin-American Studies in the Department of Black and Hispanic Studies. An anthropologist by training, Professor Ramos-Zayas holds degrees from Columbia and Yale and is the author of three books, the most recent being *Street Therapists: Race, Affect and Neoliberal Personhood in Latino Newark*, which is forthcoming from The University of Chicago Press.

The newly-inaugurated Jewish Studies Center held its first annual benefit on September 15<sup>th</sup> and received a number of generous donations. At the benefit, the National Yiddish Theatre presented “New Voices of the Yiddish Stage,” and on November 7<sup>th</sup> the JSC’s author series will welcome acclaimed artist and author Art Spiegelman, whose Pulitzer Prize-winning comic-book memoir *Maus* was the subject of an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. This event will celebrate his latest book, *Meta Maus*.

The next speaker in the Global Studies faculty development series will be Professor Donald Pease of Dartmouth College. Professor Pease, who is the Ted and Helen Geisel Third Century Professor in the Humanities and Chair of the Dartmouth Liberal Studies Program, is the author of many books and articles on nineteenth and twentieth-century American culture, and criticism. Last April, the Global Studies initiative welcomed two international scholars, Professor Gökçe Yurdakul, who is Georg Simmel Professor of Diversity and Social Conflict at the Humboldt University Berlin, and Professor Azade Seyhan, who is Fairbank Professor in the Humanities, Professor of German and Comparative Literature, Bryn Mawr Director of the program in Comparative Literature, and adjunct professor of Philosophy at Bryn Mawr College.

On November 14<sup>th</sup>, the Weissman School and the Jewish Studies Center, along with several other organizations, will jointly sponsor the “Marie Curie Nobel Centennial Symposium: A Celebration of Science, Art, and Thought,” which has been organized by Professors Edyta Greer and David Gruber of the Department of Natural Sciences. The event will be introduced by CUNY Vice Chancellor for Research Gillian Smalls, and the Keynote Speaker will be Nobel Prize-winning chemist Professor Roald Hoffman of Cornell University, who will speak on the topic of “Chemistry’s Essential Tensions: Three Views of a Science.”

### **Grants, Awards, and Support for Scholarship**

Professor Geanne Rosenberg of the Department of Journalism has been named a Faculty Associate of the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University. According to its website, the Center “represents a network of faculty, fellows, students, entrepreneurs, lawyers, and virtual architects working to identify and engage with the challenges and opportunities of cyberspace.”

The Scholarship, Research and Creative Activities Grant Program (SRCA) of Arizona State University/New College awarded a \$5,000 grant to Professor Katherine Behar's collaborative project *Disorientalism* (with fellow artist Marianne Kim). This grant will help to support a five-part series called *The Food Groups*, portions of which the artists are exhibiting in two individual exhibitions, at the Philip Feldman Gallery + Project Space, Portland, Oregon in September 2011, and at Arizona State University in January 2012.

Professor David Gruber of the Department of Natural Sciences has won a 2011 Feliks Gross Endowment Award. This is a CUNY-wide award presented annually to assistant professors in recognition of outstanding research in the humanities or sciences, including the social and life sciences. It is administered by the CUNY Academy for the Humanities and Sciences and judged by senior faculty of the university.

Professor Peter Gregory of the Department of Mathematics has received the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Mathematics Instruction for his work on the use of tablet PCs in conjunction with Ti-89 graphing calculators to improve student learning. Professor Gregory is the second Weissman faculty member to receive this award in the last three years.

Professor Jason Munshi-South's research on deer mice in New York City parks formed the subject of an article on "urban evolution" in *The New York Times* on July 25. A member of the Department of Natural Sciences, Professor Munshi-South is an environmental scientist whose work focuses on the impacts of urbanization on native mammals in NYC.

In the spring and fall 2011 semesters, twenty-one faculty members received Weissman research reassigned time. Additionally, forty six faculty members from Weissman were awarded PSC-CUNY 42 grants that totaled \$188k.

### **Weissman as a Center of Cultural Life**

Pulitzer Prize-winning author Jhumpa Lahiri, whose 2003 novel *The Namesake* was a recent choice for Baruch's freshman text, will be the Sydney Harman Writer-in-Residence for fall 2011. A public reading and conversation with Ms. Lahiri will take place on October 18<sup>th</sup>.

The Aaron Silberman Concert series celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary this past spring with a recital by Violinist Sergiu Schwartz and Pianist Peter Basquin on March 10<sup>th</sup> and a concert by the Alexander String Quartet on April 15<sup>th</sup>. On October 4<sup>th</sup>, the Silberman series welcomed pianist Sara Davis Buechner. The New York Piano Society and the New York Flute Club offered a variety of concerts, and BPAC presented a concert entitled "Repast Baroque/Italians Abroad . . . and Some Bach Too."

The CUNY New Music Festival presented "An Evening of Planned Entropy" on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Under the leadership of composer Amir Shpilman and with the support of Grammy Award-winning pianist Ursula Oppens, this year's festival featured fourteen pieces by faculty and student composers representing Lehman College, Brooklyn College, Queens College, Hunter College and the Graduate Center, as well as the music of established composers Dimitri Terzakis and Eric Lyon.

On March 31<sup>st</sup>, the Milt Hinton Jazz Series presented the acclaimed pianist Cyrus Chestnut and, on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, sponsored an appearance by Lolis Eric Elie, screenwriter for the music-rich HBO series *Treme*. The Hinton Series will celebrate its twentieth anniversary this year with a concert on December 5<sup>th</sup> by Jay Leonhart, Wycliff Gordon, Houston Person, Bernard Purdy, and John Colianni. Entitled "Jay Leonhart and Friends . . . It Don't Mean a Thing," the concert will

feature the music of Duke Ellington and others, including a special piece commemorating Milt Hinton. A reception follows the concert for the first one hundred ticket buyers.

On May 13<sup>th</sup>, the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation presented *Songs of Cuba* by the Ossia Chamber Players and guest soloists Elaine Alvarez, soprano; Orlando Alonso, piano; and the Mozart Academy Ensemble. This was a concert dedicated to some of the most important works of the Cuban classical repertoire, including works by such composers as Cervantes, Lecuona, Montsalvage, Caturla, Roig, Vitier, and others.

On April 15 and April 16, BPAC offered two performances of *4 Choreographers New Works* by Sidra Bell, Lane Gifford, Kate Griffler, and Nelly van Bommel.

Last spring, The National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene presented *The Adventures of Hershele Ostropoyler*, and this fall Ripe Time is presenting *Septimus and Clarissa*, which has been adapted for the theater by Ellen McLaughlin from Virginia Woolf's novel *Mrs. Dalloway*. Throughout the month of September, BPAC presented *A Blue Sky like No Other*, which offered one man's personal reminiscences of September 11, 2001 and served as a tribute to the members of the FDNY who lost their lives on that day. In early October, the Joel Segall Great Works Reading Series offered *Antigone* by Sophocles, and at the end of the month F.A.C.T. (Friends Always Creating Theatre) and Baruch's LGBT Society and Graduate Arts Alliance presented *Untucked: Five Short Plays about LGBT Culture*.

In the spring semester, the Sydney Mishkin Gallery offered two exhibitions, *Spirit Rock, Sacred Mountain: A Chinese View of Nature* and *Cosas Ocultas: The Work of Rocío García and Alberto Casado*. The exhibition opening of *Spirit Rock, Sacred Mountain* was co-sponsored by the Gramercy Neighborhood Associates, and critic Lance Esplund reviewed the show in *The Wall Street Journal*. Eight Baruch classes attended gallery tours for this exhibition, including one that returned for a talk in Chinese given by the artist Hai Tao. The exhibition of Cuban art, *Cosas Ocultas*, was a collaboration between the Sidney Mishkin Gallery and The Shelley & Donald Rubin Private Collection. The show was a featured part of the ¡Si Cuba! Festival, and NY1 broadcasted an interview with the curators and one of the artists in the show.

Currently, the Mishkin Gallery is exhibiting *Narrative, Sketch, Document: The Changing Roles of Photography* until October 26<sup>th</sup>. In conjunction with Baruch's celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Milt Hinton Jazz Series, the Mishkin Gallery will present *Milt Hinton's Jazz Photographs: Classics and Works in Color* from November 11<sup>th</sup> to December 12<sup>th</sup>. The gallery's new website went live at <http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/wsas/artsculture/mishkingallery/index.html>.