June 18, 2020

Celebrating Juneteenth

Dear Baruch Community,

This year, Juneteenth has rightfully gained the widespread national attention and appreciation that it has long deserved. For 155 years, the date—June 19—has marked the official end of slavery in the United States, although we all know that the road to emancipation was—and continues to be—far more complicated and turbulent.

The mass demonstrations against racial injustice that continue to take place around the country have brought new focus and energy to Juneteenth. While ignited by ongoing police brutality against Black citizens, the protests have fueled an important global reckoning against the legacy of slavery and its modern-day descendants: discrimination and systemic racism that is engrained in our society.

As your incoming president, I have recently expressed my admiration for the good work that is already underway at Baruch, and vouched to renew our commitment through actions. In celebration of Juneteenth, Dr. Shelly Eversley, Interim Chair of the Black and Latino Studies Department, has assembled an enlightening collection of articles and links to videos, including from the Equality Archive. And, I look forward to working with the Presidential Advisory Council on Diversity and Inclusion to further their mission-critical work.

Although there is much good work underway at Baruch and around the country to help recalibrate society and mindsets, we know this is just a beginning. Since the protests began a few weeks ago, we are starting to see some entrenched norms shifting and public views changing. Just this week alone, New York State and numerous corporations added Juneteenth to the calendar of official holidays. We are
hopeful that this symbolizes the start of meaningful social change, and we must do our part to push for and sustain the positive change.

My official first day as president is less than two weeks away, and I can’t wait to join the Baruch community. As I have expressed in my new webpage: the impact of Baruch is profound, both as a private good—one that advances our students’ personal and career success—and a public good, creating much needed social change, innovation, and economic prosperity for our city, and our world.

Sincerely,

S. David Wu
President-designate, Baruch College