Ensuring an Inclusive Campus for Individuals with Disabilities

Dear Colleagues,

Headlining this month’s newsletter are the significant strides our campus is making to be more inclusive and supportive for members of the community with disabilities. Leading these efforts for students is Patricia Clarke Fleming, LMHC, CRC, director of Baruch’s Student Disability Services (SDS). With nearly 500 students currently registered with her office, engaging the entire campus community and raising awareness of these students’ talents, skills, and needs are priorities.

Where Inclusivity Begins: With You

Baruch’s and CUNY’s programs are committed to ensuring equal access and opportunity for students with disabilities through innovative support programs, grounded in nationally regarded best practices. These programs work when individual colleagues throughout the institution are engaged.

Educating ourselves is one of the first steps. You’ll find a terrific overview of best practices for inclusive higher education at the website for the Lawrence B. Taishoff Center for Inclusive Higher Education at Syracuse University; highly recommended, its post “What Is Inclusive Higher Education?”

If there is one key message, it is this: Making the academic, cocurricular, and social environment more inclusive begins with the conviction that students with disabilities have the same range of intellect, talent, skills, and thirst for learning as their nondisabled peers.

Resources for You

Your attendance at special events furthers Student Disability Services’ mission and the community’s awareness. Therefore, I highly recommend that you consider the upcoming event:
2019 AHEAD Equity and Excellence Conference: Video Session Screening

Students, faculty, and staff are invited to screen best sessions from the most recent AHEAD (Association on Higher Education and Disability) Conference. Snacks will be served. Offered in conjunction with CUNY’s LD PROJECT.

**When:** Friday, Nov. 8  
**Where:** NVC, Room 2-125  
**RSVP:** Five sessions from 9:30 am–4:30 pm

*Highlight:* Haben Girma, JD, the first student who is both deaf and blind to have graduated from Harvard Law School, gives the keynote address, “How Students with Disabilities Are an Asset to Universities.” Conference schedule [here](#).

**SDS: Its Impact at Baruch, throughout CUNY, and in NYC**

This Friday’s event is just one of the many resources, activities, and initiatives helmed or co-hosted by the Office of Student Disability Services. Here’s a snapshot of what SDS provides for Baruch students as well as populations through the University and City.

Highlights from 2019:

- SDS’s **Assistive Technology**, called “the jewel of CUNY,” includes such sophisticated equipment as tactile text-to–Braille converters. Find more about CUNY Assistive Technology Services [here](#).

- More than 20 CUNY disability specialists from across the University attended “Methods of Notetaking: Livescribe, Smartpen, and Sonocent,” an SDS **AT Train the Trainers** workshop in October.

- Hosted 20 CUNY students and staff for an information session in October about opportunities with [Lime Connect](#) for scholarships, fellowships, recruitment receptions, networks, and campus events. Lime Connect is a global not-for-profit “rebranding disability through achievement.”

- **Opening career paths** through partnership with [CUNY LEADS](#) (Linking Employment, Academics, and Disability Services). Christopher Hall, one of five Baruch students who participated in the [Harvard Business School Summer Venture in Management Program](#) in June, is one of LEADS’s success stories.

- Served as a gathering place for those participating in the [NYC Disability Pride](#)
Parade in July. Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Christopher Rosa led the CUNY contingent, which joined the parade at 23rd Street. Afterward, more than 100 people returned to Baruch for a luncheon in support of Disability Pride.

- Sponsored three Baruch students to attend the 8th Annual Coalition of Students with Disabilities Leadership Retreat in June: At the retreat, student leaders explored ways to develop awareness, advocacy, opportunity, and a sense of community among CUNY’s 11,000+ students with disabilities.

- Hosted the Building Bridges Disability Conference in May: “Transportation Advocacy in the Fast Lane” featured a panel of transportation experts who spoke to making the City’s transit system better for individuals with disabilities.

- Serves as a voter registration site where students can receive information and register to vote.

- Proctored 615 exams in Spring 2019, up 14.5 percent from the year before.

Additional Partners
Of course, SDS isn’t the only voice raising awareness about the needs of students with disabilities. Let me offer three additional examples:

- The recent Ticker article by Amanda Salazar “Baruch Can Do More for Students with Disabilities” showed how on point our students are in regard to these issues.

- The CUNY Athletic Conference offers a program of Inclusive Sports with a University-wide Wheelchair Basketball team, part of their Recreational, Intercollegiate, and Paralympic program.

- The University has a new resource: The Journal of Teaching Disability Studies, launched by Mariette Bates and colleagues from the CUNY School of Professional Studies. Learn more here.

Please become part of these efforts. Engage in discussions and attend events about how we can make Baruch an inclusive and supportive environment for all members of our community. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Mona Jha, Esq.
Chief Diversity Officer