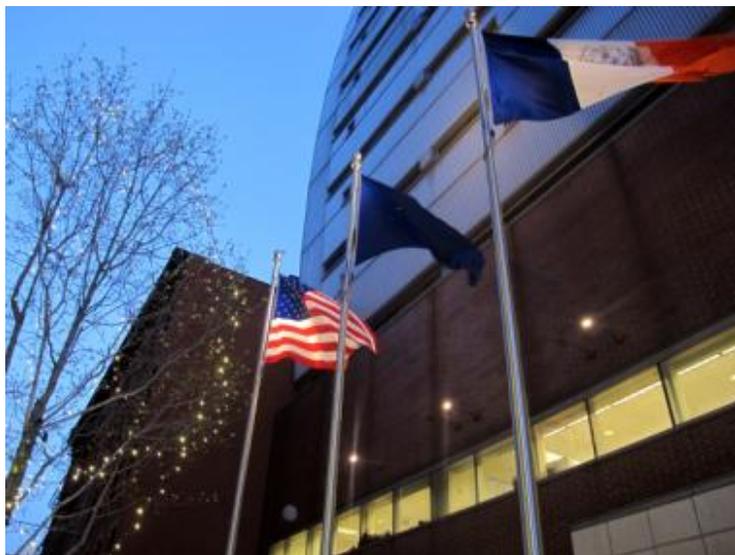


Baruch Flips Switch on \$640K Security Lighting Project



The flagpoles in front of Baruch College on East 25th Street have been lit. Some of the trees have been strung with twinkle lights.

By [Mary Johnson](#) on March 20, 2012

FLATIRON — With the flip of a series of switches, Baruch College staff turned on a \$642,000 outdoor lighting system Monday that's designed to make students safer on the Flatiron campus.

The new lighting, which has been five years in the making, illuminates the arches on the Newman Library building on the north side of East 25th Street. It lights the flag poles and trees

and the entranceway of the college's building on the south side of the street.

"This was a relatively low-visibility area in evening, and we thought there were some serious safety issues as a result," Baruch College President Mitchel Wallerstein said at the lighting ceremony on Monday night.

"This area has truly been transformed. It is now a much more welcoming and safer place."

A spokeswoman for Baruch College said there wasn't one particular crime or accident that prompted the push for better outdoor lighting on campus. The design plan for Baruch had always included exterior lighting, but the college lacked the necessary funds to install it on its own.

In 2007, the school submitted a funding request to the city. City Councilwoman Rosie Mendez gathered \$500,000 for the project, and Borough President Scott Stringer contributed about \$142,000, officials said.

"This was one of the first capital projects that I successfully navigated through the City Council back when I got elected," Mendez said.

"Some things work a little more slowly than others in government," she added with a smile.

Antonio Alfonso, president of the undergraduate student government at Baruch College, said he had noticed a palpable difference in the vibe on campus now that the lighting has been installed.

"It's making it feel more like home," said Alfonso, 22, a senior at Baruch.

"This is a very safe neighborhood," he added. "However, it was definitely dark."

Alfonso said he has never felt threatened on campus, but occasionally, intimidating characters wander around the area late at night when classes are over and students have largely dispersed.

"I'm sure that will go away now, with the lighting," said Alfonso. "Now we feel more inclined to walk down this street."

Officials said that the new lighting will be especially important if the college's request to turn East 25th Street between Third and Lexington avenues into a pedestrian plaza is approved.

The Department of Transportation denied the proposal in the last round of requests for public plazas. But the college is still pursuing the project, which has collected ample support from Community Board 6 and other community organizations.

"We have a beautiful lighting program here now," said Mark Thompson, chair of Community Board 6, at the lighting event on Monday.

"And soon — I'll knock on wood, but I think we're going to get it — we're going to have a plaza out here, and it'll be the heart of the campus."