



Middle States Commission on Higher Education

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Team Report

Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Baruch College

Date of On-Site Evaluation Visit: *March 1 – March 4, 2020*

Section A: Institutional Representatives

Institutional representatives at the time of the visit:

President/CEO

Dr. Mitchel Wallerstein, President

Chief Academic Officer

Dr. James McCarthy, Interim Provost

Chief Financial Officer

Ms. Kathy Cobb, Vice President for Finance and Administration

Chair of the Board of Trustees

Mr. William C. Thompson, Chairperson

Section B: Institutional Context

Baruch College is a senior college in the City University of New York. Founded in 1847 as the Free Academy, it was established as City College's School of Business and Civic Administration in 1919. It was renamed in 1953 in honor of Bernard Baruch. In 1968 Baruch became a fully independent senior college within CUNY. It is comprised of three schools, the Zicklin School of Business, the Marxe School of Public and International Affairs and the Weissman School of Arts and Sciences. Throughout its history, Baruch has served students from families of modest means, from diverse backgrounds, many of them immigrants, who had no other alternative to Baruch for a quality, four-year undergraduate education. Baruch offers 30 undergraduate majors, 60 undergraduate minors, 57 graduate level specializations and 5 doctoral specializations. It currently enrolls close to 20,000 students.

Baruch College undertook a standards-based approach to the self-study in order to facilitate an alignment between the Middle States standards and Baruch's mission and institutional priorities. This enabled a comprehensive review of all aspects of the institution. Eight working groups were established, one for each of the standards and one for the requirements of affiliation and support of the self-study process. The self-study process was broadly inclusive, all internal stakeholder groups were well represented.

Two institutional priorities came out of the strategic planning process that culminated in the 2018-2023 Strategic Plan. The priorities were: to demonstrate an active and sustained commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion; and to understand and improve the academic and professional experiences of students, faculty and staff.

Section C: Standards for Accreditation

Standard I: Mission and Goals

The institution's mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet the standard.

Based on a review of the self-study, evidence and interviews with campus constituencies to validate and verify compliance during the on-site evaluation visit, the team draws the following conclusions relative to the standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

The longstanding mission of both CUNY and Baruch College has focused on ensuring access, affordability and social mobility. After a year-long strategic planning process that resulted in the Baruch College Strategic Plan 2018-2023, the Baruch mission statement was revised and reaffirmed. The documentation in the self-study summarizes the alignment of mission and institutional goals. It is clear from the campus interviews during the site team visit that the strategic planning process was very inclusive and that the campus community is highly committed to the mission and goals. All stakeholders were knowledgeable and able to easily answer questions posed by the team about the mission and institutional goals.

Strategic plans for the three schools do not all begin and end concurrently with the College plan, but all of the current school plans were completed in a timeframe that allowed them to incorporate the institutional goals of the new College plan into their plans. Advisory boards are relied on in each of the schools to provide external input into curriculum and strategies for preparing students to be equipped to meet the needs of employers.

The Strategic Plan has been approved through all appropriate processes and the College is currently in phase one of the Baruch College Strategic Plan 2018-2023 Implementation Plan. There is close alignment of planning, resource allocation, program and curricular development and institutional and educational outcomes. External stakeholders participated in the planning process to ensure that students

are being prepared to meet the challenges of a changing world. The plan includes six goals that focus on excellence in teaching and learning; support for outstanding scholarship, research and discovery; ongoing review and renewal of curriculum to ensure that students are prepared to be successful in a changing world; increase students' engagement, academic momentum, degree completion and post-graduation success; ensure that the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion and cultural competency are embedded throughout the College; and enhance faculty and staff satisfaction and engagement. These goals are consistent with the mission, realistic and appropriate for higher education.

The College community exhibits a laser focus on student learning and outcomes. The College maintains extremely impressive retention and graduation rates and is highly ranked nationally for social mobility. There is an impressive array of student support programs that were eloquently articulated for the team during the meeting with students. The knowledge and appreciation that the students expressed regarding the opportunities provided for them beyond their coursework was exciting to hear.

There is a clear commitment to scholarly inquiry and creative activity. Research support, reduced teaching loads for tenure-track faculty and significant access to sabbaticals are all indications of the institutional commitment in this area.

The College uses an integrated approach to assessment and planning that is framed by their collaborative learning model of institutional effectiveness. Outcomes assessment is deeply embedded in the culture of the institution and members of the campus community speak with great facility about the focus on student learning outcomes and institutional assessment.

Recognition of Accomplishment:

The team was very impressed with the College-wide engagement in the Self-Study process. The campus community used the process as an opportunity to reflect on the past, present and future of Baruch College and we are confident that it will have a significant positive impact on the future of the College.

Collegial Advice:

The team had a difficult time utilizing the College website. We suggest a regularly scheduled and thorough review to ensure that links are working, and information is being regularly updated.

Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

Based on a review of the self-study report, evidence, and interviews with campus constituencies to validate and verify compliance during the on-site evaluation visit, the team draws the following conclusions relative to this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

In 2017, the Trustees of the City University of New York (hereafter referred to as CUNY) created reforms of the university's governance and administrative policies, producing greater ethical and fiscal transparency, accountability measures and putting CUNY in the forefront of reform efforts in higher education. These acts, as documented in their by-laws, were initiated to foster transparency and integrity of the university's administrative operations.

Baruch College, as part of the CUNY system, demonstrates its commitment to ethics and integrity through CUNY, the Board of Trustees, the College leadership and its policies and practices. The College's Office of Legal Affairs and Labor Relations (OLALR), also known as Office of the Executive Legal Counsel specifically provides guidance on ethics, integrity, grievances and disciplinary matters, adverse legal, compliance, and financial consequences. Human Resources, the Provost's Office, the Office for Diversity, Office of the Dean of Students and other offices assist with administering policies relating to ethics and integrity. The College also has a Conflict Officer to assist with concerns relating to intellectual property, and conflicts of interest. The OLALR monitors and provides updates regarding the ethics policy, in addition, its website provides guidelines informing the campus constituency about its responsibility to comply with ethics (JCOPE); presentations also are provided several times throughout the year with a listing of such posted on its website. The commitment to ethics is also fostered by an annual ethics week event.

The College has a series of measures describing academic and intellectual freedom, intellectual property rights, intellectual inquiry, teaching, research and

publication rights. This is affirmed through the Preamble of CUNY and the Professional Staff Congress, and the Student Handbook. Faculty, staff, and students alike understand their rights and responsibilities with respect to an academic environment that supports academic integrity and further understand how to access resources (i.e., grievance, complaint) should a concern arise. Policies and due process measures are accessible on various websites and addressed during respective orientations and professional development workshops.

Fostering an environment that values diversity and respect is a high priority for Baruch. This was evidenced through the lived experiences of the campus community. The Office of Diversity, Compliance, and Equity Initiatives partners with faculty, staff, and students to further advance the campus' commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. This is realized in many ways including the new employee and student orientations, diverse thematic month celebrations, book reads, and the implementation of the newly developed President's Advisory Council on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The self-study expressed concerns about the support for victims of harassment or assault. This concern was experienced inconsistently, as expressed among students, faculty, and staff.

Baruch's mission to promote affordability and accessibility is central to its core values and founding. The college has a high student retention rate and a low or no student debt ratio. This is further realized by the Open Education Resources where faculty are encouraged to use free on-line educational resources to alleviate the cost of students purchasing books; this commitment is for undergraduates as well as graduate students. The campus also makes certain to define access to include students with disabilities and ensuring they have accommodations to help with their academic success and that faculty as well have the appropriate resources to help with delivering accommodations.

Recognition of Accomplishments:

Creation of President's Advisory Council on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Creation of workshops sponsored by the Center for Teaching and Learning and the Bernard L. Schwartz Communication Institute

Suggestions:

CUNY is encouraged to examine its Title IX policy as compared to the Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights Title IX.

The campus is encouraged to create a Title IX working group to identify patterns and potential risks of exposure to students and the institution.

Recommendations:

The campus is recommended to implement an anonymous on-line reporting form for complaints of sexual violence.

Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence of all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

Based on a review of the self-study report, evidence, and interviews with campus constituencies to validate and verify compliance during the on-site evaluation visit, the team draws the following conclusions relative to this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Baruch College offers educational programs leading to a higher education degree that are well designed, challenging, and consistent with their stated mission. Baruch College offers doctoral degrees in partnership with the Graduate Center of CUNY through the Zicklin School PhD program in business, which offers multiple areas of concentration, as well as the Weissman School PhD program in industrial/organizational psychology. The UG degree requires a minimum of 120 units, including completion of a major (24+ units), major prerequisites (variable), plus the *Pathways* general education curriculum (42 units). Master's programs range from 30 to over 70 units and the doctoral degrees include rigorous coursework and a dissertation. Many programs offer one or more internship courses and many students participate in experiential forms of learning. There are also at least 55 certificate programs. Supporting documents include the *Undergraduate and Graduate Academic Bulletins* and the *...Inventory of Registered Programs*, among many.

The curriculum at Baruch is delivered by a qualified and professional faculty. Degree data in the *Faculty Credentials* spreadsheet show full and part time faculty

with doctoral or terminal degrees in their fields educated at many of the best graduate programs across the nation. Processes for the review of faculty for tenure and promotion are well structured. There are peer review committees for tenure and promotion at the department, school, and college levels and two levels of appeal committees. The probationary period for new tenure-track faculty is seven years. Evidence of teaching effectiveness includes student evaluations and peer observations of teaching. The PSC-CUNY labor contract requires that at least once during each academic semester, non-tenured faculty members be observed for a full classroom period. Though not required by the labor contract, peer reviews should also be conducted for Associate Professors for consideration in promotion decisions (see *Personnel and Budget Guidelines* revised 2008; *Policy 5.01 Academic Personnel Practice*; Provost Office *Reappointment, Tenure, CCE, and Promotion*; *Article 18: Professional Evaluation*). Faculty appear sufficient in number to deliver the many academic programs. The *Common Data Set* for AY18-19 reports 493 full-time and 607 part-time faculty. The modal class size is 20-29 students. Note, however, the *Self-Study* indicates just 46% of classes in 2017-18 were taught by full-time faculty.

Many resources for the professional growth and development of faculty are apparent. The *Center for Teaching and Learning* and the *Schwartz Communication Institute* provide support for use of different teaching modalities. The *Faculty Fellowship Publication Program* assists new faculty with research and creative writing projects. There are internal grant funds for new research, funds for travel to conferences, an *Office of Sponsored Projects and Research* that provides grant and research compliance support, a sabbatical option that pays faculty 80% for a full year leave, reduced 2/2 preparations for tenure-track faculty who are teaching jumbo sections, regular *Faculty Development Seminars*, and an extensive online *Faculty Handbook*. The programs of study for students are clearly spelled out and transparent. Both the *Undergraduate* and *Graduate Bulletins* provide comprehensive information for each major and minor. *Degree Maps* for each undergraduate major provide useable 4-year plans for students. Students themselves mentioned *DegreeWorks* as an invaluable degree completion planning tool. Students felt well informed about degree requirements.

Degree programs are complemented with sufficient resources that enrich the student learning experience. Professional advisors deliver advising for UG students by appointment through the *Office of Undergraduate Advisement*. The *SEEK* program offers intensified support services for educational success. *SACC* provides individual and group peer tutoring in many subjects, especially math and English. A *First Year Seminar*, required of all freshman, focuses on “tools” for success in college. The *Subotnick Financial Services Center and the Wasserman Trading Floor* is a unique, simulated learning lab for students. The CUNY document, *A Plan for Experiential Learning*, places a priority on internship and civic engagement opportunities. Numerous archived documents emphasize a culture of internships and volunteerism. Other supportive resources include an

active *Study Abroad Office*, the *Newman Library* with many materials in support of teaching and research, the *Writing Center*, and extensive computing space with a laptop vending service.

Baruch offers a meaningful general education curriculum called *Pathways*, which began in 2013, as part of a CUNY-wide, standardized undergraduate curricular requirement. It is divided into three areas, with 14 courses total and 42 units of study. The “Required Core” includes two courses in English composition, one in Math, and one in the Natural Sciences, for a total of 12 credits/ 4 courses. The “Flexible Core” includes six courses from five areas addressing World Cultures and Global Issues, U.S. Experience in its Diversity, Creative Expression, Individual and Society, and Scientific World, for a total of 18 credits/ 6 courses. The third component is the “College Option,” where students complete a three course minor in the liberal arts, plus a “Great Works of Literature” course. The number of College Option credits is 6 to 12, depending on whether a student transferred into the college and, if so, how many credits he or she had at the time of transfer.

The Self-Study notes the Weissman School’s attempt to incorporate a new ethics course PHI 1100 “Ethics and Critical Thinking” into the pre-Weissman core, which was ultimately not allowed by CUNY. The MSCHE *Alignment* spreadsheet shows many content areas in the Flexible Core and College Option address values and ethics in some way and some courses in the “Individual and Society” category focus directly on ethics. Content areas address communication skills, information literacy, scientific processes, and critical thinking as required by MSCHE.

The curriculum approval process for the campus is well established and clearly documented. Each of the three schools has a standing curriculum committee that reviews proposals for new courses, new programs, and changes to either. The Weissman School and the Zicklin School have separate Undergraduate and Graduate Curriculum Committees. Faculty and at least one student representative are voting members. (See *Faculty Handbook for the Preparation of New Academic Programs*, and *School Bylaws Faculty Responsibility for Curriculum...*). Faculty productivity data suggests opportunities for graduate students to participate in scholarship with faculty are possible. According to the *University Performance Management Process 2018-19 Data Book*, College faculty averaged .9 pieces of scholarship/creative activities per year from 2016-2018. The recent *Teaching Load Reduction Agreement* states that the teaching load by fall 2020 across the CUNY campuses will be reduced from 21 to 18 credit hours, potentially increasing the availability of faculty to mentor graduate students.

Last, evidence of the periodic assessment of academic programs is provided. One level of assessment focuses on surveys of students and student outcomes.

NSSE17 Snapshot data on seniors shows *Baruch* exceeds other undergraduate competitors in offering a “culminating senior experience,” but lags behind in “worked with a faculty member on a research project.” The *CUNY Performance Management Process 2018-2019 Data Book* reports that 86% of fall 2017 full-time freshman returned full-time the next year. The *2018 Student Experience Survey* indicates more than 2:5 students want more evening or online courses and that the main barrier to external learning is time. On a second level, assessment of major programs and student learning outcomes is active and ongoing. An Office of the Provost document emphasizes that student learning assessment is faculty driven and many faculty and staff in numerous meetings likewise confirmed this to be the case. Assessment reports in the evidence inventory most relevant to this standard are *Program Reviews* that follow a 7 year cycle, national accreditation continuous improvement documents, and assessment reports for the *Pathways* core. A more detailed discussion on assessment is included under Standard V.

Collegial Advice:

The majors and minors narratives in the online Undergraduate Bulletin should be carefully edited for consistency of information provided, clarity, accuracy, and ease in reading.

Greater support for faculty participation in assessment is needed, including training workshops, recognition in review processes, and with workload.

Recognition of Accomplishments:

The Degree Maps that outline the requirements and plan for completion of each undergraduate degree are an impressive resource for students.

The many programs in support of teaching and research deliver a rich array of services despite appearing to be understaffed.

The Zero Cost Textbook initiative is mission relevant and clearly enhances access through affordability for students.

Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success.

In the team’s judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

Based on a review of the self-study report, evidence, and interviews with campus constituencies to validate and verify compliance during the on-site evaluation visit, the team draws the following conclusions relative to this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Baruch College declares itself as a “nationally-recognized engine of social mobility” (p.1), serving students from diverse backgrounds who are looking for quality, and affordable, education. As stated in its Mission, Baruch College provides “...an inclusive, transformational education in the arts and sciences, business, and public and international affairs to students from New York and around the world...” Baruch College evidences these statements being home to a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff, enrolling more than 18,000 students, who speak 100-plus languages and represent 168 countries. The culture of inclusion is fostered with a significant number of academic and student support services and programs created to facilitate student success of a diverse population. Faculty and staff with the appropriate credentials collaborate to create an adequate learning environment and a memorable educational experience to transform “the lives of New Yorkers from diverse backgrounds” (p.2).

Baruch has ethical policies and processes that apply to the entire student life cycle: clear admissions and transfer students’ criteria, security on student records, clear information for students with disabilities, veterans, and transparent information about financial aid, federal funding, honors program, and student expenses. All this information is widely disseminated on the campus and on the website. Students evidenced clearly knowledge of the procedures.

Baruch offers career services, academic advisement, counseling, student disability services, tutoring, and a writing center, among other units, for helping undergraduates and graduate students to success. Evidence of this goal is the Student Advisement Toolkit, a set of policies and procedures to assist students in graduating on time. It includes an Academic Planner, Degree Maps, Degree Works, and a Time Management Calculator to help students manage daily tasks.

Baruch's FinishinFour initiative to assist students in calculating their required load per semester in order to graduate on time is another great example of evidencing Baruch's commitment to student success in a timely manner. However, the college is at full capacity and students complained about not enough class sections. This problem could put in jeopardy those valuable efforts to achieve the expected time to degree. Also, although the student-to-advisor ratio is insufficient, the work developed by the staff is commendable and positively recognized by the students.

Baruch is committed to an affordable education for its student body, which is composed of 3,169 (16.7%) graduate students and 15,463 (83.3%) undergraduate students. Seventy percent (70%) of Baruch College's undergraduate student population apply for Federal Student Aid, 38% of those are First-Gen, 68% received Pell Grants, and 37% are from families with a household income of less than \$20,000 annually.

The diversity of the student population at Baruch is remarkable. According to the fall 2018 Fact Sheet, men make up 51% of the population, and women 49% of the student body. Asian/Pacific Islander students are the largest ethnic group at 41%, followed by White at 31% Hispanic at 17%, and Black/African American at 11%. Full-time students make up 67% of the population.

For those students who do not meet standard entrance criteria, Baruch College offers cohort-based support programs for students: SEEK (Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge) to provide academic support; Tools for Clear Speech (TfCS) to help nonnative English speakers to improve the pronunciation, fluency, and abilities of English language, and an Early Alert Initiative to help students who are struggling the most, keeping them off probation, and helping them to graduate. These programs provide evidence of how Baruch promotes student success and are highly valued by students, along with international initiatives, such as internships abroad.

Baruch College's efforts to assure student success are demonstrated with its high retention and graduation rates: First-year retention at or above 87 percent for the past decade, and second-year retention at or above 79 percent during the same period. The College's four-year graduation rates have improved 10 percentage points, from 35 percent for the Fall 2008 cohort to 45 percent for the Fall 2014 cohort (p.12). These increasing numbers are also reflected in the number of bachelor's degrees awarded over the past decade (32% increase) but are not reflected in the total number of Master's degrees awarded (-8%). The Zicklin School enrolls 71% of all students, mostly in business-related programs.

To maximize student success in a diverse population, Baruch supports its services within the Division of Student Affairs, which consists of a staff of 135 members covering several areas, and working in collaboration with faculty and

other campus partners. Integrating curricular and co-curricular activities, this division creates a learner-centered campus community to facilitate student learning, to enrich the student experience, and to build a respectful and inclusive community.

The Starr Career Development Center and Bridge to Baruch are also remarkable initiatives to provide career support, resources and confidence to engage Baruch's students in lifelong professional development.

The opinion of Baruch students is considered and respected inside the College. The many student publications demonstrate how they share ideas, opinions, works and experiences with the community. Baruch also fosters student leadership with "T.E.A.M. Baruch", a program developed to train students serving as peer mentors, and with the Student Leadership Weekend, loaded with activities to engage students with the life at Baruch College, and also to develop leadership skills. Participation in student government is evidenced by the Undergraduate Student Government and the Graduate Student Assembly. Students consider that their voices are heard and respected inside Baruch College.

According to the Student Affairs mission presented in its Assessment report 2018-2019, "the Division creates innovative and engaging initiatives to supplement classroom learning, connect students to real-world experiences, and promote their interpersonal, social, cultural, and emotional growth." The fact that 73 initiatives of the Student Affairs Division support the Strategic Plan is clear evidence on how Baruch College is effectively committed to fostering the student experience.

In sum, Baruch College offers a wide range of activities, programs, and services to adequately support the student experience. However, the overcrowding and the lack of shared spaces and human resources are being felt and resented by the students and noticed in the surveys.

Collegial Advice:

To hire more human resources for academic advising to improve the capacity to serve more students, supporting the search of excellence, access, and equity declared in Baruch College's mission.

Recognition of Accomplishments:

The extraordinary work performed by the staff of student services to fulfill the student needs.

The SEEK program has a positive impact on students entering the college with greater academic and economic disadvantages, and it has been developed as a remarkable initiative to promote student success.

Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their programs of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.

In the team's judgment, Baruch College appears to meet this standard.

Based on a review of the self-study report, evidence, and interviews with campus constituencies to validate and verify compliance during the on-site evaluation visit, the team draws the following conclusions relative to this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Baruch College appears to be committed to continuous assessment and improvement of its operations to increase effectiveness, allocate resources in a manner that supports its strategic priorities, and improve student outcomes. This commitment is evident in the Baruch College Strategic Plan 2018-2023, in which strategic goal 1.1.3 states: Engage in, continually refine approaches to, and provide resource support for robust, sustained, College-wide, faculty-informed assessment of student learning that is in compliance with regional and specialized accreditation standards.

Based on our review of the Self-Study, discussions with the faculty and staff during Team visit, and reviewing additional documents, it appears that Baruch College has clearly stated educational goals at the institution, program, and course levels that are consistent with its programs of study, degree level, and Baruch's mission. Educational goals are articulated and are being assessed at three levels: Institutional, program, and course level. Institutional learning goals are being assessed via general education also known as Baruch College Pathways. There are seven categories in general education: English Composition, Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning, Life and Physical Sciences, World Culture and Global Issues, U.S. Experience in its Diversity, Creative Expression, The Individual and Society, and Scientific World. Each learning goal is associated with multiple

learning objectives and is assessed in a three-year cycle. We have found evidence that the general education assessment results were used to improve both pedagogy and curriculum at Baruch.

At the program level, learning outcome/objectives are being assessed at the school/department levels using respective school/department's culture, methodology, and priorities. For example, the Marx School of Public and International Affairs follows NASPAA (Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration) guidelines to articulate student learning goals and assessment of learning goals. Similarly, the Zicklin School of Business follows the guidelines from its accreditor AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business). Programs in the Weissman School of Arts and Sciences don't go through any special programmatic accreditation, and are diverse in disciplinary cultures, methodology and practices. Assessment in the Weissman School is led by respective program faculty as well as the Weissman Assessment Committee. Assessment in the Weissman School is also done in a three-year cycle. Weissman has also instituted a systematic and sustainable program review process that has resulted in pedagogical and curriculum improvements across the discipline within the school.

Baruch College's educational effectiveness is also evident in its students' outcomes. Baruch's first year to second year retention rates are an impressive 87% and six-year graduation rate is 68%. Placement rates of Baruch's recent graduates is similarly notable. Baruch College is also doing a good job communicating student outcomes and achievements to College constituents.

It is also evident that Baruch College is committed to its student learning as well as educational effectiveness. They have invested substantial resources (both human and financial) to promote and support student learning, achievements, and outcomes. The College has hired an Assistant Provost for Assessment, Accreditation, and Institutional Effectiveness to oversee all assessment activities as well as to streamline the process and make it more effective, efficient, and transparent. The Assistant Provost in collaboration with others offers professional development workshops and provides consultation to all administrative divisions and academic departments across Baruch College, including school- and division-based assessment committees who work towards the same goal. According to the students' feedback, the Writing Center is making tremendous positive impact regarding students' writing skills. The impact in the SEEK program is also noteworthy. Students coming from both academically and economically disadvantaged backgrounds participate in this program and demonstrate better performance compared to their counterparts who are not in SEEK program.

There seems to be a link between assessment and resource allocation which comes from CUNY's Coordinated Undergraduate Education program. However, additional resources should be allocated to general education assessment in order

to make the assessment process and implementation of assessment more systematic and sustainable.

Collegial Advice:

Baruch offers 30 undergraduate degrees and 60 undergraduate minors. However, there is no organized and sustainable systematic process in place to assess these minors. The Team would like to strongly encourage that this process be put in place and implemented.

The Team has observed there are some limitations regarding general education assessment. Although the categories are varied in disciplines and methodologies, each department should document the systematic and consistent assessment methods used within each discipline. The Team would like to strongly encourage that the assessment committee documents existing systematic and consistent assessment method of random sampling of courses to assess learning goals within a category, so that there is clarity regarding the consistency of the process across all departments teaching Pathways courses.

Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

Based on a review of the self-study report, evidence, and interviews with campus constituencies to validate and verify compliance during the on-site evaluation visit, the team draws the following conclusions relative to this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Baruch clearly documents its planning and resource allocation at each level of the institution. These processes directly tie into the assessment approach and prioritization of the Baruch College Strategic Plan 2018-2023 which aligns with the CUNY Strategic Framework and the CUNY Performance Management

Process indicators. The institutional objectives and unit objectives are clearly stated and assessed appropriately through the strategic planning process at the three schools within the College. Baruch has well-defined decision making processes and responsibilities are clearly assigned throughout the institution. The collaborative learning model of institutional effectiveness allows for clearly documented and communicated process improvements which are then shared through the General Faculty reports and with the Faculty Senate.

Grant Thornton performed an annual independent audit of the CUNY system for the year ended June 30, 2019. The audit resulted in an unqualified opinion. The Baruch College Fund, the Bernard A. Baruch College Alumni Association, the Baruch Auxiliary Enterprises Corporation, and the Early Learning Center each have their own independent financial audits. Reviewing the FY2019 College Financial Plan makes clear that in FY2021 Baruch College will be out of CUTRA (Reserve) funds. The projections in the FY2019 College Financial Plan show that the CUTRA balance will be approximately \$33,000 in FY2021. The CUTRA balance has been depleted over time as the College has been asked by CUNY to fund the retroactive increases in the labor contracts. For FY2020 those contractual obligations are estimated to be approximately \$2.7 million and for FY2021 the contractual obligations are estimated to be approximately \$5.4 million.

The pressure to adopt administrative efficiencies intensified as the state stopped providing the financial resources to cover the increases in the collective bargaining agreements. Going into fiscal year 2018 Baruch was anticipating no changes to the budget allocation however, as a result of the 2018 collective bargaining (PSC contract) increases, Baruch has had to reduce the overall spending for the institution by just over \$5 million for fiscal year 2019. This budget reduction is a result of multiple actions taken by CUNY. First, CUNY informed Baruch that the system will not be providing additional funds to cover the cost of the labor contract step and other salary increases. Thus, Baruch has to fund an additional \$800,000 to cover these contractual obligations. Second, although tuition increased by \$200 per student per year CUNY informed Baruch that it intends to use \$2,682,000 (out of the approximately \$4,200,000 in new tuition revenue) to fund a collective-bargaining reserve account. An additional \$1,278,000 was used to cover the pension costs associated with the PSC contract. Lastly, CUNY recaptured \$620,000 in savings from Baruch for the Administration Excellence Initiative that is intended to affect cost savings at each of the CUNY institutions. CUNY intends to redistribute \$340,000 to Baruch to be used for campus maintenance contracts and the contractual cost of reducing the faculty workload from 21 credit hours to 18 credit hours. CUNY is holding back \$240,000 of the savings for an unspecified purpose.

The College has taken actions to address this financial exigency. Baruch has implemented across the board budget reductions based on proportional size of each units base budget. It has implemented vacancy-control procedures for all

positions that become vacant during the fiscal year. All new hires require written justification and approvals are granted sparingly. Planned faculty searches require a review and approval before the search proceeds. After reviewing the financial plan, the Provost decides which positions will be filled. Finally, each division and school is required to submit a financial plan which was reviewed by the Budget Office for feasibility. These plans were then reviewed and approved by the Vice President for Administration and Finance and the President.

Baruch continues to implement new initiatives that address process improvements as the College moves towards increasing digital efforts and away from manual processes. Implemented initiatives include, but are not limited to, streamlining processes of non-tax levy budgeting and procurement activity into the CUNYfirst system, and the implementation of ‘procure to pay’ for non-tax levy funding sources that encompass end-to-end OTPS processing, including budgeting, requisitioning, encumbering, receipting and liquidating.

Baruch continues to work towards making efficient use of physical space. However, the College has reached maximum capacity when it comes to the number of students it can continue to serve. Multiple capital projects are underway at Baruch to help alleviate some of the physical space challenges; however, the institution does not have an updated Capital (Facilities) Master Plan (the last Capital (Facilities) Master Plan is from 2008). Operating with constrained resources has required Baruch to adopt a number of technical solutions to reduce expenditures. For example, the Office of Human Resources has implemented an online time reporting system for tax-levy position control which not only increased functionality and transparency for employees but also reduced personnel expenditures by automating a once manual process. Baruch’s mission and goals are supported through various integrated assessment and planning documents. The various strategic plans are on five year cycles. The Baruch College strategic plan, the strategic plans for the three schools, the Baruch College Performance Management Process Goals Progress Report, and various assessment and outcome reports support the collective goals and reinforce the overall mission of the institution.

Collegial Advice:

Expenditures continue to outpace revenues at Baruch College. One way to offset fixed costs and address this financial challenge is to continue to look at alternative ways to increase revenues. We recommend that Baruch further explore Executive Programs and Online Programs (such as an online MBA program) to increase revenues for the institution. This issue becomes increasingly important when factoring in the fact that Baruch’s facilities are already operating at peak capacity and physical space is a constraint.

Recommendation:

The last Capital (Facilities) Master Plan was formalized and completed in 2008. With the large number of capital projects underway we recommend that Baruch engage in the process of updating and completing a Capital (Facilities) Master Plan.

The FY2020 Senior College Operating Budget document shows that Baruch College receives 35% of its overall Tax-Levy Operating Budget from state funding. Baruch receives the lowest percentage of state funding when compared to its sister CUNY institutions. The average state funding is closer to 52%. We recommend that the CUNY funding model undergo a comprehensive review as the continued lack of state funding will begin to hamper the mission of the College and is financially unsustainable. As such, Baruch will exhaust its CUTRA balance by the end of FY2020. Baruch is unable to meet the required Primary Reserve Ratio of the Composite Financial Index (CFI) because Baruch along with other sister institutions have been asked by CUNY to fund the increases in the labor contracts through the use of their CUTRA reserves and budget reductions.

Recognition of Accomplishment:

The Office of College Advancement excels in supporting the mission of the College. The office continues to raise significant financial resources to support the institution and should be commended for their efforts.

Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituents it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, educational system, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.

In the team’s judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

Based on a review of the self-study report, evidence, and interviews with campus constituencies to validate and verify compliance during the on-site evaluation visit, the team draws the following conclusions relative to this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Baruch College is governed by federal and state law. The CUNY Board of Trustees serves the public interest, ensures that the institution clearly states and

fulfills its mission and goals, has fiduciary responsibility for the institution, and is ultimately accountable for the academic quality, planning, and fiscal well-being of the institution. The CUNY Code of conduct for the Board of Trustees and the CUNY Conflict of Interest guidelines ensure that no individual “shall have any interest, financial or otherwise, direct or indirect, or engage in any business or transaction or professional activity, or incur any obligation of any nature, which is in substantial conflict with the proper discharge of his or her duties and responsibilities at the University”.

The Baruch College governance structure outlines roles, responsibilities, and accountability for decision-making, which are all supported and maintained through both CUNY-wide and College-level policies and information channels. Local governance of Baruch College is active and participatory, while promoting a shared governance structure. Its president, who is afforded both authority and autonomy in the oversight of the institution, is selected according to *Board of Trustees Policy 2.12* which lays out the process for presidential searches. It includes a search committee consisting of Baruch faculty, alumni and Undergraduate Student Government members., All college presidents are evaluated by the CUNY Board of Trustees, per the criteria for evaluation of the president.

At Baruch, the President is supported by an administrative team comprising the provost, a chief of staff, a general counsel, a chief diversity officer, six vice presidents overseeing college-level divisions, and three deans serving as lead administrators for each of the schools (Weissman, Zicklin, and Marxe) each with its own set of bylaws, personnel and budget committee, curriculum committee(s), and committee on academic standing. Together with the president of the Faculty Senate, they form the President’s Cabinet. Reporting relationships are clearly documented, there is regular engagement with faculty, and assessment data has played a significant role in enhancing operations.

From the evidence reviewed and interviews conducted, the team found that President Wallerstein in ten years of leadership has significantly contributed to the institution’s vision of socioeconomic mobility and institutional improvements leading to increased graduation rates and a strengthened community of staff and faculty. He also supported a truly collaborative effort for the development of the *2018-2023 Strategic Plan* and accompanying *Implementation Plan*.

To ensure a continuous transition into the new presidency, Designated President Wu has visited Baruch on multiple occasions to ensure a smooth leadership transition. He will be bringing in his experience from prior institutions to further advance Baruch’s mission of access and socioeconomic mobility while prioritizing the integration of Baruch alumni into major industries and businesses, thus further evidencing Baruch’s Return on Investment of State and City funding.

All members of the senior administration have both the credentials and professional experience necessary to lead Baruch College in a manner consistent with the College's mission and their functional roles as evidenced in interviews and professional Curriculum Vitae and resumés provided to the team.

Senior administration is afforded the necessary time, assistance and information systems required to perform their duties, including the use of "powerful CUNY level management and accountability information systems".

Assessment of the effectiveness of governance, leadership, and administration is done periodically through a number of tools including the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey, 2016 Faculty Campus Climate Study, assessments from the Enrollment Management Division, five-year cycles of school assessment and strategic planning, participation in the NSSE Survey and actions developed to address survey findings, annual Baruch College Undergraduate Education (CUE Reports), academic program reviews and specialized accreditation reports, and assessments within the Division of Information Services, among others.

At the administrative level these assessments have allowed Baruch to eliminate redundancies and functions that aren't needed, while demonstrating that online programs will be a great "revenue trigger."; A Retention Cross Border Team was established, and other CUNY campuses have been invited to discuss the design of new programs leading to strengthened partnerships and alliances.

Assessment initiatives revealed faculty and staff complaints regarding services rendered. A new HR Director is providing customer service coaching, and moving towards a "business partnership model" between OHR and the college departments where each division or schools will have one OHR contact.

System representatives, Baruch administrators and faculty recognize that with the recent changes at the Central Administration "presidents are getting more leverage as to their needs and budget requests".

Baruch administration and faculty recognize that within their budget constraints they are "doing more with less than they have ever had to". They are maintaining excellence "being as lean as they can get".

One can reply to any concern regarding a tuition increase by noting, as expressed and evidenced during the visit, that Baruch College will still be a "bargain institution".

The Academic Senate Chair's participation in the President's cabinet gives the faculty an active and collaborative voice in administrative and institutional affairs.

Faculty recognize that with the last two chairs the Academic Senate has moved from an adversarial to a collaborative position”.

Collegial Advice:

The College should extend current efforts aimed at opening lines of communication between faculty leaders and the administration. While the senior administration has been working collaboratively and more deliberatively with the Faculty Senate for the past few years on increasing transparency and communication, this work merits continued dedication.

Baruch College has begun the process of engaging the community with results of the 2019 COACHE survey, and this process offers an ideal opportunity for deepening communication and collaboration between faculty and the administration

Findings from the *Baruch College Self-Study 2020: Reflection and Renewal* should be shared or presented to the CUNY BOT. The Team recognizes that CUNY is a large system which makes it difficult for the BOT to be involved in every self-study, the Baruch findings shed light on the important role that the institution is playing in ensuring the mission of access and social mobility, thus evidencing the need for a budget allocation process recognizing and promoting the continuation of the exemplary initiatives underway.

Baruch should continue developing and licensing Executive Programs which are geared at being self-sustaining and increasing institutional revenues that contribute to the access and affordability model of all other degrees.

The Baruch administration should invest time and effort, and include the students perspective in the ongoing marketing and media partnerships discussed in the Self-Study to communicate to prospective students and NY at large the initiatives and outcomes set in place to ensure that Baruch remains affordable, while being highly selective and the largest contributor in the State to socioeconomic mobility.

Recognition of Accomplishments:

Institutional Budget Allocation processes and Administration’s support for initiatives that promote continuous faculty development, including, adjustment of faculty workloads for research, which in turn leads to prestige and greater competitiveness for external funding; endowment funds and seed money for faculty travels to support research; “jumbo” sized sections counting as credit work which allots faculty release time for their scholarly endeavors; and assertion of creating a supportive faculty teaching and scholarship environment.

Baruch administration and faculty are committed to further implementing OPEN Resource Education and Zero Cost Textbooks with the potential of increasing revenues from tuition thru the enrollment of students in online courses which in turn lessen the burden on an already exceeding institutional capacity offsetting student expenses which can be used to counter argue against opposition to future tuition increases as there will be a significant Return on Investment (ROI).

Section D: Requirements of Affiliation

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet all of the Requirements of Affiliation based on a review of the self-study report, evidence, and interviews with campus constituencies.

Section E: Verification of Compliance with Accreditation- Relevant Federal Compliance Requirements

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet all accreditation-relevant federal compliance requirements. This judgment is based on a review of the Institutional Federal Compliance Report, evidence, and interviews with campus constituencies.

Section F: Verification of Student Achievement Data and Institutional Data

Section F does not need to be read during the Oral Exit Report

I. Student Achievement Data

In the team's judgment, the institution's approach to implementing its student achievement goals appears to be effective, consonant with higher education expectations, and consistent with the institution's mission. This judgment is based on a review of the institution's student achievement information provided in the self-study report, evidence, interviews with campus constituencies, and the student achievement URL available on its website.

In addition, in the team's judgment, the institution's student achievement information data that it discloses to the public appear to be reasonably valid and accurate in light of other data and information reviewed by the team.

Student outcomes assessment is deeply embedded in the culture of Baruch College. Student achievement is assessed as part of the general education and programmatic curricula. All courses include learning goals and the learning goals are publicized. Goals are set by the faculty, are documented at all levels and are periodically reviewed by the faculty.

II. Verification of Institutional Data

In the team's opinion, the institution's processes and procedures for verifying institutional data appears to be reasonably valid and effective.

As an institution with long traditions of rigorous specialized accreditations and as a senior college in the CUNY System, Baruch has well-established and highly credible processes and procedures for verification of institutional data. The team found the data to be consistent and found that the broader campus community was very knowledgeable in their discussions of data.