

Baruch College Strengthening Undergraduate Education 2004-2005

I. Introduction

Top academic priorities of Baruch College continue to be the retention and graduation of our undergraduate student body. It is the College's deeply held belief that the best way to achieve these ends is to provide a rigorous, high-quality education that actively engages students in the learning process and the life of the institution through the development, implementation and evaluation of a wide range of coordinated programs, services and assessment measures. Cognizant that no single approach can address all needs, Baruch's leadership has prepared a multi-pronged campaign drawing on the expertise and participation of all key College stakeholders: faculty, administrators, students, alumni and select external partners.

Baruch efforts to strengthen undergraduate education are challenged by a host of factors, including distinct organizational stresses, multiple demands upon faculty and staff, and the ongoing development of a strategic plan and an assessment plan. Moreover, a shared emphasis on undergraduate education has not yet been fully realized by all college units, a process now underway but one that we envision will take several years to realize. Nonetheless, several years of prior effort coupled with dedicated data collection and analysis offers Baruch a path to targeted strategic improvements. We have a good sense of institutional shortcomings: faculty-student interaction, student success rates in lower-level mathematics courses, written and oral communication across disciplines and contexts, and a weak culture of service and community. We also know our strengths: organization, orientation, technology, library, peer tutoring, faculty, enthusiasm, student initiative, and willingness to cooperate and coordinate across boundaries. The Strengthening Undergraduate Education proposal will build upon these advantages.

II. Plan of Action

The Strengthening Undergraduate Education initiative brings together faculty, administrators and staff from all of the college's units. Oversight of the project rests with the Provost's Office, with specific responsibilities assigned to David Potash, the Associate Provost of the Teaching and Learning Environment. He will chair a committee that will be charged with the development, implementation and assessment of the project. The committee's membership includes: Professor April Allen, Dean of Arts and Sciences Myrna Chase, Provost David Dannenbring, Deputy Director of the Schwartz Communication Institute Mikhail Gershovich, Professor and Chair of Mathematics Warren Gordon, Director of the Career Development Center Patricia Imbimbo, Vice President for Student Development Sam Johnson, Director of SACC (Student Academic Counseling Center) Carol Morgan, Director of Advisement Sharon Ricks, Associate

Provost Dennis Slavin, Professor Cheryl Smith, Director of Orientation and Freshman Initiative Mark Spergel, Assistant Dean of Business Phyllis Zadra, and others.

One of the main challenges facing Baruch and the committee in this effort will be to investigate and consider potential changes in the college's organizational structure to address the demands of undergraduate education more effectively.

III. Programmatic Activities

The coordinated projects listed below are designed to work collectively to develop an integrated undergraduate experience that:

- Eases the transition into College
- Provides students with the academic and life skills necessary for success
- Develops an engaged student
- Increases retention and engagement to speed graduation rates
- Promotes a culture of assessment and continuous improvement
- Advances the learning goals of Baruch faculty and curricula, with a focus on:
 - Communication/Critical Thinking
 - Quantitative/Analytic Ability
 - Citizenship

To this end, our projects fall within the structured framework outlined below. Estimated enrollments and budget are detailed on the accompanying spreadsheet. Assessment is essential to all of our activities. Accordingly, all initiatives follow a common assessment template. A web site, <http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/firstyear/baruch-freshman-form.html> offers on-line information and support for assessment plans. However, as Baruch does not yet have a college wide assessment plan, some activities are being assessed using a different matrix. Assessment plans will be updated as the College makes progress towards this important goal.

Section A. USIP (Proposal submitted earlier)

Section B. Coordinated Undergraduate Education Initiative (CUE)

1. Easing Transition into Baruch College

- a. Provide all new students Electronic Orientation CD-ROM (version 4).
- b. Create a new CD-ROM on student success.
- c. Redesign websites to incorporate DegreeWorks, tracking and assessment.
- d. New transfer student website.
- e. CUNY community college linkages for business.
- f. Expanded Baruch Beginnings (convocation and activities, programs).

2. Learning Communities

- a. Expand pilot to 300 students with new activities and plans.
- b. Pilot electronic portfolios.

- c. Create weeklong orientation for Learning Communities.
 - d. Pilot diversity training with Anti-Defamation League.
 - e. Faculty development for learning communities and freshman blocks
 - f. Refine freshman year learning goals.
 - g. Review and develop faculty-led freshman seminar pilot.
3. **Blocks and Linked Courses**
- a. Integrate freshman text (Nickel and Dimed) into freshman curriculum.
 - b. Review and develop new support mechanisms for freshman seminar.
 - c. Faculty and curricular development and support in English.
 - d. Faculty and curricular development and support in mathematics.
 - e. Faculty support – technology and blocks
 - f. Support Newman Library’s Freshman Research Experience (FRE) project.
4. **CPE Preparation**
- a. Expand multiple partnerships with Schwartz Communication Institute to:
 - i. Expand CPE faculty development.
 - ii. Imbed CPE-type assignments into lower level courses.
 - b. Create CPE tutorial prep movie on CD-ROM.
 - c. Workshops
5. **General Education - Communication and Critical Thinking Support**
- a. Business/Arts & Sciences collaboration in Introduction to Business.
 - b. Communication Institute support in “pre-business” core courses.
 - c. Expand and restructure Baruch College’s Writing Center.
 - d. Expand support of “English Error Analyzer.”
 - e. Create transfer student version of FRE information literacy project.
6. **General Education – WAC at Baruch**
7. **General Education - Quantitative/Analytic Support**
- a. Hire Math support specialist in coordination with College Now.
 - b. Math tutorial support.
8. **Development Engaged Students**
- a. Support vocational inventory program/majors and Careers fair.
 - b. Pilot a dedicated freshman internship program.
 - c. Run a second annual student services information fair.
 - d. Expand Freshman Year Resources websites with on-line tutorials.
9. **Support for At-Risk Groups**
- a. Offer Intersession Immersion.
 - b. Provide additional support for non-ESL students in composition.
 - c. Specialized tutorial support in key mathematics and English courses
 - d. Intervene with at-risk freshman through a mid-semester report.
 - e. Provide ongoing, guided intervention for freshman at risk for probation.
 - f. Provide group interventions for international students and special groups
 - g. Create SACC peer outsourcing service.
 - h.
10. **Culture of Assessment**
- a. All projects and activities follow a common assessment template.
 - b. Participate in CIRP and YFCY as pre and post instruments for freshman.
 - c. Participate in NSSE for student engagement.

- d. Expand general education assessment with faculty and staff development.
- e. Appoint a CUE assessment researcher.

1. Easing Transition into Baruch

First impressions matter, especially in higher education; students in transition are vulnerable and have specific needs. To serve this population, Baruch has developed a host of activities, practices, and priorities that have helped the college maintain a high show rate and high levels of entering student satisfaction.

One way that Baruch has provided enhanced services for students in transition is through technology. The College has successfully employed orientation CD-ROMs the past three years for incoming freshmen and for transfer students. In fact, the CD-ROMs have exceeded their promise by helping students learn about academic programs and requirements, on-site and electronic support services and learning, student life, expectations and advice on how to succeed in college. Students view the CD-ROM before attending a more traditional on-site advisement. Incoming freshmen also receive a copy of the fall 2004 freshman text, Nickel and Dimed, and are invited to the fall Convocation/Baruch Beginnings day, when the book will be discussed as part of a day of festive activities. Prelude students receive the same orientation with appropriate course placements and advisement. Transfer students receive an orientation that is geared toward their needs and includes a one-on-one advisement process focusing on credit evaluation.

Students who transfer to Baruch from CUNY's community colleges often encounter a variety of obstacles, particularly if they plan to study business. It is essential that students and respective institutional professionals know about the Zicklin's School of Business's required pre-business core curriculum. This core of eight courses (accounting, business law, calculus, computer information systems, English composition, microeconomics, macroeconomics, and statistics) must be completed with a minimum GPA of 2.25 in addition to a required 2.25 overall before a student may take advance courses in the Zicklin School of Business. Students are welcome to transfer to Baruch College and complete these courses after transferring, however the fastest way to a BBA degree from Baruch College is to complete the pre-business core at your initial institution.

To address the issue of timely and effective preparation for entrance to the Zicklin School, Baruch will continue to work jointly with the community colleges to establish a body of minimum pre-business core competencies. Establishing these core competencies will address the problem of articulation more specifically than has occurred in the past, and will make Baruch's expectations explicit early on in a student's college career. The development of a Baruch College/Zicklin website specifically created for potential transfer students will enhance the awareness of the transfer process to Zicklin, the Zicklin course requirements, potential pitfalls, and how to avoid them.

Training sessions for relevant advisement staff at the community colleges is needed, too. The more that CUNY advisors understand Baruch and the Zicklin School's academic criteria, the more effective that they can be in guiding their students. Visiting the community colleges (beginning with BMCC and LaGuardia, Baruch's largest feeder schools) and conducting information/counseling sessions during the early stage of a

student's college career will be a key element in opening up communication between our colleges. This will also foster sound decision-making at a stage when it can really be helpful. Lastly, inviting potential transfer student "affinity groups" to visit with members of the Baruch community and find out more about our programs in advance of applying for transfer will help students choose appropriate courses of action, both in terms of preparedness and in terms of being able to make choices at Baruch that will promote success.

Freshman Convocation Day, entitled "Baruch Beginnings," familiarizes entering freshmen with the campus, students, faculty, and the surrounding community and fosters stronger relationships among the students, and between students and Baruch. For Fall 2004 the formal convocation will feature greetings and a keynote address from Barbara Ehrenreich, author of the freshman text. Freshmen also meet fellow students in their blocks and participate in a structured discussion, which are led by senior administrators, faculty members and student leaders, about the freshman text. Additional activities round out Baruch Beginnings, including our second Parents and Families Orientation. Twice a year, once during the fall semester and once during the spring semester, parents will be mailed a copy of the newly created Baruch parents' newsletter, *Parenthesis*.

The next assessment of the efficacy of the orientation CD-ROM on retention and student satisfaction is planned for 2004-2005. Assessment of the first three versions demonstrated that students overwhelmingly welcomed the use of this technology, eagerly complied with the requirements, enjoyed it, and retained the essential information more fully than when it was presented in person. However, some changes were suggested and further changes in the college's curriculum and regulations require a new version.

Also, CUE/Freshman Year, in collaboration with College Now, will produce a short documentary video chronicling a day in the life of a Baruch College student. The goal is to provide a realistic glimpse into the expectations and demands required of Baruch student. Research demonstrates that realistic expectations have a positive impact on student success. The movie will be made available on CD-ROM for to all entering Baruch students and College Now students planning to attend Baruch College in the future.

2. Learning Communities

A critical innovation for the College is the expansion of the learning communities to approximately 300 entering freshmen after last year's successful pilot with approximately 50 students. These will include blocked courses with overlapping curricula based on shared themes and shared co-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities, providing a commonality of educational experience, increased engagement in the freshman year academic experience, and improved school spirit. The NSSE has confirmed that one of Baruch's most prominent shortcomings is student-faculty interaction; the learning communities are a direct response to that problem. We have already found that, as predicted, Learning Communities greatly enhance faculty engagement as well and take the lead in transforming instruction at the College, furthering the College's larger

curricular goals and standards. Most significantly, plans for next year's learning communities represent a quantum leap from the past year's pilot and an even greater one from the existing universal block programming by strengthening academic connections among students and building a greater sense of community.

Leadership in the learning communities will come from faculty leaders, advisors, peer mentors, and executives from the Executives-on-Campus program. Co-curricular activities will include more fully guided, integrated, and in-depth curricular support in research, study, test taking, note taking, and time management skills as well as majors and career exploration than has been possible before in the existing freshman seminar curriculum. Extra-curricular activities will include student leadership development, intramural sports, and cultural activities.

Freshmen participating in Learning Communities will attend a 4-day orientation to the College including workshops, seminars, and activities addressing the role of the liberal arts in a business degree, ethics and citizenship, time management, introduction to electronic portfolios, information literacy, electronic learning at the College. Students will get advised, participate in several benchmarking surveys, socialize, get an in depth tour of the historic neighborhood surrounding the campus, attend a performance at our Performing Arts Center, and participate in leadership and team building activities. The Anti-Defamation League will run their award-winning full-day workshops on diversity entitled, "A Campus of Difference."

Baruch College will pilot the installation and use of electronic portfolios through the freshman Learning Communities in order to better facilitate learning goals across the curriculum, and should serve as a springboard for a myriad of other applications across the institution.

Several alternative models for delivering freshman seminar will be tested in the Learning Communities. A faculty-led College-wide committee will devote the 2004-2005 academic year to developing a credit-bearing alternative freshman seminar course for 2005-2006.

All students in Learning Communities will be invited to take the Noel-Levitz College Student Inventory. Academic advisors already on staff will be assigned a student caseload to counsel and track throughout their academic careers at Baruch College, using the CSI as a benchmarking tool, along with e-portfolio, and existing diagnostic tools available on campus, to design an individualized "success plan" with each student. This will mark the first time that non-SEEK or Honors students at the College will have a personal advisor assigned to them with whom they will work together collaboratively and in a structured way throughout their College careers.

Assessment is an essential component of the Learning Community experience. The Learning Communities will benefit from assessment already taking place within departments but will look more holistically at the development of a successful freshman year and learning goals. Faculty development is centered upon the development of

shared outcomes and their relationship with the College's mission and the role of general education.

3. Blocks and Linked Courses

Block programming is indispensable to the successful education and retention of freshmen at Baruch. Research and our own experience over the past four years confirm that block programs foster the formation of study groups and the development of social relationships, aid in the acculturation process, promote academic integration into the College, and increase retention, which is now approaching 90 percent. The program has firmly taken root in the institutional culture at the College.

Improvements in blocks include greater coordination of the program throughout the academic year and coordination of block faculty prior to the end of Spring 2004 semester through enhanced leadership from the Office of the Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences, which also handles scheduling for the Weissman School of Arts and Sciences. Earlier coordination will be followed up by regular meetings of block faculty and block leaders, and supported through ongoing electronic communication and coordination. A Freshman Year Experience website is available for students and faculty and will continue to be expanded as a full-service resource for academic support with a link to the "virtual advisor" website. Through block programming faculty have innovated, using Blackboard and other technologies to engage students in the learning process.

Block programming also helps to address concerns with student behavior. The Provost's Office has prepared a "Guide to Teaching in the Freshman Block" that will include guidelines on how to create a syllabus that preempts disruptive behavior, how to create learner-centered goals and assess outcomes, and how to assist students with navigating their academic careers at the College. Faculty development sessions, in coordination with the Freshman Seminar, emphasize the importance of reinforced messages to students.

All incoming day session freshmen will be registered in set blocks of courses but given the opportunity to replace one course (other than math or English) with foreign language for a full-time schedule. Baruch's small cohort of evening-session part-time freshmen will be blocked when appropriate. All told, the College plans to offer blocks to approximately 1650 new students, including blocks for 220 SEEK students and blocks for 150 entering ESL students. The latter blocks will include courses in ESL, psychology, and the Freshman Seminar. We will also be offering blocks to the approximately 80 students entering Baruch through the CUNY Honors College.

Freshman Seminar, a non-credit 12-week program designed to provide ongoing support throughout the semester, continues to play a key role in the block programming effort. Many of the academic skill-building areas introduced in the Freshman Seminar course (study skills, time management, test-taking skills, academic honesty, majors and the decision-making process), will be reexamined, reinforced and expanded upon experientially in supplementary instruction and electronic resources within the academic

courses in the blocks. This way, the concepts covered in Freshman Seminar are more actively woven into the curriculum they are intended to support and students apply the skills instead of just hear about them. Blackboard will play an expanded role in the delivery of the Freshman Seminar in 2004-2005. This course will benefit from revisions piloted in the freshman learning communities as well as an intensive yearlong review by a college-wide task force to be undertaken during 2004-2005.

Other components of the blocks include the Live Theater Enrichment (LITE) Program. The project targets two ENG 2150 classes in spring 2005. Through faculty coordinated student discount offerings, students will be required to attend at least one live off campus theater, opera, or dance performance and then review it. Student engagement surveys will be used to assess the impact of this project.

Related Technology-Based Instructional Support Projects for Blocked Courses

Faculty Training in Writing and Grammar Software:

- This project will train faculty to use software developed for use with ESL and English 2100 students, and for 2004-2005, Psychology 1001 and Public Affairs 1250. Another 25 teachers (full-time and adjuncts) will be trained on the use of writing and grammar software. An e-tutor and a writing instructor will also assist.
- An error analysis tool, Error Analyzer, allows a teacher to annotate a student's (electronic) text with error categories (of the teacher's own choosing and specifications) and comments.
- The project will also train faculty in the use of other software, including ESL-specific grammar programs (Articles, Verb Tenses, Modals, Prepositionals, and others), Concordance program, Subject-Verb Agreement, and Sentence Combining.
- Software currently under development will be aimed at the ACT Reading Test (a text analyzer) and the CPE (a similar text analyzer and a new graph analyzer).
- We plan to build additional "banks" of assignments with the reading analyzer and graph analyzer components. Sample, practice exams for the ACT Reading and ACT Grammar Skills, and the CPE Task 1 and Task 2 will be incorporated into this project.

The mathematics department will pilot new curricular modules as well as models of tutor support as it experiments with changes in the base curriculum.

The Freshman Research Experience (FRE) is an intensive research program based on Information Competency and designed to introduce students to the systems, services and resources of the William and Anita Newman Library at Baruch College. FRE is an instructional initiative for incoming freshmen to be offered to all students enrolled in block scheduled English courses including English 2100 and ESL. All faculty teaching block-scheduled courses are encouraged to attend a workshop on the FRE curricula and to participate in a hands-on research refresher to learn about changes in the Library's resources. The session introduces the Freshman Research Experience curriculum, including model assignments and other resources on a Blackboard site for faculty, lecture

and workshop content and schedules for English sections, and an opportunity to discuss specific course requirements with instructional librarians.

In 2004-2005 the curriculum will be reviewed and enriched. Since the module is optional, outreach to faculty teaching in the block will be expanded. Additional materials will be designed that facilitate the use of Information Competency principles and support the FRE curricula. Also, the FRE program will expand outreach to freshmen throughout the year via point of need instruction, workshops, and web-based instructional materials. In addition, the library faculty will explore additional cooperation with the Freshman Seminar program and the Writing Center, including development of new programs and curricular materials. These initiatives include an increase in the number of core research workshops it offers: Database Survival Skills, Precision Searching, and Web Research, plus a “Term Paper Rush.”

For the first time a transfer version of FRE will be developed and administered to all incoming transfers students so that this often neglected but significant population will be as consistently prepared to meet the academic challenges of the institution as their freshman counterparts.

4. Preparing Students for the CUNY Proficiency Exam (CPE)

Baruch’s efforts to prepare students for the CPE extend beyond workshops to include faculty and curricular development through the Schwartz Communication Institute. Research determined that students require more sustained support for the CPE as well as support that consider the type of task given on the second part of the exam. The Institute will continue to provide professional development for faculty, providing information about the exam and assistance in creating CPE-type assignments that develop the analytic and communicative skills evaluated on the CPE. Special emphasis will be placed upon courses within the Zicklin School of Business. Communication consultants will provide students with formative feedback on the assignments using the grading matrices of the CPE.

Finally, pre-production for creation of a CPE tutorial prep movie is now complete and ready to enter the production phase of development. The narrative of the movie follows the experience of a Baruch student who has received her CPE test notification. The film guides the student through the experience, addressing both the cognitive/didactic elements of preparation for the exam and allays concerns and anxieties students face in taking the exam. Once completed, each student scheduled for CPE will receive a copy of the movie on CD-ROM along with printed materials and the vast on-site and electronic resources available to them.

5. General Education – Communication and Critical Thinking Support

Improving the communication skills, written and oral, has long been central to Baruch’s undergraduate learning goals. Increasingly, faculty members are exploring the close relationship between communication goals and critical thinking goals. Central to the

College's plans are several related initiatives: strengthen courses that directly address communication issues (Composition, Speech, etc.); develop communication intensive courses throughout the curriculum through the Schwartz Communication Institute; develop communication learning goals throughout the curriculum; and the restructuring of the writing center.

The first three semesters of English offer Baruch students a strong foundation in writing skills, and specific learning goals are being developed and shared. Assessment will be critical in the coming years, as well as faculty development, for part-time faculty members teach using a wide variety of approaches and standards. The College will seek to establish a greater sense of common expectations. For example, the English Department adopted a common grammar/rhetoric handbook, Raine's Keys for Writers; the college has pushed its use throughout the curriculum.

Communication intensive courses have served as Baruch's primary vehicle for establishing communication across the curriculum. The Schwartz Communication Institute oversees the development of CICs and the writing fellows (See next section for a more detailed look at CICs and the writing fellows). In 2002, the Zicklin School of Business passed a resolution requiring all students who entered the College under the new general education requirements to complete a minimum of four Communication Intensive Courses as part of their graduation requirements. So far, while capstone courses are currently the vehicle for delivering CICs in the Zicklin School, intensive communication skills will be embedded into the business curriculum on a more widespread scale in order to meet the institution's learning goals in the area of communication skills. Courses in Management and Society, Information Systems Development, Corporate Finance, and Investment Analysis are targeted for treatment. Courses in Accountancy and Decision Making and Modeling will be added as well.

However, many courses can benefit from enhanced communication goals without meeting all of the criteria for a CIC. For example, Business 1000 is a survey introductory course taught in large lecture sections. Given the limitations of the large lecture course along with the time restrictions of a 2-credit course, it has been difficult to infuse group activities or put additional emphasis on communication skills into the course. In fall 2002 we piloted an honors section of Business 1000 with 86 students in a large lecture with 4 smaller recitations. That pilot was successful, allowing students to work in groups, have debates, produce Powerpoint presentations, and get feedback on written assignments. In spring 2003, we piloted a similar project, BUS 1000T that carried 3 instead of 2 credits. The large lecture had 240 students and there were 8 recitation sections recreating the performance results we saw in the fall with the honors students. The project was repeated in 2003-2004 with success. We plan to expand BUS 1000T further in 2004-2005 through the hiring of recitation lecturers who, along with the full-time faculty, will work aided by the continued guidance of the Bernard L. Schwartz Communication Institute.

To become eligible for entrance into the Zicklin School of Business, Baruch students must have demonstrated core competencies in a number of quantitative and discipline-

specific areas, including economics, accountancy, computer information systems, law, and statistics. Key to mastering the business curriculum is the ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing. Writing fellows from the Bernard L. Schwartz Communication Institute will consult with faculty in the pre-business core courses to infuse communication intensive assignments and assessment using proven instructional models from other CIC course interventions. After using CFY funds in previous years to augment quantitative learning goals in the pre-business curriculum, the College can now address deficiencies in communication skills to insure a fuller range of successful outcomes in the business disciplines and enhance career opportunities.

Baruch College is committed to helping students develop good writing practices, assisting in the instruction of good writing, and providing opportunities for faculty, programs and centers to realize greater efficiencies in supporting good writing practices and developing better writing in all disciplines. Integration and cooperation allows for more effective deployment of resources and more thorough assessment. The Writing Center, organized as a unit within the Department of English in the mid-1980s, plays a very important role in the College's academic support system, but it has focused on assisting students in English classes. In the Spring 2003 semester, the process to reorganize the Writing Center allowed for growth and greater impact. Phase 2 changes are designed to continue to:

- Improve data-gathering procedures
- Strengthen outcomes assessment strategies
- Enhance the Writing Center's accessibility
- Widen the impact of Writing Center activity to other departments
- Augment tutor-training programs within SACC and the Schwartz Communication Institute
- Reinforce the best practices for writing
- Signal the College's ongoing commitment to student writing
- Provide support for students with ESL-based writing problems, by improving access to ancillary materials (grammar software) and providing referrals to tutors and preceptors specifically trained in TESL

The great strength of the Writing Center is its preceptors, who are professionals hired and supervised by the English Department's Writing Director. It has also pioneered the use of e-tutoring, whereby students are able to submit samples of their writing electronically. These samples are then marked by the preceptor with the help of the "Error Analyzer" program and returned to the student usually within twenty-four hours as a web-page file with commentary and links to error explanations.

The reorganized Center preserves these strengths while taking advantage of other units within the College. Coordination and integration with SACC, the College's peer tutoring program, allows for an integrated data system and coordinated services. Writing Center expertise, effectively harnessed, leads to broader and more effective writing support in a variety of arenas and levels.

6. Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) at Baruch

The WAC program at Baruch College operates through the Bernard L. Schwartz Communication Institute. Since its inception in 1997, the Institute has supported Communication-Intensive Courses (CICs) in a wide number of disciplines. Designed to engage students in a broad range of communication-intensive activities, CICs emphasize at least two of three modes of communication: writing, speaking and computer-mediated communication. Although the college does not yet have a universal requirement for CICs, the Zicklin School of Business – whose enrollment accounts for approximately 85% percent of the undergraduate student body –requires all of its students to take at least one CIC at the 1000, 2000, 3000 and capstone level. The Weissman School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Public Affairs are considering adopting similar requirements.

As part of a broader communication-intensive program, WAC at Baruch features:

- Approximately 9,000 enrollments in CICs each year
- Communication-intensive curricula shaped to meet the needs of individual departments and courses
- Support for classes that range from 20 to 300+ students
- Support of full-time faculty in teaching and designing CICs
- Support of the College Administration, which last year allocated more than \$200,000 to supplement resources allocated from the CUNY Office of Academic Affairs
- Formative and summative assessments of student and faculty outcomes, and effectiveness of individual CICs and the program in general
- Professional staff of 25, comprised of 14 Communication Fellows, 7 CUNY Writing Fellows (CWFs), an Instructional Technology Specialist, a coordinator, full-time director, an administrative assistant and the college's WAC coordinator

With CUE support, the Schwartz Institute will lay the groundwork for a significant restructuring and expansion of the CIC program over the next several years. It is our plan to reach an increasingly greater number of faculty and students in a wider range of disciplines. Significant work is taking place at Baruch on assessment issues, through Middle States, AACSB (business), and public affairs. Consistently, communication is identified as a critical learning goal. The Institute is well situated to play a critical role in helping the college develop, implement and assess college-wide communication initiatives.

Under the CUE initiative, the Institute will:

- Develop broader, more inclusive guidelines for CIC development in all disciplines
- Identify existing courses that could be designated Communication-Intensive, but which are not officially designated as such
- Provide consulting support in a college-wide effort to increase the number of CICs offered each semester

- Provide consulting and administrative support in establishing a universal CIC requirement for all Baruch students
- Create and conduct WAC faculty development seminars and on-going programs in Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC), Writing in the Disciplines (WID), and write-to-learn strategies for faculty in all departments of the Zicklin School of Business and the Weissman School of Arts and Sciences
- Revise current program assessment and develop new discipline-specific assessments of program outcomes

As part of the CUE Initiative, CWFs (College Writing Fellows) assigned to Baruch and the Bernard L. Schwartz Communication Institute will continue to function much as the Institute's Communication Fellows in supporting CICs. In addition, however, CWFs will perform various specialized tasks as befitting their areas of expertise. CWFs will work collectively and independently on projects related to the development of CIC curricula, program assessment, instructional technology, and the CUNY Proficiency Exam (CPE). Some of these activities include:

CPE Workshops: Each semester, the fellows will organize and conduct workshops to aid students in preparing for the CPE. The workshops will focus on test-taking strategies and understanding the format of the exam. The Fellows will develop a more systematic approach to the CPE, which will enable students to become cognizant of their ability to write and think critically, to assess these abilities, and to learn about methods and available resources to improve them.

Assessment of Student Writing: The Fellows will continue to play an important role in the assessment of the writing component of the communication-intensive program. They will evaluate and record student responses to pre- and post-diagnostic writing prompts that are administered in all CICs at the beginning and the end of the semester.

Serving as liaisons to other academic service units: Fellows will coordinate the Institute's efforts in WAC with the activities of the College's other academic service units, including the Student Academic Consulting Center (SACC), the College's Writing Center, and the Office of Testing and Evaluation. They will also explore opportunities to form working relationships with the Office of Advisement and Orientation, College Now, and the Office of Institutional Research.

Serving as liaisons to academic departments within the Zicklin School of Business, the Weissman School of Arts and Sciences, and the School of Public Affairs. Assigned to individual departments, Fellows will aid in the development of discipline-specific WAC curricula and co-curricular programs.

Coordinating CIC support within existing programs: Fellows will perform various functions in the oversight of existing CIC programs in Business Policy, Fine and Performing Arts, Anthropology and Great Works.

Developing Online Writing Instruction components: As part of CUNY Central's Online Writing Intensive (OWI) program, Fellows will develop and support computer-mediated writing modules for upper-division major courses in the Zicklin School of Business.

In addition to the above, the Fellows will undertake various individual projects, including coordinating support for specific CICs, assisting in faculty development, creating a web-driven interface for assessments, advising faculty on WAC-related research projects, and advising student clubs and organizations on how to incorporate low-stakes writing into their activities.

7. General Education – Quantitative/Analytic Support

Quantitative and analytic skills are essential to a business education. Through discussions about assessment and general education, faculty members are increasingly exploring the lower level mathematics curriculum and requirements and their impact on future study and student success. The investigation will proceed on two fronts: strengthening the lower level courses and support mechanisms, such as tutoring, and to bring faculty members together to determine how quantitative skills are developed and assessed throughout the curriculum.

Central to the strengthening of the lower level mathematics curriculum will be the recruitment and hiring of a full-time administrator co-jointly with College Now with expertise in mathematics instruction and learning. This professional will have responsibilities overseeing mathematics tutorial support, working with mathematics faculty on supplemental instruction and the curriculum, and a charge to facilitate discussions at the high school level about students' mathematics preparation.

In addition, SACC will supply supplemental instruction to entry-level math courses for fall 2004 as phase two of a pilot. Five sections of MTH 2001, precalculus, will be assigned an SI (Supplemental Instructor) leader to attend all class lectures and to conduct three separate review sessions each week for the entirety of the semester, including finals week. Assessment will be conducted based on tracking academic performance throughout the semester and evaluations will be completed out by participating faculty, SI leaders, and students.

In Fall 2004 Baruch will again offer Mathematics 1030, a 2-credit and 4-hour college algebra course designed for students who have demonstrated freshman-level mathematics skills but are not yet prepared for precalculus. A rigorous assessment of MTH 1030 will examine student placement, performance and faculty satisfaction. Resources for supplemental instruction, tutoring and faculty developmental will be allocated if needed.

8. Development of the Engaged Student

For several years Baruch has used engagement as a measure of the quality of the academic experience for undergraduates. Engagement, to borrow from the NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement), is about student participation in programs and activities that institutions provide for their learning and personal development. Engagement examines behaviors by students and institutions that are associated with desired outcomes of college.

Over ninety percent of students entering Baruch College enroll with the intention of earning the BBA degree. It is crucial that students undergo an in-depth self-exploration leading to selecting a major as part of a life and career planning process. With pre-business curriculum requirements in place, students should begin this process no later than the second semester of their freshmen year. We have devised and piloted a multi-step process for all second-semester freshmen to aid student discovery.

All second semester freshmen were invited to take the Strong Vocation Interest Inventory. Students attended a ninety-minute interactive workshop where they received the results of their inventory, learned about the major and career decision-making process, and planned further exploration. Workshops were followed with a school-wide Major and Careers Fair featuring a series of panel discussions and one-on-one discussions with faculty advisors.

Once second-semester freshmen grades are known, students in danger of not meeting the BBA entrance requirements will be invited to attend workshops to examine their academic situation and explore possible alternative majors. Students will also receive guidance about appropriate courses to take in their sophomore year. We will also offer freshmen assistance with procuring internships for the summer and/or sophomore year.

The project requires hiring one full-time adjunct and the purchase of additional training and counseling materials. We will assess several objectives: success in placing students in internships, impact on the major and career decision-making process, impact of a professional experience on their academic performance, impact of the internship experience on future employability, and impact on retention, particularly of high achieving students.

9. Supports for At-Risk Groups

As in previous years Baruch will offer an intersession immersion targeted at continuing students. The Intersession Program will be a program for students who are ready to exit the ESL sequence but have not passed the CUNY/ACT, and for students who need to pass move out of the lower level mathematics sequence. Tutoring will be an integral part of the intersession immersion, both in one-on-one and in workshops.

Baruch closely tracks retentions rates. In recent years we have sharpened our focus on students who need additional support and have developed a series of programs and activities to assist this population.

For example, additional tutorial support is available for ESL students. In fact, much of the faculty development and tutorial support in the base mathematics and English classes focuses on students at risk for failure. At a larger level, a mid-semester early-warning report for freshman identifies and contacts students facing academic difficulties and provides them with opportunities to address issues quickly. The process is straightforward. At the sixth week of the term, all faculty members teaching in the freshmen blocks indicate which students are experiencing academic or other problems. The Advisement Center then contacts students and provide support, in conjunction with SACC and Student Development.

The Advisement Center provides dedicated support for freshmen placed on academic probation reducing the likelihood of their dismissal from the College. Students are assigned peer mentors and attend seven regularly scheduled meetings with the mentors and Academic Counseling Assistants (trained interns from area doctoral programs in counseling psychology). The model is based on a project currently in place for SEEK students at Baruch and an assessment of a pilot run last year. The Advisement Center also offers workshops for student groups with particular needs, i.e. international students.

Over the past two and a half years, SACC has developed into an award-winning peer support unit in the College mainly as a result of its cross-training program. SACC tutors demonstrate proficiency across the spectrum of academic disciplines, enabling them to support learning goals across the curriculum. A peer leadership program - PALS - will function as an outsourcing service to meet the ever-increasing demand from departments and support service offices to provide peer support for Learning Communities, Prelude to Success, student clubs, SEEK, student orientation, and other outsourcing needs. While the client department can compensate the peer, administrative costs would need support from CUE. Peers trained in study skill, time management, e-portfolio creation and management, test-taking skills, analytic, writing, and presentation skills will assist with the College's learning goals outside the realm of the needs of specific courses currently affiliated with SACC.

10. Culture of Assessment

The development and encouragement of good assessment practices is central to Baruch's coordinated freshman year program and is woven throughout our activities. Faculty and staff who submitted proposals to the program are required to develop assessment plans. A web site, <http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/firstyear/baruch-freshman-form.html> offers on-line information and support for assessment plans, and further support is provided in meetings and mailings. As Baruch gains more experience and knowledge of assessment practices, we will further integrate assessment plans, practices and outcomes.

Building on results from the NSSE, the College plans to administer an additional two national surveys of freshman, the benchmarking CIRP survey of entering freshmen that measures student expectations entering the institution, and the YFCY survey of the first year experience administered at the conclusion of the freshman year to assess experiential outcomes in comparison to expectations. These assessments should provide Baruch

College with a perspective on the first year experience here in relation to national norms and serve as a basis for future planning. Continuing to use these instruments for multiple years allows us to collect invaluable comparison data and identify trends.

In 2002-2003, Baruch College implemented standardized assessment planning and outcomes reporting as part of the application and approval process for allocation CFY funds to proposed projects. These efforts provided a foundation for expanding a culture of assessment at the College. To further this goal, we will enlarge the scope of the [Assessment@Baruch](#) website to encompass the expanded scope of CUE so that we may continue to educate faculty about outcomes assessment, provide hands-on guidance with the process, provide links to related sites, and report on institutional activities.