

Message from the President

March 12, 2020

Baruch College and CUNY Campuses to Remain Open

To the Members of the Baruch College Staff:

You are the backbone of Baruch College, and you make the institution run. We highly value the role you play; you help to make Baruch the outstanding institution that it is. And we want you all to remain healthy and safe during this coronavirus pandemic.

As you probably know, CUNY Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez announced yesterday a five-day instructional pause that will enable faculty and students to make the transition to distance education. At the same time, the Chancellor has made it clear that the University remains open—at least for the near-term future. As public institutions, the determination regarding when or if to close can be made *only* by the Governor (and the Mayor).

This means that, for the present, all of us who serve on the College staff—including, of course, the vice presidents, the deans, as well as the Provost and me—must continue to report to work and keep Baruch operating. At the same time, we understand that there are members of the staff who may have underlying health issues (such as compromised immune systems or respiratory problems) or who may be pregnant, and we are prepared to make special arrangements for those individuals. People who fall into any of these categories should discuss the matter, on a confidential basis, with their supervisor. I am also hereby instructing supervisors to be flexible regarding work hours so that people who wish to commute at non-rush hour times, to avoid densely packed trains and buses, may do so—though total weekly work hours must be maintained. Finally, I strongly encourage all supervisors to permit and encourage staff to “social distance” in their immediate workspace, wherever physically possible, to avoid potential disease transmission.

The situation we are dealing with is serious, and it is highly dynamic and changing rapidly. This could mean that the Governor might soon decide that it is necessary to close CUNY and SUNY. But until/unless he does so, we are obligated, as state employees, to report to work. I know that I can count on you to fulfill your responsibilities, and I repeat what I have said previously: **we are all in this together, and together, we will get through it.**

Sincerely,

Mitchel Wallerstein, PhD
President, Baruch College

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