

Undergraduate Student Government

Newman Vertical Campus 3-270
55 Lexington Ave, New York, NY 10010

✉ senate@usgbaruch.com

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Nov 7, 2023 | 📅 SENATE MEETING

Attendees: Senate

Meeting Date:	November 7th, 2023	Meeting Time:	5:30 PM - 6:42 PM
Location:	USG Conference Room	Recorder:	Adriana Cuca

— Attendees —

[LATE - Arrived 5:39 PM] Jessica Yauri President	Abdullah Mahdi Executive Vice President
Karen Guanga Executive Treasurer	Adriana Cuca Executive Secretary
Adelaide Ilyasov Vice President of Academic Affairs	Dave Olajide Vice President of Campus Affairs
Khairun 'Khair' Nisa Vice President of Legislative Affairs	Skyla Chan Vice President of Student Affairs
Asher Gonzalez Chair of Appeals	Amrutha Thirumalesh Chair of Clubs & Organizations
Bricen Fisher Chair of Finance	Aliyah Jara Chair of Graphic Design
Jessica Angamarca Chair of Marketing	Victor Martinez Representative Senator
Brianna Augustin Representative Senator	Emile Barhumi Representative Senator
JiaQi Wu Representative Senator	Jason Martinez Representative Senator
Kayla Hualpa Representative Senator	Shazia Hussain Representative Senator
Zena Ally Representative Senator	Christian Reyes Representative Senator
[VACANT]	

Passing of the Minutes

- Motion to Pass Senate Meeting #9 Minutes
 - 18-0-0

Reports

I. Alaina Gilligo | Vice President for Operations and Administration

- VP Gilligo was welcomed to the Senate by Executive Vice President, Abdullah Mahdi, to introduce herself, what she does at the college, and what her office does. She came to Baruch after a long career in government, almost 20 years in city and state government for New York. Most recently, she worked as the first Deputy Comptroller of the New York City's comptroller's office for eight years. Prior to this, she worked as the Chief of Staff for the Manhattan Borough President's office. Before this, VP Gilligo worked as a Policy and Communications Director in the New York State Assembly early on in her career. She really loved the operational side of her work in government, she pursued an opportunity to work at Gilbane Building Company, a construction management company, where she worked in strategic partnerships. She then applied to work at Baruch to head the management of funding for various departments at the college. At Baruch, VP Gilligo's division takes care of Public Safety, Human Resources, Facilities, which

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includes Buildings and Grounds, Conference Centers, that includes most event spaces, Finance, and more. She works to ensure that the needs of students and faculty are met as everyone on campus deserves support to succeed. VP Gilligo gave students the opportunity to ask her any questions such as:

- Question from Dave Olajide: One of the Campus Affairs initiatives for this year is to take steps towards updating Baruch's ID system to become a tap ID system. Most colleges have a system in which students can just tap their IDs for entry to their schools, to reduce crowd flow issues and for safety reasons. After speaking with Chief Curry, he explained that this is something he is looking to see happen at the school and recommended discussing this with Dean King. How do you think the school can move forward with this update? How would it be implemented into future capital projects?
 - A: This has definitely come up in the meetings in my office. I've only been here for a couple of months, there is still so much more to learn. I would honestly say that we have so many needs at Baruch, and you have to take a step back, assess them, and categorize them based on priority. What would affect life and safety? What existing resources do we have to meet these needs and where do we need new resources? I think I am in the phase of that assessment so that we are making decisions in the most strategic way possible. What is the most important priority? I think you are right, the school needs to be modern and maintain best practices. To your question about what we need to do to advance this discussion, I think understanding what it would cost, which I could look into. What would it take? How long would it take? Who do we need to work with? I think understanding that process and folding it into the conversation about what our priorities are.
- Question from Dave Olajide: I have been speaking about the elevators for this building, the equipment for them is obsolete and fixing them would be difficult without having to shut down the elevators as a whole. What would the process be like to make those repairs with school remaining in progress?
 - A: It goes back to priorities. If you look at 17 Lex, it is a heartbreak, and so you have to look at your infrastructure and decide where your priorities are. I think that we are in the process of doing that across the whole campus. The Facilities and the Buildings and Grounds team have come up with their top priorities on capital projects and their top priorities on basic maintenance of existing facilities. What I have asked them to do is to bucket it by what presents a risk to safety, start there and then go down. What potentially is the highest risk to disrupt academic operations? Would we have to shut a building down because we lack running water, for example? The President has asked for a holistic view, we have developed it and are now consulting CUNY and DASNY who are our partners,

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where CUNY funds everything we need and DASNY manages a lot of those capital needs. More importantly, they know our buildings, we are talking to them to make sure our priorities make sense to them as well. I have to then sit with the President and leadership to figure out if we need to hold on certain projects and do certain things first. I understand how paramount the issues with the elevators are. I have met extensively with our elevator maintenance company and learned that it is a rotation of failure and fix with our elevators because of the flaws in the function of the elevators. We can't rely on those fixes to last. My challenge, my mandate is, I need to make persuasive arguments to CUNY and DASNY about why this is so harmful and disruptive and why we need the funding and focus to execute the repairs we need. So, Phase 2 of the 17 Lex renovations, at this moment, does nothing to solve our elevators. I am discussing with them right now about how I don't want our community to wait years for Phase 2 to be done and our elevators are still not fixed. So, could we add those elevators to Phase 2? If not, could we make it a separate, but concurrent project? If so, how much would it cost? Once we know that, we have to change those priorities. I am immersed in those conversations to be able to come back to this community and give a coherent plan of what we are going to do. The bigger picture is that we are understaffed, I need to make a case for what we need to succeed and we are still operating with the barebones infrastructure from COVID-19. I need to tell the story of what is happening to us as a collective college.

- Q: In working with the Campus Affairs committee and Representative Senator, Kayla Hualpa, we have been gathering information from the student body on the issue of feminine hygiene products and menstrual products in the restroom. As of right now, there have been about 400 students who have completed the survey. This early data shows about 55% of students say that it is a financial burden to purchase menstrual products, 80% of students say they have or know someone who has been negatively impacted by the lack of menstrual products on campus, and 75% of students say that Baruch isn't doing enough to make these things accessible. It is a pretty holistic view of the issue, though the survey is still in progress. There are only three places in the Newman Vertical Campus where students can access menstrual products, the Health and Wellness Center, the Office of Student Life, and the Food Pantry. In the 17 Lex building there is nowhere to access such products. The goal of this project is to develop a resolution to present to and vote on by the USG. The removal of paper towels in the restrooms has led to that money being reallocated to other resources. Is there going to be a portion of the budget dedicated towards making feminine hygiene products accessible in our bathrooms and not random locations on campus? If not,

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is there anything that the student body needs to do in order to present this as a prominent issue?

- A: The data you have collected empowers your argument, it would help me if you shared what success looks like. I want to make sure I know what the ideal is. I have to do some homework to see if any solutions have been explored and I need to understand the context more to be able to answer the question. I very much want to, it would help me as a start to learn what you actually want to see.
- Follow-up question: Other schools like Hunter have been able to implement funding for these products through their student activity fee. The way Baruch's is structured does not allow us to dip into those funds and create this as an ongoing purchase, it only limits it to the decisions of the current USG, the next one would be able to just get rid of it if they wanted to. How could this be sustainable for our school?
- A: Maybe what you do is to start here and that gives us time to create a sustainable plan. I would love for this to be in place.
- Dean Art King: We need to figure out what Hunter did to implement this, our Health and Wellness Office can make some adjustments as a temporary fix, but not on a large scale.
- Q: Something that a lot of students have asked me before is about the escalators. There is a lot of foot traffic that happens because of the escalators, is it possible to switch the direction so that this can be decreased and students don't have to walk around the whole hallway to worsen crowd levels?
 - A: I would put that in the category of not the highest priority because there are much more urgent needs. We are due for a master planning review of our facilities, I would see this being something part of a longer plan. I don't know enough to answer just yet.
- Question from Brianna Augustin: I wanted to know how dorming and student housing plays into these budget discussions. The Baruch dorms have been having issues in terms of elevators, wifi, it's horrible. The space is shared with Hunter and several other programs. I know it is managed by a third party, but I wanted to know how Baruch facilitates that. It's becoming a real issue, working at the front desk, I hear a lot of student concerns and I am working with the other RAs to collect them.
 - A: If there is some write up of all of the frustrations, if you could share that with me and I'll bring it to the attention of the people who are a part of those conversations.
 - Follow-up from the audience: Just want to emphasize what was mentioned earlier by Brianna about Baruch being more involved with the dorms. As someone who is currently experiencing the problems with the third party, the situation is terrible. From the outside in, it may not seem the case, but

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dorming students are paying almost eight thousand dollars for housing and we have property being stolen, issues with safety at night, and more. I think this is something that should be addressed, the dorms are not always thought of when discussing the college's facilities, but at the price point we are paying it is expected for our living conditions to be improved. We have international students, students who are uncomfortable at home, and so on. The dorms are incredibly important to these students.

- Question from Khairun Nisa: I wanted to know how limited our resources are, you keep mentioning that there is a lack of resources.
 - In the big picture, Baruch is doing wonderfully, our enrollment is growing, our fundraising is reaching goals, we are succeeding in a lot of different ways. CUNY as a whole is struggling, the collective of the colleges is slowing down to preserve its resources. Money can't be freely spent and resources are not freely available. I am working to build better relations throughout CUNY to understand our needs better. Nothing can be done without thorough investigations and justifications for the decisions being made. There were a lot of cuts in the budget of my division, there are a lot of conversations to be had about where money would come from to fill in for those cuts. I have to ask questions like, what else can we do to bring more money in? We have to look into the existing resources and create a plan to justify more over time.
- Questions from Abdullah Mahdi: It's really exciting to have you here, I'm an operations major myself! When this role was vacant, there was a national search that the college did. The previous USG executive board and the current e-board assisted with the interview process which was great to be a part of. Are there any specific opportunities for student involvement or feedback when it comes to budgeting or resource allocation?
 - A: What would that look like to you?
 - Follow-up: I know for USG, we help manage the student activity fee and association budget, but when it comes to the tax levy budget we are not really allowed to touch that as students. When it comes to adding more faculty or more people in purchasing, what kind of input do the students have in these processes?
 - A: I don't know if students have a say in those conversations. I think it would be fantastic if we could explain and give you more knowledge about these dynamics. I think great ideas come from many different places, I welcome critical thought and ideas. I think having set priorities is empowering in order to understand what success looks like and what you would want those priorities to be. You meet with audiences that I might not be able to speak to, we could even brief you on things we as administrators would want to have talked about with those individuals.

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- Dean King: If I could jump in, you are the voice, you are the leadership to bring the needs of the students to our attention. You all have access to speak with public officials, school administrators. You tell us what you want us to prioritize and turn our attention to.
- Question from Abdullah Mahdi: The college is currently executing the Strategic Plan, with all the new changes and streamlining, how does that fall under your jurisdiction? What are some exciting things to look forward to?
 - A: I'm excited that two of the pillars of the Strategic Plan are under my division. When it is front and center and the collective is saying that one thing is important, that means I have to provide resources for those things. There is currently an idea for an Intranet, which I think is a huge opportunity for the college. Through the building of an Intranet, there are ways to better use technology or automate and streamline processes. I would also say emergency preparedness. With the network outage and flooding that has happened in the time that I've been here, I think there is a real opportunity for us to revisit all of our processes and procedures, especially with the changes in leadership at Baruch and CUNY.
- Dean Art King: Just an update on space in the school, we are still looking for a larger prayer space for our Muslim students. It remains difficult, but we are looking into multiple options and speaking with Damli and the Office of Student Life for their input on this matter. Also, we are looking into cafeteria space. It is very hard to find vendors for a cafeteria as they don't often make profit because of the competition with other food spots in the area. We are working with other CUNY schools to see what methods work best for them and see how we may be able to apply those practices at Baruch.
- Q: The school has issues with inconsistent air conditioning and heating. While it would most likely be a long-term project, is it possible to establish a centralized AC and heating system?
 - A: There is funding that the state has around sustainability for opportunities to tap into that funding for a centralized air system. I'm not educated enough on how achievable it is in the near future, but it is something we are looking into.

II. Representatives from the Office of Alumni Relations

- The Office of Alumni Relations is hosting a CUNYTuesday social media event in which Baruch student stories that show how their experience at Baruch has positively impacted them to inspire maximum giving for CUNYTuesday. The CUNYTuesday campaign is an annual CUNY wide "Giving Tuesday" campaign organized across all CUNY schools and colleges with the purpose of driving donations to support student activities or student programs. We are looking for five student leaders willing to share their stories in a short video or LinkedIn post. Please let us know which students will participate by Friday, November 10th.

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Unfinished Business

- I. Zena Ally | Representative Senator
 - A. Last week was the Make It All Happen event in which I had fundraised for two organizations, Blossoms of Guyana and Save the Children. I served snacks and Yaya's, and in total raised over \$550 between the two organizations!

New Business

- I. Kayla Hualpa | Representative Senator
 - A. The Moon Project is going on this week and I just wanted to invite more Table members to volunteer. I have received concerns about the number of men that are tabling, and I understand that not all of the students who menstruate are female identifying, but I would like this to be a female led project. I just want our students to feel comfortable asking questions to our tabling volunteers.
 1. Damali Tolson | Director of the Office of Student Life: I think it would be empowering if there are representatives of all gender identities present. It would be helpful, instead of saying not to have guys participating, to take it as a teachable moment for all volunteers.
 2. Dave Olajide | VP of Campus Affairs: Reach out to myself, Spirit, or Kayla to have more volunteers. I have debriefed my committee's volunteers on what they should say when students come up to them, but we will definitely make sure more women will be up there to explain things as well.
- II. Khairun Nisa | VP of Legislative Affairs
 - A. There is going to be a Crafting Queer History event on Thursday, if anyone is available to help me get set up, please let me know!
- III. Happy late Birthday to our Vice President of Student Affairs, Skyla!

Adjournment

- I. Motion to Adjourn Senate Meeting #10 at 6:42 pm.
 - 18-0-0