



NEWSLETTER
FALL 2024
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CURIOUS LEARNERS, CONFIDENT LEADERS

As we near the end of 2024, our students, faculty, and leadership are looking to the future with confidence, thanks in large part to your loyal and generous support.

At Baruch, our 17 Lex Society continues to strengthen the programs, people, and priorities that move our mission forward, creating new opportunities for our students to excel and thrive as curious learners and confident leaders. Thank you for all that your support has made possible!





BARUCH'S UNSTOPPABLE IMPACT

In September 2023, **President S. David Wu** unveiled Baruch's 2023–2028 strategic plan. One year later, we sat down with President Wu to learn more about Baruch's progress and achievements—and where his sights are set next.

17 Lex members are among our most loyal and generous donors. What should they know about where Baruch stands today, one year into its five-year strategic plan?

First and foremost, 17 Lex members should know that we've made significant strides across all four of our priority areas. What does that look like?

We've been laser-focused on enhancing student success by embedding even more hands-on learning experiences into our curriculum. One of these exciting initiatives is the launch of the *Experiential and Community Engaged Learning* (ExCEL) program. This initiative creates immersive learning opportunities,

empowering our students to apply what they learn in the classroom to real-world situations. We're not just talking about using cutting-edge technology—we're building a network where our students can connect with alumni and industry leaders, forming valuable professional relationships.

On the teaching front, we're transforming the way we educate. Our new online MBA and MPH programs are already making waves, and we're supporting groundbreaking research in areas like climate change, AI, and data science. Our students are actively participating in these efforts, solving real-world problems in dynamic, unstructured environments. In fact, we've established an annual *Student Research Symposium* that has become a campus-wide event, drawing immense participation.

Baruch has always been a vibrant, diverse community, and we've worked hard to celebrate and strengthen that diversity. This year, we've hosted workshops and

programs that spark meaningful dialogue, encourage respect, and promote a culture of inclusivity. And let me tell you, the faculty-student basketball game was a huge hit—it's all part of fostering an engaged and lively campus environment.

Infrastructure-wise, we're thinking long-term. The expansion to 63 Madison Avenue is a huge step forward as we prepare for the major renovations at the Field Building at 17 Lex. We're setting the stage for the complete revamping and redesign of floors two through sixteen, and we are actively seeking state capital funding to make it happen. These improvements are essential for keeping up with the growing needs of our community and creating spaces where students can thrive.

That's quite a lot of ground covered! So, what's next for Baruch in 2025?

We've got big plans! When it comes to student success, we're looking to integrate AI content across multiple curricula, ensuring our students have the tools to compete in the rapidly evolving job market. We're also revamping our First-Year Seminar to provide more experiential learning opportunities, helping students take full advantage of everything New York City has to offer.

On the teaching and research side, we're developing a more systematic approach to integrating technology into our curriculum, making sure students are tech-savvy and workforce-ready. We want to lead the way in producing graduates who not only understand the latest innovations but also know how to apply them.

We're also deepening our commitment to respectful dialogue. Our new *Respectful Dialogue Series* is equipping students and faculty with the tools they need to navigate complex issues and engage in constructive dialogues, from understanding how to disagree respectfully to appreciating perspectives different from their own.

This year, CUNY is recognizing several additional holiday traditions, and we'll be celebrating our community's diversity with new campus events. And, as we head into the next phase of the 17 Lex renovation and begin long-term planning for 63 Madison, we're gearing up for some truly exciting transformations.

UNSTOPPABLE ASPIRATIONS

Maximizing Students' Potential to Succeed:

Increase access to excellence and empower all students to succeed.

Promote Excellence in Research and

Impactful Teaching: Foster teaching and research symbiotically to achieve local and global impact.

Strengthen Our Collaborative and Engaged Community:

Cultivate a thriving campus community where students, staff, and faculty feel a sense of belonging and experience opportunities for connection and growth.

Optimize Operations and Infrastructure:

Enhance operational and fiscal effectiveness while improving physical and information infrastructure to meet growing needs of the community.

With so much on the horizon, what role do 17 Lex members play in generating this “unstoppable impact?”

The title of our strategic plan, “Together, we are unstoppable,” isn't just a slogan—it's a reality. None of this progress would be possible without the passion, generosity, and support of our alumni and friends. You are our champions, opening doors for current students, providing mentorship, and ensuring that a Baruch education continues to be one of the best values in the nation.

For the second year in a row, Baruch was named by the *Wall Street Journal* the #1 Best Value in the U.S. That's not just because of the quality education we provide—it's a reflection of the remarkable achievements of our graduates—our alumni. And that success is made possible by those who came before them: the 17 Lex members, who have always been there to lend a hand and pave the way. ■

CREATIVITY

The Mishkin Gallery is unlike any other place on Baruch's campus—it's part classroom, part laboratory, a place where art and history coexist, according to Alaina Claire Feldman, the Gallery's director and curator.

"Art isn't just about pretty pictures; it's also about content and meaning," she says. "That's why I try to bring in art from different geographies and time frames, which I hope will expand our students' understanding—not just of the past, but of the present."

Named after **Sidney Mishkin '34**, the Mishkin Gallery is more than a space; it's an experience, a place where people from all different backgrounds and interests come together to experience art. And that includes audiences of different backgrounds, right here at Baruch, Feldman says.

"The gallery provides an opportunity for experiential learning," says Feldman. "It's one thing to learn something in a book, but it's another to stand in front of an artwork with your professor and peers."

Tamae Vassell MA '25, a Nagelberg Fellow for the 2023-24 academic year, witnessed powerful interactions firsthand. Vassell, who spearheaded the Gallery's integration of Bloomberg Connects (*see sidebar*), recalls how the Gallery started new conversations and promoted curiosity among students and faculty.

"Professors bring their students as a way to challenge them to think deeper," she says. "Watching students interact with the pieces and ask questions to learn more builds a type of cultural understanding and awareness. It's also a reminder that we all look at art from different perspectives."

In addition to fostering inclusivity and dialogue, Feldman remains focused on making the Gallery a warm and welcoming environment

for the Baruch community, especially considering that, for many students, this may be their first encounter with an art gallery.

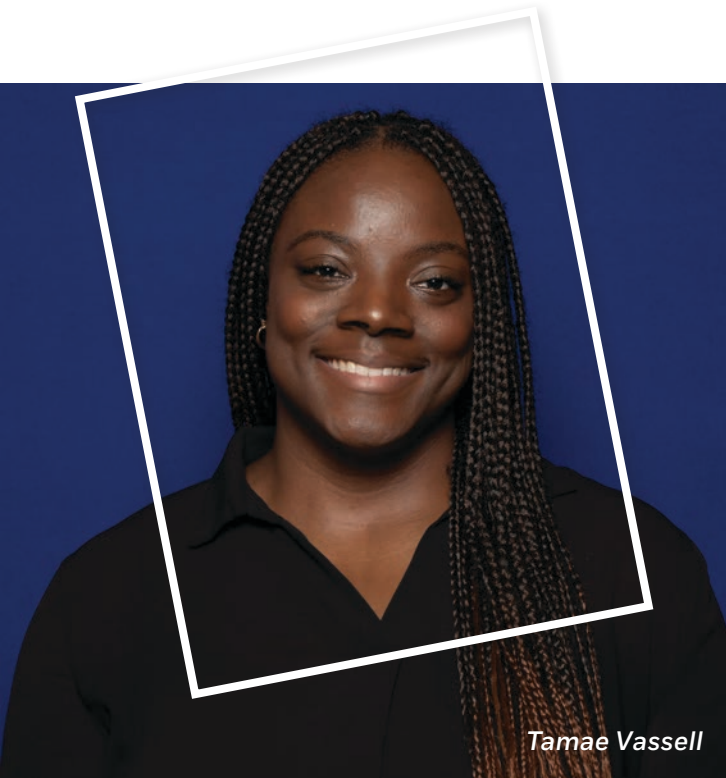
Feldman details how the campus itself reflects that commitment to inclusivity, with art adorning the hallways with a host of international artists hailing from Puerto Rico, Japan, Germany, China, Haiti, Mexico, and more.

"A lot of our students are immigrants or first-generation college students, so it's important that our collection, programs, and exhibitions reflect the places and contexts they and their families hail from," she says.

Experiencing art is an opportunity for students in our community to understand a different past but also to imagine a unique future, according to Feldman.

"When they graduate to become future lawyers, politicians, scientists, bankers, and so much more, it's important that they are inspired by what they've learned at Baruch to imagine what's next." ■

KNOWS NO BOUNDS AT BARUCH'S MISHKIN GALLERY



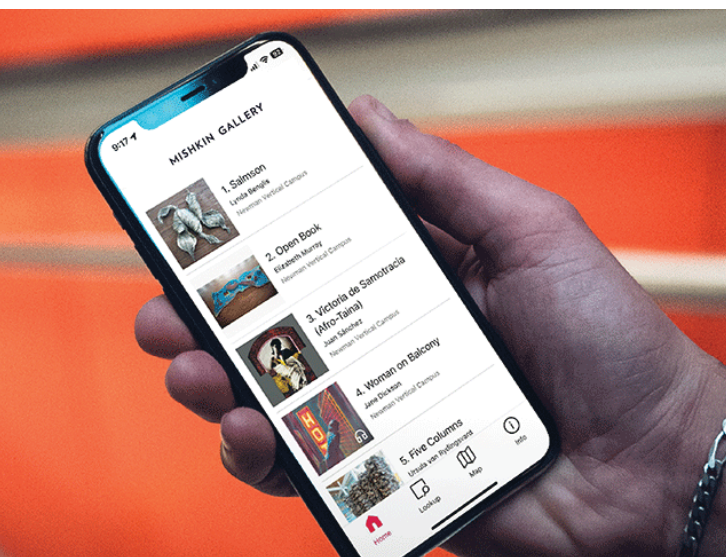
Tamae Vassell



TRANSFORMING THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

The Mishkin Gallery is now among more than 450 arts and cultural institutions from around the world that are part of **Bloomberg Connects**. Through this free app, users have the opportunity to explore interactive digital guides of the Mishkin Gallery on their phones anytime and anywhere, making the visitor experience even more accessible and preserving its rich collection for future generations.

Tamae Vassell, a recent Nagelberg Fellow who organized the Mishkin Gallery's app content, said this is an exciting moment for Baruch's art museum: "I look forward to people interacting with Mishkin Gallery through the app and hope they enjoy their digital experience."



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17 LEX MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: LUZ D. LIEBESKIND BBA '85, EMS '08

OPENING A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES

Luz D. Liebeskind wears many hats—and she has the titles to prove it. Liebeskind is a dual-degree holder, accomplished executive, passionate volunteer, generous philanthropist, and as of July 1, president of the Baruch College Fund.

“I’ve always said I wouldn’t be where I am without a Baruch College education,” says Liebeskind, who currently serves as chief financial officer at UJA-Federation of New York, where she oversees an annual budget of approximately \$225 million and an endowment of more than \$1 billion.

Liebeskind, who graduated with her bachelor’s in accounting in 1985 before returning for her executive master’s degree in finance in 2008, was a first-generation college student who immigrated from the Dominican Republic at the age of 16. Despite commuting from her home in Washington Heights, Liebeskind was an active member of the Baruch student body from the start, serving

as president of the Spanish Club and as a member of Beta Alpha Psi, among other organizations.

“I know that Baruch can change the trajectory of a student’s life—of a family’s life,” she says. “In addition to the education, it was the mentorship, the guidance, and the career development that I gained that enabled me to connect with top accounting firms and secure my dream job.”

“It’s why I’m so committed to giving back any way I can,” adds Liebeskind.

And that is a promise she has certainly delivered on. A member of the Board of Trustees since 2000, Liebeskind continues to pay forward the same generosity she received by mentoring and hiring students, contributing as a guest speaker, connecting with Baruch students and alumni, and contributing philanthropically through the Elsa and Nicolas Vargas Scholarship, established in honor of her parents.

“Baruch students are driven and motivated and want to succeed,” says Liebeskind. “When alumni are present and offering themselves in whatever way they can, it opens a world of possibilities for our students.”

Now, in her new role, Liebeskind is looking forward to having a front row seat on Baruch’s continued journey to the top, building on the institution’s strengths to prepare a new generation of leaders to leave their mark on the world.

“President Wu has laid out an impressive and ambitious strategic plan to ignite our momentum and increase our recognition, cementing Baruch as a leading institution,” Liebeskind says.

“Our students are unstoppable because they have the resources to reach higher and achieve more, thanks to the generosity and commitment of BCF donors and alumni,” she adds. ■

CELEBRATING MARXE: 30 YEARS

Since 1994, the Austin W. Marxe School of Public and International Affairs has served as a hub of knowledge about societies and policies, and today, remains New York City's only public graduate school dedicated to public affairs.

In recognition of this historic 30th anniversary, we asked, what makes the Marxe community unstoppable?



"Here, you'll find economists collaborating with political scientists, historians, and communication scholars, as well as people working in areas from immigration to housing and so much more. The school truly exemplifies interdisciplinarity and cross-pollination in a way I haven't seen in many other places. What you end up discovering is that you have **common ground and common cause with so many people** who, without these walls and divides collapsed, you might have never met."

Don Waisanen, PhD
Professor



"The Marxe School is the epicenter of opportunity for students interested in law, politics, political science, economics, nonprofit management, public affairs, and so much more. I've already been able to work for organizations like the Robin Hood Foundation, the New York City Economic Development Corporation, and the office of Senator Charles E. Schumer, **each experience bringing me one step closer to helping those who are less fortunate receive the resources they need to prosper.**"

Jamal Mark '25
Major: Public Affairs



"Baruch to me is the ultimate avenue of opportunity—embracing the best of public service ideals, while providing excellent educational and experiential opportunities for a diversity of students. **Marxe students are current or emerging leaders who make a difference now and will continue to contribute to society in the future.** They are serious about their personal development and their commitment to improving life for others."

Janet Dewart Bell, EMPA '99
17 Lex Member



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2025 BERNARD BARUCH DINNER

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2025

ZIEGFELD BALLROOM



For more information about
the 2025 Dinner or to purchase
tickets, scan the QR code.