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BARUCH

ALUMNI MAGAZINE



PROGRAMS THAT OPEN DOORS

CELEBRATING MILESTONES IN STUDENT SUPPORT

Baruch COLLEGE | CUNY

BARUCH ALUMNI MAGAZINE

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Alumni and Friends,

A new academic year brings fresh energy to Baruch—and this year, special reasons to celebrate. In this issue, we mark milestones for programs that have opened doors for generations of students: 30 years of the Starr Career Development Center and 20 years since its naming; 25 years of Executives on Campus; and 20 years of the Max Berger Pre-Law Fellows Program and Alpha Phi Omega Scholarship, among others. These anniversaries invite us to celebrate the people behind these programs and imagine what we can make possible together in the years ahead.

Our alumni are central to that story. You share your time, experience, and resources to help students discover their strengths, build confidence, and prepare to lead in a rapidly changing world. A conversation with a mentor or an opportunity to explore a profession can change a student's sense of what is possible. I invite you to build on this work by supporting an existing program or bringing us an idea for a new one.

Your commitment, alongside the talent and dedication of our faculty and staff, continues to earn Baruch recognition. This fall, *U.S. News & World Report* ranked Baruch the #1 public college in New York State and #1 for innovation. The Princeton Review named Baruch the top public college in the Northeast for return on investment and #1 in the region for alumni network and career placement. In its inaugural college rankings, *TIME* placed Baruch top-50 among all colleges and universities in the U.S. These distinctions reflect the promise at the heart of our mission: an outstanding education that creates lasting opportunity.

You will also meet Nukhet Sandal, PhD, our new Dean of the Weissman School of Arts and Sciences. Her Q&A offers a glimpse into the perspective and energy she brings to Baruch. I am delighted to welcome her as she leads Weissman and helps our community engage thoughtfully in a complex world.

I also had the pleasure of celebrating this year's Alumni Changemakers, whose work spans across international disaster and emergency medicine, maternal healthcare, higher education, and women's empowerment. Their achievements remind us how far a Baruch education can reach—and how much good our graduates bring to the world.

Throughout this issue of *Baruch Alumni Magazine*, you will see what we accomplish together. I hope that these stories inspire you to stay connected and help write our next chapter. The Office of Alumni Relations and Volunteer Engagement is here to help you find a meaningful way to take part.

Thank you for all you make possible for Baruch and for the generations of Bearcats to follow.

Sincerely,

S. DAVID WU
President, Baruch College



FEATURE STORY

AN ENDURING COMMITMENT

CELEBRATING MILESTONES IN STUDENT SUPPORT

BY SALLY FAY

Built on a legacy of making educational opportunities accessible to a diverse student body, Baruch College has a well-deserved reputation for fostering student success. The College continues to earn top rankings and accolades as a driving force in promoting the social and economic mobility of its graduates.

But the framework for success isn't just built in the classroom; career guidance, financial support, and access to opportunities all play a role. It's a reality that the College has long addressed through numerous and varied student-centered programs and initiatives, many of impressive duration. Here we highlight several of them as they commemorate recent or imminent milestone anniversaries.

FINANCIAL WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION AT BAURCH

Soon to celebrate its 25th anniversary, the Financial Women's Association (FWA) Mentoring Program at Baruch is built on the synergy between Baruch College and the FWA, an influential New York–based professional organization founded in 1956 to support the career advancement of women in finance-related sectors. The program offers one-to-one mentoring by FWA members for about 40 Baruch business and accounting majors each year.

Betsy Werley, a volunteer program co-lead since 2014, helped launch the collaboration in 2002 during her tenure as FWA president. Baruch, she says, was identified as "a perfect partner to fulfill FWA's mission of advancing all women in finance, given its prominent business curriculum, diverse students, and social mobility impact."

In 2005 financial powerhouse BMO provided transformative funding, enabling the FWA mentoring program to offer stipends, needs-based scholarships, and study abroad support. Since its inception the program has engaged more than 100 mentors and has "graduated" some 450 alumna mentees.

Herself a mentor of 11 Baruch students representing eight countries and

three continents, Werley describes the FWA-Baruch partnership as a win-win scenario. Mentors experience what she calls a "gratifying and often addictive opportunity to partner with a talented student and shape the future of American business."

Adeola Akinridade ('05) has experienced the FWA mentoring program from both the mentee and mentor perspectives. Currently a partner in EisnerAmper's Financial Advisory Services Group, she credits her mentor with providing "invaluable guidance and support as I navigated career decisions and considered full-time job options." Her experience as a mentee ultimately inspired her to become a mentor in 2019. "I've had the privilege of being paired with four incredible mentees who have since become dear friends," says Akinridade.

FINANCIAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

The Financial Leadership Program (FLP), which in 2026 celebrated its 20th year, began with a question that was both practical and deeply personal to many alumni: Why weren't educated, hardworking, and deserving Baruch students getting hired for front-office positions on Wall Street?

Among those wrestling with that question was Christine Li-Auyeung ('00, '02, EMS '09). Perceiving a need for a bridge to help students develop the skills and confidence to turn their potential into opportunity, she worked with the Starr Career Development Center to launch what was originally called the Wall Street Careers Program and, while pursuing her master's degree in financial statement analysis and securities valuation, directed its first three cohorts.

"We saw students with tremendous potential who needed guidance, exposure, and someone to help them see what was possible," says Li-Auyeung, an operational risk manager at an international bank who continues to serve as a program advisor.



The FLP program prepares students for front-office positions on Wall Street.

"FLP remains a meaningful part of a Baruch education because it helps talented students translate their academic potential into career confidence, opportunity, and long-term professional relationships." —Marietta Bottero

Early cohorts received training in financial modeling and valuation, résumé writing, interview preparation, and professional conduct. The global financial crisis of 2008 led the program to adopt a broader focus, reflected in its current name. Over the past 20 years, the program has served more than 500 Baruch students.

Says Marietta Bottero, program manager since 2014, "FLP's lasting impact is reflected in the alumni who have built successful careers across financial services and continue to support the next generation."

ALPHA PHI OMEGA SCHOLARSHIP

Leadership, friendship, and service to others are the guiding principles of coeducational national service fraternity Alpha Phi Omega (APO). Though the Baruch chapter, Gamma Delta, is no longer active, those principles endure among its members, most notably through the alumni-initiated APO Scholarship, awarded annually for the past 20 years.

The scholarship is a tribute to the strong bonds the members formed under Gamma Delta's first charter, which was granted in 1939. Although the chapter became dormant in the mid-1960s, the brothers' connection to one another and their dedication to helping others endured throughout their postgraduate life. At a reunion in 2005, several alumni lobbied for a scholarship as a way to honor departed brethren and give back to the College.

Some 90 donors representing three decades of APO alumni contributed to establish the group scholarship, which was officially endowed in 2008. Its current endowment, which stands at more than $700,000, supports the awarding of scholarships each year.

"The guys who got the scholarship off the ground, led by Marty Bodian ('52) and Ed Ruzinsky ('54), saw it as a way for us to show our gratitude," recalls APO member Bob Becker ('57), an early and ongoing contributor to the fund. "We'd gotten a great education, completely for free."

The renewed visibility of APO and its mission inspired a group of Baruch students to recharter the Gamma Delta chapter in 2013. "The original chapter hadn't been active for decades, yet they still had enough brotherhood

and camaraderie to come together and fundraise," says Viktor Bunin ('14), who was president of the reactivated chapter as well as a recipient of an APO Scholarship.

Bunin, who currently creates new products for crypto platform Coinbase, credits the award with helping him focus on his studies and ultimately go into consulting. Though the chapter fell victim to the disruptions of the Covid pandemic, Bunin says its spirit remains alive among its alumni. "APO is all about taking initiative to make the world a better place," he says.

EXECUTIVES ON CAMPUS

The 25-year tenure of the Executives on Campus (EOC) mentoring program at Baruch is a testament to ongoing alumni commitment to the College and its mission.

EOC was started in 2001 by five alumni who'd been classmates decades earlier. Reminiscing that the one thing they'd lacked as students was having someone to help prepare them for the world that awaited them after graduation, they formed the mentoring program as a way to better equip today's students for postgraduate success.

Today, EOC serves about 1,000 students per year and boasts 500 active mentors, some 85 percent of whom are Baruch alumni. Mentors meet one-on-one with students to share their firsthand experiences and offer guidance on networking, interviewing, and other essential business skills. Over the years, the program has expanded its content, adding virtual mentoring opportunities that connect students with mentors beyond the tri-state area and initiatives such as "Mentor for a Morning/Evening" sessions.

The sustained commitment of program mentors is proof that Baruch students aren't the only ones who find value in the EOC experience. Recently retired investment banking executive Andres "Andy" Bello ('77), who's been mentoring students for nearly a decade, says he feels a kinship with participating students, many of whom are immigrants and first-generation college students like he was.

"It's really fulfilling to be able to play a small part in their lives as they work to determine what that path from Baruch to the working world looks like for them," he says.

MAX BERGER PRE-LAW PROGRAM

Soon to celebrate its first 20 years, the Max Berger Pre-Law Program at Baruch College is a comprehensive law school preparation and career development initiative with a proven record of success.

The program, established through the generosity of alumnus and attorney Max Berger ('68, LLD-Hon. '19), delivers mentoring, academic preparation, professional exposure, and financial resources with the aim to help participants explore the legal field and navigate the law school admissions process. Since its inception in 2007, it has assisted more than 2,500 students and alumni in applying to law school—as well as thousands of others through advisement sessions and events—and provided upward of $500,000 in funding for LSAT prep, unpaid legal internships, and law school application expenses.

Guen Park ('13) is one of the many Baruch students who found career clarity thanks to the program. An accounting major, he was struggling to decide whether law was the right career path for him. "Without any lawyers in my family or network, the profession felt unfamiliar," he explains. "Through mentorship, panels with practicing attorneys, and connections with Baruch alumni, the program provided a firsthand look at a career in law."

Park ultimately attended Columbia Law School and built a career as a tax attorney, recently joining Kirkland & Ellis as a tax partner.

For Berger, the program's growth has been extraordinary. "In our 20 years, we have succeeded beyond our most optimistic expectations because we have the most motivated students on the planet, and the long-term director of the program, Tina Coco, is our secret sauce," he says. " I look forward to the program continuing to thrive and our alumni coming back to Baruch to mentor our students for many years to come."



Max Berger (center) chats with pre-law students.

THE WASHINGTON SEMESTER

For the past 15 years, The Washington Semester (TWS) has provided a select group of high-achieving graduate students with the unique opportunity to gain impactful insight into the public policy process while living, studying, and working in Washington, DC. The signature program of Baruch's Marxe School of Public and International Affairs, TWS combines graduate coursework with the real-world experience and networking opportunities unique to the nation's capital.



The Washington Semester 2025 cohort

During the semester-long program, participants earn credits toward completion of their master's degree through academic seminars on policymaking and intergovernmental relations while also undertaking an intensive, high-value internship in legislative offices on Capitol Hill, federal agencies, or nonprofit organizations.

So far more than 125 students have participated in the program, which offers career-shaping opportunities to expand their knowledge and to connect with policymakers. Notes Yvette LaGonterie (MPA '96), adjunct lecturer and TWS's faculty director, "This experience is helping them become the future leaders we need in the public sector."

BARUCH'S STARR CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Baruch's Starr Career Development Center, celebrating two major milestones, has grown into a recognized leader in the development and delivery of career readiness programming, experiential learning, and innovative initiatives.

The Career Development Center was created 30 years ago to merge the College's job placement and counseling services into a holistic center providing guidance to students at all stages of their academic journey. A transformational multimillion-dollar gift from the Starr Foundation 20 years ago endowed the center (thereafter the Starr Career Development Center, or Starr) and enabled expansion of staffing and programs.

A panoply of Starr initiatives have been launched over the years in response to the ever-evolving landscape of career development, says Ellen Stein, PhD, part of the original center team and its director from 2016 through June 2026.

Recently appointed assistant VP overseeing the newly created Office of Career and Industry Partnerships, Stein adds that the Starr Center is poised to play a key role in delivering even more impactful career development initiatives. Stein's new appointment and the rehousing of Starr within her office reflect the College's commitment to increase students' potential for professional success.

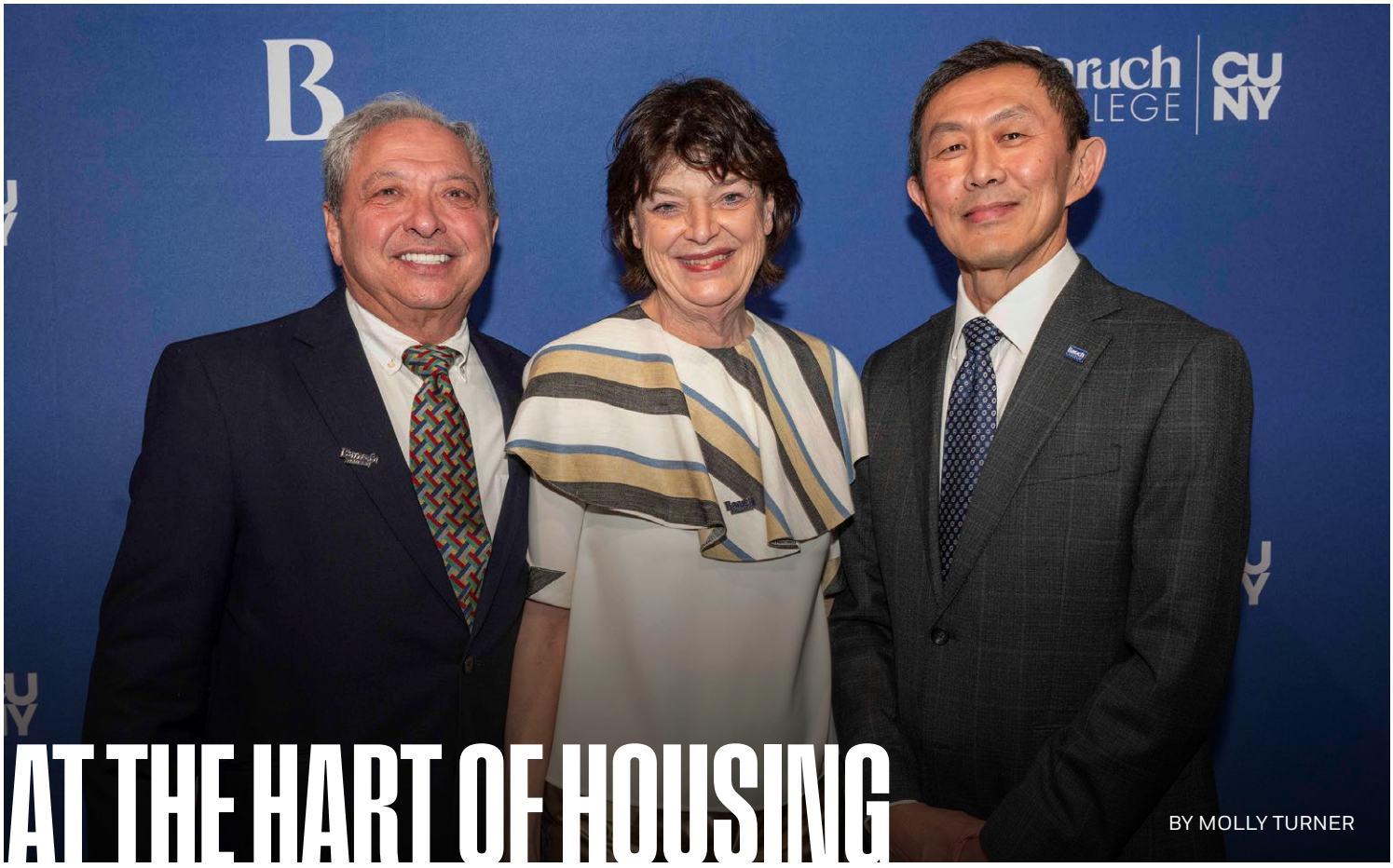
"In addition to the outstanding academics at Baruch, the programs, services, tools, and support provided by the Starr Career Development Center are among the most significant ingredients in the secret sauce that fuels Baruch students' success." — Ellen Stein, center director, 2016–26

The College's in-process innovations include the CUNY Beyond Program, designed to increase the connection between classroom learning and meaningful career pathways; the Next Level Student Success Program to enhance the student experience at all stages within their academic journey; and Baruch's AI Leadership Initiative, which aims to equip students with the skills necessary to navigate an increasingly AI-centric career search process.

Starr's influence on graduates' positive career outcomes owes much to the support it's received from the College community, notes Patricia Imbimbo, PhD, director of the center from its inception to 2016. "From the beginning, the center was assisted by Baruch alumni who worked very hard to open avenues typically closed to students at public colleges," she says.

LIFE-CHANGING SUPPORT

The initiatives featured on these pages are a reflection of the dedication of Baruch alumni, staff, and supporters to nurturing students' potential and fostering productive engagement with the world at large. They, along with many more programs throughout the College, have provided decades of life-changing support for students, opening doors, unlocking potential, and building tomorrow's leaders. Here's to many more milestone years!



AT THE HART OF HOUSING

BY MOLLY TURNER

Baruch Launches Innovative Program to Address Housing Affordability

As part of its mission to educate student leaders to positively transform their communities, Baruch College is launching the Housing Affordability, Research, and Transformation (HART) program to address one of the most pressing societal needs in New York City and beyond: affordable housing.

The HART program is based in the Austin W. Marxe School of Public and International Affairs and funded by a partnership between the College and donors **Gary Tannenbaum ('70)** and Baruch College Fund chair **Helen Mills**.

While Marxe has taught a course on housing policy in its Master of Public Administration program for over 15 years, the HART program will expand curriculum, research, and experiential learning to teach students how to create and apply innovative AI-powered solutions to the affordable housing crisis. It will also host a lecture series and establish a chair in Housing Policy and Practice, housed within Marxe.

Mills says she was drawn to give to HART because affordable housing is "one of New York City's most urgent challenges." She adds, "The program gives Baruch students the opportunity to work on solutions that can make a real difference in people's lives."

The HART program's goals also focus heavily on artificial intelligence, including a graduate concentration in affordable housing and AI for Marxe's new Master of Science in City Planning and a partnership with the Baruch AI Hub. This partnership will ensure students learn how to utilize AI-powered tools like predictive modeling or assistive bots to address critical issues in real time.

"What appealed to me about HART is its practical approach," says Tannenbaum, "bringing students, faculty, and the real estate community together to address the very real challenge of creating more affordable housing in New York."

"We are so fortunate to have donors like Gary Tannenbaum and Helen Mills who share our commitment to public impact and student success," says Marxe Dean Sherry Ryan. "Their generosity will allow Marxe students to engage directly with one of New York City's most urgent challenges while developing skills needed to pursue careers in housing planning and community development."

HAT TRICK FOR STUDENT ENTREPRENEUR

BY SARA J. WELCH



Popped Up!, a digital app launched by Baruch student entrepreneur **My Anh Phan ('28)**, recently won all three startup competitions across CUNY.

The first of its kind, Popped Up! offers live, crowdsourced updates on pop-up marketing events across New York City. Phan got the idea for the app after frequenting local pop-ups.

"I started following pop-up accounts on social media and became an avid pop-up goer. Then I was like, 'Why is there no app?'"

Phan wanted a centralized platform with useful information on pop-ups across the city that would include real-time updates, such as, 'How long is the line?' or 'Have they run out of free samples?' But when she couldn't find one, she created it herself.

After learning basic coding and partnering with a developer at another CUNY college, Popped Up! was born.

The app won two startup competitions in a single day: the CUNY-wide Baruch CEO Pitch Competition at the Lawrence N. Field Center for Entrepreneurship, where Phan and her team took home $5,000, and the CUNY Clash Ideas Competition, where they snagged $10,000. A few days later, they won $15,000 in the women and tech category at the Zahn Innovation Center Venture Incubator and Competition at City College. They didn't waste any time putting that $30,000 to use: As of September, Popped Up! is available as a free app for both iPhone and Android.

"I couldn't have done it without the Field Center and the Executive Director, Dr. Marlene Leekang," she reflects.

"My first stop on campus is always the Field Center, literally. My first startup, Bearcat Thrift, was incubated there. Marlene has been a mentor. I'm very grateful there's a space like this on campus."



ONLINE LEARNING, REAL-WORLD MILESTONE

At Commencement 2026, Baruch celebrated its first batch of graduates who completed fully online degrees—a total of 64 new alumni who graduated from either the online MBA, online MS in Marketing, or online MS in Artificial Intelligence and Business Analytics programs. Many of the graduates attended the ceremony in person at the Barclays Center, meeting each other for the first time.

The new crop of alumni hailed from a diverse range of locations, including New York City, Albany, Long Island, San Francisco, CA and Summerville, SC.

"The online program was so cohesive, and everyone really looked out for each other," says Navkaren Singh (MBA '26), one of the new graduates. "Hands down, it was a great experience."

Scan the QR code to learn more about Baruch's online programs!

BUILDING BRIDGES



A Conversation with New Weissman Dean Nukhet Sandal

BY MEGHAN GOFF

Nukhet Sandal became Dean of Baruch College's Weissman School of Arts and Sciences on July 1, arriving with a scholar's eye for how people and societies connect—and a first-generation immigrant's firsthand understanding of what an education like Baruch's can make possible.

We sat down with her to talk about that journey and why she believes Weissman's future runs through its alumni.

Welcome to Baruch! Can you share more about what drew you to the College?

I grew up in Turkey in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious family. That experience ultimately shaped my decision to study international relations and later, my research on conflict, religion, and politics. I came to the U.S. as an international student for my PhD, and as a first-generation immigrant, I understand very personally what it means for education to become a pathway into a new society.

What attracted me to Baruch was, first, its extraordinary mission. There are very few institutions where academic excellence, diversity, access, and social mobility come together so powerfully.

What role do you see alumni playing in building a supportive and vibrant Weissman community?

I see our alumni at the center of our success and our vision. They're the ones who have been through a Weissman and Baruch education, and they're applying it in the world. They have lessons to share about that journey with our students.

Is there a part of your own story that helps you connect with the typical Baruch student?

I love that so many of our students have these diverse stories to tell about their cultural backgrounds and in many cases, immigrant experiences.

As an immigrant myself, I start with my own story. I tell students that in Turkey, I studied three years of dentistry before exploring international relations—and that changing your mind, changing your major, wasn't nearly as easy there as it is in the U.S. That usually gets a conversation going, and then they start sharing their own backgrounds, opportunities, and challenges.

How are you adjusting to life in NYC?

I came to the U.S. in 2004, and I remember the first time I came to New York thinking, "Oh my God, this is it." All the different languages you hear on the street, all the different communities you find.

Family is a big part of my life, too. My husband and our four cats are currently in Ohio, and they'll be joining me in New York next year, so for now we spend a lot of time on the phone, keeping each other updated on the small details of our day.

Any parting words for our readers?

One of the things I'm most excited about is the connections to alumni. Everyone I've met so far has been so generous with their time, and their vision is really critical to how we'll take Weissman forward for the next decade and beyond.

BARUCH IN ORBIT

BY DANIEL JACOBSON

This spring, a SpaceX rocket will lift off from Kennedy Space Center carrying an experiment designed not by top aerospace engineers but by Baruch undergraduates. Once aboard the International Space Station, astronauts will run it for up to six weeks and then send it home for analysis.

Baruch has been selected for Mission 22 of the Student Spaceflight Experiments Program (SSEP), a national STEM initiative that gives students a full research experience: designing a microgravity experiment, writing a formal proposal, competing for a single flight slot, and analyzing results. The implementation plan, submitted by a team led by Weissman School of Arts and Sciences Professor Krista Dobi, was accepted on its first submission—which the SSEP national team noted is exceedingly rare.

The idea grew out of work already happening on campus. Dobi and Professor Zoe Sheehan had been using Baruch's MakerHub to prototype an open-source Random Positioning Machine, which simulates microgravity on Earth with 3D-printed parts and fruit flies. When Anthony Maniscalco, director of Baruch's Experiential and Community Engaged Learning program, circulated the SSEP opportunity, the team decided to take their research into the stratosphere.

"Our ethos at MakerHub is always: Design it, build it, try it, embrace the potential of failure, and try it again," Sheehan says. "Each iteration is fairly low stakes, but this time the overall outcome was high stakes. Look at what can happen!"

Approximately 40 students in two biology lab courses—Professor Dobi's Molecular and Cellular Biology and Associate Professor Rebecca Spokony's Comparative Immunology—are spending nine weeks designing experiments and drafting proposals, with Assistant Professor Ana Gonzalez Nayeck, who teaches Astrobiology, serving as a specialized resource. Meanwhile, the Graphic Communication program is running a campus-wide competition to design the mission patch that will fly alongside it.

None of this happened without different departments working in tandem. Sheehan calls the result "a little mini-hive for exploration"—arts and sciences working together, in Baruchian fashion—but this time, they're going from a crowded block on Lexington Avenue to the galaxy.



2026 BARUCH ALUMNI CHANGEMAKERS

On September 17, Baruch College's Office of Alumni Relations and Volunteer Engagement hosted its fifth annual Baruch Alumni Changemakers Awards, celebrating Baruch graduates who have made a positive impact on their communities and industries.



Kerry Coddett ('07)
Filmmaker, Comedian, Showrunner



Donald Donahue (EMBA '89)
President, World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine



Somia El-Rowmeim (EMPA '24)
Founder and CEO, Women's Empowerment Coalition of NYC



Doris B. González ('82)
Acting President, NYS Higher Education Services Corporation



Marny Smith (MSEd '17)
Co-founder and Director of Maternal Health Initiatives, PUSH for Empowered Pregnancy

WE WELCOME YOUR SUBMISSIONS! Please email us at alumni@baruch.cuny.edu

'50s

Irwin Engelman ('55, LLD Hon '00) and his wife, Rosalyn, shared the advice and lessons they've learned from their loving, 70-year marriage in an interview with CNBC. *WWD* (formerly *Women's Wear Daily*) profiled **Neal Fox** ('56) about his storied career as a luxury retailer.

'60s

After practicing dentistry for 38 years, **David A. Hirsh** ('60) spent five years as the dental director of Hillcrest Dental, a nonprofit dental facility treating mostly Medicaid patients. Hirsh is now retired but treasures his years serving others, stating, "Baruch gave me the foundation to help others in many ways." **Paula Cullison** ('65) was inducted into the Arizona Women's Hall of Fame in October 2026 for her lifelong commitment to community service and activism. **Bruce Schames** ('67) was elected financial secretary of Chapter 221 of the Knights of Pythias in Tamarac, FL.



ALL IN THE FAMILY

It was a heartwarming mother-son moment at the Executives on Campus (EOC) program's year-end celebration. **Richard Cadena, Jr.** ('11, MS '17) received the program's "Mentor of the Year" honor and celebrated with his mother—and fellow Baruch graduate—**Betty Freire-Cadena** ('85). As a student at Baruch, Richard was a mentee in the EOC program and today serves as VP, Senior Credit Underwriter at BHI.

'70s

The Armenian Missionary Association of America recognized **Nurhan Helvacian** ('71) for his service to the Armenian community at their 107th annual meeting banquet in October 2026 in Teaneck, NJ. *Marquis Who's Who* honored **David X. Martin** ('71) for his leadership in risk management and finance. **Angelantonio Freda** ('73) has published *A Police Action*, a historical romance novel set during the Vietnam War. **John Gesimondo** ('79) has published his novella, *The Soulful Putt*. **Stewart Webster** ('79) founded the URTBridge Foundation (You Are the Bridge Foundation), which sends children free books every month for the first five years of their lives.

'80s

Helen Brown-Liburd ('81) was inducted into the PhD Hall of Fame, joining two other Baruch alumni: **Michael B. Clement** ('80) and **Jennifer Joe** ('86), who were inducted in 2015 and 2024, respectively. **Frank Kirby** ('81) made his literary debut with the publication of his novel, *Michaela*, by Tivoli Books. **Debbie Benitez** ('82) has published her grief memoir, *A Wink from Above: Staying Connected*. **James Lam** ('83) has been appointed to the board of directors of World Gold Trust Services, LLC and WGC USA Asset Management, LLC. Lam will also serve on the audit committees of both boards. **Felicia Raphael** ('85) is now the executive director of the New York State Unified Court System's Hon. Betty Weinberg Ellerin Commission on Women in the Courts. The Catholic Business Network of Baltimore honored **Edward J. Fortunato** ('87) with the 2026 Catholic Business Leadership Award at its annual Catholic leadership breakfast in June. *Crain's New York Business* honored **Susan Fox** ('88) as a notable leader in health care. PDS Biotechnology Corp. appointed **Janetta Trochimiuk** ('88) as interim principal accounting officer in September 2026. **Carl E. Geffken** (MBA '89) was appointed city manager of Forest Park, GA. **Natalie Loeb** (MS '89) has published the leadership guide, *Beyond the Courtroom: Proven Strategies from the Legal Field for Leadership, Emotional Intelligence, and Well-Being in the Modern Workplace.*

'90s

Michael Alicea ('92) has joined Epiq, a global legal and business services provider, as chief administration officer. **Tammy J. Cohen** (MBA '92) delivered an author talk about her book, *Text Messages to My Sons: A Guide to Using Mobile Devices to Connect and Communicate with Your Kids*, at the Barnes & Noble in Manhasset, NY. **Tanya Lane** ('92) was appointed to the Brooklyn Children's Museum's board of trustees. *Brooklyn Today* and *Business Matters* profiled **Abraham Pinchuck** ('92) on how his approach to building relationships has shaped his successful sales career. *Marquis Who's Who* honored **Steven L. De Luca** (MBA '93) for his significant accomplishments in the marketing, communications, and media industries. *Brooklyn Paper* interviewed **Dominick Gervasi** ('93), founder of Made in Brooklyn Tours, about his business and career. TSMC promoted **Jonathan Lee** (MBA '93) to senior vice president. NCNW New York honored **Cheryl A. Pemberton-Graves** (MPA '93) in recognition of her work and leadership uplifting Black women in communities

at their 52nd Annual Bethune/Height Recognition Program Luncheon. *Crain's New York Business* honored **Dawn Pinnock** ('93) as a notable leader in healthcare for 2026. **Rene Gonzales** ('94) is the senior vice president and chief technology officer at WSFS Bank. **Jerry Leonard** ('95) began his new role as chief financial officer of Vyome Holdings in September. After graduating with a degree in graphic design, **Rafael Ortiz** ('95) spent many years working in publishing and marketing, including at Oxford University Press before making a career transition to library science in 2018. Ortiz is now the public services director at Pickerington Public Library in Ohio. American Jewish University appointed **Cheryl Peretz** (MBA '95) interim dean of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies. *FirstPost* profiled **Perizaad Zorabian** (MBA '96) about her career transition from Bollywood actress to director of her successful family business, Zorabian Chicken. **Tony Allen** (MPA '98) was profiled in *Texas Metro News* about his career path which led him to serving as president of Delaware State University. **Oscar Nduka Onyema** ('98) chairman. Commodity Futures Trading Commission named **Marc H. Sielski** ('98) the agency's executive director. Nigerian financial services firm Meristem Stockbrokers Limited appointed *Long Island Business News* featured **Davi Tserpelis** ('98) as a 2026 Long Island business influencer. **Nicole Jones** (MPA '99) volunteered as a judge in Los Angeles at the 74th Annual Carter G. Woodson Oratorical Contest in honor of Black history. **Emmanuelle Riedel Drouin** (MBA '99) was appointed deputy chief executive officer of Proparco.

'00s

Raisa Cohen ('02) was recognized as a best immigration lawyer in New York in *Marquis Who's Who*. Gencor Industries, Inc. appointed **Raymond Cole** (MBA '02) interim chief financial officer. **Barbara Karpinska-Hopkins** (MBA '02) was named on *ForbesWomen Poland's* 50 Over 50 list. After building her career with companies including



FROM PATIENT TO PUBLIC HEALTHCARE BOSS

BY JASON EPSTEIN

Alina Moran (MPA '01) was born at NYC Health + Hospitals. Now, she runs it.

Moran, who serves as CEO of NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst, returned to the public health system that always cared for her family. "I grew up understanding how vital accessible care is for families like mine," says Moran, the daughter of Puerto Rican parents. "For over 20 years, I have served at the nation's largest public safety net system—the same system that my parents relied on when they arrived on the mainland knowing very little about the healthcare system."

As a first-generation college student, Moran could never have imagined the trailblazing career ahead of her. After earning an engineering degree from Brown University, she launched her healthcare career at NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue through the National Urban Fellows program, eventually rising to become Bellevue's finance director for managed care.

"It was a turning point," she says, "revealing the power of public service and the vital work of ensuring that every New Yorker has access to high-quality healthcare."

Moran has held several crucial executive roles within NYC Health + Hospitals, including CFO at Elmhurst and CEO at Metropolitan. Before assuming her current position, she worked out west as CEO of the California Hospital Medical Center, playing a pivotal role in leading them through the Covid-19 pandemic.

As she continues to lead one of NYC's largest public hospitals, she's focused on shoring up the hospital's finances, improving patient communication, and using technology to strengthen patient care and communication.

"We've launched a wellness center and programs for all staff called Helping Healers Heal (H3), which provides 24/7 team support and proactive wellness rounds for employees throughout our hospital."







PAINTING THE CITY

BY ERIN MCLAUGHLIN (MA '23)

Zeehan Wazed's ('13) journey as a mural artist began with a simple doodle in his notebook. A Baruch classmate leaned over his desk to say that his art could be sellable and later bought Wazed some canvases at the campus bookstore. Weeks later, that same classmate's art-collector uncle bought Wazed's first painting, and the rest is history.

Today, Wazed is one of NYC's most respected mural artists. While painting his latest mural on the side of a NYCHA apartment, he notes that his foray into the New York City art scene began underground—literally.

"Between high school and college, I used to street perform to make some money on the train," he says. "It exposed me to the whole street-art scene. I honestly started with graffiti—and for obvious reasons, had to stop doing that—so I started doodling in my notebook."

Many of his clients today are Wall Street fine-art collectors, and he notes that it took a while to adjust to that world.

"I wasn't acclimated to it, especially growing up in an immigrant community in Jamaica, Queens," he says.

But no matter who he's painting for, Wazed paints in a style that sparks the imagination—from the MetLife World Cup VIP Lounge to murals lining Astoria streets to The Oculus at One World Trade, his art graces every facet of the NYC metropolitan area.

Bottom: Wazed's mural in the MetLife Building's VIP Lounge in celebration of the World Cup.

Ernst & Young, Goldman Sachs, and Waystone, **Niaz Khan** ('02) is now the founder of Altura Governance, which provides independent fiduciary directorship, corporate governance, and compliance services to the hedge fund, private equity, and broader investment management community. **Beata Kowal** ('02) is creative director at JUSTLANDED SOLAR LLC, a new multimedia production company that has patented the first solar-powered guitar. *Crain's New York Business* honored **John Hui** ('02) as a notable leader in health care for 2026. The Asian American Business Development Center also recognized Hui as one of the 2026 Outstanding 50 Asian Americans in Business. **Mahmud Samad** ('02) is the founder of Interconnext Consulting, a platform designed to leverage the more than 20 years of experience Samad has working across finance, operations, M&A, transformation, and growth initiatives. Samad also shares, "I'm a proud Baruch alumnus and grateful for the foundation, network, and relationships that continue to shape my professional journey." **Stephanie Larosiliere** ('03) was appointed executive director of the Invesco Mortgage Capital Inc. board of directors. Franklin Templeton Investment Solutions appointed **Wen Nennen** (MS '03) head of insurance general account solutions. **Cris Scorza** ('04) is proud to celebrate five years as the Helena Rubinstein Chair of Education at the Whitney Museum of American Art. Scorza says, "I am a proud Baruch graduate, and my BA in Arts Administration and Art History gave me the foundation to build a career at the intersection of art, education, and leadership." **Allison Sesso** (MPA '04) was honored as a distinguished alumna at SUNY Cortland's alumni awards ceremony in July 2026. **Sulie Arias** ('05) was profiled in *Lawdragon* about her career as partner in the real estate finance group at Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft. *Marquis Who's Who* recognized **Karina Blanco Garcia** ('05) for her expertise in mortgage financing. **Kamran Malik** ('05) is the operational risk large bank examiner at the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency in the U.S. Department of the Treasury. *Forbes*

TURNING PLATES INTO PROFIT

BY ERIN MCLAUGHLIN (MA '23)



Kashma Evelyn-Nisbett ('13), a native of the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis in the Caribbean, experienced her first snowfall during her student years at Baruch College. Looking back, she observes how the changing seasons could also symbolize her own career transition.

She had moved to New York (and later Massachusetts) for her education and to work in finance, eventually holding roles at American Express and JPMorgan Chase. But eight years—and several snowfalls—later, she shifted her career entirely, becoming the founder and creative director of a social media-based business, FoodForKash Inc., which has more than 100,000 followers across social media platforms. A global brand ambassador, she's worked with Wendy's, Smashburger, ShopRite, Ferrero Rocher, and others.

Evelyn-Nisbett built a strong foundation for entrepreneurship as a corporate communications student at Baruch.

"I learned how to pitch and sell to people from different cultural backgrounds. My major had me doing so many presentations, which was the starting point for me. I became comfortable with speaking in different rooms."

The idea to launch a food-based social-media brand spawned from one of Evelyn-Nisbett's hobbies—posting online restaurant reviews for fun—eventually gaining the attention of major brands and getting paid for her work.

"A restaurant owner once asked me what the price was for each meal photo [I was going to post]," she laughs. "I was like, 'Wait, do people really pay for photos of food?' That question today seems like a no-brainer, given the rise of content marketing, but back then, I really had no idea."

Soon, Evelyn-Nisbett scaled up her social media business and left her corporate career behind.

Last year, she brought her brand back home on a trip to Nevis. While visiting family, she highlighted local restaurants, events, and hotels. She also pitched an idea to the Nevis tourism board: A self-hosted culinary series, *A Taste of Nevis*, which led to her being named Culinary Ambassador of Nevis.

Whether she's reviewing food, partnering with brands, or leading workshops, Evelyn-Nisbett taps into her entrepreneurial spark—and she'll always remember where that spark was first lit.

"I always tell people that I went to Baruch College. I am very proud to be an alumna."

ranked **Andrew Vahab** ('05) among the 250 top wealth advisors in America. **Troels Adrian** (MPA '06) was appointed director of industry engagement for UC Davis Health Ventures. *Authority Magazine* interviewed **Thomas Davenport** (MPA '06) for a profile about his career as the founder and managing partner of Davenport Capital Management. **Dhaval Parikh** (MBA '06) is the new head of institutional capital formation for the asset management platform Inland Institutional, LLC. The Scherman Foundation appointed **George Suttles** (MPA '07) president and CEO in September. *City and State New York* included **Cristina Contreras** (EMPA '08) on its Bronx Power 100 list in recognition of her role as CEO of NYC Health + Hospitals/Lincoln. **Paul Kotronis** (MBA '08) was appointed senior managing director of commercial real estate at Peapack Private. **Ali Morgan** (MSEd '08) is the new head of school at his alma mater, Good Hope Country Day School, in St. Croix. Hyundai Auto Canada appointed **Nicole Tady** ('08) brand and product PR specialist. **Ohad Melnik-Marom** (EMS '09) was appointed to the board of Fort Technology, Inc. **Nathan Toth** (EMPA '09) was appointed finance director of the New York City Council.

'10s

Bold Journey Magazine featured an interview with **Darnell Gilet** ('10). **Jennifer Saesue** ('10) was recognized in *Crain's New York Business*'s 40 Under 40 for her successful modern takes on Thai food at her NYC restaurants. **Aissata M.B. Camara** ('11) received the Order of Civil Merit from the Kingdom of Spain. This decoration recognizes public servants for extraordinary civic service. **Clemente Diaz** ('11) recently received several awards in honor of his work in career-focused pedagogy, including the 2026 Best Practice Award for Career Readiness from the Career Services Association of CUNY and the 2025 Baruch College Excellence Award for Innovation. Diaz also presented at the 2026 National Career Development Association (NCDA) Global Career Development Conference in Anaheim, CA. Property Group appointed **Frank**

BEAUTY REIMAGINED

BY ERIN MCLAUGHLIN (MA '23)



Zareefa Ahmed ('13) traded her Wall Street accounting career for beauty entrepreneurship.

Holistic beauty routines had long been part of her life. Since childhood, she admired her mother's self-care routines, specifically her self-created ancestral skincare remedies.

At work, she plugged away as an accountant. In her free time, she uploaded a video of one of the remedies online—and then another, and then another. And after months of experimenting with filming, recording, and editing, a video of her mother's banana-peel face mask went viral.

"I realized that content creation and brand deals can be another stream of income," Ahmed says. But her success as an entrepreneur and creator stems from her business acumen, which goes back to her days at Baruch.

"A lot of my success has to do with understanding business, money management, and what it takes to run both successfully."

After her mother's sudden passing in 2020, Ahmed launched a tribute to her legacy: Ammu Beauty, a skincare brand. Its products are modern iterations of her mother's face masks and serums, made with natural herbs and ingredients.

The journey was far from easy. While navigating her newfound business and grieving her mother, she went through a divorce, single motherhood, and the loss of her home. Those experiences, she reflects, shaped both her and her brand.

"The journey is what makes it so beautiful. It makes me resilient. It makes me feel comfortable in my skin. At the end of the day, I was chasing perfect skin, but in reality, what I found was myself."

At the heart of Ammu Beauty is Ahmed's focus on using her products and platform to help others. "How many people can I help before I leave this earth?" she asks. "That's what motivates me every morning, and what keeps me going."

Dolisi ('11) managing director, head of investments. **Marvin Webb** (MBA '11) was profiled for *Bold Journey Magazine.* **Justin Zhu** ('11, MS '12) was appointed chief financial officer, principal financial officer, and principal accounting officer at Whitefiber, Inc. *Crain's New York Business* honored **Rahul Tikekar** (MBA '12) as a notable leader in healthcare for 2026. **Wen Zhen Cai** ('12) is the new vice president of accounting at Monday Properties, a leading real estate investment and development firm. **Michael R. Durant** ('14, MS '16) began his term as president of the board of directors for the New York State Society of CPAs in June. **Dhanya Hemanth Raj** (MA '14) was promoted to director of marketing at Instamart. **Brandon Patterson** (MPA '14) has joined the public affairs firm MAD Global Strategy as a senior vice president. **Juan Carlos Payero** (MPA '14) has joined the Healthcare Distribution Alliance as director of state government affairs. **Poly Kaniz Fatima** ('15) founded and opened M&H Accounting Services, a bookkeeping and accounting practice, and is accepting new clients in the Bronx. **Konstantin Malyshkin** ('15) joined Ensis Partners as a principal. **Laura Massetti** (MBA '15) founded Real Work Ready, a company that teaches early-career professionals valuable communication and behavior skills to better navigate the workplace. **Jonathan Santos-Ramos** (MPA '15) will begin his new role as chief executive officer of Care for the Homeless in January 2027. The Woman's Hospital of Texas named **Edjola Xhaferi** (EMBA '15) chief financial officer. **Daniel Kennedy** ('16) has been working as a cardiac registered nurse since May 2024 and is now studying to become a nurse practitioner. 3iQ, a pioneer in digital asset investments, appointed **Kristina Zvyagintseva** ('16) head of business development, U.S. growth. **Peter Cipriano** (MPA '17), chief executive officer of Penn Transformation Partners, was interviewed in *The Wall Street Journal* about his firm's partnership with Amtrak to redesign



A MOTHER-DAUGHTER GRADUATION

Congratulations to **Nicole Julius** (MPA ’26), office manager in Baruch’s Office of College Advancement, and her daughter, **Natalie Jordan** (MPA ’26), who both graduated from the same MPA cohort this year!

ALL-STAR NOMINEE

This year, alumna-turned-graduate student **Megan Bell** (’24), a New York Yankees ball girl, was nominated to be part of the MLB’s All-Star Ball Crew!



Penn Station. **Guneet Madhan** (’17) has published *From Chaos to Credit*, a book that examines finance as both an analytical discipline and a system shaped by human ideas and decisions. Madhan notes the book has roots in his Baruch education. **John Keary** (’18) is the new director of AI and innovation at Tarter Krinsky & Drogin. **Yaneisis Dushey** (MA ’19) began her new role as a Spanish teacher at Rye High School in Westchester, NY in September. **Chao Peng** (MS ’19) joined Kalshi as a platform operations analyst. **Dewin Vasquez** (’19) was accepted into the highly competitive MBA program at Stanford University for the fall 2026 term. Vasquez also volunteers as an advisory trustee of the Baruch College Fund (BCF) board. **Annie Willis** (’19) participated in the career and leadership discussion panel, *Modern Women with a Modern Vision*, at the Hudson River Museum in March for Women’s History Month.

’20s

Sean Brady (MBA ’21) was promoted to partner at Evercore Wealth Management. As an enterprise customer success manager at a leading ecommerce software company, **Yaakov Spraragen** (’21) is utilizing his communications degree from Baruch to help manage relationships with top global brands like Pandora, Polaroid, and Morrocanoil. Newtown Savings Bank appointed **Dennis Arango** (’22) customer experience manager of its Woodbury, CT branch. **Yasmeen Persaud** (’22) is an assignment editor at CBS News New York and wants to thank the journalism department at Baruch for helping her to achieve her dreams. Mayor Mamdani appointed **Karla Cordero** (MPA ’23) to the Panel for Educational Policy. **Harshdeep Singh** (’23, MS ’25) was promoted to assistant vice president, private client banker – SB/MOD at JPMorgan Chase. Singh was also in the spring 2026 cohort of the CUNY Startups New Venture Accelerator (NVA) program as the founder of Bluoprint, a student-focused platform designed to organize campus life. Singh and Bluoprint placed third overall at the NVA Demo Day competition in April 2026. **Elijah Wingfield** (’23) founded The Summer Run, a recreational basketball league championship in Southampton, NY. The Summer Run had its inaugural season in 2026 and resulted in six teams vying for a $3,000 prize. **Melani Bonilla** (’24) is an associate producer of short-form video at NBC News. **Abdullah Mahdi** (’24) is now a media sales planner at Freewheel, a Comcast advertising company. After working as a capital funding intern through the CUNY X MTA Internship Program, **Mahi Amin** (’25) is now a full-time financial analyst for the Metropolitan Transit Authority. **Christopher Clarke** (’25) was profiled about his music career under the name Spincity Chris in *Caribbean Life*. **Masayori Sudo Hasegawa** (’25) was elected to the Baruch College Fund Board of Trustees. **Alejandra Melgar** (’25) is the founder of ALEJE Cosmetics, a luxury makeup brand specializing in glittery and colorful lashes.

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