

USG establishes two new committees

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The Undergraduate Student Government recently created two new committees, the Arts Committee and the Constitutional Review Committee, which will work to improve students' experience on campus and possibly change the principles on which USG operates.

Depending on the extent of the possible amendments to the USG constitution and the amount of resources the Arts Committee will have available, Baruch students could see major changes in how USG operates and the atmosphere on campus.

"Baruch is changing. The whole campus, the whole faculty, we're making it into a better school. I feel like it's my responsibility to jump [on] it and start something new," Nathan Lin, chair of the Arts Committee, said.

USG instated its last Arts Committee on Oct. 7, 2014, but the committee was disbanded before the academic year ended. According to Lin, the idea to recreate an Arts Committee was brought up by Daniel Dornbaum, the current USG president, who approached Lin toward the end of the Spring 2016 semester.

Last year, Lin was the vice chair of Public Relations. At that time, the chair of Public Relations planned Chalk on the Plaza and an art gallery, which helped him gain experience in working on art-based events on campus. He currently holds the position of a representative senator.

According to Lin, the committee's short-term goals are spreading awareness of the committee's existence and holding small-scale events, including hosting pop-up artists around campus and on the plaza.

"The main theme behind it is, Baruch is a commuter school. It's like New York City," Lin said. "We see subway performances in the corner, someone's playing music. We are trying to create the same thing. We're just having artists come in to the plaza or on campus just [to play music]. You can just walk [by] if you're busy, or you can take a moment and enjoy this piece, this beautiful moment."

As for the long-term goals, Lin hopes to change what people think about Baruch, showing students that the business school has an arts element to it as well.

As of press time, the Arts Committee consists of eight members and meets every Monday at 5 p.m. in the USG Lounge.

The second committee, the Constitutional Review Committee, was started by Andrew Windsor, who contemplated the idea of making changes to the USG constitution since he ran for the position of a representative senator in the Spring 2016 semester.

One of the committee's main ideas is to create a judicial branch within USG, which would require major changes in the constitution.

According to Windsor, the prospect of creating the third branch of USG was brought up at a senate meeting by Dornbaum, who heard the idea from Stony Brook students back when he was the vice president of Legislative Affairs. Though Dornbaum wanted to explore the idea further, the senate did not embrace the idea and he was too preoccupied with his duties. When Windsor ran for his current position, he made it a personal goal to delve further into the topic.

"At first, the senate wasn't entirely on board with it—I had to do a lot of convincing," Windsor said. "But we realized [that] the committee can't do any harm, it can only

make recommendations. If the senate likes these recommendations, we'll proceed with [them]... If the senate doesn't like those recommendations, no harm, no foul."

In order for the committee to amend the constitution, the proposed amendment has to go through an outlined process. First, the proposal has to be brought up to the senate table. If a senator wishes to sponsor it, he or she may speak to the chair of the senate to organize a vote on the proposed amendment, which has to be approved by a majority vote in the senate. Afterward, USG has to obtain the signatures of 10 percent of undergraduate students, which amounts to approximately 1,400 students, abide by the roles set by the Bernard M. Baruch College Governance Charter and submit the amendment as a subject of a referendum to the Office of Student Affairs. The amendment then gets put on the ballot that students fill out when they vote for the next USG in the Spring semester. Lastly, the amendment has to get voted on by 10 percent of the undergraduate student body or gain approval from the president of Baruch College.

In order to get the required number of signatures, Windsor has to have the proposed amendments ready by March. The deadline is based on the experience of a previous USG—in 2015, it took USG a month to collect the required signatures.

As of press time, 17 people signed up to receive emails from the committee, excluding Windsor. The committee meets each Wednesday at 2 p.m. in the USG Conference Room.

"I'd like to make this constitution a bit better, see what we can fix... see if there's anything else we can add," Windsor said.