MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to Barnard!

I can imagine no better place to be than Barnard College. Here, you will be able to immerse yourself in an education that prompts you to explore the world from a variety of different perspectives and through the lenses of multiple disciplines. From this foundation, you can begin to shape your own educational journey — one that I promise will last a lifetime. I have no doubt that your years at Barnard will give you the tools necessary to pursue your passions with knowledge, confidence, and humanity.

In the pages that follow, you will discover what makes this College such a singular institution — with excellence across the arts and sciences, our world-class faculty of scholars dedicated to teaching, and the vast resources of Columbia University and New York City to draw from. You will find courses in literature and the arts, in anthropology and politics, in languages and mathematics, in psychology, neuroscience, and physics. You will find lectures taught by world-renowned professors as well as intimate seminars where faculty share their latest research and ideas. You will find classes in subjects that you have been wanting to study for years, and others that may never have crossed your mind.

In preparation for the unique academic year of 2020-21, both faculty and staff worked diligently throughout the summer to design and implement virtual courses that are robust and engaging, and in line with what one might expect out of their Barnard education regardless of format. Nearly all of Barnard’s fall classes have been restructured to enhance remote instruction. And we have made structural changes to support this new modality, dividing each semester into two seven-week blocks to allow for the intensive, immersive courses shown to be most effective in remote settings. With the addition of a third Summer term, you will have even more opportunities to explore.

In this unprecedented year, Barnard is reimagining its offerings. Many classes across the curriculum will focus on the current moment, asking students to use different disciplinary lenses to interrogate and learn from this time in history while preparing students for their future studies and careers. And an innovative First-Year Experience course required for the Class of 2024, “Big Problems: Making Sense of 2020,” — paired with a lecture series open to all members of the Barnard community — will facilitate community among first-year students through this lens. Faculty will contextualize the current moment and encourage students to think critically about how COVID-19 has generated significant social, economic, political, and ecological upheavals.

There are hundreds of options waiting for you — now you simply need to choose. It can be hard to know where to start, and how best to plot a course that will satisfy your intellect and your imagination. So don’t rush. Take time to discover the possibilities. And feel free to take a risk. Choose a course that may lead somewhere new. Take at least one class in a subject that unnerves you, and others that seem tailor-made. Because Barnard truly is the best of all worlds for students and faculty who care about the fundamental disciplines that enhance our abilities as thinkers and doers.

Revel in the options before you, and please enjoy the process.

Sian Leah Beilock