



May 13, 2022

Colleagues:

I hope you have been enjoying this lovely weather during Nurses Week, where we celebrate the accomplishment of our aspiring nurses in the classroom, as well as those alumni nurses serving on the front lines in our area hospitals and health care facilities. We have officially reached the final weeks of the Spring semester: it has certainly not been without its challenges, but I am pleased with where we find ourselves as we head towards Commencement.

This week, I had the great pleasure of being interviewed by students in Professor Lin's World Literature and Languages class for a project they were conducting related to their course, CHN 594. It was great to connect with our students and to share with them my own experiences and vision for what CSI can provide to those whom we serve. It was wonderful to hear their own plans and to offer encouragement as they complete this project and the term: I am always impressed and inspired by our students, and I will make it a point to meet with them more frequently in the coming academic year.

I also met with the College Council Executive Committee, where Interim Director of Athletics T.J. Tibbs provided a detailed review of the move to NCAA Division II Athletics. I know there have been many questions about this transition, and I thank T.J. and his staff for their due diligence and—above all else—transparency in making this information more widely known. Later that day, the other Senior College Presidents and I engaged in a conversation about how college athletics can and do play a role in enrollment management, attracting prospective student-athletes (and others) to our campus and its programs, filling our dormitories, and raising our academic and public relations profile. As we continue our search for a permanent Director of Athletics, I want to again thank T.J. for taking the reins these past 15 months, and acknowledge the hard work that he and his team have done on behalf of our institution and our student-athletes.

On Wednesday I participated in the monthly full-day Council of President's meeting, where we discussed issues related to graduate education, online learning, plans for commencement activities and—perhaps most urgently—our current situation as it relates to enrollment. Many of these topics are intertwined and some (for example the booming job market) are out of our control, which means that those things which are in our control—such as what happens in the classroom or how we provide “customer service” to our students—are critically important. We learned that students are looking for the best value and the best experience—while CUNY and CSI have always provided value, increasingly we must also demonstrate “value added” if we want to attract and retain today's student population.

The following day, I represented the campus at “CSI Day” at Kingsborough Community College, where I was part of a team (many thanks to AVP Alex Scott and others for joining me) that participated in a question-and-answer session regarding transfer from KCC to CSI. With enrollment down, we need to be nimble and agile when it comes to identifying and supporting real and potential sources of students: as more than one-third of all CSI students begin (here or elsewhere) as associate degree-seekers, we need to remove obstacles to their matriculation to our baccalaureate programs, ease their transition to our institution, and provide the academic, social, and other support mechanisms that they need to be successful at the next stage of their academic careers. This is neither an easy nor inexpensive proposition, but it is both an enrollment imperative and a moral one: built on a mission of access and opportunity, we must embrace and support all our students...or we will have none. Recruitment, retention, and enrollment management must be our top institutional priorities in the coming months.

Another major initiative will be to smooth pathways between our academic programs and the world of work. This will involve the development of robust apprenticeships, internships, and other workplace-based or applied learning opportunities. We need to better liaise with industry partners and local employers to make sure that our students are equipped with the theoretical framework and the real-world experiences to be career-ready upon graduation. This is a major initiative for the University and should be for the individual campuses as well.

In my ongoing commitment to transparency and accountability, I will be hosting a “virtual town hall” on Tuesday, May 17 from 2:30 pm to 4:00 pm. There is no set agenda (we still do not know our campus budget allocation, so holding a forum dedicated to that topic is moot) but I will be available to answer questions, share my perspective as the Spring term closes, and hear your impressions about what we can all do to allow CSI to continue to reach its full potential and best serve our students, and one another. You can join the Zoom [HERE](#).

Until next time,



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