

March 25, 2022

Colleagues:

I hope this note finds you well, and that you are gearing up for next week's reaccreditation visit from our friends at Middle States. Amidst the preparations for that important event, I have been keeping up with other responsibilities on and off campus.

This week, in addition to the usual standing meetings, I attended (virtually) the March meeting of the CUNY Board of Trustees. The Board is the ultimate authority on all matters concerning our University, and we are fortunate to have strong local advocates for public higher education. Just this week, I had a pleasant conversation with two BoT members who call Staten Island their home: Michael Arvanites and Dr. Jill O'Donnell-Twormey. Both will serve as Board representatives to the Middle States visit, and each is a true friend and staunch ally of CUNY in general and of CSI in particular. It is good to have folks who recognize CSI as the cultural and intellectual heart of Staten Island in our corner!

I also had the opportunity to speak to Professor Susan Smith-Peter, a fellow historian and our current Marchi Fellow. Dr. Smith-Peter's work as coordinator of the program in Public History, and her expertise in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, provided for an interesting and thought-provoking conversation. I have been following her contributions to the editorial dialog about the conflict closely, and her reputation as a scholar reflects that of the campus as a "destination" for both students and the general public who seek expertise and knowledge. A planned online student exhibit, and subsequent symposium that will partner with Staten Island cultural institutions, further demonstrates the impact our campus has in the local community.

My interaction with Professor Mary Boland, Director of our Writing program, was equally illuminating. Professor Boland provided context for her activities, and this information will be important to share with our accreditors as it shows the various steps we take to assist students at various levels of preparedness. When we pivoted to remote work two years ago, Professor Boland's team was one of many that pivoted to remote work two years ago, and their concern for our students allowed for the maintenance of forward progress on any number of important initiatives. One of the truly special things about CSI is that we—as the only public institution of higher education in the borough—serve a wide variety of students: from traditional baccalaureate-seekers to those pursuing graduate study, and from those seeking industry-recognized certifications and credentials to those interested in associate's degrees. We truly are the best choice for Staten Islanders. And the dedication of our faculty and staff to these disparate learners is made clear with every conversation I have.

My week ended with an important celebration: the long-awaited ribbon cutting for our athletic track, generously supported by Assemblyman Michael Cusick, has come to pass. Assemblyman Cusick, like Trustees Arvanites and O'Donnell-Twormey, recognize the role that this campus can play for our students and the borough we serve. It is impossible to sustain progress on any initiative absent the support of influential friends—and CSI has plenty of these. our role as borough stewards, as change agents, and as engines of economic and social mobility are

important but can occur only with the assistance of local officials. I look forward to working with such allies in the months ahead as we continue to celebrate CSI and reaffirm our commitment as a “destination campus.”

I leave you this week with one request: as we welcome our Middle States accreditors next week, I urge you to be both accessible to them and transparent in your dealings with them: we are all members of a single CSI community and we all will benefit from a successful visit. Your assistance here is appreciated and your input—like each of you -- is valued and valuable.

Until next time,

TGL



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