

September 23, 2022

Colleagues:

As the season changes from Summer to Autumn, I write with an update as to recent activities. Although the days have grown shorter, the pace and scope of work have not abated. This past Saturday more than 300 members of our community gathered on campus to celebrate the official opening of the “Willowbrook Mile” an accessible and interactive trail that documents the history of the Willowbrook State School, the investigation that led to its closing, and the advocacy that led to the rights of all persons to live to their full potential. The event was marked by speeches from activists, local elected officials, former residents, and others who were instrumental in that campaign and who worked to ensure that the story is neither repeated nor forgotten. I want to especially acknowledge the work of those who made this event possible and thank them for including me in this special and moving occasion. It was wonderful to see so many long-time supporters of the movement and to meet new friends, and I look forward to many conversations as to how we can embrace our legacy of place and become stewards of the disability rights movement.

As the semester hits its stride it is heartening to see increased presence and liveliness on campus. The new takeout sushi facility in the library is giving the popular Halal cart a run for its money, as students, staff, and others appreciate the variety of offerings to complement our in-house catering options. This week, the Alumni and CSI Associations had their first meetings of the term, and on Wednesday evening I attended and presented at the kickoff meeting of the CSI Foundation. That body has announced its plans for an in-person Celestial Ball—the first since 2019—on December 3, as we gather at the Richmond County Country Club to support students and honor “Heroes Among Us.” I look forward to the event and hope to see many of you there.

On Thursday of this week, I had the opportunity to address both the Faculty Senate and the College Council, where I answered questions related to the budget, enrollment strategies, personnel and staffing, and strategic planning (and other) initiatives. AVP and CFO Carlos Serrano also offered insight into our financial plan and provided an analysis of how city, state, and tuition funding support our campus operations. Following those conversations, it was my pleasure to mingle with many of you, informally and as colleagues—some of whom I was meeting in person for the first time—as we feted our soon-to-be-retired Provost and SVPAA, J. Michael Parrish, who is leaving CSI at the end of this month. It has been wonderful working with such a dedicated professional and a seasoned academic administrator, and I know you join me in wishing him “fair winds and following seas” as he begins the next chapter of his life.

On Friday I had the opportunity to join nearly a dozen of our CSI colleagues---and several times that number of CUNY allies—at the launch of the CUNY LGBTQIA+ Consortium. This initiative, and others like it, affirm our campus and system commitment to diversity, inclusivity, and belonging, and I am pleased and proud to play an admittedly small role in advancing such agendas. CUNY and CSI are not just committed to equity, we are engines of it.

The end of September brings with it the arrival of the Jewish holidays, and I take this opportunity to wish all those members of our community who celebrate “L’Shana Tovah” a happy and healthy start to the New Year.

Until next time,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Timothy G. Lynch". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T' and 'L'.

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