

August 26, 2022

Colleagues:

What a way to close the summer vacation and kick off the academic year! After two years of mostly remote learning and work, I was thrilled to welcome so many students and staff back to our lovely Willowbrook campus! Our course offerings (69% in person, 8% hybrid) closely mirror the 70% on-campus staff density goals set by the University, and student demand for in-person services and academic activities remains high. I also believe that the lessons learned from remote work can be leveraged to provide an optimal customer-service experience for our students, and that we should remain nimble and agile in how we offer such services. I appreciate all that each of you is doing to continue to provide first-rate customer service to our most important stakeholders!

On Monday, I invited Chancellor Matos Rodríguez to our campus. He and I met with incoming students (and their resident adviser counterparts...and our mascot...and our cheerleaders!) at Dolphin Cove, and later spoke to student representatives to discuss the upcoming academic year. It was wonderful to hear the pride in our students' voices as they described their experiences and to have them share the positive stories of how the CSI community has supported them through the challenges of the pandemic. It is clear that we provide access to transformational educational opportunities for many, and that the impact of such activities is profound. I know that the Chancellor was touched by these stories and he—like I—remain grateful for the impact that you all make in the lives of our students.

Later in the week, I hosted President Larry Johnson and Interim Provost Nicola Blake of Guttman Community College to discuss articulation agreements and transfer initiatives. I truly believe that CSI—with its idyllic location, world-class academic programs, impressive dormitories, and robust student activities schedules—can be **the** transfer destination for all of CUNY's community college graduates. We have mountains of data that show community college graduates perform well academically upon transfer, and we should remove as many barriers to their successful matriculation as possible to offset our current enrollment declines. Speaking of enrollment, we currently lag approximately 15% behind last fall's student headcount: for context, a one-percent swing in enrollment equates to a roughly three-quarters-of-a-million-dollar adjustment to our budget, or an annual drop of some \$12 million this coming academic year. Clearly, our top priority this year must be finding effective methods to attract and retain more students to the College, while remaining cautious and prudent in our staffing levels.

I enjoyed meeting with so many of our incoming faculty colleagues at their orientation on Wednesday, and kudos to the Provost's Office for the onboarding they provided to almost two dozen new full-time instructors. In addition to new members of the Dolphin family, such as Director of Athletics Chase Licata, I also networked with the Council of Chairpersons, governance leaders, and others, many of whom I saw at Wednesday's Welcome Back BBQ. I want to thank Jodi Merendino and her staff (and our student athlete volunteers!) for the wonderful catering job, and the Facilities, and Building and Grounds crews who worked hard in setting up/cleaning/breaking down the event. I know that with the start of classes on Thursday, many of you share in my excitement at the commencement of classes, but also in my anxiety as we deal with the usual start-of-semester hiccups: I appreciate your patience as we work through some of these issues.

I hope to see many of you at this evening's CSI Night at the FerryHawks game, and I thank our community partners for making this happen. It is a great way to start the new academic year, and I look forward to working with you all—individually and collectively—in the coming months.

Until next time, TGL



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