

STUDENT GOVERNMENT NEWSLETTER

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COLLEGE OF STATEN ISLAND STUDENT GOVERNMENT

MEET YOUR STUDENT GOVERNMENT SENATORS

By Stephanie Helewa, Senator

Welcome to the third issue of the new Student Government Newsletter. Our plan is to publish this newsletter monthly. We will be sharing news about what the Student Government is currently working on. Each month we will be introducing you to two members of the Student Government. **This month we would like you to meet Anthony Bartolotta and Dennis Gaffigan.**

Anthony is a junior and an Engineering and Science major. He is a student leader serving as a senator on the Student Government. He is also a member of the Auxiliary Services Corporation Board of Directors. With his participation and leadership he hopes to put his best efforts forward to achieve a better future for the students who come after him.

Anthony feels that by being a leader and striving to make both minor and major changes is the first step in bettering lives for future generations of CSI students. He also feels that CSI is continuing to become bigger and more efficient each day!

Dennis is a senior and a history major. Some of his accomplishments this year are the establishment of departmental scholarships where a department is chosen each month and a student from that department is awarded a \$1500 scholarship based not only on their academic achievement but also their extracurricular activities which Dennis feels greatly enhance the learning experience. In addition the commission is actively working with the Deans of Humanities and the



Sciences to improve Academic Advisement, look for ways to decrease the cost of textbooks, and look into testing in particular the CPE exams. Dennis stresses the fact that the commission is there to try and help students with have problems with their classes.

UPCOMING 2009 CSI LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE "STUDENTS IMPACTING COMMUNITIES"

The Office of Student Life is excited to be presenting the 2nd Annual CSI Leadership Conference. This year's theme is "Students Impacting Communities". The Conference will be held Friday, April 3rd in the Center for the Arts. The event is open to all CSI students, faculty, staff and the greater CUNY community.

This full day conference will feature some of the most sought after speakers on leadership and civic engagement, including CARYL STERN, President of the USS Fund for UNICEF and DOMINIC CARTER, host and senior political reporter for NY1. They will share their passion, knowledge, and expertise regarding the value of strong leaders in the future of our communities.

Registration materials are available on line at www.csi.cuny.edu. Just click the link CSI Leadership Conference under Upcoming Events on the home page.

The Referendum to Change the Student Government Constitution

By Nicholas Imbornone, Vice President



Spring 2009

Remaining Meeting

Schedule

March 19

April 2, 30

May 14

All meetings are held during club hours :

1:30—3:30 p.m.

in Room 1C-209

During the Spring 2009 student elections, which will be held from March 30th through April 4th on the same ballot as the candidates who are running for various seats, will be a referendum. It will be in the form of a question and will ask the voter if they accept proposed changes to the Student Government constitution. These changes are being proposed by the Student Government and include minor changes in wording and eight principal proposed changes. The main changes proposed are as follows:

A mission statement will become part of the constitution stating what Student Government's main objectives are as an organization

The number of members on the Student Government would increase from twenty to twenty-five. From one graduate student, nine junior/senior students, nine freshmen/sophomore students and one at-large student the membership would change to four freshmen, seven sophomores, six juniors, five seniors, one graduate student, one president and one vice-president.

In order to fill any vacant seats on the Student Government there will be an October in-house election where the Student Government would vote on the candidates to fill those seats instead of a vote by the student body, as is the case now. However, if more than one-fifth of the seats are vacant and contested there will be an election by the student body.

The President and Vice-President of the Student Government will be elected by the student body, instead of by the Student Government.

The Student Center Commission will be called the Campus Center and Student Facilities Commission.

A new commission will be established called the Disabled Students and Veteran's Affairs Commission.

The Student Government President along with each commissioner will have to submit a transition document at the end of their term of office explaining what they have accomplished.

Every member of the Student Government will have to submit a schedule of office hours.

Every member must serve on at least one commission or committee, but no more than three commissions.

It is extremely important for every student to vote on these proposed changes to our constitution as they would definitely help us represent student interests more broadly and successfully.

WELCOME NEW STUDENT GOVERNMENT SENATORS

At our meeting on March 5th the Student Government elected three new members to fill vacant positions for the remainder of the spring semester. We had ten applicants for three positions. The following new senators were elected: Katrina Hannan and Rob Hebron were elected to fill the vacant freshman/sophomore seats. Gregory Levin was elected to fill the vacant Junior/Senior seat. These senators will serve until May 31st when the Student Government elected in the upcoming spring elections will take their seats. We welcome these new members and look forward to working with them during the remainder of the semester. Don't forget, our office is located in Room 1C-207 and there is usually at least one senator there if you have an issue or idea you would like to discuss. If no one is available someone in the office will take your number and someone will get back to you quickly.

Lobby Day

By Nervana Gaballa, Senator

March 4th was Lobby Day for CUNY and SUNY campuses. Sponsored by NYPIRG and the University Student Senate, students from various colleges joined together in a central location in Albany to fight the proposed tuition hike.

According to Governor David Patterson's budget, he proposed a 15% tuition increase and \$88.1 million in cuts for CUNY. Mentorship and support programs such as the Collegiate and Technology Entry Program commonly known as C-Step would be cut by \$4 million which is 50% of the original funding. TAP, the Tuition Assistance Program would be cut by \$65 million as well. College students who did not believe that the solution to

the recession should be placed on the backs of hard working students went to Albany and met with various assembly members and senators. Their Higher Education Platform included saying no to a CUNY tuition hike, rejecting the \$4 million cut to CSTEP and restoring full funding for all opportunity programs, and rejecting proposed changes to TAP.

A few assembly members were advocates for students and didn't believe an increase in tuition was fair. We spoke with Senator Diane Savino and Assembly member William Colton who agreed the Governor's proposals were not something to be followed. Other assembly members that met with CUNY students thought the tuition

Hikes were inevitable and the struggle would come from the amount it would be increased to.

The trip to Albany had a good turnout of students from all five boroughs. Over ten CSI students attended. Once in Albany all CUNY and SUNY students met in an Albany Public Library. After welcomes and an overview by Cheryl Lynch, NYPIRG Chair and Simone Lamont, USS Chair, there was a review of the platform statements and tips on advocating and lobbying. Pizza was served and the meetings with the legislators began at noon with the final meetings ending at 3 p.m. We then got on the bus and took the three and a half hour trip back to CSI.

Student Government Update

By Peter DeCrescenzo, President

Hello, I am the Student Government President and I am here to update you, the student body, on what has been discussed at the last few Student Government meetings. Recently our focus has been on promoting the nomination period for the spring elections, which came to a close on Friday, March 13th, as well as the in-house elections that took place on March 5th. Student Government had the difficult task of electing three new senators out of the ten students who were nominated. Congratulations to those who won! Through the hard work of the Publicity Committee, we were able to visit classes to create an awareness of the many opportunities on campus, with a special focus on becoming a Student Government Senator.

On March 9th, the board of Trustees came to CSI for a hearing to listen to students, faculty, administrators, and those in the community about the benefits of the College of Staten Island. The most touching statements were those made by our students. The Board left the campus understanding a bit about our diversity, but more importantly about some of our hardships.

On March 12th, a few local politicians sent representatives to hear students, faculty and staff discuss the hardships involved in their journey towards graduation. Student Government sent five representatives to this meeting. We have contact information for them in our office, located in room 1C-207 if you would like make them aware of your struggles. We are pushing for as many students as possible to contact their local politicians.

Many students may have noticed the distribution and collection of surveys throughout the day at the Ferry Shuttle on March 17th and 18th. The college administration is looking for more efficient ways to run the shuttle. Cross your fingers for a third shuttle by September! Also in April keep your eyes and ears open for the college wide Sustainability Earth Day Celebration. There will be many activities and promotions. One important discussion will focus on car pools which will be helpful to many students. Remember, we are here to support you—the students of CSI! Take care!

**CSI Student
Government
We're here for
you.....
Students Helping
Students**

**COLLEGE OF STATEN ISLAND
STUDENT GOVERNMENT**

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**DON'T FORGET TO VOTE IN
THE UPCOMING STUDENT
ELECTIONS!**

**You can vote from any computer by
logging into:**

**<http://www.elexpert.net/votecsi> or by
visiting the college's homepage at
www.csi.cuny.edu and clicking on the
vote icon**

**Your login is your first and last initial,
your birth month and date and the last
four digits of your social security num-
ber. You will not need an additional
password**

**VOTING BEGIN ON MARCH 30 AND
ENDS ON APRIL 4**

**MAKE SURE YOUR VOICE IS HEARD
ELECT YOUR NEXT STUDENT
LEADERS !!**

Black History Month Jazz Performance

By Peri Fisher, Part Time, Evening & Weekend Commissioner

Once again, Keith Marks entertained CSI students, professors and members of the CSI community on February 11th in honor of Black History Month in the Green Dolphin Lounge. At times, the students got up and danced while Marks and members of his jazz trio played pieces from jazz history that were written by famous African American composers along with more modern numbers like "The Electric Slide".

Unlike the many Jazz Brunches that Marks has played for CSI, this was an evening event, so rather than breakfast foods that are usually served at Marks' performances, the Part Time, Evening & Weekend Commission provided a taste of southern soul. Attendees enjoyed fried chicken, collard greens, grits, black-eyed peas, and peach cobbler along with the music.

We look forward to bringing Marks back again next year. Since the idea of a jazz supper was entirely successful, the Part Time, Evening & Weekend Commission will likely have Marks back twice again next year—once for a jazz brunch and one for a jazz supper. Until then, look for many other events sponsored by Student Government and the Part Time, Evening & Weekend Commission including the Caffeine Café, which serves free coffee, tea and hot chocolate to evening & weekend students.