

April 14, 2023

Colleagues:

I hope that you are enjoying the lovely weather and a restful Spring Break. I write with updates as to campus activities that you may find of interest.

On Monday the campus hosted Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez and Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer Héctor Batista for a day-long visit and tour. The Chancellor reviewed the newly begun sidewalk replacement project, visited the recently completed track-and-field complex, and met with representatives from the offices of local and state elected officials. Capital projects and improvements such as these are tangible examples of how we are trying to provide the best possible experiences for our students, and bode well for future investments in our campus and system infrastructure. Many thanks to Interim Vice President Robert Wallace and his team for coordinating the interface with Senator Andrew J. Lanza, Governor Kathy Hochul, and the Staten Island Economic Development Committee, which was represented by its new CEO and President, Michael Cusick, former Assembly Member and a new CSI Foundation Board member. The highlight of our tour was a visit to 6S, where we met with Engineering and Environmental Science's Chairperson Neo Antoniades as well as Professor Sean Thatcher, and learned of planned improvements to laboratory spaces, and heard how our students and graduates are finding employment opportunities thanks to the work of embedded advisers funded by CUNY's Inclusive Economy Initiative. I was incredibly proud to share with the Chancellor the very good things we are doing here at CSI, and I thank you all for making this possible.

That evening the campus hosted the Staten Island Borough Hearing, where members of the CUNY Board of Trustees, the Chancellor and his senior administrative team, and I listened to testimony from over a dozen speakers. Individuals brought forth concerns about proposed tuition hikes, enrollment challenges, insufficient funding, and infrastructure concerns. We also heard about exciting partnerships with external organizations such as the Staten Island Museum and Amazon, about innovative work related to offshore wind, about an increasingly welcoming campus climate, and about the stellar success of our nursing program. I remain fully cognizant of the rough road ahead, but even more so of the tremendous things that we ---individually and collectively---are capable of accomplishing.

Tuesday brought the welcome news that CUNY will be lifting its vaccine mandate for students, faculty, and staff in the coming weeks. This will surely aid our enrollment and help in bringing more people to our campus for athletic, cultural, and educational events. It was great to see and interact with such visitors at that afternoon's softball game, and I hope to have more such opportunities in the coming days and weeks. Following the game, the other senior college presidents and I met to discuss the state of athletics in these changing times, and about how we can minimize our challenges and maximize our opportunities in this space. We also discussed the still-evolving budget situation, and our ongoing lobbying efforts, a discussion that carried over to Wednesday's Council of President's meeting. There, we learned of system initiatives related to advancement, COVID protocols, strategic planning (the CUNY roadmap will be released shortly), and other areas of concern. Not coincidentally, our own campus is having similar conversations, as seen by Friday's agenda of the Institutional Planning Committee where we discussed, among other items, our own strategic planning efforts as well as matters related to curricular development and academic programming.

This week was marked by intense activity and acute pride. Little of what is described above would have been possible but for collaboration between multiple parties and stakeholders, and I remain grateful for the process that allowed this to occur. I am, today, more confident and optimistic in the future of CSI than ever, and look forward to the hard but meaningful work ahead of us.

Until next time,



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