

June 29, 2023

Colleagues:

As the calendar turns to July and we enter another month, I write with a note of gratitude and appreciation.

On Monday evening the CUNY Board of Trustees appointed me as the eighth president of the College of Staten Island. I am incredibly humbled by the opportunity to continue to serve this institution and our students, and immensely proud of what we have accomplished over the last eighteen months. In that time span we have stabilized (and are now growing!) our enrollment: our internal target of 10,600 students for Fall 2023 is looking very good, and we anticipate reaching and then surpassing that goal. Our budgetary situation, while still a major concern, is vastly improved, with more than a two-thirds reduction in our sizable deficit in a year and a half. We have made - and are currently making- important investments in, and improvements to, our campus infrastructure: from IT upgrades to strategic investments in lighting and the opening of our track-and-field facility, from a summer refresh (painting, library and campus center renovations) to our sidewalk replacement project, we are restoring the campus to a place of pride and purpose. We have advanced important diversity initiatives, recruiting and retaining the most diverse faculty, staff, and student populations in our school's history, and appointed the inaugural cabinet-level adviser for DEIB. We celebrated our legacy with the Year of Willowbrook and the opening of the Willowbrook Mile, and hosted academic and cultural events that showcased our faculty and celebrated our students. We gained full membership in the NCAA Division II and reaffirmed our accreditation with Middle States, ACEN, and other agencies. In short, the last eighteen months have been incredibly busy, but also undeniably successful.

This would not have been possible but for the hard work of our dedicated staff and talented faculty, and I cannot thank you enough for making me look good and putting me in a position to succeed. This was truly a collective effort, rooted in a respect for shared governance, transparency, and accountability. I am proud of what we have accomplished, but even more so by the collaborative and consultative manner in which we did this. I pledge to continue to be accessible and hold myself, my team, and all of you accountable for the continued success of our

students and our institution. Our mission of access and excellence is one that is unique in higher education, and our role in the local community demands that we leverage our position to the betterment of all our stakeholders. The future is bright for the college, and we are primed for great things.

The coming academic year will not be without its challenges. The budgetary situation remains complex, and our funding is never assured. We will be continuing our strategic planning process, and strengthening our efforts to ensure a campus community that embraces diversity, celebrates pluralism, and is truly equitable. We will enhance our fundraising and philanthropy, expand opportunities for applied learning opportunities, and continue to provide access to transformational educational opportunities for all. We will be student-centered and forward-focused: in short, we will be not the best-kept-secret in higher education, but a destination campus that provides real value beyond an inexpensive degree.

I look forward to the hard, important work ahead, and to working with each of you to advance the mission of CSI and of CUNY.

With best wishes for a restful and restorative Independence Day holiday,



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