



December 1, 2023

Colleagues:

I hope this post-Thanksgiving email finds you well. As the calendar turns to December, I write with updates and information regarding recent activities that you may find of interest.

This week began with a meeting of the College Council Budget Committee, where we discussed recently released information concerning Fiscal Year 2023 and our projected financial plans for the current and future years. The results are somewhat of a mixed bag: although we made tremendous progress in closing our projected deficit (if you recall it had been forecasted we would end with a \$12M shortfall), we still fell short of a balanced budget, ending the year with a deficit of roughly \$4M. This is attributable to many factors, including the loss of federal stimulus support, continuing decreases in enrollment (although we are moving in the right direction in the current year), and a continuing structural deficit caused by expenses exceeding our resources. It should be noted that a decline of approximately 70% in our deficit in nine months is, frankly, amazing: this is particularly impressive given that our full-time employee headcount has increased and we made significant investments in our campus facilities, but the year-end balance is a cause of concern to the University. Our Fiscal Year 2024 forecast has CSI closing with a projected deficit of approximately \$8M: the pessimist will note this is double our FY 23 closeout but the optimist will note that this is roughly one-third better than where we were projected to end FY 23 at this point last year. As an optimist, I want to “focus on the donut and not on the hole” and believe that continued forbearance will get us to a better place by the end of this fiscal year and beyond.

This optimism was the basis of meetings I had with members of the Chancellery on Tuesday. They recognize the work we have done, appreciate the strategic investments we are making, and agree that our plan is an appropriate one. This plan will involve intentional work around recruitment and retention (growing and sustaining our enrollment), managing workload (increasing efficiencies in our operations), and transferring the cost of campus-borne expenses to other entities. We feel that collectively these steps can get us whole, but only if the University is adequately funded by our partners. Hence, our lobbying efforts will be key to our financial position: this point was central to a conversation had by campus Presidents Tuesday

evening at CUNY's John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, and it again formed some of the conversation that members of the administration had with the local PSC chapter on Thursday. (Other topics included, among other things, the rise of doxing attacks on CUNY employees, intellectual property protections, and campus support for research activities). That afternoon also saw a well-attended ensemble recital, featuring many of our talented faculty, including Professor Michael Morreale, who is retiring this semester following a quarter century of service to CSI. Congratulations, and thank you, Mike!

The week also included our most successful #Giving Tuesday event to date, with us raising more than \$130,000 for student scholarships and support (fifth in the system!). Thanks to the generous donors and the hard work of our Advancement team, we doubled last year's amount and exceeded what was an admittedly ambitious target. The "season of giving" extends through the month of December, and it would be great to hit a milestone of \$150,000. If you are still considering making a gift, please do so in support of our philanthropic and fundraising efforts. ([Give to College of Staten Island | #CUNYTUESDAY 2023](#))

The week concluded with a meeting on campus with my dear friend and colleague, Dr. Christopher Rosa, President and CEO of the Viscardi Center, the leading agency advocating for economic justice and equity for those living with disabilities. The meeting was also attended by Mike Cusick, President and CEO of the Staten Island Economic Development Center, and Dr. Christine Cea, member of the New York State Education Department's Board of Regents. Working with Viscardi makes perfect sense for CSI given our legacy of place and I look forward to seeing the results of this potential partnership in the coming years: today's meeting, coming as it did on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, as declared by the United Nations, was particularly poignant. As these conversations move from aspirational to operational, we will have more fulsome discussions about the kinds of partnerships that make sense for us, our students, and the communities we serve.

Until next time,



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