

March 15, 2024

Colleagues:

I hope this mid-month email finds you well. I write with information concerning recent activities that you may find of interest.

This week was another hectic one. It began with a drive to Albany where I met with state representatives to advocate for campus and system needs, while meeting with students from the CUNY/SUNY Model Senate and the Malave Leadership Academy (MLA). Our students are our best advocates and spokespersons, and seeing them in action on behalf of CSI and CUNY was tremendously impactful and gratifying. As the lobbying season winds down, it is imperative that we keep up the pressure on our elected officials: this was a message carried by many of our alumni—some of whom I met this week—as part of a recent outreach campaign, and a message that I conveyed in meetings with New York Councilmember Kamillah Hanks and New York State Assemblymember Charles Fall's office on Monday.

On Tuesday, members of our campus leadership team participated in an intensive training session produced by Hillel International, as part of the Campus Climate Initiative, so that we can continue to provide a supportive environment on campus where students can openly embrace their identity, faith, and values, without fear of discrimination, harassment, or marginalization. Our partners at Hillel, who worked with the Petrie Foundation to generously fund our Campus Climate Initiative grant, have been tremendously helpful in providing us with the tools we need to improve our campus climate and ensure a workplace and learning environment that is free from discrimination and harassment of all kinds. If you feel that you are the victim of such behavior, or have witnessed such, please report this activity via [CUNY's University-Wide Discrimination and Retaliation Reporting Portal – The City University of New York](#).

That afternoon and the entire next day was consumed with meetings with CUNY Central, where Senior College leaders met first to discuss pathways to career opportunities, and where all CUNY administrators gathered for our monthly Council of Presidents meeting on Wednesday. There, we discussed campus operations, analyzed student success metrics, and received updates on state and city budget processes. We were also briefed on current and planned IT projects, the result of federal lobbying efforts, and the status of contract negotiations. We also received important information related to our mid-year financial projections, which show continued progress toward closing our anticipated \$8M budget shortfall for this fiscal year.

My week continued with a very productive meeting with our campus PSC chapter, where we addressed issues related to infrastructure, concerns about workload and staffing, responses to potential doxing actions, and clarification around academic operations. It was a candid and, as almost all of our discussions have been, fruitful conversation. I thank the chapter leadership for bringing the concerns of their members forward, and for the collegial manner in which they have continuously worked with the administration to improve our campus. That evening, I had the pleasure of joining our dedicated "Friends of CSI"—the longest-standing support organization among our many affiliates—for their board meeting. We discussed the state of the College, their plans for future activities, and their support for our students. The Friends have consistently

provided scholarship support and sponsored many of our events, and their interest in and appreciation for the work that we are doing is clear, and profound.

We also recently received recognition as a “Top Green Campus” by *The Princeton Review*, thanks to our work around sustainability (and many thanks here to Nora Santiago for her indefatigable leadership of these efforts). And speaking of “green” it was so great to see many of you at Thursday’s Irish Heritage luncheon, as produced by Jody Merendino and her team at the Park Café. It was a wonderful start to the St. Patrick’s Day weekend and a good way to meet with many among our community who are—even if just for the day—Irish! For those of us who claim that distinction on every day, I wish you a safe and enjoyable holiday.

Until next time,



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