

April 29, 2022

Colleagues:

I hope that you were able to enjoy some downtime while classes were not in session last week. I know that while I enjoyed the lack of a commute, I also greatly missed being on campus! I would be remiss to not acknowledge some events that occurred since I last communicated, so I want to take a moment now to wish those members of our community who observed Orthodox Easter a happy holiday and to also acknowledge the many wonderful contributions of our dedicated administrative assistants (Administrative Professionals Day was April 27). The office support staff has been incredibly welcoming and supportive to me since my arrival and I know that they have worked tirelessly to assist in the transition to (and now from!) distance education and remote work throughout these challenging times. Thank you, all (but especially Rosemary and Patti!)

This week, I had the pleasure of meeting with the departmental chairpersons, first as part of their general meeting, and then again as part of the Personnel and Budget Committee process. It was good to hear concerns and, especially, to work collaboratively to address issues before they become problems. I also had the great honor of participating in the annual induction ceremony for Phi Beta Delta, the Honors Society for International Scholars. It was wonderful to meet so many folks who value the opportunities provided by such programs and especially to hear a fascinating paper delivered by our very own Professor Nerve Macaspac, on “The Geography of Peace.” Dr. Macaspac spoke about how peace is more than just the absence of conflict, but how it is a set of social and spatial processes that is rooted in a refusal of violence. It was a thought-provoking presentation that led me to consider how we as a community can promote peace by creating a space where ideas are communicated freely and respectfully, and where multiple viewpoints are solicited and engaged. Indeed, in my short time as Interim President, I have witnessed firsthand the commitment of so many members of our community to such ideas, and to international education and global exchange. From study abroad programs and related activities, and from sponsoring international scholars to welcoming students from abroad, ours is truly a campus that values global experiences. Global awareness and international engagement are part and parcel of CSI’s mission and it was heartening to see our commitment to those pillars extend beyond words. Many thanks to the chapter for the invitation and for the opportunity to address this year’s inductees.

I also had the opportunity to dialog with my fellow Senior College Presidents, and to have a one-on-one meeting with CUNY’s Vice Chancellor for Facilities, Mohamed Attalla. At that meeting, we discussed ongoing campus projects, and plans for upcoming ones. I shared as well CSI’s sustainability plan, spearheaded by VP Hope Berte, which is particularly timely given last week’s observation of Earth Day. The campus is making major strides in reducing its footprint,

enhancing recycling, and lowering costs by being increasingly mindful of our efforts to embrace green initiatives. Your individual and collective assistance in these areas is much appreciated.

Thursday brought one of the highlights of our academic year, the annual Undergraduate Research Conference. Of course, the event could not have occurred but for the leadership of Associate Provost Dante Tawfeeq and his staff (particularly Lynne Lacomis, who coordinated the logistics of the event) in the Office of Academic Affairs. Over the course of the afternoon, several dozen students presented their research, much of it conducted under the tutelage of or in concert with their faculty mentors, in both virtual and in-person formats. Experiential learning activities such as these provide valuable experiences for students to link the theoretical knowledge they gain from lectures with real-world applications. I was impressed by the quality of the poster presentations, the inspiring performances, and the level of support provided by the campus (thank you, especially to AVP and CIO Patty Kahn and her team for their technical assistance). That evening, I attended a reception for *Eight on Victory*, an exhibit in the CSI Art Gallery that showcases the work of several of our adjunct instructors, and which I encourage all of you to check out. It is an interesting and impressive display that highlights how our faculty research and creative activity informs their interactions with our students. The full day of student presentations and faculty accomplishments was truly a great opportunity to reflect on the high-quality work produced by all members of the CSI community. I am proud of all that we are able to share.

Until next time,

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