

November 11, 2022

Colleagues:

On this Veteran's Day holiday, I write to thank all those who have served our country, especially those members of our immediate CSI and CUNY community. Our campus has the distinction of again being recognized as a "Military Friendly" institution, and the Veterans Center, headed by Ms. Laura Scazzafavo, deserve our appreciation for the work they do on behalf of the several dozen veterans who study at CSI. I believe that connections to our nation's military can support our campus enrollment and create pipelines to higher education for the brave men and women of our armed forces, and I intend to pursue closer relationships with these partners.

Since my last communication, I have been engaged in various pursuits and activities. Last week, I joined VP Hodge and his colleagues for a teambuilding retreat where we discussed the importance of "customer service" as it relates to retention and enrollment. We know that most students who "stop out" do so for things largely out of our control, so we had better do a good job with those factors that we **can** influence. When students know that they can get clear answers to their questions, and not be shuttled from office to office for transactional affairs, or when they know there are engaging activities inside the classroom and beyond, they are much more likely to have positive experiences—and stay at CSI. It is therefore incumbent on all of us to work so that our current and prospective students have the best possible experiences when interacting with (y)our offices.

I also had a great podcast conversation with my friend and colleague, President Larry Johnson of Guttman Community College, where we discussed ways in which we could leverage the power of the CUNY system to better serve our students and create transfer pipelines to our campus. I truly believe that CSI can be the transfer destination for CUNY's community college students. Speaking of transfer, that was one of the major features of a day-long Council of President's (CoPs) meeting this week at CUNY Central. Members of the Chancellery discussed plans to improve policies and processes, align curricula (with robust faculty engagement), and move the needle on this perpetual challenge. As there are more transfer students than new freshmen, we would be well-advised to target this population and entice them to come to CSI—but many encounter roadblocks (and the loss of credit) that prevent them from doing so. Our Provost and the team in the Office of Academic Affairs will be making this a top priority in the coming months.

The CoPs meeting also focused on fiscal and enrollment issues, as did my bi-weekly check in with both the Senior College leaders and my monthly agenda-setting meeting with our own College Council Executive Committee. It is clear that we will need to grow our enrollment (we are currently serving 10,000 degree-seeking students and this is projected to decline over the coming terms), and maintain a prudent line when it comes to our budget. Hires should be strategic, intentional, and critical to our mission of access and opportunity. As I mentioned, each of us has a role to play in enrollment management, and while that will help stabilize our situation, I realize our future is dependent on more than tuition revenue. As such, I am continually advocating for changes to the funding allocation model that will alleviate some of our recurring issues. Following this week's elections, I have begun to strategize with our local officials to lobby for the same, and engagement with state and other officials will ramp up shortly. As the only institution of public higher education in the Borough, we enjoy widespread and diverse support, which is encouraging, and which we must exploit. My busy week concluded with the opening of a new art exhibit in the Center for the Arts, *girls + eggs*, which I encourage you all to check out—many thanks to Chair Siona Wilson and her team in Performing and Creative Arts for another engaging exhibit.

While the challenges of my office are many, I want to close this week's message on some positive notes. First, as reported in *CSI Today*, one of our military veteran students, Ashley Plymale, a 17-year US Army veteran, was recently awarded the Gen. Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award from the Army (one of its highest honors). Ashley transferred to our campus from John Jay, so she truly encapsulates what CSI can provide to this cohort and what transfer students can bring to CSI. Congratulations, Ashley!

Lastly, when meeting with students I have heard many good examples of the positive impact that caring and attentive employees have had on them. This should not go unrecognized nor uncelebrated, and in the coming weeks, we will be doing just that—recognizing those who have served CSI in various capacities

for a number of years. This small gesture is one way to honor the impact you all have on CSI. I wish you all a restful weekend.

With appreciation and until next time,



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