

November 18, 2022

Colleagues:

What an eventful week! As I am sure you have seen, we were pleased to host an honorable alumna, Queen Diambi of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on Wednesday. Her Majesty, valedictorian of the Class of 1992, spoke glowingly of her time on our campus, and relayed how her experience here was both affirming and life-changing. Her interactions with our students allowed them to recognize their own potential and envision where a CSI education could take them. The Queen described how she arrived at CSI and CUNY not speaking English, but how she persevered through that and a learning challenge to complete her degree in less than three years: she attributes her success to the active attention and empathetic engagement of her faculty and CSI staff, which allowed her to “regain her dignity as a learner.” It is clear that the work you all do is important and impactful.

Speaking of notable alumni, on Thursday, I had the pleasure of attending a luncheon recognizing the contributions of Dr. Christine Cea, past chair of the CSI Foundation Board of Directors and tireless advocate on behalf of those with cognitive, intellectual, and developmental disabilities. Like Queen Diambi, Dr. Cea’s story is intensely personal and uniquely CSI. Returning to school as a young mother, Dr. Cea earned multiple degrees and an appointment to the New York State Board of Regents, where she has been able to create policies rooted in empathy, and built on equity and opportunity. Her accomplishments are reflective of what our students can achieve, and her work is emblematic of how our graduates and alumni can positively impact our communities. Thank you, Dr. Cea!

The CSI Foundation, which Dr. Cea led for a number of years, is excited to announce the return to an in-person Celestial Ball, the first since 2019. Held at the beautiful Richmond Country Club, this year’s event recognizes “Heroes Among Us” and honors those who went “above and beyond” in their support of CSI during the pandemic. Discounted rates are available for CSI employees, and I encourage you to consider joining me at the [Celestial Ball](#). Additionally, in coming weeks CSI and CUNY will participate in the annual #givingTuesday, and ask that you remember our campus during this important fundraising campaign, as both events benefit our students.

This week, I also had meetings with both the NCAA and the East Coast Conference, where we analyzed recent financial audits and strategized about the future of intercollegiate athletics. Members of the administration and I also had a lengthy conversation with representatives from the Professional Staff Congress on Tuesday afternoon. Among the items we discussed were our ongoing campus commitment to COVID-19 precautions: it is important to reiterate that while we are now more than two years into the pandemic, we remain steadfast in our commitment to the safety and security of all members of our campus community. We continue to follow local, state, and national directives related to vaccination and testing, and our campus public safety officers continue to check for compliance with Cleared4 upon entry. Our cleaning protocols—twice per shift for all common areas—offer reassurance here, as do our relatively low rates of infection (less than 1%, with only five positive cases among nearly 600 tests administered last week.) While I recognize that adherence to these requirements comes at a cost and are sometimes an inconvenience, it is imperative that we remain vigilant in all matters pertaining to the health and wellness of our community. I thank you for your assistance here and I am especially grateful to the members of our various teams for working so hard to keep us safe and healthy.

The week continued with monthly meetings of the College Council (where we discussed, among other things, the state of CSI Auxiliary Services) and the Faculty Senate (where we highlighted the return to pre-pandemic levels of faculty grant activity). It is clear that the campus is anxious for a return to normalcy and I am hopeful that our Spring term will see an increased level of such activity. The Institutional Planning Committee held its November meeting, too, where we continued to make progress on strategic planning and enrollment imperatives. I am pleased with the progress that has been done to date and look forward to the hard, though important, work that is ahead.

As next week brings Thanksgiving, I want to wish all of you and your loved ones a peaceful and restorative holiday. I will return with a weekly note after the holiday.

Until next time,



Timothy G. Lynch, Ph.D. (he/him/his)
Interim President, College of Staten Island
The City University of New York
2800 Victory Blvd, SI, NY 10314
718.982.2400