



September 29, 2023

Colleagues:

I hope this rainy-day email finds you well (and dry!) as I write with updates and information that you might find of interest.

This week was one of frenzied activity for me and members of our administration. Early in the week, I met with colleagues from across CUNY to discuss fundraising strategies and initiatives. As significant support from state and city coffers is no longer assured, and with still lagging behind our historic highs, it is imperative that we—as a system and as individual institutions—become more entrepreneurial and innovative. To that end, we should look to our unique assets—including our Performing & Creative Arts Center and large, often-underutilized campus—as opportunities to raise money. Bringing outside groups to campus also has the benefit of exposing the wider community to the strength and diversity of our academic offerings, increasing the likelihood that visitors will “spread the word” about the wonderful things we have to offer at CSI.

We also need to leverage our position as the only public institution of higher education in the borough, which we have done with some success as it relates to our local elected officials. I do think we have ample opportunities to engage with local businesses as partners and as benefactors of their support and I will be working towards that goal in the coming months. This was the theme of a wide-ranging conversation that I had with Advancement staff and a focus group of successful alumni and administrators on Thursday afternoon, where we brainstormed about ways to improve our institutional identity and reputation through engaging content and an increased social media presence. We plan to ask our students to assist in this endeavor by serving as “influencers” (or ‘finfluencers’) to amplify our message.

Giving and philanthropy was also the theme at a social event we hosted this past Tuesday evening, where representatives from the [CSI Alumni Association](#), The Friends of CSI, the

Association of Retired Professors, the [CSI Foundation](#), and our administration met to discuss our shared missions and how we can all work together and amplify each other's efforts. It was wonderful to mingle with recent graduates, long-retired instructors, and others who always work hard to support our students and our institution and to discuss ways in which we can ensure that we are not competing or duplicating our philanthropic efforts. I look forward to enhanced cooperation and more such activities, including the Alumni Association's upcoming [Murder Mystery Dinner & Show](#) on October 27th. Don't forget to buy your tickets!

On Wednesday the Provost and I travelled to New York Law School to meet with our counterparts and discuss ways in which we can enhance an already-strong partnership between our institutions (the last two CSI valedictorians, for example, are currently enrolled at NYLS). We discussed joint events, scholarship opportunities, faculty partnerships, and other ideas as ways to build pipelines and open doors for CSI students and graduates. I have similar meetings planned with representatives from other post-baccalaureate institutions in the coming weeks.

The week also saw a meeting with the Higher Education Officer (HEO) Steering Committee, where members of the administration and I discussed ways to address that body's concerns while also brainstorming about ways to enhance and elevate a sense of campus pride and belongingness. We plan to move forward on many of these very good ideas---including the resurrection of the CSI Spirit Committee and team-building exercises throughout the year—to enhance campus pride. This was also a theme of the week-ending meeting with the Institutional Planning Committee, where we discussed the next steps in our strategic planning process, with a hoped-for rollout by the close of this academic year. There is much to take pride in, for sure, but much more to be done.

As the month of September ends, I want to acknowledge the impending retirements of two-long serving CSI employees. After nearly 30 years of service to our College, Administrative Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds (and recent Dolphin Award winner) Jon Mahoney will be making his last rounds on the campus grounds next week. Any who worked with Jon know him to be affable and hard-working, and a great colleague. The same can be said for Dean Balsamini, who has led the Small Business Development Center for nearly two decades, and who has been a fixture in the Staten Island Community for even longer. Dean's work in revitalizing the local economy after Superstorm Sandy, and in assisting local businesses during the COVID pandemic, is legendary and truly enhanced the College's reputation as an anchor institution in the borough. Both men will be missed and I know you will join me in extending them the heartiest and warmest congratulations and best wishes for the future.

Until next time,



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