



November 17, 2023

Colleagues:

I hope the seasonal weather finds you well as I write with information about recent campus activities that you may find of interest.

This week was an active one on-campus and off, as demonstrated by the activities commemorating the accomplishments of CSI's veterans AND celebrating our commitment to international education. It was wonderful that so many turned out to meet folks from each cohort, whether it was at the Veteran's Center suite, the Tournament of Heroes basketball tourney, or at one of the events hosted by the Center for Global Engagement. The former demonstrates that CSI is a destination campus for those returning from active or reserve military status, and our commitment to serving them well, while the latter demonstrates our global reach and impact. With international exchange programs, multiple study-abroad opportunities, and faculty from around the world, it is clear that if you study here, you can go anywhere.

This was on display, too, at Tuesday's event in our Center for the Arts, where we hosted the "Center for an Urban Future" and Abby Jo Sigal, Executive Director of the NYC Mayor's Office of Talent and Workforce Development, for a conversation about providing access to tech careers for Staten Islanders. This was also the case at Wednesday's fifth annual "Careers in Finance, Economics, and Accounting Summit," produced by Dean Susan Holak of the Lucille and Jay Chazanoff School of Business, attended by more than 300 students, and with presentations by high-level industry experts and recent CSI alumni. Events such as these demonstrate that CSI truly is the academic, cultural, economic, geographic, and social heart of the Borough.

This was a lesson I learned, too, at Tuesday's "Pizza with the President" luncheon, where VP Hodge and I listened to—and learned from!—our talented students representing the Macaulay Honors College and Verrazzano School honors programs. These students provided great insight into why they chose CSI among many options, and the ways in which we can better serve them and others. With apologies to the College Council and Faculty Senate—with whom I met on Thursday—or to my colleagues on the Council of Presidents (with whom I spent all day Wednesday at the Chancellery), this was easily my favorite meeting of the week! The students are inspired and inspiring, and listening to the reasons why they chose to attend CSI, their experiences here, and their plans for the future was amazing.

The following day brought a return to reality and more mundane topics. At the Council of Presidents, we discussed many items, including our improving enrollment picture (CSI closed Fall 2023 up 5% in headcount and FTE, and the University is up 300% in applications for Fall 2024); nascent lobbying strategies (including processes related to congressional earmarks); and the results of the most recent COACHE survey (the Provost has a task force interpreting and analyzing our data). In the latter part of the week, at College Council, we discussed facilities improvements (including lighting, landscaping, painting, and more) and strategies to close our structural deficit (which we have reduced by more than a third despite adding a dozen full-time positions in a year). Speaking of new hires, that afternoon, I met many of our newest faculty colleagues at a luncheon hosted by CGE, and that evening I attended a reception at The Graduate Center, CUNY recognizing and welcoming all new full-time faculty hires, and I was pleased to be joined by a number of our CSI cohort at that event.

Next week brings with it Thanksgiving (although I had the first of what will likely be many of the coming week's feasts at the Park Café on Thursday, where it was great to "break bread" with so many of you in an informal setting) and as such my weekly notifications will be on hiatus. I do, nonetheless, want to wish you all a restful and restorative holiday and comment on the symbolism on the holiday. I will use the early part of next week to attend an event at Wagner College's Holocaust Museum: this is timely in that it is both a poignant juxtaposition to current events in the Middle East and a stark reminder that our own national day of Thanksgiving occurs in the midst of Native American History month...thereby providing a moment for pause and reflection on the complicated relationship between indigenous persons and those who came after them. I certainly intend to use the day to think about how we can better serve all members of our community, internal and beyond our campus, and I suspect many of you will do the same.

May you have a safe and enjoyable holiday with loved ones. With appreciation for all that you do to make the College of Staten Island so special,

Until next time,



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