



May 15, 2014

President's Report to the College Council

Good afternoon.

On May 5, after serving two years in an interim capacity, I was named President of the College of Staten Island by the CUNY Board of Trustees. At the meeting, I was given an opportunity to say a few words before the Board. Given that I have not yet made an official public comment on my appointment, I decided to utilize my time today to share my prepared statement to the Board with you. I also want to thank you for the many, many emails, notes, and phone calls of congratulation that I have received.

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I want to start out by thanking Board Chair Benno Schmidt, Vice Chair Philip Berry, Interim Chancellor Bill Kelly, Chancellor Designate J.B. Milliken, and the distinguished members of the Board of Trustees in appointing me President of the College of Staten Island. I also want to thank the CSI faculty, staff, and students, as well as our extended CSI family—our alumni, the CSI Foundation, the Staten Island community and elected delegation, and so many others—for their support over the past two years.

I am deeply humbled and honored for your confidence in allowing me to continue to serve CSI as its seventh President, dating back to the establishment of our predecessor institutions, Staten Island Community College in 1956, Richmond College in 1965, and finally the College of Staten Island in 1976.

In just the past two years, we have implemented many of the items set forth in our Strategic Plan, Many Voices, One Vision: we created new academic schools—the School of Business, School of Education, and the School of Health Sciences; ten new academic departments; rolled out a comprehensive new branding initiative; launched a \$20 million comprehensive campaign to support our faculty, students, and new buildings, as well as to grow our endowment; opened our first student residence halls, Dolphin Cove; and with the recent \$10 million in funds allocated to the design and bidding stages of our new CUNY Interdisciplinary High-Performance Computing Center in the 2014-2015 state budget, we are well on our way to building our first new academic building at CSI since moving to our current Willowbrook site in 1993. This could not have happened without all those whom I thanked earlier, especially our faculty and staff who have worked so hard to move our institution forward.

The excitement generated from our momentum is both palpable and far-reaching. Just last month, Business Insider, the prominent business and technology news Website, released its list of the top schools in the country, ones with great academics and high acceptance rates that challenge the myth that a college is necessarily better if it is more difficult to gain entrance—criteria that mirror CUNY’s mission. Only one school per state was chosen, and for New York, that school was the College of Staten Island.

My entire career in higher education has been dedicated to public-access institutions, which provide the highest quality education, open to all. I am proud of the noble mission of The City University of New York and look forward to continuing this work at the College of Staten Island.

I am proud of CSI’s world-class faculty whose research, scholarship, and creative works are second to none.

I am proud of our dedicated staff.

And most of all, I am proud of our wonderful students.

On their behalf, and with the confidence and faith you have expressed in me tonight, I remain committed to advancing the Mission, Vision, and Values of the College of Staten Island and of The City University of New York.

Thank you.

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This concludes my statement.

My comments to the Board of Trustees were both heartfelt and an accurate portrayal of CSI’s upward trajectory. In fact, the very next day following the Board meeting, we received more great news.

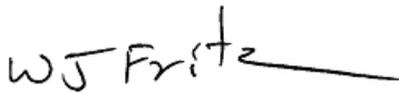
Last year, the Obama Administration announced a plan to assess schools on how well they serve their students, based on metrics like graduation rates, tuition, and the percentage of students who receive Pell Grants. Time magazine recently released its college rankings based upon these metrics, and CSI ranked 48th out of 2,500

schools. You may have heard of some of the schools ranked below us: Amherst, Stanford, MIT, and University of California-Berkeley.

This latest accolade represents quite an exclamation point to another great academic year at CSI. Speaking of exclamation points, I look forward to seeing you at our 65th Commencement on May 29, where we will have the opportunity to continue our celebration of all that we have accomplished together on behalf of our students. Although this is the 38th Commencement since the establishment of the College of Staten Island in 1976, this is the actually our 65th when we include the Commencements of our predecessor institutions, Staten Island Community College and Richmond College. This is part our ongoing efforts to consider our valued predecessor institutions and respective alumni a “part of” CSI as opposed to “apart from” CSI.

In closing, I thank you for another wonderful year.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "WJ Fritz" followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

William J. Fritz, PhD