



College Council President's Report September 17, 2015

Good afternoon. Welcome back to the start of a new academic year at the College of Staten Island.

This is always a singular time of anticipation and optimism at the College and I am reminded of a scene from Alfred Lord Tennyson's, *The Foresters: Robin Hood and Maid Marian*: "Upon a birthday: if this life of ours be a good glad thing, why should we make us merry because a year of it is gone? But Hope smiles from the threshold of the year to come, whispering, 'it will be happier,' and old faces press round us, and warm hands close with warm hands."

Normally, my reports at College Council are brief, but I have requested a little more time from College Council President John Verzani as I have three important issues to discuss with you, namely, our achievements over the summer, ongoing budget challenges, and the recent administrative reorganization and Vice Presidential search waiver issue.

There are some very positive highlights from the summer, starting with our recognition in national higher education rankings. Money magazine ranked CSI third in New York State, eighth among public institutions in the Middle-Atlantic region, and 123rd nationally for institutions that provide the best value for students' tuition dollars. Forbes magazine followed by ranking CSI one of "America's Top Colleges" offering a high return-on-investment education.

Concerning external funding, State Assemblymember Michael Cusick allocated to the College a \$1M state grant to improve our outdoor track facilities in support of our student-athletes and to promote the health and wellness of our faculty, staff, and the community. We also received \$1.3M in City funding for a variety of capital projects, and \$415k in private funds to support master's degree students in the humanities and social sciences. Additionally, through their generous support and service to the College, the President's Board Room will now be named after Lorraine and Professor Gordon DiPaolo. This was the third naming opportunity that we have received this past year, meeting our ambitious goal.

We have also increased our momentum this summer with key facility projects. A satellite campus in St. George with ten classrooms is on track to open next fall to provide access to as many as 18,000 recent high school graduates residing in the North Shore, who are not currently attending any CUNY campus. We are also on target to commence Phase 1 of our Building 2M construction, which will provide an additional ten classrooms next academic year.

These accomplishments are the result of the hard work of many people in this room, including my senior administration, faculty, deans, and staff, and are positioning CSI as the destination campus within New York City.

Speaking of the senior administration, I am very pleased to welcome three remarkable individuals to the College of Staten Island, all of whom were selected through national searches. Although they have most recently resided in California, Virginia and Ohio, they are all now Staten Island residents. Please welcome Dr. Gary Reichard, our new Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs; Khatmeh Osseiran-Hanna, Vice President for Institutional Advancement and External Affairs; and Christopher Giordano, Assistant Vice President for Student Services and Dean of Students.

I expect that their leadership will help us to advance their respective areas even during this time of fiscal challenge, which brings me to the next topic of discussion. This year, our College budget was reduced by 3%, and our enrollment experienced a decrease by 3.5%. Additionally, the State has not provided any new Compact funding, which has historically been used for investments and new faculty lines. Fortunately, we greatly mitigated the potentially devastating impact of these cuts through sound fiscal planning last year which entailed not filling some vacant positions; setting-aside 10% of Other Than Personnel Service (OTPS) allocations; reducing year-end spending; working with students to implement a transportation fee for our shuttle bus; and taking an all funds approach, both tax levy and non-tax levy, to supplement our resources. These strategic measures resulted in a larger than normal reserve at year end to help balance this year's budget and ensure that the decreased funding will have a lesser impact on the campus.

Looking ahead, following a net gain of nine faculty from searches last year, our hiring during the current fiscal year may be more modest, but I am committed to maintaining our current faculty numbers and to possibly seeing a slight positive gain. Along these lines, I have asked the Provost to authorize searches with this goal in mind, finances permitting. We plan to use funds from non-tax levy resources, such as the CSI Foundation, to supplement OTPS funding for academic departments. We will be creating a plan to focus on recruitment and retention to increase and sustain enrollments, and we will be submitting proposals to compete for a pool of \$12M made available from the State to senior campuses to improve access, degree completion, academic programs, and student services.

Concerning the recent administrative reorganization and Vice Presidential search waiver issue, for the past few years, I have listened to faculty concerns about the reporting structure of academic units and related student concerns. I have also consulted with staff and several external experts concerning the College's administrative structure. Their collective thoughts and recommendations have prompted me to reorganize how we deliver services to our students.

To strengthen our academic enterprise, I have relocated all academic support services to the Division of Academic Affairs under the leadership of the Provost. This includes the registrar, testing, academic advisement, academic support and remedial support programs. The Provost will be redefining the roles of the two vacant Associate Provost positions in Academic Affairs to provide oversight of this expanded portfolio.

The remaining offices from Enrollment Management and Student Affairs will now report to the new position of Vice President for Student and Enrollment Services, a structure that has been utilized previously at CSI and one that has proven successful in colleges nationally. As I previously advised the College community, I have appointed Jennifer Rubain, through a search waiver process, to serve as our new Vice President. Jennifer will be supported by our new Assistant Vice President for Student Services and Dean of Students, Christopher Giordano, who possesses extensive experience and was hired following a national search. I have great confidence in Christopher's ability to serve in this role. We also have strong content expertise in the Enrollment Services area. The reorganization will reduce the number of Vice Presidents on my Cabinet which will lead to budget savings for other investments, strengthen articulation among many similar student support programs, enhance Student Services, and allow for more strategic student recruitment. I strongly believe that this reorganization also strengthens the faculty voice in the delivery of services to students.

I agree with John Verzani who, on behalf of the Executive Committees of the College Council and Faculty Senate, communicated to me that: "Waiving a national search should remain the exception, reserved for very rare and well-reasoned exemptions." I consider this to be one of those rare exceptions.

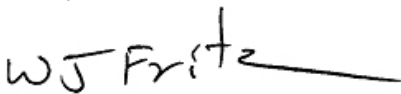
CSI has a long history of comprehensive searches for administrative and faculty positions, and I am committed to continuing that history. Since I have been President, we have completed nine administrative national searches, including four conducted last year for our Provost, Vice President for Institutional Advancement and External Affairs, Assistant Vice President for Finance and Budget, and Assistant Vice President for Student Services and Dean of Students. This year, we will be launching at least five additional national searches for three Dean positions and two Associate Provost positions.

Jennifer brings a unique and valued set of skills and experience to CSI, including strategic planning, diversity and recruitment, and both campus and Central Office perspectives. Jennifer previously served with the Brooklyn College administration and as a University Dean in the CUNY Central Office. She has worked closely with CSI faculty on a variety of projects, and they can attest to her effectiveness. Most importantly, she has broad experience in strategic planning and specific experience in diversity strategic planning. This will allow her to help the Division develop forward-looking plans, and she will provide valuable guidance to the College as we will soon launch a new strategic planning process. Our current plan, *Many Voices, One Vision*, has served us well for the past five years, but will expire at the end of 2016. Our Periodic Review Report for Middle States occurs in 2017, and it would not be prudent for the campus to be operating under an expired plan during the time of the report. We are fortunate to have an individual with such talents to occupy this newly configured position.

I recognize that the structural and personnel changes represent major organizational shifts for our campus, but I am reassured by the many high-level directors and senior administrators in place. This reorganization will create more effective coordination and collaboration across divisions, while also ensuring that the College moves ahead in a more strategic and holistic context.

I know that some of you are still concerned about the search waiver process and I respect your opinion. Nonetheless, I feel that we must move forward because, in my best judgment, this is what is needed to provide the highest level of services to our students. Even if we may disagree, I ask that you give the new Vice President for Student and Enrollment Services a fair chance to prove herself to the campus and to demonstrate the considerable talents that she brings to assist us in achieving our collective goals.

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
President

