

College Council  
December 19, 2019

I know that it is impossible to acknowledge all of our losses but I was especially saddened earlier this month to hear of the passing of retired Professor Bernie Domanski. Bernie was chair of Computer Science when I first came to CSI. Please join me in a moment of silence.

[Pause for silence]

I'd like to start by congratulating Patricia Smith, Tyehimba Jess, and Joel Hamkins whom the Board of Trustees approved as Distinguished Professors at Monday's Board meeting. They join Distinguished Professors Fred Naider, Jay Rosen, Sarah Schulman and Sos Agaian. Their well-deserved recognition as leading scholars in their respective fields will bring additional acclaim to the College and to CUNY and provides a real opportunity for our students, to use a CUNY phrase, to "study with the best."

Dean Savage, a professor at Queens College, analyzed program-specific data from the recent DOE College Scorecard, examining data on 11 nationally accredited Master of Social Work (MSW) programs in the New York City metropolitan area, including two SUNY campuses, NYU, Long Island University, and Columbia University.

Savage found that of the 11 institutions in the NYC area that have accredited MSW programs, College of Staten Island students graduate with the lowest debt (in federal loans taken out during enrollment in the MSW program) and the highest earnings.

We recently learned that the New York State Ed Department, based on Governor Cuomo's support, approved our School of Education's proposal for an Ed.D. in Community-based Leadership.

I continue to remind the campus that one of our more serious problems is deferred maintenance. That is why 18 months ago I declared a Lustrum of Infrastructure. We have an

overwhelmingly long list of items that need attention. Even as a top priority there are so many issues on the list that it will take some time to address them all but we are making progress. All items mentioned in the recent Banner article are being addressed (water damage in the stairwells, new roof top repair project, and others). Hope will be sending out an email shortly describing the state of recent and ongoing construction activities.

Presidential evaluations in CUNY have not been done for some time, which is not a best practice. I spoke with the Chancellor about the evaluation process and we discussed how it was best to start with a phased in approach, starting with the longest serving CUNY presidents. It's hard to believe that I fall in that category, along with the presidents of Hunter, Medgar Evers, and New York City Tech.

The process will be overseen by an AASCU President and will provide opportunity for in person input as well as written or electronic feedback. I urge everyone to participate in the process. Rob Wallace has been designated as the campus liaison

and he will be the best source of information as the process unfolds, probably in February.

I'd like to end with something different for this College Council. Many of you know Student Government President Fatu Amara, a senior completing her Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry with minors in Political Science and Psychology. Fatu is also a student of the Verrazano School and CSTEP, who has dedicated her efforts to school and community volunteerism. Originally from Sierra Leone, she is a graduate of Curtis High School. In 2018, Fatu was accepted into the prestigious Jeannette K. Watson Fellowship, through which she had the opportunity to intern at the NYC Mayor's Office for Immigrant Affairs by facilitating language learning programs, and in Rwanda, where she worked on development projects by conducting outreach to rural communities. Fatu spoke at the CSI Foundation's Celestial Ball on December 7th, and I'd like to share with you some of her remarks.

PLAY VIDEO

It's hard not to be inspired by Fatu. The sponsors of one of her Scholarships, Dr. Mike Nakao, an alum and graduate of Richmond College, was so inspired when he heard her remarks, that he and his wife wrote a check for \$70k additional support for the endowment he created. Fatu Amara and countless others are the story of our college.

I understand and don't want to pretend that we don't have challenges, but I also want us to remember why we got into higher education in the first place – to help change student's lives. I don't want to forget, that it's not the challenges that we face here that define us, it's the job we do educating our students.

Thank you and I hope you have a wonderful holiday and peaceful break. Happy New Year!