



College Council Remarks
May 20, 2021

Good afternoon.

It's hard to believe that we have reached the end of the 2020-2021 Academic Year. I want to acknowledge that this will be Dean Marcus Tye's and Cheryl Adolph's last College Council and want to wish them well in their new endeavors.

I also want to give a special acknowledgement to people who have been reporting to campus on a regular basis over the course of the last year to help students and to keep the campus running. Their dedication is greatly appreciated.

May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. Earlier this month, several departments teamed together to host a panel of faculty, students and staff for a very important event, [Speak out Against Anti-Asian Violence](#). This event was very sobering and powerful as the panelist reflected on the recent rise in violence against Asians and Pacific Islanders, America's often overlooked history, and their own personal stories about how bigotry, bias and racism has affected their lives.

While these stories are often hard to hear, it is important that we hear them. It is important that we keep talking, listening and learning about racism, and working

together to help create a more equitable and inclusive community and world where every feels a sense of belonging.

I encourage everyone to continue hosting, attending and participating in these types of events, as education is more than just what we teach and learn in the classroom, and we can grow so much just by listening to each other.

I want to wish all of our students the best of luck on their final exams. I also want to congratulate all of our upcoming graduates. This has always been an exciting time of year for us, and this year is no different. I am looking forward to our virtual [Commencement](#) on May 27 and seeing our graduates at the upcoming Grad Walks on campus June 9, 10, & 11.

This was a tough year, but we made it through. At the start of the year, I emphasized three priorities:

1. focus on our students to ensure their success
2. maintain the health and safety of our faculty, staff, and students; and
3. protect jobs.

Throughout the year these priorities remained at the forefront of everything we did and every decision we made. Considering where we were a year ago, and where we are now overall, I believe we had a pretty successful year. A large part of that success was due to all of your hard work and dedication, as well as your patience as we navigated these uncharted waters. We got through this year

together, and I am going to rely on your continued dedication and patience as we now work on returning to campus in the Fall.

As you read in the [Chancellor's email dated May 13th](#), staff will be returning to campus the week of August 2nd to prepare for a more in person Fall, and faculty will follow in accordance with the academic calendar. Every office should be open during normal working hours starting August 2; however, we need to plan for flexible schedules to ensure adherence to our re-entry plan while maintaining appropriate staffing. Schedules should be rotated and staff should alternate between in person and remote work where possible to ensure that we don't overcrowd the workplace and spread out days spent on campus.

VP Hope Berte and Jessica Collura have been meeting with the directors and heads of departments in each division to answer questions about the reopening of buildings and [CUNY's Flexible Work Guidelines](#).

Our facilities team has been working hard preparing our campus for re-entry. A few days ago, I toured the HVAC systems in some of our buildings and am happy to report that our team is ensuring the systems we have in each building are delivering sufficient fresh air to our classrooms and offices in alignment with the core recommendations from the CDC and ASHRAE's (American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers) epidemic task force.

Our Engineering team is confident in our buildings and their systems and will continue to monitor airflow to ensure that we stay within the guidelines for cfm

(cubic feet per minute) of fresh air per person given typical occupancy. Our buildings get plenty of fresh air from the outside that is filtered, heated and conditioned before passing through, and exiting the building. It is not recycled.

Our buildings were not designed to have windows that open. In fact, if windows do get opened, it actually reduces the amount of outside air coming in through the system. It also allows unfiltered, unconditioned air to enter the building and can contribute to mold growth. Please keep the windows shut as they were designed.

Provost Parrish and VP Berte are working on updating our re-entry plans which will include increasing the number of classes being offered in person and hybrid, using a combination of face to face, synchronous and asynchronous instruction. We are submitting a modified plan assuming a relaxation of social distancing rules from 6 feet to 3 feet. We are also planning for more in person presence and assuming mandatory testing along with increased numbers of community members being vaccinated.

Enrollment is key to our budget. It is important that we have sufficient fully online courses for students who cannot come to campus and it is equally important to have the maximum opportunity for students to participate in on campus experiences whether daily or at least once during the semester. To help, CUNY has recently changed to definition of a hybrid course to include students coming to campus only for a final exam.

The 3rd quarter report for our budget was released on April 26, showing that the University is projected to end FY 2021 in a positive condition BUT with significant help of federal stimulus funds -- \$150.4M.

With the exception of two (2) senior campuses, three (3) professional schools and Central Administration, all other campuses are projected to end the year in an operating deficit before applying Stimulus or CUTRA reserves. Overall, with a net operating deficit totaling \$135.9M; CUNY is a system in distress. A total of \$203.2M in combined Stimulus and CUTRA reserves are projected to help campuses end in a positive balance.

The 3rd Quarter Report shows minimal reductions in PS costs compared to last year which doesn't truly reflect the savings we have achieved to date from the hiring freeze. Instead, we have an operating deficit of \$11.6M, due to \$10.1M in combined resource deductions and the fact that we continue to incur unfunded mandatory cost increases. Thus, we will have to rely on the use of \$11.7M in stimulus funds and CUTRA resources to end in the black by less than 60k. This was the cost of protecting jobs as well as being more lenient with students who owed the college tuition.

Needless to say, I am concerned about the budget and how it will affect us 2-3 years from now. Our stimulus money will end by then and there is a projection, based on demographics, of a 15% drop in enrollment across the city starting in 2025. We have 2 to 3 years to address the fact that our payroll is higher than our

base budget and our enrollment is down. We must either increase enrollment or continue to see efficiencies in our staffing.

On a more positive note, our capital funding continues to be healthy. From 2012 through 2021, CSI has received approximately \$100M in Capital funding to address infrastructure problems and make campus improvements. Our critical maintenance money from CUNY has risen from \$1M to over \$5M a year and that will continue to next year.

Infrastructure improvements consist of: the reconstruction of the loop road; phase one of the building entry plaza upgrades; upgrades to cooling and heating components; roof replacements including the academic stair tower roofs; gutters, boiler safety valve replacements and underground piping replacement.

Campus improvements include: the build out of St. George and Building 2M which will house the Lucille and Jay Chaznoff School of Business; the 1R pool dehumidification system; the 6S chemical waste lab; soccer field bleachers; the 4N Makerspace.

New projects on the horizon include: the continuation of the entry plaza reconstruction; multi-phase sidewalk replacement project; redesign of the 1C dining hall and kitchen; Campus wide restroom reconstruction; skylight reconstruction with a replacement of the 6S skylight; 1P Media Screening room; Athletic Fields reconstruction starting with new track and inner field; Public Safety Security System phased project; academic stair tower interior reconstruction;

replacement of boiler in 6S; and most recently discussed, Campus-wide fiber loop reconstruction.

In closing, I want to sincerely thank you for the work that has been done over the last year to help ensure our students received an outstanding education. I wish you all a safe and relaxing summer.

Sincerely,
William J. Fritz
President

