



College Council
February 20, 2020

Good afternoon and welcome back. I'd like to start with some relatively good news regarding the budget that demonstrates the work we're doing as a campus, even though it has been tough, is starting to pay off.

In January, I shared information with the campus community regarding our midyear financial report. In that message I noted that, with support from CUNY, we reduced a \$-4.1M potential shortfall (which was consistent to the \$2.5-\$5M that I projected in September) to a more manageable \$-1.4M gap.

Our cost savings measures are paying off and combined with improved collections, as well as our enrollment, means that I am cautiously optimistic that we will end the year in the black with a positive CUTRA. While our enrollment is still soft, and we have much to do, we have 300 more students this spring than originally projected, which will provide a boost to our budget, especially since the Provost, Deans, and Chairs were able to improve efficiency by slightly decreasing the number of sections.

Importantly, our fall admits are up almost 4,000, more than double this time last year. While much of this is due to improved processing time, the number of applications is also up. Additionally, our collections are improving, in part because we have implemented tougher

deregistration policies. In fact, it looks like we are nearly \$900k above our estimated FY 2020 collection numbers.

This does not mean we're out of the woods. However, it does suggest we're on the right track and with some luck should allow us to provide additional travel monies and to fully fund our OTPS budget this year, meaning that the allocations promised at the start of the year will be honored. This means that we should have more travel and OTPS than we actually spent last year. To put this in context, allocations have been higher in the past but due to mid-year reductions on spending authority units never were allowed to spend what was allocated. This year we allocated less with the promise that all that was allocated could be spent. As stated, I am monitoring this very closely and things could still change; however, I remain optimistic that we can deliver on this promise.

At our last College Council, I noted how well our Master of Social Work Program compares to the 10 other nationally accredited programs in the metropolitan area, specifically citing a review that found 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. The Social Work program just received some additional attention with *GradReports Best Colleges List* ranking both our [Bachelors](#) and [Masters](#) in Social Work as 20th in the nation.

In the last few weeks we were notified that our Economics and Philosophy baccalaureate programs were recognized by *Great Value Colleges*, Economics ranked as [15th](#) in the nation and Philosophy as [59th](#); while our Electrical Engineering baccalaureate program was ranked [25th](#) in the nation by *Affordable Schools*.

Importantly, our predecessor institution, Staten Island Community College (SICC), has been listed on the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project for being the center of LGBT activities on Staten Island from the 1970s to the 1990s. I believe it speaks well for the College that as early as 1972, we had an LGBT student group and of course we have continued that tradition with establishment of our LGBTQ Resource Center and Lavender Graduation, along with many other initiatives.

As I hope you are aware, last year I declared a *Lustrum of Infrastructure* to signal that we must focus on facilities, critical maintenance and on keeping the campus a pleasant place and safe place to work and study. Within the framework of infrastructure, I believe we need to focus on improving campus safety and security. Just reading the newspapers in our times shows we must make safety a top priority.

We have had a number of tabletop exercises with first responders and recently held an internal tabletop exercise to help us be prepared in the event of an emergency event on campus. Mike Lederhandler our Safety Director, will be addressing the Council in a few minutes to elaborate on proactive measures we've been taking.

That said it is clear we need to upgrade our facilities and equipment. At the end of January, we had our annual Legislative Forum and legislators who were in attendance were very responsive to our safety needs and a number have committed to provide funding for various initiatives which Mike will elaborate on.

We followed our legislative meeting with my yearly trip to Albany to advocate for additional support for the College and

CUNY. The Chancellor was there as were a number of presidents. I spoke with all of our representatives about the TAP Gap and Excelsior and there seemed to be widespread bipartisan recognition and appreciation of the issue. Further discussions with our friends in Albany shows promise that they may support bipartisan legislation that could potentially give us up to \$10M over two years to pay for the things Mike will talk about.

On a separate issue our city delegation, as a follow-up to our legislative forum, informed me that they will be requesting support from the Mayor for our St. George initiative given that it is an access initiative that serves numerous associates students. They are requesting either \$1M/year to cover our non-instructional operating costs or a one-time \$10M sum to allow for purchase of the building.

Thank you.

William J. Fritz

President

