



College Council Remarks April 22, 2021

As we have all heard, there was a guilty verdict rendered in the murder trial of Derek Chauvin. While there will never really be any justice for George Floyd, who was murdered almost a year ago, this verdict represents a glimmer of hope that change may be on the horizon. It represents a hope that there will be accountability and consequences for police officers who engage in acts of excessive force against black men and women. And while it represents a step in the right direction, it is only one small step. There is much more to be done.

At CSI, we must come together in our efforts to oppose racism in all aspects of life and society, embrace racial equity policies and practices and steadfastly commit to uphold a culture of inclusion. I have always been proud to lead an institution that celebrates diversity and opens doors for underserved members of the community, and I am equally proud of our commitment to

promote social justice and equality. We are educators and role models, and we have a unique opportunity to make meaningful change by helping to build a more equitable society. To do so, we must actively work against racial injustice on a daily basis.

Along those lines, there are two upcoming virtual events sponsored by multiple departments, faculty, students and staff, that I encourage you to attend. [Cooked: Survival By Zipcode](#) [Racism as a Public Health Crisis](#), a panel discussion scheduled for April 28, and [Speak Out Against Anti-Asian Violence!](#), a panel discussion to be held on May 6. Part of the effort to help address racial injustice is to first acknowledge that racism exists and we can do that by sharing our stories, listening to others tell their truths, engaging in conversation and learning how to become part of the solution. Please check our events calendar for further registration details.

As part of our efforts to help improve the culture at CSI, the Diversity Council had their first meeting, and they are united in their efforts to help build a better community. Provost Parrish will speak more on the first Council's meeting in his remarks at

Faculty Senate, but I want to thank the committee members for making a commitment to serve on this important Council. We will be posting the names of the committee members on our websites in the upcoming days.

Unfortunately, we learned this week that we lost a beloved member of our community, Professor Calvin Holder. Professor Holder helped recruit me to CSI and met with me many times, sharing his thoughts on how to make us a better campus. I always appreciated his wise counsel and insight. He will be remembered as a great educator, mentor, and friend to many. I know that there will be an additional tribute for him at the faculty senate but I wanted pay personal tribute to Professor Holder.

The recently enacted FY22 State budget of \$212B was up by \$18B and exceeded expectations.

For CUNY Senior Colleges the 5% reduction (\$26.2M) is eliminated; however, the reduction remains for the current year which still equates to a \$1.7M cut for CSI. The enacted

budget includes a four-year plan to eliminate the Tap Gap of \$78M. For FY22, the TAP Gap will be reduced by \$23.1M through an increase in the maximum TAP award by \$500. Finally, the Enacted budget does not fund mandatory costs and does not extend the predictable tuition policy for CUNY and SUNY and freezes tuition rates for three years. The overall impact is a wash, at best.

In contrast to the operational budget, the FY22 Capital Budget, is good news and provides \$466.7 million in new funding with the majority benefitting Senior colleges.

- \$284.2 million for critical maintenance;
- \$100.0 million for new capital projects;
- \$10.0 million for wind energy.

While we have earmarked funding through the three stimulus packages (CARES, CRSSA, ARPA), it is important to remember that we do not yet have access to much of the money, it is one-time money and not recurring, nearly half goes directly to students, and it must last us for at least 3 fiscal years (FY21, 22, & 23).

The current year will require the use of all CARES and 2/3 of the institutional part of CRSSA funding to achieve a balanced budget. We will require most of the remaining CRSSA money to get the campus back open for the fall. At the present time, the ARPA money will be reserved for FY22 & 23.

This month we had two well attended town halls, both for the proposed governance plan and for reopening. I want to thank everyone who attended and participated in these events. As previously announced, I am postponing the referendum for the proposed new governance plan to October to honor the requests to allow additional time for more feedback. The task forces that will be appointed to address specific aspects of the plan will be announced shortly.

April is CUNY Disability Awareness Month. Earlier this month the Annual Willowbrook Lecture was held with about 500 participants in attendance. It was a successful event sponsored by the Department of Educational Studies and The Office of Sustainability. This event is always a great way to honor the

history of our campus and continue to pursue equality for people with disabilities by acknowledging the pain and suffering brought upon those who lived at The Willowbrook State School. There are additional events sponsored by the Office of Student Life scheduled to take place tomorrow and next week focusing on students with disabilities and their self-advocacy, struggles, challenges and triumphs. Please check our website for details and registration information.

In closing, I want to acknowledge that yesterday was Administrative Assistants Day, and I would like to personally take the opportunity to thank all of our administrative assistants for all your hard work in helping keep the College operations running smoothly, especially during the pandemic. Your dedication is much appreciated.

William J. Fritz
President

