

College Council  
September 30, 2021

Welcome back! I hope everyone is having a good start to the Fall semester. I have been walking around campus, and enjoy seeing many of you and our students back in the classrooms in offices, and out enjoying the beautiful grounds. It feels good to be getting back to normal, albeit with masks, social distancing and other safety measures in place.

While we are still navigating a pandemic, we must not waiver in our commitment to delivering a vibrant campus life experience, a welcoming home for our residents, an excellent education for all of our students, and importantly, on fostering the equity mindedness of our institution and its policies.

Thus, the most important thing to do right now is to get vaccinated and follow all the safety measures put in place in order to keep everyone safe.

I want to thank all of our essential personnel who continued to work on campus throughout the pandemic. Your hard work and dedication is appreciated by all. I personally deeply appreciate the faculty who have gone the extra mile to meet the needs of our students in this pandemic.

As all of you know, to get onto campus now, everyone (with few exceptions, such as children under 12) must either show proof of vaccination or a negative test within the last seven days. At this time, faculty, staff and students, including all of our affiliates, should all be registered with Cleared4, as the Everbridge app will no longer be available after tomorrow.

As of October 7<sup>th</sup>, students will be expected to be fully vaccinated with a few exceptions for religious and medical reasons. Please make sure that you read and understand CUNY's policy so that the correct information is given to our students if asked. Student Affairs and Academic Affairs have sent out numerous communications to Faculty and Students on the matter, and we must all work together to ensure that the students

are not misled and understand CUNY's vaccination policy. As of October 7<sup>th</sup>, Students, except in very limited circumstances, must be vaccinated to access campus. This is an important step as we move toward a more in person Spring semester.

The COVID pandemic and our mostly remote accommodations for 18 months did not stop our positive trajectory and it's been rewarded with several citations that have come to us in recent weeks. U.S. News and World report identified us as a badge-earner for Diversity and a Best College of Undergraduate Nursing. The Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education report of Top Colleges identified us as a top school for both Student and Staff Diversity.

Forbes magazine cited CSI as a top college for lowest debt score of graduates, ranking us 6th in the state and 51st nationally in that category, while also ranking 12th in our state in median 10-year salary of our graduating students. I applaud our faculty, 10 of whom have earned the distinction as the top 2% of the world's scientists in Stanford University's annual study. All of this sits

parallel to the scores of individual awards and grants our faculty continue to earn, keeping with our long standing of academic excellence.

The campus suffered a double blow this fall from the weather. First, on August 27th a microburst hit campus leaving behind approximately 14 downed trees. Second, and shortly after the microburst, we experienced significant flooding as a result of Hurricane IDA. Buildings 1N and 2N and the Springer Concert Hall are still closed at this time while we address the damage. Unfortunately, we also lost many of our facilities supplies, materials and equipment due to flooding in the basement of our main storage area in building 2M. CUNY, DASNY and AIG Insurance Company are working on campus to ensure that all damages are remediated and losses are tracked and reimbursed .

With respect to the Budget, we recently submitted a multi-year balanced Financial Plan to CUNY. While we are projecting to

end FY 21 in the black, and the next three years through FY24 in the black, with a positive CUTRA each year. Despite this, it is imperative to understand that the budget is masked by stimulus funds which expire by FY23. In fact, when you view the financial plan without the reliance on stimulus funding, we would have deficits in every year of the plan and a remaining structural deficit in FY 24. This translates to the need to restructure our spending base to align with available resources. In order to right size the budget, we must continue to increase enrollment reduce payroll through attrition. We must only make crucial hires, and realize savings by making data driven decisions on where to invest in support of our strategic vision. Most important, we must focus on providing our students with the best education we possibly can in an environment in which they can thrive.

I want to briefly address the governance plan proposal. The ballots went out on Monday and will close on Friday. The plan has gone through several different revisions over the past seven months, as a result of open communication, consultation and

feedback received from the campus community. I continued to receive feedback and modified the document accordingly up to the last minute. I want to thank everyone for their contributions throughout the process.

Before casting your vote, please read the plan, and do it with an open mind. We are all educated people, who can make educated decisions that we think are best. We do not need someone else to tell us how to vote or what is best for them. Make your own determinations, and do what you think is best for the College in the long run. I proposed this new plan because it is important to me that the College have a more inclusive and nimble governance plan that empowers people, gives voices to the unheard, improves the climate and clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of our constituents. But it is up to you whether or not you vote for or against the plan. Everyone in the instructional staff has a vote – but it should be your vote and not the vote of someone else.

I want to close by saying thank you to all those who reached out to me, sharing their memories and stories about Debbie Mahoney. I am truly touched. Debbie was a wonderful person, and great friend and colleague to many. We will all miss her. We have lost many good people over the years at the College of Staten Island, and we must never forget them and should celebrate their lives the best we can. It is a painful reminder that life is short and unpredictable and we must do our best to make the most of it while we are here. My deepest sympathies for all those who have suffered a loss, especially during these difficult times. I hope that the worst of the pandemic is behind us and that there are brighter days ahead for all.

Thank you.

William J. Fritz  
President