Presidential Newsletter

I hope that everyone had an enjoyable and safe winter intersession, and I welcome you back for the spring semester. The new semester brings important developments and progress for the College of Staten Island.

The 2012-2013 New York Executive Budget for CUNY is currently being reviewed by the State Legislature on an accelerated timetable. Passage of the final budget is expected to take place one week prior to the April 1 deadline. CUNY is requesting from the Legislature additional financial support for capital construction and renovation projects, in order to replace antiquated facilities with modern and safe classrooms and laboratories. CUNY is also seeking restoration of funding for students with disabilities, as well as for childcare and other student services. The University’s funding will directly impact CSI’s ability to advance excellence in education and services to our students. I encourage everyone to contact your state legislators and voice support for CUNY and CSI. Please visit www.supportcuny.org to join the campaign.

The College has already engaged our state and local legislative representatives concerning CSI’s budgetary needs. On January 20, CSI held its annual Legislative Forum, which brought together State Senate members, Assembly members, and City Councilpersons to discuss the College’s capital and discretionary funding priorities. We also requested assistance from representatives concerning our efforts to have the MTA extend its bus service onto the campus. The College is committed to advocating for these important issues on behalf of our students, faculty, and staff.

CSI continues to experience unprecedented growth. Our winter session is thriving with an increase in enrollment and an increase in sections offered from 62 last winter to 75 in 2012. The College’s spring enrollment once again shows an increase over last year, with a greater than 1% increase in FTEs, demonstrating that our students are enrolling with higher course loads and comparable outcomes.

The College is dedicated to meeting the needs of our growing student population. At the February 15, 2012 meeting of the New York City Housing Development Corporation Board of Directors, a resolution was passed approving the selling of bonds to construct a 454-bed housing project at the College of Staten Island. The project, located on the current site of the outdoor basketball and handball courts north of Building 3A, includes nine studio apartments for resident assistants and 124 apartments of either two, three, or four bedrooms. The complex will also include lounge space, group study rooms, an onsite laundry facility, multipurpose room, and a fitness center. The residences will be managed by ACC SC Management LLC, which is the leading developer and operator of student housing in the country. The general contractor, T.G. Nickel and Associates of Ronkonkoma, NY, will commence construction shortly after the closing on the bonds, which is scheduled for March 1, 2012. It is anticipated that a formal groundbreaking ceremony will be scheduled in several weeks, and I welcome everyone to join us in celebrating this institutional milestone.
I am also pleased to announce that the College has purchased 173 additional student computers with funds generated through Student Technology Fees. These new computers are now available throughout the campus in locations including Building 2A, the Campus Center, Sports & Recreation Center, the Library, and in the lobbies of academic buildings. All computers are equipped with the same software available in open computer laboratories, which will enable students to work on their academic assignments throughout the campus. In addition, the College replaced 367 student computers in special-purpose and general-purpose computer laboratories. In total, 540 new computers are now available for use by our students.

The academic excellence of our students reflects our uncompromising support for their success. Recently, Evelyn Okeke was chosen to receive the highly competitive 2012 UNCF/Merck Undergraduate Science Research Scholarship Award. Irvin Ibarguen is now the first student from CSI’s History Department to be admitted to Harvard University’s Doctoral program in History, while Mark Barahman has been accepted into the Albert Einstein College of Medicine MD-PhD program. In addition, doctoral student Katrina Caroccia won the Horst Schulz Biochemistry Prize for her 2011 first-authored paper in Peptide Science. Please join me in congratulating these and the many other CSI students for their extraordinary academic accomplishments.

Our student-athletes are also experiencing great success. The CSI men’s basketball team, which has a 23-4 record and is currently on a 16-game winning streak, advanced to the finals of The City University of New York Athletic Conference (CUNYAC) tournament. The team will be playing in the championship game against Medgar Evers College at The City College of New York on Saturday at 5:00pm, and I encourage all members of the campus community to come to the game and show their support. The CSI women’s team also finished a successful season by reaching the quarterfinals of the tournament. Individual members of both the men’s and women’s teams recently received CUNYAC honors. Thomas Tibbs and Jordan Young have repeated as All-CUNY first-team selections, and Bloochy Magloire and Katelyn Hepworth were named to the men’s and women’s second teams. The Dolphins also swept Rookie-of-the-Year honors with Javon Cox capturing the men’s award and Nikki Fabozzi earning the women’s award. Finally, CSI men’s coach Tony Petosa received his second consecutive men’s Coach of the Year honor.

This semester marks the completion of the College’s Self-Study report as part of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education reaccreditation process. The Self-Study provides a comprehensive assessment of the College as measured by the Commission’s 14 standards of institutional excellence. The report was formally submitted to the members of the Middle States Team, which will be visiting the College in April to conduct an evaluation of our institution. I want to thank the more than 130 faculty, staff, and students whose dedicated service on the College’s Middle States Working Groups and Steering Committee led to this significant achievement.

I am pleased to note that Black History Month is currently being celebrated at the College. On February 9, CSI held its kick-off event, “Perspectives on Race,” before a standing-room-only audience in the Center for the Arts Recital Hall. The event featured inspirational performances by the CSI Gospel Choir, compelling presentations by faculty, and a remarkable panel discussion by a diverse group of CSI students concerning their perceptions on race. I want to thank the Division for Student Affairs and the event planning committee for the overwhelming success of this event, which truly reflects the strength of our diversity at the College.
In closing, I would like to wish all of you a successful semester at CSI.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Tomás D. Morales, PhD
President