

College Council
February 28, 2019

Due to Faculty Senate business at the December College Council, I haven't spoken to this group in some time so there are a number of items I want to address before Carlos gives his presentation on the budget.

I'm going to touch on the budget and what it means for the Spring and more importantly, for next year. I also want to touch on some actions that we're taking which address infrastructure and enrollment.

Before, I start I want to officially welcome our new Provost, Dr. Michael Parrish. I know Michael will be a great addition to the College and is already hard at work!

I know you have all heard by now that we have a new Chancellor effective May 1. On February 13 the Board appointed Félix V. Matos Rodríguez, President of Queens College, as the new Chancellor. Chancellor Matos Rodríguez, or

“Felo” as we call him, has broad experience in CUNY as director of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College (El Centro), President of Hostos, and finally President of Queens. During his time at CUNY he was on leave and served as Secretary of the Department of Family Services for Puerto Rico. I believe that his appointment is welcome news for all of CUNY but specifically for CSI. He has cabinet level government experience that will aid in negotiations with City and State. He has experience across the types of institutions that make up CUNY. More importantly, he has the perspective of an “outer Borough” president serving on a campus that shares many of our challenges. He thinks highly of CSI and of the role we play in the Borough.

Budget

Last year at this time we faced a nearly \$1M deficit. This year we are in a similar situation with a \$1.1M projected deficit that we need to close. Similar to last year, we’re going to have to do some belt tightening by making only the most critical OTPS expenditures, making only the most critical hires, and by relying on support from our non-tax levy funds. What’s different from

last year, and what has been frustrating to me, is that our budget information was really not finalized until earlier this semester, which has made it harder to project and communicate with the campus. It is also frustrating to realize that the relief we thought was in sight from tuition increases is more than eaten up by cost of labor rather than for new investments.

We must take steps now, to avoid similar conversations in future years. In the past, I have referenced the financial report that CUNY issues which has a chart showing instructional staffing in relation to the college's enrollment numbers that is an outlier in all of CUNY. We have to close that gap through a combination of increasing enrollment and by limiting future hires to critical needs. One factor guiding our hiring decisions will be cost of instruction. I've charged our Provost, along with the budget committee, IPC, and P&B with undertaking this study so we can make better decisions regarding hiring of full-time staff and adjuncts. This is necessary and one of the best ways to take hold of our future.

Our current PS budget is about 95% of the total and that is choking us – making it extremely difficult to run our departments or to keep the campus safe and clean. A big reason why that is the case is that State support has not kept pace with labor costs, and our PS has naturally increased as a result.

The last three years tell me that we cannot rely on the State or CUNY to improve our basic operating budget. We have to do it ourselves and I believe we can do it.

One way I've tried to address this is by increasing support from our local officials and private entities for specific projects – both to address our campus needs to enhance our academic programs as well. It is important to remember, as I discussed last year, that we cannot use these sources of money to solve our operating budget problems - that would be illegal.

In the past several years, we have secured over \$5.2M just for academic projects through the work of our government relations arm including:

- \$1.35M from the City Council for the development of a new high-tech engineering MakerSpace to support our students.
- \$45k for engineering equipment
- Well over \$1M from the City Council's Technology Committee to support our highly successful CI Tech Incubator.
- \$200k from Senator Lanza for upgrade of our Nursing Simulator Lab.
- \$300k from public and private sources for the Con Ed Trading Room.
- \$1.73M for the Media Culture Screening Room and TV Studio
- \$41k for eye tracking equipment in psychology
- \$500k for renovation of the 6S Greenhouse which is finally getting off the ground.
- Money for the breast cancer research center.
- We have a good chance of receiving additional support to fund a new genomic center, and replacement of our existing

fiber which will support the research enterprise of the entire campus. You may have read about Amherst College which lost network access for days due to a failure of its technology infrastructure that was installed about the same time as ours. We're taking steps to avoid a similar situation.

- A final example of using funding to support our mission has been getting some notice. The College's Tech Incubator was recently cited in *Forbes*:

*[The] **CSI Tech Incubator**—an initiative of the admittedly not world renowned, yet admirably scrappy **College of Staten Island**. This is the first startup program in the borough dedicated to technology innovation ... the **college** is forging deep partnerships with tech-based startups. Thus, in something akin to a Tesla coil sparking everything within touching distance, a formerly sleepy borough is getting charged with economic energy and knock-on business activity.*

I hope that one day we will be “*world renowned*” and the “*the place where it’s all happening*” but in the meantime I will take, “*admirably scrappy.*”

This type of initiative, fully funded by the City Council and external grants, represents something larger than just a tech start-up. My vision is that this will become a signature gateway to connecting faculty and students to private industry. Ensuring that our students will have access to the best jobs no matter their major and ultimately provide grant funding for scholarship.

Enrollment

I’ve talked before about enrollment being a collective effort that is impacted by nearly everything on campus. From the bathrooms to the classes we offer. Enrollment and retention are the other half of the equation in ensuring a thriving campus. Our new AVP of Enrollment, Alexander Scott, started two weeks ago and will be using his 20 years of experience at 4 different institutions to develop a long-range strategy to improve our numbers. I’ve charged Alexander to work closely with Academic Affairs to develop this plan.

Importantly, our infrastructure efforts, new grounds equipment, the paving of the roads, a new sidewalk, the hardscape project, the new dehumidification system for the pool, addressing underground fiber and steam pipes as well as the sewage and electrical systems are all designed to make this a more attractive campus for students and are part of our recruitment efforts.

We are currently reviewing proposals to remodel and rejuvenate our bookstore.

We have submitted an application to the NCAA for our sports program to join Queens College in the East Coast Conference, in a move to Division II. Our student athletics graduate faster with higher GPAs than the student body at large, they major in tougher majors and are often our honors students.

The profile of DII students is even higher than our current DIII affiliation with the ECC boasting a 4-year graduation rate of over 75%. DII students are required by the NCAA of having a profile higher than our baccalaureate students in general. They

must come to us with at least a 2.2 GPA and earn 30 credits a year in order to be eligible to play. This move will allow us to offer scholarships to students, with a goal of increasing the percentage of out-of-state and international student athletes, especially those living in Dolphin Cove. Through competition in the ECC, we will increase the College's exposure as we compete in locations along the eastern seaboard. This is important. Enrollment across CUNY is soft so it's important that our exposure grows outside of the metro area and this is one way to do it.

The good news is that 100% of the costs of the scholarships will be borne by athletics generated revenue and by philanthropy and will yield significant additional revenue for the college. For example, if we can attract 50 out of state athletes this alone will generate more than \$600k in tuition differential. This is an example of a strategic use of our athletics program to help solve a campus problem (increasing the profile of students in housing and generating operating dollars). Queens College with 20% of student athletes from out of state and 11% international, for

example, generates campus revenues of this size above operating expenses. With our facilities we can do even better.

Now is the time to consider many different campus wide measures to make this a world class institution and fulfill our strategic plan. Last year at the Budget retreat I said that we must increase enrollment, increase collections, watch our expenses, and make strategic investments to grow. The same remains true today.