

October 27, 2021

Dear Members of the College Community:

I write today to announce my retirement at the end of this calendar year, a decision I have delayed several times over the past two years at the request of the Chancellor in order to work on issues that I believe are critical to the future and long-term success of our institution.

As I have written many times, the College of Staten Island has an [amazing legacy of providing access to high quality education for the students](#) of Staten Island, New York City, the state, and beyond. We have a *legacy of institution* that combines one of the first community colleges in NYC, Staten Island Community College, and Richmond College, an experimental upper division and graduate college that brought public access to baccalaureate and master's degrees to the borough. We have a *legacy of place* as the only public institution of higher education in the borough and the island's second largest employer. More importantly we occupy the grounds of Halloran General Hospital that provided amazing care for wounded soldiers from both the Pacific and European theaters of World War II. Most importantly, we occupy the sacred grounds of Willowbrook State School, where civil rights of people with developmental disabilities was first brought to light, leading to the Willowbrook Consent Decree and later the Americans with Disabilities Act. We have a *legacy of mission* of borough stewardship and serving as an anchor institution for Staten Island.

We have amazing faculty, staff, and students. We take students from challenging backgrounds and send them to law school, to medical school, and to the best professional schools. Our students get jobs at top firms on Wall Street and serve the best non-for-profits. Even more importantly, on Staten Island, a borough of small businesses, almost everyone employs a graduate of CSI and nearly every family on the Island has a member who is an alum. We make students' dreams come true.

I have spent one third of my more than 40 years in higher education at CSI and am proud of what it is becoming and am humbled to have served a role in its evolution. During my tenure, CSI received the largest ever gift to any non-for-profit on Staten Island, a cash gift of \$7.5 million for naming of the Lucille and Jay Chazanoff School of Business, which now includes a planned supplemental gift of over \$1 million. I oversaw over \$250 million in major construction, critical maintenance, and renovations, including the renovation of a historic vacant building for the new home of the School of Business and initiated the "Lustrum" of Infrastructure to prioritize critical maintenance and care of existing buildings over new construction.

We successfully worked with our local elected officials for more than \$40 million in City and State money in support of the College, which includes a new track and field, artificial turf ball field, artificial turf, bleachers, lighting for soccer, trading room floor, nursing sim lab, engineering maker space lab,

Media Culture TV studio, and Genomic Center. The CSI Dolphins moved to NCAA DII to improve recruitment and bring greater opportunities for our student athletes to compete against athletes in the Northeast.

We opened CSI St. George for better access to classes for many SI residents. The 30,000 Degree Consortium was initiated by bringing together all institutions on Staten Island to increase the number of residents with baccalaureate degrees by 30,000 in 2025. Philanthropic support has also greatly increased. The CSI Foundation now has approximately \$22 million in assets and a million-dollar surplus in unrestricted funds.

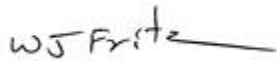
During my presidency, a new strategic plan for 2017-2022 called *"Opportunity to Ascend"* was created, to emphasize the opportunities CSI provides for our students as well as the opportunity we have as an institution to ascend in national recognition. The plan focuses on student success, global engagement, Borough stewardship, destination campus, scholarship-driven education, and resource management. We successfully underwent a restructuring of the academic reorganization of CSI to include its first academic schools including a new School of Business, a School of Education, a School of Health Sciences and eleven new academic departments. We have new academic degrees and certificate programs highlighted by a new MSW degree with a focus on care for the developmentally disabled and established CSI as a doctoral degree granting institution.

Bonnie and I consider it an honor to have lived and served in the community; we treasure our friends and colleagues and want everyone to know that both CSI and Staten Island will be forever a part of our lives.

As I have written before, I remain concerned about the enrollment and budgetary challenges of the future. However, these are solvable problems. My greatest concern remains the need for a new governance plan to guide more inclusive campus discussions and recommendations as well as to align with the standards of Middle States. A new team will need to decide if my proposals have merit and to make recommendations to the Board that they deem appropriate. I urge the campus to continue to engage in discussions of how recommendations are made and campus conversations take place.

My concluding belief is that the College of Staten Island has a bright future. It cannot fail in its mission to provide access and quality. It is located in too strategic a region, with such a unique campus that it will succeed and take its rightful place as one of the stars of American public higher education. I call on the entire campus community to work together to make that happen.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "WJ Fritz", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

William J. Fritz
President