



December 17, 2020

Reflections on challenges facing the College of Staten Island at the end of 2020

This has been a tough year. The pandemic, economic downturn, harsh presidential election, pervasive racism in our society, loss of friends and neighbors and, of course, our own microcosm of: uncertainty about the budget, our inability to get students and researchers back on campus as fast as we would have liked, and the need to maximize enrollment in our courses. These issues have necessitated tough choices. I don't blame anyone for being upset.

I believe deeply in the mission and future potential of CSI. I have a personal passion to help the underserved community of Staten Island. This is why I support initiatives like 30,000 degrees, outreach to Port Richmond, and CSI St. George.

My administration and I are committed to making the best decisions possible to protect health & safety and jobs as our first priority – even if these decisions are not always popular.

I have heard your concerns about research and will support scholarship-driven education as per our Strategic Plan to the extent allowed by our resources and in a way that supports the success of our students.

I have heard your concerns and frustrations with our budget and will continue to work to secure funding for the campus from all sources.

I have heard the campus community concerns of diversity and will address hiring, recruitment and retention of BIPOC faculty and staff.

I have heard your concerns about the achievement gaps of our students and will find ways to bridge the divide.

I have heard your concerns about returning to campus and I am committed to bringing everyone back as soon as it is safe to do so.

Over the next few months, we are going to be rolling out diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programming. This programming is a good first start, but it is just that – a first start. It is being shared across campus and I am hearing from many members of the CSI community who are sharing great suggestions. I will incorporate as many as possible into the program. Even where we don't have the money to implement the suggestion, I will keep it on the list for consideration when our resources return. I am also revitalizing and reconstituting the Diversity Council to provide recommendations.

Given the current challenges we are facing we need to work together. There is nothing that we can't do as a campus when we come together and work as a team for the betterment of our students.

In closing, I wish each and every one a safe and best holiday season possible. Please take time for family and friends, virtually if face to face is not possible. I will see everyone at the start of next year.

William J. Fritz

President

