Warmest greetings to you all as we begin the new semester. Happy New Year!

The summer months passed and it was certainly a busy time. On a number of important fronts, we took steps, each designed to advance the best interests of the students, faculty, and staff of the College of Staten Island. These steps, taken collaboratively and transparently, reinforce our commitment to making CSI a premier college, not only within CUNY, but in our entire region.

The key to our planning and our execution has been, and will continue to be, shared governance. The heart of shared governance is openness, communication, and inclusiveness. Openness ensures that all that is done can be seen by all who care about this institution. Communication ensures that all who care about this institution can be heard. Inclusiveness ensures that all voices are heard. During my first two years at CSI, I have worked diligently to create such a culture. For example, the material and information available to the College community on the CSI Website has grown exponentially, and continues to grow. The College budget can be found on the Finance and Administration Website; a Master Plan Website is being developed; a Strategic Planning Website is about to be launched, and a capital construction Website with full description of security site proposal is available on the intranet.

Additionally, this past year, record numbers of faculty have participated on executive search committees, ensuring the diverse perspective that faculty provides. Further, I continue to meet regularly with the Executive Committees of the College Council and Faculty Senate, and with PSC representatives. Both the Provost and I have created social opportunities that encourage open communication and networking among faculty, staff, and students. This is all part of my administration’s goals to institutionalize our commitment to engage, to listen, and to discuss.
This commitment is crucial in the new academic year, as we embark on our strategic planning process. The last Strategic Plan was developed in 2006 and it is now time to take a comprehensive look at the College, reviewing mission, vision, and values statements. Preparation for this initiative began over a year ago, and took on a formal structure last semester, when the Institutional Planning Committee assumed the responsibility to serve as the Strategic Planning Steering Committee. The Committee has designed a process that is transparent and that acknowledges the importance of context and includes the wider Staten Island community, as well. On behalf of the Steering Committee, we have engaged Rickes Associates to facilitate the numerous focus groups whose input will drive development of our mission, vision, and value statements. Rickes Associates will also assist us as we develop goals and action plans for our future. In all of this, our guiding star has been transparency, and the firm conviction that good process yields good outcomes.

This statement is equally true for the manner in which we are approaching the Master Planning process, the first since 1986. This new Master Planning process began two years ago, was paused, and is now restarting. To that end, on September 23, we held a Town Hall meeting, in the Center for the Arts in Room 119 at 2:30pm, regarding our Master Planning process. At this meeting, we gathered input and feedback about what has been done and what we will do, as we design space to meet our future needs. Another Town Hall meeting will take place in November. I urge you all to attend.

In a spirit of trust, respect, and devotion to the good of CSI, we embrace the opportunities that shared governance provides to elevate our College to a higher level of excellence. And we continue to ascend to that higher level. I am pleased to report that this fall, 43 new tenured and tenure-track faculty and several new administrators have joined the CSI community. They join an already distinguished faculty, increasingly recognized for its scholarship and pedagogy. In particular, I would like to note Sarah Schulman, Professor of English at the College of Staten Island, who has been named to the Founding Advisory Collective of the Human Rights and Social Movements Program at Harvard’s Kennedy School, Carr Center for Human Rights Policy. I’m also delighted to welcome two new vice presidents: Dr. Jerald Jones-Woolfolk, our new Vice President for Student Affairs; Barbara Eshoo, our new Vice President for Institutional Advancement and External Relations. Each
woman was chosen after a national search, and I would especially like to thank the faculty, students, and staff who participated in these important searches.

Additionally, I would like to note that we have completed another important search for our Director of Diversity and Compliance, and have selected Ken Iwama to head up that position. Mr. Iwama, an attorney with a specialty in the area of diversity and compliance, joined us on Tuesday, September 15. Again, many thanks to those of you who participated in the search for this crucial College position. Mr. Iwama will play a large part in CSI’s Inclusive Excellence Initiative. Our initial work in this area and our extensive meetings with the CUNY IE Committee have already been cited by CUNY as exceptional. Our commitment to deepening our diversity through hiring and programming, and expanding our inclusiveness, will continue to be hallmarks of this administration.

Enrollment is robust. I’m proud to report that CSI has reached an all-time high enrollment, with more than 13,878 students attending classes on our campus. This marks a six percent increase over last year. Our record enrollment is a function of multiple events -- certainly, the CSI value proposition is very attractive to students in these difficult times. But I am also convinced that our school tag line – “World Class, Right Here” – has drawn more and more interest in CSI. That tag line is backed up by our graduates, who are now being accepted at top professional schools, graduate schools, and in a broad array of high-profile jobs. Additional empirical data to support the rise in our reputation can be found in the extraordinary fact that this year we have doubled enrollment in our entering Macaulay Honors class, and we continue to grow The Verrazano School and our Teacher Education Honors Academy. Also, for the first time in seven years, our graduate enrollment increased.

Part of our attraction has been our ability to provide financial and career aid to deserving students. In the 2009-2010 academic year, 181 CSI scholarships were allocated to 108 students. The total dollar amount of these scholarships exceeded $199K. I’m also pleased to note this does not include the new Valedictorian/Salutatorian scholarship program that allocated full tuition to six students. We believe this is the highest number of high school valedictorians and salutatorians to ever attend CSI. A scholarship ceremony for these scholars and their guests will be held on October 8 at 1:30pm in the Recital Hall in the
Center for the Arts, with a dessert reception, and I hope you can all attend. Additionally, external scholarships were given to CSI students for the 2009-2010 academic year from the Association of American University Women, CUNY Pipeline, Jeannette K. Watson Summer Fellows Program, American Business Women’s Association-NYC Chapter, and HACU (Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities).

In addition, our internship programs continue to thrive. Over the summer, we placed six students with financial need in paying programs on Staten Island. The College of Staten Island is collaborating with Snug Harbor Cultural Center in recruiting and placing students in the Center’s new Residential Cultural Internship Program. Students interested in careers in the performing and visual arts, horticulture, education, and arts administration can secure internships in this unique residential internship program. Overall, our internship program continues to grow with participating companies such as NYU Langone Medical Center, RUSK Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine, The Ford Foundation, Oppenheimer, Marvel Comics, the MTA, and Morgan Stanley Smith Barney.

This past summer saw a number of important events at the College. In July we hosted the New York Philharmonic concert on Staten Island; 11 faculty and staff participated in a China study tour; and 33 CSI students took part in study abroad programs in Italy, England, France, Greece, Ecuador, Israel, Spain, Poland, and China. In August, I traveled again to Vietnam, a trip underwritten in part by the Vietnam-USA Educational Training Center, to advance our efforts to bring more students from that country to study at CSI and to facilitate study-abroad opportunities for our own students.

Also over the summer, “G.I. Jobs” announced the release of its 2010 list of Military Friendly Schools. The list honors the top 15 percent of colleges, universities, and trade schools that are doing the most to embrace the United States of America’s veterans as students. The College of Staten Island was recognized for its commitment to serving the needs of students with military experience, and its wide array of services specifically designed for current, new, and future veteran students.
As the College continues to expand from within, we are also expanding our association with the broader community. The College is an active participant in the SI Visioning Project – I am a member of the Board of Directors, A Vision for Staten Island. I am also a member of the Staten Island Economic Development Corporation, Immigrant Entrepreneur Program Ambassador and the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce, and I am on the Board of the Staten Island Foundation. I was honored to be appointed by Mayor Bloomberg to be one of two Staten Island representatives on the Panel for Educational Policy, which approves the Department of Education budget, the five-year capital plan, agreements and proposals for closing failing schools, and educational policies proposed by the Chancellor.

On Saturday, September 19, the College participated once again in the African Heritage Parade, and on October 3, we will open our campus to the second annual Fall Festival. Last year’s event drew thousands of visitors to the Great Lawn.

As a final note, Convocation will be held October 22, during club hours from 2:00pm to 4:00pm in the Center for the Arts Williamson Theatre. We will take a look back from where we have come and a look forward to where we will be going. We will also honor the many faculty and staff at CSI who have reached milestone anniversaries of service at our school. It will be a wonderful celebration of all things CSI.

This has been an exciting summer and early autumn for our College, and I look forward to working with you and for you, for the good of our extraordinary faculty, our dedicated staff, and the thousands of students who have entrusted us with their education.

Thank you and welcome back to CSI.

Tomás D. Morales, PhD
President