



March 10, 2023

Colleagues:

I hope that this busy week has treated you well. I write with information and updates as to activities in which I have been engaged since my last communication. This week was all about partnerships and engagement. On Monday, I continued my efforts to educate and advocate, by visiting with State Assemblymember Michael Reilly, and staff from State Assemblymember Sam Pirozzolo's and State Senator Jessica Scarcella-Spanton's offices. I relayed the importance of funding higher education, and of the role that CUNY and CSI play in our local communities. This message will be amplified when I travel to Albany this weekend to caucus with other CUNY officials as we continue to make our case for increased funding.

I also met with representatives from the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) to discuss collaboration around workforce development, grantsmanship, and micro-credentials. The goal is to provide training and certification to individuals who work with organizations that serve those with cognitive, developmental, and intellectual disabilities. Our "legacy of place" here at Willowbrook makes this a natural partnership, as seen during Friday's campus event marking March as "Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month."

I also had a wonderful conversation with representatives from the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU), an organization dedicated to enhancing the role that such institutions can play in reducing disparities and serving as engines of economic and social mobility. The mission and goals of CUMU mesh nicely with those of CSI and CUNY, a theme reinforced at Wednesday's all-day meeting of the Council of Presidents. There, we discussed enrollment, faculty research, fundraising and philanthropy, and—of course—the state of the system and campus budget. As I alluded to in last week's communication, and as I shared with the College Council Executive Committee on Tuesday, CSI has done an incredible job of addressing our structural deficit. In the period between our FY 2022 midyear report and this month's third-quarter update, we shaved an astounding \$4 million dollars from that total! This

would not have been possible but for the hard work, creativity, and flexibility of many folks on this campus: special thanks, in no particular order, to the Deans and Department Chairpersons, but also to CFO Serrano and his team, Provost Steiper, and the teams in Recruitment and Admissions and in Academic Advising who made this happen!

The week also brought good news when it comes to our facilities. Friday saw a ribbon-cutting ceremony that marked the completion of our athletic field complex project. This new facility will serve a dual purpose, as it will provide a top-notch forum for our track-and-field teams and other student-athletes, while also serving a recreational purpose for staff, students, and the local community. I am also pleased to announce that thanks to a partnership with the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation, we will soon receive several dozen trees to beautify the campus and help with soil erosion and water damage, and that our Buildings and Grounds teams will soon embark on a series of projects to improve the “look and feel” of high-traffic, high-visibility areas of campus. These will include upgrades to ADA access, a revitalization of the 1L entrance, installation and display of student (and other) artwork, and a refresh of building foyers and public space. I look forward to seeing the results of these initiatives in the coming months.

My densely scheduled week prevented me from attending, but not from acknowledging, events in honor of Women’s History Month/International Women’s Day. CUNY sponsored a “Divine Feminine Leadership Conference” Dinner on Wednesday, attended by several students, faculty and staff from our campus, and a three-day “Career Compass for Women Leaders” Conference. As the father of two daughters, I found the program—like my children!—both inspiring and challenging, and look forward to working with campus and system stakeholders to advance gender equity here and beyond. I am sure you will join me in that noble endeavor.

Until next time,



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