



January 26, 2024

Colleagues:

Welcome to the Spring 2024 semester!

The first week of the term is always a special time, when new and continuing students—more than 10,000 of them—return to our campus as coursework resumes and dreams take shape. With classes full and labs, studios, athletic facilities, and residence halls buzzing with activity, it looks and feels like a great few months await. Many thanks to the teams in Admissions, Recruitment, Advising, and Enrollment Management for helping us reach our goals for the Spring semester!

This week was a busy one for the Administration, as it was for many who were preparing for the return of our students. On Monday, the Cabinet and I participated in a day-long retreat facilitated by CUNY's executive coaching consultants. We discussed a "strengths-based approach" to leadership and learned how we can best serve the institution, and each other. Combined with bi-weekly personal mentoring sessions, this has allowed me to grow and develop as a higher ed administrator, and I value the guidance and feedback I have received. I hope it makes me a more accessible and empathetic partner to all of you.

That evening, I attended a Board of Trustees committee meeting, where we discussed strategies to address sizable structural deficits, and the implementation of a plan to do so. I have communicated with governance leaders and others in Academic Affairs to see how this might be implemented at CSI, with minimal impact to student learning or other aspects of our operations. Everyone has a part to play here as we strive for efficiencies, and I am confident that by working through shared governance channels, we will come through this stronger than ever.

On Tuesday, I was pleased to welcome Borough President Vito Fossella to campus as we announced the rollout of the inaugural Staten Island High School Girls' Basketball Tournament, the championship of which will be held in our gymnasium on February 3 (incidentally, our Men's Basketball team is currently atop the East Coast Conference standings). It was great to meet with so many students and impress upon them the thought of one day playing for their hometown team. Athletics can and does play a major role in our recruitment strategy, and data from last term shows that our student-athletes are outperforming their peers in credit accumulation, grade point average, and other important metrics. Many thanks to Athletics Director Chase Licata and his team for the work they are doing on this front.

Later in the week, I attended an event at Wagner College, commemorating the ten-year anniversary of that institution's Holocaust Center. We have good partners in the fight to combat antisemitism and all forms of discrimination here on the Island, a message that was conveyed eloquently by our Chancellor in his welcome back message this week. Our own commitment to dialog around difficult issues is steadfast, as seen by Thursday's rally in support of Gaza/Palestine, and in our sponsoring of upcoming anti-hate symposia. This is a commitment that I know you share and I am grateful for your support.

Until next time,



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