

March 11, 2022

Colleagues:

I hope this communication finds you well and that you had a meaningful and rewarding day on Tuesday, celebrating International Woman's Day. I've had an interesting and invigorating week, replete with the usual meetings, as well as some unexpected ones.

This week, I continued to engage with local and state elected officials to advocate for their support of the Governor's proposed budget, and am hopeful that this will happen. If so, it bodes well for CUNY and for CSI, with promised student support (including the continuation of CARES ACT-supported mental health counseling), new full-time faculty hires, and increased baseline budgetary allocations for senior colleges. The process is long and cumbersome, but I remain cautiously and guardedly optimistic about the possible outcomes. I also met with representatives of our faculty governance bodies, and with members of the collective bargaining units, to hear their concerns, answer their questions, and strategize for the future. I am convinced that by working through shared governance, this campus will benefit from a collaborative, consultative, and mutually respectful dialog... and my efforts to do the needed restorative work have been mirrored by like-minded faculty and staff colleagues who are anxious to put past differences aside. I am grateful for the opportunity to have such honest and open (and difficult) conversations with my colleagues, who are committed to helping CSI realize its full potential. I also had intriguing discussions with private philanthropists who are looking to support our campus, and with the Presidents and Provosts of the CUNY Brooklyn campuses, with whom we are trying to build closer connections and transfer pipelines. All in all, I am encouraged by these conversations and optimistic about what they portend.

I wanted to draw attention to a pair of events that occurred on campus this week, and to emphasize their importance. On Tuesday, the anti-racist collective held a workshop that surfaced issues of concern and is formulating recommendations for a path forward. I am anxious to receive their report and work with various and myriad stakeholders to address what they have identified as items requiring our attention. The hard and important work of advancing equity, social justice, and belonging-ness on our campus is of paramount importance to me and to the University. I will need your assistance in tackling these issues. That evening, our "Year of Willowbrook" commemoration continued, with "Avoiding the Next Willowbrook: Lessons Learned from Parents' Activism." The powerful program was an important call to action, one that was timely given my Friday afternoon meeting with representatives from the Eden II Program, an organization that aims to provide maximum help to the autism community through education, empowerment, and various support mechanisms. It is important to remember that our role as borough stewards includes working with and on behalf of those who may not be our students, but who are our partners.

Next week brings the usual full slate of activities, and...St Patrick's Day. As an Irish American and a proud multiple CUNY graduate, I am reminded that CUNY was established (1847) to educate and uplift the children of immigrants—and at that time of its founding it was predominantly Irish immigrants who benefitted from this mission. (And as a closed loop moment in this Women's History Month, it should be noted that Thomas Hunter, a native of Ireland

founded the CUNY college that bears his name, as the first baccalaureate institution for women in the system.) While the racial and ethnic composition of our student body may have changed over time, our mission, to provide a quality and accessible education to all, has not: today, CUNY remains the engine of economic and social mobility that it was nearly two centuries ago, propelling more students to a higher socioeconomic status than all the Ivy League schools COMBINED.

(Y)our commitment to that mission is evident, it is important, and it is appreciated.

Until next time,

TGL

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