

January 27, 2022

Colleagues:

Welcome to the Spring semester....and welcome back!

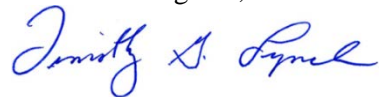
I am buoyed by the optimism that accompanies the first day of instruction, and gratified to think of so many of my colleagues—and our students—on our beautiful campus tomorrow. In many ways, Spring 2022 marks a “return to normalcy” for the College and for the University, as we pivot to an increased campus presence, larger percentage of in-person instruction, and expansion of face-to-face services. There will no doubt be challenges in the coming weeks and months, but I am convinced that, together, we will prevail and emerge stronger than ever, or ever thought possible.

As we welcome each other to the new term, we do so with the realization that “normality” may not look exactly like it did two years ago. Limited office density, continued physical and social distancing where appropriate, the prevalence of face masks, and assorted other adjustments will remain. So too will the availability of remote services, which will allow us to (continue to) provide high-quality customer service to our students. I know the transition to remote work was difficult but I also believe that this has allowed for a more nimble and agile approach to how we conduct our operations. This is a good thing.

My listening and learning tour continued this week, and I met many folks in person or via Zoom, individually and collectively. Again, the passion for CSI, commitment to our Mission, and desire to aid our students was evident in every conversation. While “Opportunity and Challenge” may have marked the campus in the past, I am coming to find that CSI is best characterized as Caring, Supportive, and Innovative.

I saw firsthand the caring and supportive nature of CSI this week, when I learned of the tragic passing of student-athlete Bougary Sissoko. The empathy and compassion exhibited by many—but especially by the coaches and athletic administrators who knew this student best—was profound. The genuine and authentic demonstration of support was astounding...and inspiring. The professional assistance of our colleagues in the Counseling Center, who made themselves available 24/7 to support grieving staff, students, and teammates, was another example of the many ways in which this campus community pulls together in times of need. We will need to do more of this in the challenging times ahead. Nothing can prepare us for the untimely death of a young person or the uncertainty of life and work in the midst of a global pandemic, but knowing that there is and will be a support network in such trying times is incredibly comforting and reassuring.

With warm regards,



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