

Faculty Senate Research Committee
College of Staten Island, CUNY
15 March, 2021

**Statement to the Board: Brooklyn Borough Hearing, 15 March 2021
Submitted by the Research Committee of Faculty Senate, College of Staten Island**

The Research Committee of the College of Staten Island (CSI), a committee of the College's Faculty Senate, wishes to express its alarm at recent actions taken by President William J. Fritz to unilaterally replace CSI's current Governance Plan. As we have expressed to the Board before, breakdowns in shared governance in recent years have degraded CSI's ability to execute its research mission. The wholesale and unilateral replacement of the current Governance Plan with one that, among other things, removes faculty from heading college committees, elevates this from a breakdown to a crisis.

During the last twelve years, the Research Committee has pursued several avenues to strengthen and support the research reputation of the College. Among other things, the Committee has: advocated for more campus-internal fellowship support; advocated for more research release time for faculty; advised on research-related workload policy; advised on the College's role in the CUNY Graduate Center consortium; mediated grant-related disputes between individual faculty and administration; worked collaboratively with administration to ensure that travel funds from PSC-CUNY make it to faculty; and it has held writing workshops to help faculty prepare grant applications and build research publication records.

However, over the last six years, the administration has pursued what can only be described as a research "race-to-the-bottom," and so the Research Committee has been heavily preoccupied with mitigating the effects of this, and with demanding accountability. In recent years, the College has seen repeated cuts to campus fellowships, elimination of merit-based awards of research release time, and reductions to the workload credit to faculty who mentor doctoral students at the Graduate Center.

The President's proposal to replace our recent Governance Plan creates a very difficult working situation at the College. Only three years ago, our committee welcomed a major revision to CSI's Governance Plan, which established new Schools of Business, Education, and Health Sciences. The process of ensuring that these new Schools had representation took several years, and all stakeholders participated in discussions and revisions of drafts. The result was—and for the last three years, has been—a robust Faculty Senate, with committees such as the Research Committee. As in virtually all committees in the President's proposal—indeed, as in his proposed replacement to the Faculty Senate itself—leadership positions will not be occupied by faculty.

The College of Staten Island's current Governance Plan is a success story in shared governance, developed with a By-Laws Committee that was widely respected by the College community. Now, after only three years—and while a health crisis distracts our community—the administration proposes to undo that success story.

We therefore urge the Board to reject any governance-related proposal submitted to it, unless that proposal has been developed within the normal, established, shared-governance framework.

Submitted to the Board by the Research Committee of Faculty Senate, CSI

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