November 19, 2020 Chair's Report

The College Council Executive Committee helped organize the October 29th Town Hall, with its 300 or so participants. In our meeting with the president and provost on November 10th, this informed much of our conversation. We expressed that "many voices were heard representing several corners of the community. Amongst these, some common themes were expressed, as related to Accountability, Inclusivity, Communication, and Vision."

During that meeting we received an update on efforts the administration will be taking to deal with the issue of diversity. The details I'll leave to the president, but we were promised "rich programming" though likely nothing will begin until the spring semester.

The Chancellor sent a "Fiscal and Budget Update" email and the PSC followed up with its interpretation of that email which included an anticipation that the the contractual 2% increase slated to take place this month would be deferred. In light of this, we posed the following

We ask if there are other planned spending controls being discussed within CUNY; we know some campuses are planning for very severe cuts (e.g., Lehman has penciled in a 10.6% reduction in tax levy allocation in its budget documents from late October) and ask what CSI is actually planning for, what processes are in place for handling this magnitude of a cut. We remind you of our suggestion for a task force that was not acted on this past spring. Also, is there any followup to last month's discussion regrading institutional grants.

In response we heard that several reductions were planned for entering the fall semester including

* adjunct budget reductions (though late enrollment effected these)
* savings in cuts to unsponsored research
* savings through vacancies, transportation, overtime, and others

We were told that the left us with a 2.4M gap. In reponse to a followup on what the gap was relative to, we were told the savings target was similar to Lehman's 10.6% reduction, or roughly 11-12M. The totals above then reflect a significant contribution from the CARES monies. (We heard that 4M in expenditures had been claimed, which *should* free up 4M in resources once we are paid out and with the possibility there will be more of the 7.2M available). We were assured that **if** the scale of pending cuts is on this order, we should be able to weather the year.

When pressed what would happen should the state retrench by 20% a different answer was given. (The 20% figure comes from the current withholding, though that is misleading as it isn't 20% of all monies, as the college's payroll is excluded from that). In this case (cuts of up to 20+M) the college would be unable to manage the year on its own. At that point only CUNY could. The college really only has spending authority over OTPS funds *and* payroll authority through position control. A reduction in PS expenses without reducing personnel would need to be negotiated through CUNY given the system we are in. The president indicated (and has acted in accordance) his strong desire not to layoff personnel, even temporary personnel such as the CA workforce.

In following up on our earlier question about grant support, we were told that Lehman has a large CUTRA (indeed, the largest in CUNY) and has not prioritized institutional grants, as they require some investment by the institution.

For context, the most recent [Performance Management Process Data Book](https://www.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/page-assets/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/current-student-data-book-by-subject/PMP_University_Data_Book_final_rev_2020-08-26.pdf) has these numbers:

 FY18 FY19
Lehman 12.3 10.9 Grants or training, equipment,

 sponsored and institutional activity
 2.9 5.9 Research
CSI 4.8 3.8 Grants or training, equipment,

 sponsored and institutional activity
 4.3 2.5 Research

When questioned about Transparency and Vision and how to communicate different scenarios we heard that the president thinks there should be

**a focus on undergraduate students**

This had me personally quite concerned and I pointed out that most institutions seek to build up Masters enrollment to supplement resources and likely this would to several areas of *defunding* notably impacting the research mission of the college, primarily in the sciences and computational sciences. In response, it was pointed out the the college --by some measure-- spends 2 to 2.5M more on research efforts than grants bring in. In response, it was noted that this amount needs to be put in the context that the state invests at least 80M in CSI net of tuition revenue each year and provides a campus worth atleast 1B.

The President responded twice about how our mission statement has a "priority" of Scholarship-driven education; but made no mention of research and scholarship as it appears in our statements of

* **Mission**: Grounded in the tradition of the liberal arts and sciences, the College of Staten Island is committed to the highest standards in learning, teaching, **research**, **scholarship**, and service
* **Vision** Excellence in **scholarship**, **research**, and creative activities provides a strong foundation for our academic programs and student learning experiences, and by attracting and retaining an outstanding faculty we will also attract strong graduate students to our masters and doctoral programs and to work in our laboratories; **and**
* **Values** Strong commitment to teaching, **scholarship**, **research**, creative activities, and service.

We finished the meeting discussing two programs that were discussed at the town hall:

* The Library. We mentioned the significant and chronic underfunding and the recent personnel changes to Media Services that appear to have surprised the faculty. We heard that funding is an issue and it is coupled with the technology fee; and that there have been long discussions as regards the staffing model and the new model is believed to be more "efficient" though how that would be measured was not mentioned.
* The Nursing program. In the past 2 years the college has lost nearly 20 Full-Time Faculty lines and during the town hall meeting we heard loud and clear that Nursing is reeling from this. We mentioned that we had heard accrediation was on the line. A feeling that at least 2 lines were warranted was expressed by the president, though also that new lines are very difficult right now, due to a hiring freeze. We emphasized a need to clearly emphasize the importance of this "signature" program.