I had started to write this newsletter, reflecting on my experiences during the fall semester at the college, when I learned that Queens College ranked eighth in the nation on CollegeNET’s latest Social Mobility Index. Despite the coronavirus pandemic and its attendant financial upheaval, despite the shift to remote operations and all the adjustments that were required from faculty, staff, and students, Queens College continues to do what it has done since 1937: provide a high-quality education that positively changes the trajectories of students’ lives. It is wonderful to see this recognized in yet another respected national survey.

In turn, as we know from the economic impact analysis of QC released earlier this year, students become alumni who make powerful contributions to New York as employees, employers, and taxpayers. They support the arts, anchor their communities, and in general lead longer, healthier, and more productive lives than they might have otherwise. We can all take pride to be part of an institution that does so much for so many people—and will play a significant role in helping the metropolitan area recover from the recent economic turmoil attributable to the ongoing pandemic. As I continue to frequently meet with elected officials, business, labor, and community leaders, it is vitally important that we communicate the importance of investing in public higher education as demonstrated in both the national social mobility index and the economic benefits analysis. Combined with the inspiring stories of the persistence of our talented and ambitious students and the faculty and staff whose research contributes mightily to societal knowledge and improvements, such data greatly informs our advocacy efforts.

Hindsight is 20-20, so to speak. In the past year, Queens College positioned itself to deliver classes and programs virtually, albeit for public health reasons known to all of us. Students, faculty, staff, and alumni rose to meet these challenges with unprecedented dedication, patience, and creativity. This experience will prove valuable not just for winter session and the spring semester, when we will continue to operate 99 percent remotely, but in the post-pandemic future, when for all kinds of reasons, people may want to study, work, or present performances at a distance. I’m amazed at the richness of the college’s offerings.

This month’s Kupferberg events include an exhibition, a dance concert, and chamber music. The Louis Armstrong House Museum is debuting Armstrong Now! Artist Commissions, a series of brief movies that showcase contemporary...
Queens College has also made tremendous efforts to provide a high level of services to students. Academic Advising, the Center for Career Engagement and Internships, the Child Development Center, Peer Counseling, the QC Hub, the QC Learning Commons, Student Affairs, and the Student Association have all pivoted to current conditions, creating an amazing range of online programs; details are available here. Athletics is helping to keep the community fit. I have signed up for the Nike Run Club and I look forward to participating in it.

The Knights Table Food Pantry, sponsored by a generous grant from the Carrol and Milton Petrie Foundation, has been doing vital work to reduce hunger among QC and CUNY students. This month, for the first time, the the Knights Table Food Pantry Committee—with the support of the Student Association, the Health Services Center, and Queens College—will give out holiday food to the same student populations. Turning the Table on Hunger distribution events will take place from 1 to 3 pm on three consecutive Tuesdays: December 8 at Kissena Boulevard and Booth Memorial Avenue, Flushing; December 15 at Marina East NY25A Flushing Bay.
Promenade, Corona; and December 22, at 168th Street between 88th and 89th Avenues, Jamaica. Medical supplies and flu shots will also be available courtesy of the Health Services Center. QC shuttle buses will be used to facilitate this project. Students will need to wear a mask and adhere to social distancing. For more information, including how to RSVP, contact knightstable@qc.cuny.edu.

Most of you haven’t been to campus in months, but a lot of infrastructure work is taking place, such as improvements to the air conditioning systems in two buildings and ongoing fire alarm upgrades in six others. Athletics facilities renovations are scheduled. I thank all those involved in utilizing this period to maintain and enhance our beautiful campus.

A national search is being conducted for a senior-level chief diversity officer to report directly to me. Speaking of diversity, I have expanded and diversified my cabinet, appropriately reflecting the community we serve.

The process for creating the next strategic plan, which will establish college priorities and initiatives for the next five years, is well under way. Diversity, inclusion and equity are topics imbedded in all of the strategic plan working group deliberations. The steering committee has met and the working groups are actively engaged, with much involvement of faculty, staff, students, alumni and the college foundation. Yesterday’s town hall on the strategic plan—the first of five in the series—provided robust discussions on student success, student life and curriculum. If you have not already, please join us at least one of the remaining sessions. Today, from noon to 1:30 pm, the topics are Student Success and Student Life/Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, https://bit.ly/3n9gyEB. Coming up are Curriculum/DEI https://bit.ly/2GLN2Fw (on Friday, December 4, from 10 to 11:30 am) and Fiscal Sustainability/Faculty Scholarship and Creativity https://bit.ly/2JUtoIJ (on Monday, December 7, 4 to 5:30 pm). A fifth town hall, on Thursday, December 10, 2:30 to 4 pm, will be an open forum for students only https://bit.ly/2IqB44V.

We very much welcome and indeed encourage the participation of all members of the college community. We will schedule another round of town halls during the spring semester.

I encourage students who expect to be at home from January 4-25, 2021, to sign up for up to four credits in the Queens College Winter Session. It is a great time to choose from over 70 undergraduate and graduate courses, all online. To access how to register and a course listing, click here; to review Pathways courses offered, click here. If you have any questions, contact
In closing, I wish students success on their final exams and again thank the faculty and staff for all you are doing to support our students. I hope everyone has the happiest and healthiest of holidays. Please do everything in your power to stay safe.

Frank H. Wu

PS: I encourage faculty and staff to reserve Thursday, December 17, from 2 to 4 pm, for the college’s annual holiday party. We have a special program planned for all. See you soon on Zoom!