Queens College’s 83rd anniversary of the first day of classes is around the corner—October 11. It is a source of enormous pride that we are all associated with an institution that has made such a positive difference in so many lives over eight-plus decades. For institutions as for people, 83 is a remarkable age. We celebrate our legacy as “The College of the Future,” as the founders intended.

In light of the anniversary and our focus on the future, I’m excited to have taken the first steps in creating the college’s next strategic plan, establishing priorities for 2021 to 2026. This plan will help us advance the mission that was launched in 1937 and remains important to all of us today: providing an outstanding education to talented students regardless of their background or financial means.

In a recent memo, I explained the planning process, and we will keep everyone informed of its progress. The success of this work hinges on cross-campus involvement and we will involve faculty, students, staff, and alumni in working groups, as described in my message last week. Everyone can support this effort by attending the five open forums that will take place this fall and others that will be scheduled in the spring. We want and need your input.

To promote understanding of the financial issues facing the college, VP William Keller (Finance and Administration) and AVP Joseph Loughren (Finance and
I am proud of our large, diverse community as we operate course offerings in 99 percent remote mode, a condition most likely to extend into the spring. An impressive range of courses and activities are being delivered electronically. I want to cite just a few examples that demonstrate how Queens College’s talented people are adapting to the current virtual environment. There is so much happening, this list is a panorama like the view from my office in Kiely.

This Wednesday, October 7, at 12:15 pm, the Office of Student Development and Leadership and the Student Association have invited Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. to discuss the "State of Young Latinx in New York City." Diaz will touch on topics such as COVID-19, criminal justice reform, and jobs. This event, offered in conjunction with Hispanic Heritage Month, will take place live on the Student Life Youtube page. In another Hispanic Heritage Month event, I was delighted to serve as one of the speakers last Friday, October 2, at a panel discussion, "Institutional Leadership Advancing Equity with a Latino Lens in a Time of Uncertainty," held by the ALASS Institute. (The acronym stands for Accelerating Latino Student Success.) Like me, all of the speakers at the event are affiliated with the Excelencia in Education’s Presidents for Latino Student Success network.

Also on October 7, from 6 to 7:30 pm, the Italian American Heritage Committee of New York Inc., in collaboration with the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute and the Società Dante Alighieri NYC, will hold the second in its series of conferences celebrating Fellini’s centennial. To register for the event, click here. These conferences were organized to mark Italian American Heritage and Culture Month.

Since October is LGBTQ History Month, I want to mention that during free hour on Wednesday, October 14, in a slightly belated observance of National Coming Out Day (October 11), LGBTQIA+ students, faculty, and staff will share their coming out stories. Afterward, the virtual floor will stay open for impromptu personal sharing. To sign up to share your own experience of coming out, click here. All are welcome to attend this event, which is made possible through the generous support of LaGuardia Community College/CUNY and the New York City Council through the offices of Daniel Dromm (District 25) and Speaker Corey Johnson. I thank them and the event’s co-sponsors: the Queens College Gender, Love and Sexuality Alliance/GLASA, the Queens College Office of Student Development and Leadership, the Women and Gender Studies Department at Queens College, CUNY Office of Student Inclusion Initiatives.

Event login information:

In addition, the Queens College Gender, Love and Sexuality Alliance/GLASA, the Office of Student Development and Leadership at Queens College and the CUNY Office of Student Inclusion Initiatives is devoting this month's Queer Connect—a virtual safe space held every Thursday at 3
Wednesday, October 14, is a busy day on the virtual campus. The Center for Career Engagement and Internships, which has been resourceful in finding placements that allow students to work from home, is holding its annual Business and Technology Career Fair on that day from 12 noon to 2 pm. Although the fair takes place on Zoom, professional attire is highly recommended. Register at [www.qc.cuny.edu/hireqc](http://www.qc.cuny.edu/hireqc) (Student > Events > Workshops > RSVP & Add to Calendar). As the event approaches, registered students will receive instructions on how to participate and attend. If you have any questions, email qc_career@qc.cuny.edu.

I have an important entry in my calendar for October 14. I’ll be meeting members of registered student organizations on Zoom during free hour. I look forward to learning more about these organizations and what they are planning for this year.

It has been my privilege, however brief, to work with Director of Campus Security Beth LaManna, the first woman to hold that title at a CUNY senior college. She will step down before the end of the year to move with her husband to Las Vegas, where he recently accepted a new position. Beth came to QC in 2018 after serving nearly 23 years as a special agent at the Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Division. In addition to her role in helping to keep the campus community safe, Beth had the opportunity to speak with the peer counseling program, the QC Retirees Association, and the department of clinical psychology, where she offered her advice and expertise. I wish her the best of luck and thank her for outstanding service to Queens College. A national search had been launched for her replacement.

We have begun a search for a senior-level chief officer of Diversity, Inclusion and Equity to serve on an interim basis. As I have previously indicated, this position and the successes we intend to achieve are especially high priorities for me. As the strategic planning process unfolds, we will have more to say as we seek broad input and participation.

You may have read reports that rates of COVID-19 infection have risen in a few New York City neighborhoods, including several in Queens. Please monitor your email for news of new measures affecting these hotspot communities. For your health and everyone else’s, I urge you to wear a mask and maintain social distancing. Here is a new helpful aid. By downloading
COVID Alert NY, a voluntary, anonymous smartphone app, you can enable contact tracers to alert you if you have been in proximity to someone who tests positive. You can learn more here.

Finally, let me thank all of the faculty, staff, students and alumni who have adapted to the virtual classes, meetings and service delivery we are providing. We are deeply grateful to our Public Safety and Buildings and Grounds teams as well as Information Technology, all of our academic, student, and administrative support services, and the Benjamin J. Rosenthal Library staff for all they do every day to maintain our beautiful campus and necessary operations. From our deans and department chairs to our faculty and counselors, we have seen exemplary dedication amid a most challenging environment.

Stay safe and be well.

Frank H. Wu

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