Frankly Speaking

Message from President Frank H. Wu

It’s been such a pleasure in recent weeks to work at the beautiful Queens College campus, meet people the old-fashioned way—in person!—and visit campus facilities, including science labs, art studios, and sports programs, as well those offices that are helping with fall preparations. I also chatted with staff from the mailroom and Buildings and Grounds.

Suiting up for a photo op are QC athletes (from left) Danielle D'Angelo, Robert Skidmore, Dylan Hughes, President Frank H. Wu, Eduardo Marino, Alexis Hall, and Nyakuome Thichiot.
May Myat Moe and Wenjing Zhou discuss their lab work with President Wu.

Queens Borough President Donovan Richards and his team visited the campus last week and talked with faculty, staff, and students involved with vital programs he generously supports with funding.

AVP of Facilities, Planning, and Operations Zeco Krcic (left) and President Frank H. Wu (right) discuss campus plans with Borough President Donovan Richards.
A campus resident encounters (from left) QC President Frank H. Wu; Borough President Donovan Richards; Phil Ballman, the borough president's director of Cultural Affairs and Tourism; Deputy Borough President Rhonda Binda; QC AVP of Facilities, Planning, and Operations Zeco Krcic; Ludy Thenor, assistant to the deputy borough president; QC AVP of External and Governmental Relations Jeffrey Rosenstock; and Andres Vargas, member of the borough president's staff.

I know everyone is eager to get back to campus. Chief of Staff Meghan Moore-Wilk, Assistant Vice President and Chief Information Officer Troy Hahn, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs Jennifer Jarvis and I discussed plans for Fall 2021 during briefings that took place on Zoom on Thursday, April 29, and Monday, May 3. If you missed those sessions, I encourage you to click here and sign up for either of the two remaining briefings, scheduled for Thursday, May 13 at 5 pm, and Friday, May 21 at 11 am. During those briefings, we are sharing the latest information from CUNY and New York State, consistent with public health and safety guidelines. I thank everyone for your continued cooperation and support.

The virtual campus remains quite active. On Friday, QC hosted the third annual Reimagining Science and Technology Education Conference, with a keynote by veterinarian Michael Hutchinson, who helped pioneer stem-cell technology in veterinary medicine. Later the same day, the Queens College Office of Student Development and Leadership and the CUNY Office of Student Inclusion Initiatives presented Break the Silence: We Will Not Be Bullied & Harassed. People shared their stories at this moving event, held in connection with National Day of Silence, which protests mistreatment of members of the LGBTQI+ community.

Michael Hutchinson

I’d like to congratulate both our men’s and women’s tennis teams, who each captured the East Coast Conference (ECC) Championship over the weekend! It was the second straight ECC title for the women and the fourth straight for the men. The women’s team cruised to a 4-0 victory over St. Thomas Aquinas College; the men also defeated St. Thomas Aquinas, by a score of 4-1. With the victory, both Knights teams will head to the NCAA Tournament by virtue of an automatic bid. Amazingly, it will be the 20th straight appearance in the NCAA tournament for the women’s team and the 19th straight appearance for the men. Matchups for the NCAA tournament will be announced on May 4 at 8 pm ET at NCAA.com. Good luck to the Knights!
The rally and march We Belong Here: Queens Rises Against Hate, originally scheduled for April, took place instead on Sunday, May 2, led by Borough President Richards and Congressmember Grace Meng. It was a fitting way to mark Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month. I was deeply honored to join our elected officials in addressing the crowd.

With President Wu at the Flushing rally (clockwise from left): Congressmember Grace Meng; Queens Borough President Richards; State Senator John Liu, behind President Wu; Congressmember Gregory Meeks, in the back, toward the right; New York State Attorney General Letitia James.

Queens College is celebrating AAPI Month with concerts, panel discussions, a film screening, and more, all presented virtually. I’m particularly excited about the college’s main event, Celebrating Asian
American Students’ Achievements While Combating Anti-Asian/American Sentiment, on Wednesday, May 12, from noon to 1:30 pm. I’ll be making opening remarks for the program, which will feature presentations by students and faculty, plus the announcement of the Asian/American Center’s annual awards.

Another yearly and important event, the Queens College Student Choreography Showcase, will be livestreamed May 6-9. The program, Infinite Synapse, directed by Edisa Weeks (Dance), will incorporate a variety of dance techniques from contemporary to West African and traditional Irish dance. Here’s your chance to enjoy the work of student choreographers, dancers, costume designers, and composers before they develop national reputations.

Ying Zhou, executive director of the Tech Incubator at Queens College, will talk about its work with local entrepreneurs and the U.S. Small Business Administration on this week’s Big Ideas episode, debuting on Thursday, May 6. In this time of remote operations, the Big Ideas series, created by the Office of Communications and Marketing, has helped all of us learn more about the college’s remarkable faculty and staff.

Looking a little further into the future, I’d like to take this opportunity to tell everyone about the Queens College Gala. The college and the Queens College Foundation have organized this year’s gala with the help of a few alumni you may have heard about: comedians Jerry Seinfeld, Ray Romano, and Ted Alexandro; actress Fran Drescher; and the prominent chef Lidia Bastianich—who gave me a personal cooking lesson. This is a marvelous opportunity to express appreciation for student scholarship support and to continue to build on the great record of giving by our alumni and the community.

The big annual event on everyone’s mind, of course, is Commencement and the related ceremonies, all of which will be held virtually, consistent with CUNY
Baccalaureate will take place Tuesday, June 1, at 7 pm. With the help of our Honors and Awards Office, a wonderful virtual program is being prepared. We are so proud that Salk Scholar Naomi Shohet will be our student speaker. I will present the President’s Medal to Jerome Chazen, the dedicated chairperson of the Louis Armstrong House Museum Board of Directors, and to Dr. Vita Rabinowitz, the former interim chancellor and executive vice chancellor for Academic Affairs and provost of the City University of New York. A special introduction of Dr. Rabinowitz will be provided by her dear friend, former QC Interim President William Tramontano. It promises to be a great occasion for all the participating students and their families.

Graduating seniors can celebrate their achievement and each other at the virtual senior class toast on Wednesday, June 2 at 3 pm. Want to add your image to a montage wishing them well? Submit a photo or 5-1- second video here.

Commencement is scheduled for Thursday, June 3, at 9 am. All Commencement participants, from Chief Marshal Robert Engel and performers from the Aaron Copland School of Music to our honorees, the distinguished scientist Miriam Rafailovich and Congressmember and QC alumnus Adriano Espaillat, have recorded their segments in advance. We will honor past alumni classes, organized by the Office of Institutional Advancement and Alumni Relations.

We will soon share more information on how students, faculty, staff, families, and friends may attend our first-ever virtual Commencement. We anticipate there will be about 2500 graduates. Since we cannot bring graduates, their supporters, and loved ones to the campus this spring, we are bringing the campus to them. We are thankful for the exemplary help of Information Technology, and Communications and Marketing, with the support of Academic and Student Affairs, Special Events Planning, Intergovernmental Relations, Public Safety, and Buildings and Grounds. I am very much looking forward to participating in the many virtual events organized by faculty and staff from QC departments and programs.

Since there are only a few weeks left in this semester, I want to wish everyone—prospective graduates as well as all students—good luck on their final exams.

This is my last newsletter for the academic year, though please watch for emails with more details on our Fall plans. Have a wonderful summer! (Not sure how to spend it? You still have time to enroll in one or more of almost 600 Summer Session classes.)

Stay safe and healthy.
At the bottom of this email, you will see Constant Contact language that offers the option of using "SafeUnsubscribe" to remove yourself from the email list. We strongly advise you not to unsubscribe because QCmailers may contain critical, timely information you need, such as CUNYfirst attendance and grading information for faculty; Human Resources announcements for faculty and staff; and announcements from the Registrar or Bursar for students. This information may not be communicated in any other way but through QCmailers.