Hurricane Sandy and Sandy Hook: Considerations for A New Year

Someone once told me a story about a little boy who was crying because he had no shoes...and then he met a little boy who had no feet.

For many of us, the final two months of 2012 have registered an assortment of difficult memories, scattered emotions, and quiet reflections. Many of these memories are of a storm that left so many of us managing without basic needs or the everyday accoutrements we often take for granted. For those affected, the experience of temporarily losing power, heat, and light, even for a couple of days, sparked a greater sense of appreciation and empathy for those swimming in the indiscriminate tide of devastation. As I write this message, many families and students still have not found comfort or stability after Hurricane Sandy, remaining adrift both physically and mentally.

Deep and raw emotions were also provoked by the tragic deaths of the children at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. Few of us can adequately make sense of what took place and why. While we are accustomed to dealing with the daily stresses of self and work, nothing could have prepared us for the incomprehensible loss of so many young lives and their educators in the manner reported. Alongside the immense trauma has come a violent shaking of our collective psyche and sense of community. More disconcerting for the CUNY community is the fact that this tragedy took place in an educational setting not too different from our own.

So where do we go from here? What lies ahead for 2013? I have always believed that our work at CUNY is rife with possibilities. For my entire career I have embraced and been moved by the brilliance, innovation, creativity, aspirations, and dreams of students. Without a doubt, the last two months will stir varying degrees of contemplation within our students, but these events cannot stifle or consume them. Instead, this University, with its knowledge and talent both inside and outside the classroom, should engage in solution-finding with our students. Solution-finding that will bring strength in taking the necessary steps forward, inspiration to reimagine the world they want to live in and empowerment to change it.

As we reflect on this past year, let us excel in what we do best as a leading University, ask questions and seek answers. Have our students ask questions and identify strategies on how we can respond more effectively to our neighbors in times of need. Have students discern how to provide effective support systems for those physically, mentally, emotionally and educationally disadvantaged.

(Continued on page 2)
Message (Continued)

Brainstorm with our students about what kind of future and quality of life they want for themselves, their families and their communities and how do they get there. I am certain we can find ways to involve the talented minds and deep ambitions of our students while creating a better society for all of us.

This New Year provides CUNY a tremendous opportunity to leverage the best of our learning enterprise as we try to find meaning, understanding and hope from this past year. I am convinced that among our 270,000 degree-seeking students there exists thousands of innovative, pioneering and, perhaps, trendsetting ideas designed to advance, heal and encourage us all. The reality is that so many of our CUNY students have limited means and opportunities—neither shoes nor feet—yet they succeed and inspire our world every day. It is because of this spirit of learning, I am confident 2013 will bring an even greater level of connection, ingenuity and success among our extraordinary, resilient and remarkable student body.

Happy New Year and much success to you and your students.

Frank

Please click the link and see CUNY students responding to communities in need. http://www.youtube/watch?v=vl_vfK4ldw&feature=youtu.be

Policy Update

Admission of Students Who May Pose a Risk to a College

On Dec. 5, 2012 General Counsel and Senior Vice Chancellor for Legal Affairs, Frederick P. Schaffer issued a follow-up communication to a memorandum he sent on January 28, 2009 regarding the University’s policy concerning the admission of students with criminal convictions, including convictions for felony sex offenses. The memo revises the language of the provision previously supplied to each college that should be included in appropriate documents like the student handbook, admissions brochure, etc. See the memo at http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/sa/policies/AdmissionofStudentsWhoMayPoseaRisktoaCollege120512.pdf.

CUNY Project Reach Mini-Grants Competition Results

The Central Office of Student Affairs, Disability Resources and Services recently announced the results of the CUNY Project REACH (Resources and Education on Autism as CUNY’s Hallmark) competition for the development of best practices and model projects that build CUNY’s capacity to serve students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

In response to a Request for Proposals (RFP), the CUNY REACH Proposal Review Committee reviewed fourteen strong proposals from across CUNY. Through this rigorous competition, four proposals distinguished themselves for their potential to impact access and opportunity for CUNY students on the autism spectrum.

Based upon the recommendations of the Proposal Review Committee, investment will commence for the following model projects:

- The College of Staten Island’s (CSI) program will increase the academic, social and professional success of students with ASD by building on existing service infrastructure and developing web-based supports.
- Kingsborough Community College’s (KBCC) program will identify and provide support services for students with ASD, provide training for faculty and administrators and further the development of a pilot mentoring component established last spring. In addition, the Proposal Review Committee acted to give honorable mention to the CUNY Coalition for Students with Disabilities (CCSD) for its cross-campus plan to empower CUNY student leaders with disabilities to engage their peers on the autism spectrum. Great appreciation is expressed to the CUNY Project REACH team, the Office of the University Dean for Health and Human Services, and the FAR Fund for their support.

Happy New Year and much success to you and your students.

Frank

Please click the link and see CUNY students responding to communities in need. http://www.youtube/watch?v=vl_vfK4ldw&feature=youtu.be
Grants, Funds Awarded to CUNY Student Affairs

CUNY/Columbia University Allied Health Award

Columbia University has awarded a $1,000,000 grant to the Central Office of Student Affairs to support students in the Allied Health fields. Since its inception in 1995, the grant has been awarded to students in the Washington Heights/Inwood and Harlem communities who enroll in medical laboratory, radiological technology and occupational and physical therapy programs. Students are eligible for financial assistance of up to $10,000 as they complete a required 1500 hours of internship toward a New York State certification in their careers. The program was made possible through the efforts of former New York City Council Member Stanley E. Michels, the City University of New York and Columbia University. The Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone contributed an additional $100,000 for 2012-2013.

CUNY and Verizon UHopeline Grant

Verizon Wireless and the UHopeLine phone recycling program began collecting and recycling old wireless phones back in 1999. The goal was to increase awareness of dating violence, provide aid to domestic violence survivors and encourage college students to help the environment by recycling their no-longer-used wireless devices. Later in 2008, the Verizon Foundation partnered with CUNY on educational domestic violence initiatives. To date, the CUNY/Verizon UHopeline partnership has collected over 3,000 wireless phones and awarded more than $20K in grants to Women’s Services programs. “Dating violence affects many college students,” said Zina Richardson, University liaison to the CUNY Women’s Centers. “With the help of programs like Verizon’s UHopeline, we are able to educate students and raise awareness for this important cause.”

Diversity Grant

The CUNY Women's Center was awarded a $4,850 grant from the Diversity Project Development Fund of CUNY. The grant-funded project “Assessing Women’s Centers Services and Linking Them to Student Success” will be used to develop a cross-campus study linking the impact of women’s center services to student retention, satisfaction and success. The project will examine the broad range of resources and services across three service models: direct services, student organizing/leadership development and educational programming.

Supporting Students With Autism Website Launched

CUNY Project REACH (Resources and Education on Autism as CUNY’s Hallmark) launched a web page on the CUNY website in September. The website www.cuny.edu/projectREACH provides information about Project REACH as well as autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and features published articles and links to resources about ASD. The purpose of Project REACH is to enhance CUNY’s capacity to support its growing population of college students with ASD.
CSI Enhances the Student Orientation Experience

This past fall the College of Staten Island, under the collaborative leadership of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, welcomed 2,500 first-term students who participated in the College’s new two-day orientation program.

Following a successful 2011 pilot, the two-day orientation model led to the implementation of a comprehensive program that introduced incoming students to concepts and strategies for academic success, the transition to college, co-curricular enrichment, and being part of a multicultural community. Students’ initial academic advisement, course selection, and registration were also facilitated during the two-day program.

The program was designed and developed by the First Year Experience committee (FYE), a college-wide collaboration of over 30 offices and departments. The committee met regularly throughout the academic year to plan the two-day program with the Office of New Student Orientation playing a key role in its implementation. This collaborative and cooperative initiative required the involvement of HEO staff, faculty and support staff who were available throughout each scheduled orientation session. They helped with meeting and greeting students and facilitating workshops that focused on areas such as academic expectations and diversity.

The FYE committee worked with the Office of Institutional Research at the College to develop an evaluation instrument to assess each orientation session. The student response to the two-day program has been overwhelmingly positive; only minor adjustments were made since the initial pilot year, and the program is now in its 3rd year. (Continued on page 10)
US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights Ends Its Investigation of CUNY BMI

On Nov. 23, 2012, Chancellor Matthew Goldstein received a letter from the Office for Civil Rights of the US Department of Education (DOE) stating it had issued a determination dismissing the complaints concerning CUNY’s Black Male Initiative (BMI). The complaints, filed six and a half years ago by Michael Meyers of the New York Civil Rights Coalition, alleged that instituting the BMI violated the 1964 Civil Rights Act and Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments; in 2006 the complaint was amended to allege improprieties concerning race, color, ethnicity, etc. The determination found that in some respects the complaints were moot and that in all regards the current BMI program is legally compliant. The determination enables BMI to seek grant funding from US DOE and others.

Shortly afterwards, BMI Director Elliott Dawes wrote to colleagues and staff about the ruling:

“On behalf of CUNY BMI Central Administration, I would like to thank all BMI project administrators and affiliated faculty members for all of your hard work resulting in the favorable resolution of the US DOE OCR investigation of our program. Since the 2005-2006 academic year, we have worked consistently to create an inclusive University-wide program that is open and available to everyone while targeting groups that are severely underrepresented in higher education, particularly African American/Black males. As the attached US DOE OCR letter clearly states, our CUNY BMI program is legally compliant.”

In his letter, Director Dawes also expressed his thanks to the CUNY Office of the General Counsel (OGC) lawyers Jane Sovern and Heather Parlier, for their legal guidance and advice over the course of six and a half years; to Deborah Douglass, CUNY Executive Director for Education and Training Opportunity Programs at the Central Office; and to CUNY BMI central administrators who worked diligently for many years to respond to numerous US DOE OCR information requests.

The CUNY Value Video and Brochure is Released

The CUNY Office of University Relations, Office of Communications and Marketing has released a new brochure and video, The CUNY Value detailing how “CUNY is defining value by providing the opportunity of a lifetime: a high-quality, competitive and remarkably affordable college education.” View the video at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NR23F137fio&feature=youtu.be, then peruse the fact sheet and brochure at http://www.cuny.edu/about/info/value/affordable.html
Hurricane Sandy Report: CUNY Leads in the Aftermath of Hurricane Sandy

Most New Yorkers agreed that Hurricane Sandy was unlike any other storm to hit the northeast coast of the United States. Coverage of the October storm topped national headlines alongside reports of the upcoming 2012 presidential election. At CUNY, the University and campus websites reported breaking news and information, providing alerts and updates on the storm’s effects on students and staff, campus buildings and class schedules city wide. Updates on college closings and re-openings were posted in addition to information on emergency services and resources available. Sadly, it was later determined that three CUNY students and a recent graduate had lost their lives due to the storm.

Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Frank D. Sanchez and Vice Chancellor for Human Resources Management, Gloriana Waters were appointed co-chairs for the CUNY Community Hurricane Sandy Relief Council by CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein. The goal: “…to help coordinate funding and volunteer activities to assist members of the CUNY Community…who suffered personal loss and property damage as a result of the storm,” the Chancellor stated. In a short time, the Central Office of Student Affairs had launched a Hurricane Sandy website posting available resources and services, and relief agency help for those affected by the emergency. With rebuilding and relief and recovery efforts still continuing, some relevant informational links and resources can be found below.

Donate Now to Hurricane Sandy Student Fund
http://cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/sa/GeneralinfoResources/Donatenow.html

CUNY Faculty and Staff Experts: Protecting, Rebuilding and Planning for the Future

Hurricane Sandy Emergency Relief Annual Leave Bank Program

Hurricane Sandy FAQs for Students
http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/sa/GeneralinfoResources/HurricaneSandyFAQ.html

Hurricane Sandy Resources and Services
http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/sa/GeneralinfoResources.html

Shelter from the Storm: CUNY Aids Sandy’s Victims
http://www1.cuny.edu/mu/forum/2012/11/01/shelter-from-the-storm-cuny-aids-sandy%e2%80%99s-victims/

Chancellor Goldstein Announces CUNY Community Hurricane Sandy Relief Council

Surviving the Hurricane: Federal and Local Agency Assistance

Hurricane Sandy Relief Prime Goal of November 2012 “CUNY Month”
http://www1.cuny.edu/mu/forum/2012/11/12/hurricane-sandy-relief-prime-goal-of-2012-%E2%80%9Ccuny-month%E2%80%9D/
Hurricane Sandy Report: Letter From A CUNY Student…

To: Maribel Morua  
   Director  
   International Student & Scholar Services  
   The City College of New York

Date: November 15th, 2012

Dear Ms. Morua,

Still reeling from the effects of Hurricane Sandy personally, and as one of the first responders of the October 28 Sandy catastrophe, you will be happy to learn that to date I have volunteered a total of 288 hours, at the rate of 16 hours a day. In due course I will share pictures and an update of my experiences…

…the past two weeks have indeed been trying for me. After this terrible disaster hit, I lost everything except my life. Thank God I’m alive to write this email! As one of the first responders and an evacuee, as soon as I went to the evacuation shelters at John Adams High School and York College, I immediately decided to get involved to support NYC shelters and help the thousands who were homeless or without power…as a CUNY baccalaureate student, Thomas W. Smith Fellow and Colin Powell Fellow at the City College of New York, I have unwaveringly strived for academic excellence and public service for the common good…and while a first responder and a Hurricane Sandy evacuee myself, I have been able to apply what I learned to help promote civic engagement and strengthen connections between campuses and communities, nonprofit organizations and the City of New York.

As I face the daunting task of cleaning up, recuperating and somehow moving on, I am happy that I was able to attend my foreign policy class last Tuesday, even though I commuted from the shelter. Even though I am now homeless myself with roots in a poor country, Zimbabwe, I find extreme joy and profound satisfaction in that I have made a meaningful and rewarding contribution to help distribute food and water, sort out donated items and tutor school children in writing, reading and math. Perhaps most important, I was able to help patients with special needs get evacuated from nursing homes including people with medical needs and mental health issues...

I have witnessed firsthand the impact of natural disasters and how it can influence global public health policy. I now have a story to tell.

Thank you. Sincerely yours,

Charlesworth Mabheka  
The City College of New York
Hurricane Sandy Report: Students and Volunteers Reach Out Across the Boroughs

Following the storm, many students began to ask what they could do to help hurricane Sandy victims. In response, Central Office and campus departments began the careful work to help coordinate Hurricane Sandy relief efforts. Soon volunteer faculty, students and staff were canvassing for more volunteers, researching emergency services and providing assistance to storm victims while remaining in close communication with New York City agencies. The CUNY Office of University Relations also remained engaged to promote and help organize activities in close collaboration with the CUNY Council of Students with Disabilities (CCSD), the Malave Leadership Academy (MLA) and student leaders. Assistant Dean Chris Rosa and the Central Office of Student Affairs staff worked closely with student volunteers who arrived on Friday, Nov. 16 to help with disaster cleanup and to serve in the hardest hit city neighborhoods. The following day, on Nov. 17, squads of CUNY students arrived in Staten Island delivering food and providing Thanksgiving turkeys to the community. Still more teams did demolition in the Rockaways, travelling in a tour bus arranged by City Council Speaker Christine Quinn. For further background, read [http://www1.cuny.edu/mu/forum/2012/11/20/volunteering-for-sandy%e2%80%99s-victims/](http://www1.cuny.edu/mu/forum/2012/11/20/volunteering-for-sandy%e2%80%99s-victims/)

A number of these students shared their reasons for signing up to restore and rebuild:

Vicky Detata, Baruch senior and Sociology major: “I live on the Upper East Side. And I started to feel guilty because my neighborhood was just fine but so many others were suffering. My family lives in New Jersey, and my sister is handicapped. Their township suffered some destruction from Sandy and the one next to them, Point Pleasant, was wiped out. I am feeling very fortunate that they are okay. So I needed to get out to help.”

Ronald Burey, BMCC sophomore and Criminal Justice major: “My brother lost his car in the flood waters. I live in Astoria Queens. There’s no damage where I live but some neighborhoods were flooded. Now I understand what people have gone through and I want to help. My aunt called from South Carolina to insist that we evacuate. She had experience—we didn’t. She knew how bad things could get really fast, and that we are not used to that up here. But we stayed, and then watched the water flood into the lobby of our building. My brother videotaped it swirling around the building elevators. I really felt what it is like to be scared. It was unbelievable.”

Luis Gutierrez, Hunter Graduate student, and volunteer coordinator with the CUNY Coalition for Students with Disabilities (CCSD). “Simply put, I’m here because I’m about giving back. I like taking action and participating in solutions. Today I am in my element—getting involved to help people.”
Hurricane Sandy Report:

The CUNY Council of Student Life Directors (CCSLD) shared reports about students’ activities:

Student Ivy Teng Lei set up a Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/#!/events/359648620794147/ together with Alpha Phi Omega National Service Fraternity of Baruch College. Ivy was just one of many students and staff members who used social media channels to publish critical information. Other campus activities included: Colleagues with the CUNY Black Male Initiative (BMI) coordinated relief efforts and recruited volunteers; Hostos Community College Director of Student Life, Jason Liebfield joined Hostos, Hunter, Lehman, York, City and Baruch college students — including Oyamiwa Walker, Rosa Castro, George Alvarenga, Thomas Desena Jr., Mario Guinea, Mayi Custodio, Bien Pocorni, Imane Elomari, Eric Quatrone and Ramny Perez -- at a city shelter where they joined Julissa Baez of the Model Senate Session project and Denise Nolasco of the Malave CUNY Corps for a twelve-hour overnight shift, Friday Nov. 2 through Saturday Nov. 3. In another borough Marybeth Melendez, a former member of the CUNY Coalition for Students with Disabilities (CCSD) and a New York State Model Senate Session participant, was engaged in advocacy on behalf of the people of Staten Island drawing on skills she developed at her alma mater, the College of Staten Island (CSI). Local news media captured her heroic work. View at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mA-5N9hqr4E&feature=youtu.be.

Alyssa Pichardo, a graduate student at the Graduate Urban Affairs and Planning Association (GUAPA) wrote to Hunter College President Jennifer Raab about her project to help out in the storm emergency. The GUAPA community service coordinator had created a map of volunteer opportunities and donation sites around NYC that later caught the eye of software engineers at Google.org. They added the volunteer opportunities map to the Superstorm Sandy NYC Crisis Map http://google.org/crisismap/2012-sandy-nyc. An early count had upwards of 50,000 people viewing the map and also sharing via Facebook and Twitter.

Scores of University students and staff took action following Hurricane Sandy. Many of their names and activities are not shared here. Still their courageous efforts were felt across CUNY’s 24 institutions. The entire CUNY community extends its gratitude to them and acknowledges the dedication, commitment and service displayed in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy.
Key Programmatic Goals for Orientations
Establishing a sense of belonging and connection to the campus community; helping students navigate their initial advisement process; and developing partnerships and effective communication skills with the ultimate goal of improving student achievement, retention and graduation rates.

Day One of New Student Orientation
The program typically starts with a warm and informative welcome from Dr. William Fritz, Interim President of the College of Staten Island and Dr. A. Ramona Brown, Vice President of Student Affairs. Assistant Vice President/Dean of Students, Salvador Mena leads a discussion on Civility, while Associate Provost, Dr. Deborah Vess presents on Academic Expectations. Both sessions utilize orientation leaders in humor-infused skits to inform and engage students.

Additional workshops provide students with insights for understanding the advisement and registration process. The “Get Connected” session provides an opportunity for team building among the incoming students and also includes a student-panel about co-curricular options and involvement on campus. Students also attend two faculty-led academic workshops of their choice, giving them the opportunity to meet and talk with faculty and to explore the various requirements of a particular major and the different career paths that the majors can lead towards.

Day Two of New Student Orientation
Day two provides students with the opportunity to ask questions of representatives from various campus offices in an interactive, television talk show-like format. Additionally, students then set up their CUNY on-line accounts, attend a diversity workshop, participate in a library tour and complete the day registering for classes.

The activity-filled two days include students learning about the College Life Unit of Experience (CLUE) Program by attending workshops that introduce them to the different Co-curricular (CC) and Personal Growth (PG) out-of-classroom experiences organized and sponsored by departments across the campus during the academic year.
On the New Student Orientation Evaluation Survey, students have commented positively on how welcome they were made to feel and how much they learned and accomplished in the two days.

In the last two years, CSI’s two-day orientation program has accomplished many of its goals, including addressing students’ needs and offering support and direction towards their educational and personal goals. Most importantly, a reinforced sentiment heard often around the CSI community is “Proud to be CSI!”

CUNY Trustees and Chancellery Meet with Student Government Leaders at Annual Dinner

On December 10th at Baruch College, CUNY Trustees and the Chancellery met with Student Government Leaders at an annual dinner and discussion forum.

The purpose of the event was to hear from student leaders and to respond to their questions and concerns. Key Items discussed included the Pathways Initiative and requests for additional information; opportunities to extend support for students with disabilities on CUNY’s campuses; textbook prices; TAP and financial aid; availability of resources for international and undocumented students; and students’ concerns regarding their continuing studies that have been impacted by the October Hurricane Sandy storm.

Present at the dinner were 19 student leaders along with Vice Chairperson Philip A. Berry, who chaired the event, Trustees Wellington Z. Chen, Rita DiMartino, Peter S. Pantaleo, Kathleen M. Pesile, Charles A. Shorter, Kafui K. Kouakou, and Terrence F. Martell; Chancellor Matthew Goldstein, Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost Alexandra Logue, Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer Allan H. Dobrin, Senior Vice Chancellor and Board Secretary Jay Hershenson, General Counsel and Senior Vice Chancellor Frederick P. Schaffer, Senior Vice Chancellor Marc V. Shaw, Vice Chancellors Frank Sánchez, Pamela Silverblatt, Gillian Small, Gloriana Waters, Associate Vice Chancellors Brian Cohen and Matthew Sapienza, Senior University Dean Robert Ptachick, Director Robert Lemieux (representing VC Iris Weinshall), and Executive Assistant to the Chancellor Barbara Cura; Central Office, Office of Student Affairs, and Office of the Secretary of the Board of Trustees staff.
CUNY Central Administration to Relocate

Early in 2013, the CUNY Chancellery will move to newly-leased space at 205 East 42nd Street between second and third avenues. In October, staff members were presented with detailed information regarding the new facility at a meeting held in the 80th street building boardroom. The new location is expected to ease employees’ travel to work and offers greater access from various commuting points and stations. The relocation is expected to begin toward the end of March and continue into early April.