

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Commuter vs. Community

BY BILL KLINE

EDITOR IN CHIEF

If you want to find a parking space at CSI, come during Club Hours. On Wednesday at 2:30 pm and Thursday at 1:30 pm, you'll witness a mass exodus of Ford Explorers and Honda Civics as the campus empties. At this point, you're probably expecting a tirade on inadequate parking or student apathy. To a large extent that's probably correct, but my intent is not to cast guilt or blame, but to pose a running thesis, or at least debunk a deeply entrenched myth.

There is a perception that CSI suffers because it lacks a sense of community. Many have defined the college as a commuter school because many students simply come from their classes and leave when they're done. That theory would seemingly be demonstrable on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Because of this, CSI supposedly lacks that 'college experience.' Low turnout at campus events, low enrollment in student clubs, and poor voter turnout for

Student Government elections often serve as metrics. And so the stigma sticks, that CSI has an apathetic student body.

Many groups and individuals have forged efforts to engage the college community, or have at least offered implausible solutions during random drunken gatherings. "The college needs a football team," says one. "The college should serve alcohol on campus," chimes another. "The college will be better when it gets dorms."

"Residence Halls," I correct them.

Don't get me wrong. I think the implementation of any of those half-baked policies would elicit an enthusiastic response from students. If CSI introduced college football and student-discounted Heineken, all within walking distance, I'm fairly confident that The Banner Opinion page would pledge its support. I just think that the measure by which we evaluate student engagement at CSI is flawed. Not to mention the obvi-

ous trouble I foresee with proposing those items to CUNY's Board of Trustees.

Those engaged in clubs and student activities shouldn't use their sphere as the measuring stick for the rest of the campus. As a leader of a student club, I empathize with the struggle that one wages to recruit impressionable students. I identify with the near-Pavlovian methods it takes to elicit a response of some club members. If you say pizza, they will come. But the frustrations of a student organization stem from the flawed paradigm by which we view the college.

We often view CSI as a case of Pink Floyd's "Us vs. Them." 'Us' represents the small but tight knit community of Campus Center dwellers, and 'them' symbolizes the flock of exiles who desert campus when Club activities occur. A gulf separates these two far-fetched worlds. On the contrary, I view CSI more as a cluster of communities that some-

times overlap, but are nevertheless dispersed.

If CSI lacked a community, even the unengaged wouldn't see at least three people they know every time they walk from the cafeteria to the library. The bootleg Starbucks wouldn't overflow with chatty and perky co-ed crews until closing. And there wouldn't be an inside joke among Communications students about a professor so infamous, I don't even have to mention their name in print and many of my classmates would guess the name. And if they do, they know where they can get a free slice of pizza every Thursday at 1:30 pm.

Check Out The Banner On The Web



[The Banner on Wordpress:
thebannercsi.wordpress.com](http://thebannercsi.wordpress.com)



[Find Us on Facebook](#)



[The Banner on Twitter:
twitter.com/thebannercsi](https://twitter.com/thebannercsi)