

Volpe pushes for vet school; eyes Willowbrook site for CSI



Dr. Edmond Volpe

By DAN JANISON
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If the city university starts a school for animal doctors, it should be based at the College of Staten Island (CSI), Dr. Edmond Volpe, president of the college, said yesterday.

Volpe said he hopes a doctoral program in veterinary medicine could be launched at a new, consolidated CSI campus. Officials are still looking for a site for the new campus, and Volpe has said he prefers to use the grounds of the Staten Island Developmental Center (SIDC) in Willowbrook, which is scheduled to close.

The appeal for a new graduate school was part of the president's annual "state-of-the-college" address before an audience

of about 200 at one of CSI's two locations, its Sunnyside campus.

"We should not and must not continue to accept delay after delay, year after year, in unifying CSI on a single campus," Volpe declared at one point in his hourlong address.

Volpe said the Island is the only borough where city university construction is not under way. Applause met his remark that "it's our fault because we've not been hollering and shouting enough."

In his speech, Volpe also attacked what he described as unfairly low levels of state funding for CSI. Today, he was to travel to Albany for talks with Henrik

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Dullea, director of operations for Gov. Mario M. Cuomo, on preliminary goals for the 1985-86 state budget. Volpe said he plans to seek \$7 million from that budget toward construction of the new campus.

Margaret Titone, one of two Island appointees to the city university board of trustees, has been urging that a veterinary program be brought to CSI since the college was passed over for a medical school, Volpe noted. Officials are planning to build the school in Queens.

"We are filing a letter of intent with the university this semester indicating that if the university is indeed planning to develop such a doctoral program, we want it here at CSI," Volpe told the audience in the college's Williamson Theater.

The university, he added, would need to "provide the necessary facilities for such a new program. ... We shall also be developing programs in allied health at the two- and four-year levels." Allied health would include programs such as nuclear laboratory technology and physical therapy.

"I think Willowbrook would be the best possible location," Volpe told the Advance afterward. "It is a central location, and already has an infrastructure, buildings we could use."

"But," he added, "I don't think we have Willowbrook, and we must have a new campus."

Earlier, Volpe noted during a question-and-answer session with his audience of faculty and others that the city university trustees have longstanding plans for construction on state-owned property in Ocean Breeze. But Volpe noted that Sen. John J. Marchi last spring suggested using the Willowbrook site, and drew consideration for the idea.

State budget officials are reported to be favorably disposed toward the Willowbrook site, believing it could save tens of millions of dollars. An ad-hoc committee made up mostly of Community Board 2 members last summer advised against the Willowbrook site.

Assemblywoman Elizabeth A. Connelly, D-West Brighton, has publicly expressed concern for potential traffic problems at the site.

Volpe said he also will meet in Albany today with Commissioner Arthur Webb, who heads the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, which runs the SIDC.

That meeting, to focus on the future of the Willowbrook site, was arranged at the urging of Assemblyman Robert A. Stranieri, R-Dongan Hills, who also favors the Willowbrook location for a future CSI campus.

Even as enrollment rises, Volpe complained, the CSI budget remains by the state's own standards more than 56 full-time teaching positions short. CSI receives less money per student than other schools in the city university system, he said.

"Why should this college receive less funding than other colleges?" he asked. "It should not, but it will unless we — all of us — raise our voices and make our plight known."