



**STEVENS**  
INSTITUTE of TECHNOLOGY  
THE INNOVATION UNIVERSITY

**President Nariman Farvardin**  
**145th Convocation Address**  
**September 9, 2015**

Members of the Stevens community, honored guests, I am delighted to welcome you to Stevens Institute of Technology's 145th Convocation, the official and ceremonial opening of a new academic year at Stevens.

For Stevens, the start of a new academic year means many things. First, it affords us the opportunity to bring together our own galaxy of stars. Today, we are joined by the Honorable Dawn Zimmer, Mayor of our hometown of Hoboken. We are honored and so appreciative that Mayor Zimmer makes time each year during Convocation to welcome the new members of the Stevens community to their new Hoboken home. We are also delighted and grateful to have Trustee Annmarie Rizzo, a long time Hoboken resident, with us for today's ceremony. Annmarie is a dedicated Stevens alumna and Trustee, who generously gives her time, her expertise, her influence, and her support to her alma mater. She is a model for all of you who, in just four short years, will call yourselves Stevens alumni.

Please join me and the other members of the administration in welcoming our special guests.

We are also joined by our esteemed faculty, the heart and soul of this university. To our faculty, I want to say that your service to this university, your dedication to advancing the frontiers of research, and most importantly, your commitment to the guiding the educational journey of our students is truly what powers the Stevens engine. Here in this room, among our students, lies the potential to change the world. Members of the faculty: use your talents, your expertise, your heart and your soul to unleash this potential within your students. Nurture their curiosity and their unique perspectives to achieve their full potential. Mentor our students to become the next generation of technologists, innovators, entrepreneurs, and leaders upon which our society depends.

And finally, I would like to extend a special welcome to the most important group that is with us today: our students, the newest additions to the Stevens community. It is you, the students, that I and my colleagues—the faculty, staff, and administration—are dedicating our lives to serve. It is you that our honored guests, Mayor Zimmer and Trustee Rizzo look to for a brighter future.

Each of you has a special role to play at Stevens. Over the next days, weeks, months, and years, you will come to understand what role that will be. This is your opportunity to invent your future. As you surely know, our alumni—individually and collectively—are a dynamic and positive force in society. They make the world a better place...by inventing new technologies that—quite literally—save lives...by launching and leading companies that employ tens of thousands of people right here in Hoboken and all over the globe...they contribute to a vibrant economy locally and internationally...and as citizens, volunteers, parents, and contributors across a wide variety of domains, they bring their expertise and add the value of their Stevens education to many, many

organizations and causes. So, Class of 2019, consider Stevens and these next four years as your training ground to become the person you are meant to be.

I would be remiss if I did not take the opportunity to brag a little about you and your University while I have the Mayor of Hoboken and other VIPs in our midst.

The cohort of 745 new undergraduates who joined us this fall is a truly impressive group. They hail from exotic lands...from as nearby as Hoboken, New Jersey to San Francisco, California and 22 other states across the U.S., as well as 12 countries around the world, including Brazil and Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Poland, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. The academic profile of our new class is on par with the most prestigious universities in the U.S., with median SAT scores of 1260 to 1400. SAT scores continue to climb in each new class (I am not sure I'd get into Stevens if I applied today!), and we are diversifying the disciplines represented in our undergraduate student body. Stevens has always been known as an engineering powerhouse, but today, our student body also includes business majors, quantitative finance majors, musicians, artists, computer scientists and more. We look for great things from this group of talented students, and we sincerely welcome you to Stevens, Class of 2019!

And, of course, we welcome our new cohort of graduate students, which is equally as impressive! Our overall selectivity has improved on the graduate level, we are moving to an increasingly full-time graduate population, and our new class of master's and Ph.D. students comes not only from across the U.S., but from countries ranging from Canada, France and Hong Kong to China, India, Greece and Ghana.

To all our new students, both undergraduate and graduate, as someone who cares deeply about your experience at Stevens and your success while you are here, I want to share some advice. Make no mistake: as a student you will be tested here. Your professors will challenge you and your courses will require hard work, discipline, and persistence. But everyone you see here—myself included—is here to help you be successful. You will find every opportunity and every support within our means to flourish and to enjoy your academic and extra-curricular experience while you are here. I am very happy to report that there is tangible data to support this promise. Ninety seven percent of last year's freshmen returned for their sophomore year at Stevens this year. This number is an all-time high for Stevens. And, this is a particularly significant statistic given the very demanding curriculum that you all signed up for.

But, as you know, the challenges that you take on while you are here will be richly rewarded. And, now is the part when I get to brag about Stevens. Stevens graduates do incredibly well in the job market, immediately after graduation and over their duration of their careers. Ninety-five percent of graduates get jobs or enter graduate school within six months of graduation. Many have multiple job offers. The average starting salary for the Class of 2014 was almost \$65,000 and the highest starting salary was \$107,000. Stevens currently ranks 3rd in the entire nation in PayScale's 2015 College return-on-investment report, and 10th in the country in PayScale's 2015-16 mid-career

college salary report. We were recently named 7th in USA Today's Top Ten Engineering Colleges, and #17 in a recent listing of Top Entrepreneurial Colleges.

At Stevens, you have all of the tools for academic, career, and personal success at your fingertips. Our motto at Stevens, *per aspera ad astra*, means "through adversity to the stars." Here, you are surrounded by a talented group of students, supported by a stellar and caring group of faculty, and assisted by administrators who will help guide you through challenges as you carry the spirit of this university – of innovation and entrepreneurship – forward and on to the stars.

Congratulations to each and every one of you. You are now members of the Stevens family. Welcome to Stevens Institute of Technology, and get ready for the ride of your life!