



July 9, 2019

To the Stevens Community:

I am pleased to announce the formation of the President's Task Force on Mental Health, whose members will work together and with the Stevens community to develop recommendations to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness on our campus and to encourage our students to seek counseling and support.

As has been reported in the media, the rates of mental illness and suicide have risen sharply in the U.S. in recent years, with adolescents and young adults representing a particularly vulnerable group. According to the Center for Collegiate Mental Health, both anxiety and depression have become increasingly prevalent among students nationwide.

Like many colleges and universities across the country, Stevens is working to address this nationwide increase in mental illness and suicide rates. As one of the inaugural class of 30 colleges and universities [awarded the JED Seal](#) by the [JED Foundation](#) in 2013, Stevens has committed to providing our students with a variety of educational programs and support services to enhance their emotional and mental well-being. I am particularly pleased that our new Student Wellness Center, which opened in March 2019, offers students a range of health and wellness services focused on holistic healthcare. We look forward to making continued progress on a variety of health and wellness initiatives to best serve our students.

One important challenge is overcoming the stigma associated with mental illness. We know that this stigma sometimes prevents those in need of support from seeking help. Therefore, the primary focus of the Task Force in 2019-20 will be on the goal, "Make Seeking Help Our Strength."

I am grateful to the following members of the Stevens community who have agreed to serve on the Task Force, which will meet four times during the 2019-20 academic year:

- Ms. Marybeth Murphy, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs (Co-Chair)
- Dr. Kelland Thomas, Dean of the College of Arts and Letters (Co-Chair)
- Ms. Caylee Berman, President, Active Minds Student Chapter
- Mr. Jason Chlus, President, Student Government Association
- Mr. Christopher Church, Director of Programs and Advising, School of Engineering and Science
- Ms. Rosemary Dice, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Academics
- Ms. Susan Gross, Assistant Vice President for Financial Aid and Undergraduate Admissions
- Ms. Penelope Halkiadakis '19
- Mr. Devesh Jain, President, Graduate Student Council
- Dr. Sara Klein, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs

- Dr. Ashley Lytle, Assistant Professor of Psychology, College of Arts and Letters
- Dr. Theresa MacPhail, Assistant Professor, College of Arts and Letters
- Ms. Coral Matar, Stevens Parent and Public Health Professional
- Ms. Beth McGrath, Vice President for Government and Community Relations/Chief of Staff
- Ms. Marsha Melnyk, Director of Strategic Initiatives and Planning, Enrollment Management and Student Affairs
- Mr. Seth Moncrease, Director of Summer Pre-College Programs, Undergraduate Admissions
- Mr. Warren Petty, Vice President for Human Resources
- Dr. Eric Rose, Director of Student Counseling and Psychological Services
- Dr. Joelle Saad-Lesser, Teaching Associate Professor, School of Business
- Dr. Dibyendu Sarkar, Professor, School of Engineering and Science and Chair, Faculty Senate
- Mr. Edward Stukane, Vice President for Communications and Marketing
- Ms. Tara Temple, Assistant Director for Sports Medicine and Student Athlete Wellness, Department of Physical Education, Athletics, and Recreation
- Ms. Nathalie Waite Brown, Director of Graduate Student Affairs, Office of Graduate Student Affairs
- Dr. Ye Yang, Associate Professor, School of Systems and Enterprises
- Dr. David Zeng, Vice Provost for Academic Innovation and Faculty Affairs

Please join me in thanking members of the Task Force for their efforts on this critically important undertaking. I encourage all faculty and staff to engage with and provide input to the Task Force and to give its members your full cooperation and support.

Per aspera ad astra,



Nariman Farvardin
President