



October 14, 2019

To the Stevens Community:

With the semester now well underway, I wanted to take a moment to share some campus updates and to officially welcome the new members of our community—undergraduate and graduate students, new faculty, and new members of the administration—to Stevens.

### **New Students and Faculty**

An academically-distinguished cohort of 1,013 new undergraduates joined us this fall, setting new records in selectivity and SAT scores. This year, Stevens accepted just 40% of applicants—from among a record pool of 10,475 applications this year—and the average SAT score for the Class of 2023 was 1430, the highest in Stevens' history! Kudos to the Offices of Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid, and the many supporting offices who contributed to these results, as well as the academic leadership and faculty who helped to attract and yield such a stellar class of Stevens students.

New graduate student enrollment rebounded impressively this year, after last year's dip in the number of new graduate students. To be precise, 1,522 new graduate students, including 107 new Ph.D. students, enrolled in Fall 2019, a 29% increase over the prior year. Growth occurred across all three Schools. Notably, enrollment in StevensOnline has grown by 381% since its launch in Fall 2017, coincident with the growth in online programs from 26 in 2017 to 125 this fall. The Office of Graduate Education and many in the academic enterprise worked tirelessly to achieve these results, and I and our university community commend you and are extremely grateful for your efforts.

An impressive cohort of 24 new faculty members joined Stevens this fall, adding to the 30 new faculty members who became members of our community last year, bringing the full-time faculty complement to 303. We eagerly anticipate the impact that these new researchers, scholars, and teachers will have on our students, our research, and on the academic reputation of Stevens.

We also look forward to the contributions of two newly-appointed academic leaders, Dr. David Zeng, Vice Provost for Academic Innovation and Faculty Affairs, and Dr. Dilhan Kalyon, Interim Vice Provost for Research, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship in advancing Stevens' upward trajectory.

### **Campus Infrastructure**

Perhaps one of the most visible signs of the transformation taking place at Stevens is the appearance of the campus itself. There has been tremendous progress in facilities and campus infrastructure supporting education, research, and student life. Highlights include:

- On September 30th, classes were held in Gateway South Hall. If you have not visited this magnificent academic building, you should make a point to do so. The building is simply stunning, blending the most modern technologies and learning environments with architectural details that honor the past. In the next few weeks, work will be completed on the skybridge and Gianforte Family Hall. With both buildings in use, we will have added 10 smart classrooms, 13 advanced labs, and 45 faculty offices, dramatically increasing and enhancing the environment for learning and research at Stevens.
- Several lab renovations have been completed, including the Advanced Construction Materials and Design III Labs in the Griffith Building, the McLean 010 Cell Culture Lab, McLean 421-429 Instrumental Analysis Lab, and the Burchard 512-513 Nanomaterial Growth and Nanofabrication Lab.
- The newly-renovated space for the Division of IT in the basement of the S.C. Williams Library has allowed for the consolidation of all IT personnel and operations into a single location.
- The renovation of Alexander House, which will serve as the temporary student center until the University Center opens in 2022, is nearing completion and is scheduled to open in November. This building will house student organizations, Student Life, and include mixed use space.
- Numerous exterior and landscaping improvements have been completed or are underway, including: installation of a new pedestrian walkway from the Ninth Street entrance to campus; aesthetic and accessibility improvements to the McLean Plaza; new hardscape, landscape, and lighting at the Torch Bearers statue; a new outdoor event terrace at the Lore-El House; enhanced landscaping and plantings throughout the campus; new site lighting and LED upgrades; and a new building signage program; as well as heating upgrades in several buildings and an air conditioning upgrade in Jonas Hall.
- And, of course, construction is in progress for the new Student Housing/University Center. Scheduled to open during the 2021-22 academic year, this ambitious project will include a 70,000 sf university center providing extraordinary spaces for students, faculty, and staff to collaborate, socialize, and relax. The University Center will house student clubs, dining venues, a fitness center, conference and meeting spaces, and offices. The two residential towers will house nearly 1,000 students with unrivaled New York City views and modern amenities.

## **Year-End Results**

Stevens closed FY19 in a good position in research and fundraising. Research awards totaled \$37.9M one year after a record-setting year of \$45.8M in FY18. Gifts and pledges totaled \$15.4M, down from an unusual year marked by two eight-figure gifts to Stevens in FY18.

Stevens' financial performance continues to improve, with an operating budget of \$275M, which represents a 12.9% increase over FY19 preliminary results, and an A-/Stable rating by Standard & Poor's. It is important to note that this strong performance is occurring in parallel with significant investments in new faculty and campus infrastructure, and in the context of the implementation and refinement of Responsibility Center Management (RCM) across the university, which encourages accountability and entrepreneurship across all divisions and units.

### **Ongoing Recovery from Cyber-Attack**

It has been nearly 10 weeks since the ransomware attack hit Stevens on August 8th. Led by the Emergency Management Team, many faculty and staff came together and worked relentlessly to get critical systems back online so that fall classes could commence on schedule on August 26th. This was a Herculean effort and an enormous achievement that exemplified our commitment to student-centricity. Although many members of our community did experience disruption and inconvenience—and we are still not back to 100% at this time—we remained focused on our paramount priority to deliver on our commitment to educating our students.

While we are happy that we were able to begin the fall semester on time and thankful for the outstanding efforts of our colleagues, we know that this attack illuminated a number of vulnerabilities in our cybersecurity protections and in our business continuity plans—that is, our university's ability to continue to serve students, conduct research, and maintain routine business operations in the face of an unforeseen emergency.

Improving emergency preparedness and strengthening business continuity will be key focus areas for me and the leadership team in the coming months and will likely continue in the years to come. As our world has become more unpredictable and new threats emerge on almost a daily basis, it is incumbent on leadership to re-evaluate our preparedness, strengthen areas of weakness, and adopt a continuous improvement approach. I look forward to providing updates on this effort in the months ahead.

Lastly, I want to thank all members of the Stevens community—faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends—for your collegiality, your commitment to making our university a better place, and your unique contributions to the intellectual and cultural community that is Stevens. I look forward to seeing you on campus, and I wish you a healthy, productive, and satisfying remainder of the Fall 2019 semester.

*Per aspera ad astra,*



Nariman Farvardin  
President