



August 31, 2021

To Faculty, Staff and Students:

Each year, it is my pleasure to welcome our students, faculty and staff at the start of the academic year and to share highlights of Stevens' progress and plans for the upcoming year. This year, **I am also thrilled to be able to welcome students and colleagues personally** and to see so many familiar and new faces as I walk across campus. It is heartwarming to once again see students enjoying time with their friends on the lawns and in the dining halls, professors teaching in their classrooms and staff interacting with students and colleagues throughout the university. As we resume our educational, research and extra-curricular activities – albeit with precautions and safeguards still in place – **I want to thank the countless individuals in our community who have worked tirelessly for the past year and a half** to stem the spread of the virus, prepare our campus for safe and healthy living and learning and maintain the core activities of our university.

Stevens continues to soar to new heights. You see it quite literally on our campus as finishing work continues on the new University Center Complex. But Stevens is also achieving new records in the number of undergraduate and graduate applications, the size and academic profile of the incoming undergraduate and graduate classes, the number of faculty, research grant awards, philanthropic support and much more. I am incredibly proud of all that Stevens has achieved this past year despite the challenges and uncertainties we faced, and I am delighted to share some of the highlights and updates on the current state of our university.

First and foremost, it is my distinct pleasure to **welcome Dr. Jianmin Qu** to the Stevens community. Dr. Qu, who has been on campus during late August, will begin his tenure as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs on September 1st. Please take the opportunity to introduce yourself to Provost Qu and give him a warm Stevens welcome.

Undergraduate and Graduate Students

Last week, the Class of 2025 officially joined the Stevens community. **This is the largest cohort of undergraduate students in our history.** The preliminary total for our incoming new undergraduate class is **1,147 compared to 983 in Fall 2020, a 16.7% increase over last year.** For the third year in a row, Stevens received over 10,000 applications—11,320 to be exact. Impressively, the **Class of 2025 is also the most academically distinguished class in our history, with a projected combined average SAT/ACT score of 1432.** Congratulations to the Offices of Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid and the many collaborating offices and faculty who contributed to these results. In addition, the **total number of new and continuing undergraduate students in Fall 2021 just reached 4,068, an increase of 7.3% over last year and also a new record. It is noteworthy that we have exceeded the target of 4,000**

undergraduates specified in our 10-year strategic plan one-year ahead of schedule! We have also reached a record high in the **percentage of women in the first-year cohort, at approximately 33%, a notable milestone as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of women at Stevens this year.** Similarly, the **number of underrepresented minority (URM) students in the first-year cohort also reached a record in Fall 2021, at approximately 22%.**

Likewise, a new cohort of graduate students joined us recently. **Graduate applications also reached a new record this year: 11,922, a 6.6% increase over last year.** The current number of new and continuing graduate students for the **Fall 2021 semester is 3,899, approximately 12.5% higher than this time last year;** this number is projected to exceed 3,900 in the coming days. Similarly, enrollment in **StevensOnline continues to grow significantly. Currently, 678 students are enrolled in online graduate programs, a 28.7% increase over last year;** this number is also expected to increase in coming weeks. I offer my sincere appreciation to the Graduate Admissions Office, the faculty, and the Division of University Relations for broadening outreach and doing everything possible to recruit an impressive new cohort of graduate students.

New Faculty

I am delighted to welcome **30 new faculty members to the Stevens community, bringing our total of full-time faculty to 315, a new high.** Of this new cohort of faculty, 10 are women (33%). Sixteen are tenured/tenure track faculty including three associate professors, 11 assistant professors and chaired professorships in both the Department of Civil, Environmental and Ocean Engineering and the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. We have also hired eight non-tenure stream new faculty. I had the pleasure of meeting our new faculty members last week and eagerly anticipate the contributions they will make to our community in the years to come.

Research Awards

Another new record was recently set in research funding. Research awards totaled \$50.6 million in FY21, up from \$46.0 million in FY20. Noteworthy awards include a \$3.1 million grant from iModal Ground LLC for a *Passive Acoustic Underwater Intruder Detection System*; six separate awards to a number of faculty totaling \$9.2 million by the U.S. Department of Defense; a \$2 million NSF award for *Tackling Brain Diseases with Mechanics*; a \$1.4 million grant from DARPA for *Artificial Intelligence Managed Exploration of Designs*; and a \$1.1 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to study *Big Data: Causal Inference in Large-Scale Time Series*. In addition, Stevens and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute recently received an NSF award to establish an *Industry/University Cooperative Research Center in Financial Technologies*, the first of its kind in the nation. Research generated from CRAFT (The Center for Research toward Advancing Financial Technologies) will support various aspects of the fast-emerging fintech sector, including mitigating risks, developing a diverse workforce, and addressing cybersecurity.

FY22 is also off to a very strong start with \$16.8 million in funding received so far including a \$1.5 million NSF grant on *Fostering Adaptive Expertise to Increase Retention and Graduation*

of *Low-Income STEM Students* as well as a State of New Jersey *Opportunity Meets Innovation Challenge Grant* to expand and increase support for underserved and underrepresented minority (URM) students.

Sustainability Leadership

A significant commitment in building a culture of sustainability on campus, including a renewable energy initiative, sustainable building protocols, research, and academic programs, has resulted in Stevens achieving an **AASHE Stars Gold rating, silver and gold LEED building certifications and inclusion on sustainability lists such as the Princeton Review Green Schools and Sierra Club Cool Schools** in recent years. Beginning this fall, Stevens will source 100% of its electricity directly from local renewable energy, putting our university in an exclusive cohort of universities electing to run on **100% clean electricity**.

Fundraising, Financial Results and Financial Planning

A revitalized philanthropy and alumni engagement program has resulted in the **successful completion of a \$200 million fundraising campaign**, fueling a vibrant campus, student success, and faculty excellence. **At the end of FY21, gifts and pledges to Stevens totaled \$22.4 million, up from \$13.8 million in FY20.** Most impressively, we concluded *The Power of Stevens* campaign, Stevens' most ambitious fundraising campaign in history, by raising over \$200 million. The campaign has supported the creation and renovation of new academic, research and student spaces on campus; increases in the size of the faculty body and the recruitment of exceptional faculty; and numerous new initiatives and programs to empower student success.

Athletics Successes

I am also delighted to report on the **incredible progress of our Athletics programs**. Highlights for the Ducks from the last year include:

- Five Mid-Atlantic Conference (MAC) championships: Men's Tennis, Lacrosse, Swimming, and first-ever MAC championships in Golf and Softball
- Three MAC finalists: Women's Tennis, Lacrosse and Baseball
- Seven MAC senior scholar-athletes
- Ten student-athletes of the year
- Four coaches of the year
- Eleven individual school records

We all look forward to cheering on all our teams this fall.

Progress of the Last Decade and Planning for the Next 10-Year Strategic Plan

I am pleased to share with you [a new website](#) that captures the significant progress of the **university during the last decade**. Thanks to the collective efforts of all in our community, our progress has been nothing short of remarkable!

As we near the end of our 10-year strategic plan, *The Future. Ours to Create. (2012-2022)*, we **are beginning the planning for Stevens' next 10-year strategic plan (2022-2032)**. A pre-planning exercise was held this spring and over the summer to solicit input from students, faculty, staff, and alumni on the vision for the Stevens of the future. In the coming weeks, the findings and high-level recommendations of the pre-planning exercise will be shared with a **Strategic Plan Steering Committee** to begin the planning process in earnest later this fall.

Stevens' future is full of promise and potential. I look forward to our conversations and to working with all of you to set a course for the next 10 years.

As we begin the new academic year, I am energized and hopeful about what we will accomplish. **I look forward to seeing you on campus and wish you a healthy, safe, and productive fall semester.**

Per aspera ad astra,



Nariman Farvardin
President

