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To the Stevens Community:

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has presented novel and unprecedented challenges for our global society, our elected leaders and policymakers, for institutions of higher education, and for many individuals and families. As the Stevens leadership team continues, in close consultation with our Emergency Management Team (EMT), to adapt to and plan for rapidly changing circumstances—including the [continuation of all online learning and remote business operations for the remainder of the semester and the postponement of Spring 2020 campus events such as Commencement and Alumni Weekend](#)—it is appropriate to underscore several important points to our students, faculty, staff and administration, and the extended Stevens community.

First, we are committed to protecting the health and safety of the entire Stevens community while delivering on the commitment we have made to our students: providing a world-class, technology-infused education. The Stevens education has proven, over 150 years, to create innovators, problem-solvers, and leaders. At this moment in our nation's history, industry and society have an urgent need for the types of graduates that Stevens produces. And, while the mode in which we are delivering courses has changed, we are all working hard to fulfill our core commitment to educating our students.

Second, this is a time when we must continue to work together toward innovative solutions with the best interests of our collective community in mind. Our community includes not only our undergraduate and graduate students, but also our faculty and staff, our alumni and friends, our partners, and our local community of Hoboken. To this end, on Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, Stevens transitioned to remote work protocols for all administrative offices in addition to the online education measures put in place on March 11<sup>th</sup> which will now continue through the end of the Spring 2020 semester. These arrangements have the dual objectives of:

1. providing core business services—e.g., course work and educational programs as well as all business operations—remotely; and
2. promoting social distancing to reduce community spread of COVID-19.

On March 17<sup>th</sup>, the City of Hoboken announced [more stringent guidelines](#) for individuals and businesses, including requiring residents to stay home except for essential needs, such as the purchase of food, care for a family member or friend, health care visits, or employment where remote work is not possible.

New announcements are forthcoming almost hourly from Hoboken, the State of New Jersey, and the federal government with additional updates and measures being implemented. We will be

following all such guidance and urge all members of our community to stay informed by registering for *Stevens Alerts* on the myStevens page, reviewing the Stevens [COVID-19 web site](#), [Hoboken Nixle alerts](#), and [updates from the Governor of New Jersey](#).

Third, I want to urge all members of our community—particularly those who are young and healthy and at low risk of serious COVID-19 illness—to follow the [guidelines and precautions](#) being promulgated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other respected sources and government agencies to promote social distancing and other health protocols.

“[Flatten the curve](#)” has entered into the popular vernacular, and succinctly describes our challenge: take every measure possible to significantly reduce and slow down community spread to ensure that our healthcare system can meet the demand. For a STEM-based institution such as Stevens, we understand the mathematics behind the bell-shaped curve, but we must all adapt our own behavior to flatten the curve. In particular:

- Reduce contact, but stay in touch. Avoid face-to-face interactions when there are alternatives. This includes professional and social interactions. Use technology to connect and seek support; check in with friends and family to make sure they are managing in these challenging times.
- Think creatively: As a university, we are here to deliver education, to help students grow and mature, to produce talent that will fuel our economy, and to recruit the next generation of leaders. We must abandon “business as usual” approaches and find new, innovative, and perhaps alternative ways of doing what our community has done so well in recent years. I urge all members of the Stevens community to think creatively to find ways to deliver our curriculum and coursework; to recruit new undergraduate and graduate students; to conduct our groundbreaking research and even expand our research portfolio; and to perform the routine business operations that are far from routine today. In recent times, particularly, Stevens has displayed a spectacular agility and has nimbly responded to and overcome serious challenges. Now is the time to step up, lean in, and continue to differentiate Stevens as an institution that solves problems and creates leaders.

To our students, especially, I want convey to you my own disappointment, which I know is shared by all my colleagues, that the current circumstances have required the discontinuation of in-person classes and of many social activities and campus traditions for the Spring 2020 semester. It saddens me to know that I will not get the opportunity to see many of you on campus for at least a while and that many of you are missing some of the very people and things that brought you to Stevens in the first place. On behalf of the administration, we will do everything possible to find opportunities to bring you all together when it is safe to do so, and to celebrate the strength and spirit of our community.


Lastly, I am immensely proud and humbled by the selfless dedication of many, many members of our community who are working around the clock to address this dynamic and evolving situation. Our Emergency Management Team (EMT) is meeting regularly to anticipate and address numerous challenges while synthesizing rapidly changing updates on local health

conditions and governmental guidance. Each division of the university and the many faculty and staff within are making and implementing contingency plans in this evolving situation with the goal of fulfilling our commitments to our students and protecting the health and safety of our entire community. I particularly want to thank the faculty who have quickly transitioned to fully online coursework, as well as the Division of Information Technology, which has provided the necessary technical support and training. Through the thoughtful, collaborative, and comprehensive planning of our EMT, campus leaders, and academic colleagues, Stevens aims to be *ahead of the curve* in how we are dealing with COVID-19. We will continue to be proactive, responsive, and work through the technical and other challenges and numerous uncertainties presented by this dynamic and extraordinary situation.

In closing, I offer all members of our community my most sincere appreciation and best wishes in this era of unprecedented challenges. As an institution known for its education and research capabilities in resiliency, we will practice these lessons in the coming weeks and months as we did in the aftermath of our August 2019 ransomware attack, Hurricane Sandy in 2012, and previously, in the aftermath of 9/11. The Stevens motto, *Per aspera ad astra*, (through adversity to the stars) seems particularly fitting in this circumstance.

We will get through this, again, together.

*Per aspera ad astra,*

  
Nariman Farvardin  
President