



RE: Fall 2019 Semester: Returning to Campus and Returning to the Business of Our University

August 18, 2019

To the Stevens Community:

As new and returning students and faculty join us back on campus in the coming days, I would like to take this opportunity to discuss the events of the past week. This is not the type of welcome back message I would normally send, but recent events have been far from normal.

As most of you are aware, on August 8th, a sophisticated cyberattack was launched against Stevens, resulting in the loss of access to Stevens' network and some of its systems. In order to contain the attack and further protect the network environment, the Division of IT, in consultation with our cyber security partner, took quick action to disable the network and some systems while implementing the Stevens Cyber Incident Response Plan. To provide campus-wide coordination, the Stevens Emergency Management Team was activated, and our business continuity plan was enacted.

With this incident, Stevens now joins, unfortunately, a growing list of higher education institutions, city and state governments, and global corporations that have endured the challenges associated with this type of threat.

Despite the extremely challenging circumstances and complexities of the attack, I am heartened that we have made swift and substantial progress in restoring our systems and returning to normal business operations. As of August 17th, faculty, staff, and returning students are able to reset their passwords and reauthenticate their credentials to access cloud-based services including Office 365 email, Workday, Canvas, Slate, and several others. We are also working to communicate with new undergraduate and graduate students on the process of establishing their user accounts in order to access critical information for the fall semester.

Importantly, systems that are critical to registration and classroom scheduling are operational, such as our student information system (SIS), Infosilem, and others. Colleagues are working hard to make up for lost time with the goal of providing schedules and classroom assignments before the first day of classes on August 26. As you might expect, this is a very dynamic process with a great deal of progress and new systems coming online each day. However, there is still much more work to do.

We understand there have been questions about data security, and to date, we have no reason to believe that cloud-based systems such as Workday and Slate have been affected by this attack. At the time of the attack, in order to safeguard these systems, access was intentionally suspended as a

precaution. Although our investigation of the incident is ongoing, at this point we have no reason to believe that employee or student data was compromised as a result of the attack.

Furthermore, our IT team has further strengthened Stevens' networks and systems. Critical business is taking place in an environment where we have implemented enhanced security measures, and we are planning to provide a wireless network to the campus community—with appropriate credentials—by the middle of this week.

While there has been enormous progress, there is much more work to do. Therefore, I ask for your ongoing help and cooperation. Please heed the guidance of the messages posted on the Stevens website and delivered through our campus alerts system to reauthenticate user accounts, attend to critical business, and—for students and faculty—put plans in place for a successful fall semester.

Our Division of IT, the Emergency Management Team, and dozens of colleagues in all divisions throughout the university are working tenaciously around the clock to prepare for the start of classes. I know you will join me in supporting them as they focus on the priorities that are vital to our full recovery. This is essential as we aim to fulfill our commitment to provide the best experience possible to our new and returning students, even under these challenging circumstances.

I am confident that Stevens will emerge from this situation a stronger and more resilient institution, though I know these circumstances have posed significant inconvenience and prompted many questions from within and outside the Stevens community. There will be a time for review and discussion, but for now, I ask that you focus on preparing for the fall semester.

In closing, I want to reiterate my most profound appreciation to Vice President David Dodd and the entire Division of IT, along with Vice President Marybeth Murphy and the Emergency Management Team, as well as many, many colleagues who are working tirelessly with the goal of bringing our entire community back online as soon as possible.

Per aspera ad astra,



Nariman Farvardin
President