



April 18, 2017

To Faculty and Staff,

Please join me on Wednesday, April 19th at 1 pm in the DeBaun Auditorium for the Spring 2017 “Conversation with the President.” I will provide an update on progress toward the goals of the Strategic Plan, report on the input received for the Strategic Plan revision, and address concerns raised by some members of the community regarding the Gianforte gift. For background, below is the text of a reply I sent on April 4th to all recipients of an email (on which I was copied) about a petition being circulated on this issue.

Dear Members of the Stevens Community,

I have become aware that a petition has circulated among some members of our community regarding the gift of \$20 million from Susan and Greg Gianforte '83 and our plans to name a new, state-of-the-art academic building the Gianforte Academic Center. In light of these plans, some have questioned the University's commitment to the principles of academic freedom and the values of diversity and inclusion. This statement aims to clarify the terms of the Gianforte gift, to elucidate the University's position related to the Gianforte gift, and to affirm the fundamental values that underpin the mission and operations of Stevens Institute of Technology.

Undeniably, academic freedom is central to the mission of the academy and is a guiding principle that permeates the entirety of our ethos and our work at Stevens. As a community of scholars engaged in advancing the frontiers of science and technology, we practice and we teach our students to value the pursuit of scientific knowledge for its own sake. On behalf of the leadership of Stevens, the Board of Trustees, and the entire Stevens community, I reaffirm the University's commitment to academic freedom.

Regarding the gift from the Gianforte Family Foundation, it is important to note that Greg Gianforte has never made any request of the University to promote specific political, religious, or other positions associated with this gift. To be clear, there are no requirements about the types of research conducted either in the planned building or on the Stevens campus, nor any discriminatory prohibitions whatsoever, attached to this gift. It is equally important to note that Stevens would never consider accepting a gift that limited academic freedom or academic expression in any way or in any location on our campus, including in the building that will bear the Gianforte name. Such limitations would violate not only the values we hold dear as a leading university of science and technology, but also our own [gift acceptance policy](#), which precludes the acceptance of gifts of any type that are or may be in conflict with our institutional mission and values.

Stevens' mission is to provide a world-class educational environment for our students and to enable faculty to advance the frontiers of science and technology. Consistent with this mission, we will continue to seek support from a diverse set of individual, governmental and foundation donors. In

seeking this broad support, we will remain committed to the values of academic freedom and nondiscrimination in all that we do.

Similarly, Stevens has been and remains unrelentingly and unequivocally committed to the values of diversity and inclusion. We are a community enriched and strengthened by the talents, contributions, and engagement of each member, regardless of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, and all other attributes protected by [Stevens' nondiscrimination policy](#). We have not wavered in our dedication to these principles, and we never will. We will continue to work earnestly and aggressively to provide a safe, inviting, and nurturing environment—in all aspects and in all areas of our campus—for all members of our community. We will work together to make Stevens a more diverse community that visibly demonstrates these principles that we hold dear both in words and in actions.

Furthermore, I have spoken with Greg Gianforte about the concerns raised in the petition. He agrees with the values of Stevens articulated here and believes that discrimination is wrong. His gift to Stevens does not come with a political agenda. His gift to Stevens is intended to make a contribution back to his alma mater, which he believes gave so much to him, preparing him for an exceptionally successful career as an engineer, an innovator and an entrepreneur in the software industry.

The Gianforte Family Foundation's gift of \$20 million—the largest single gift in our 147-year history—supports a building that addresses the University's most urgent and highest priority infrastructure need. It will have a transformative effect on our campus. It will provide desperately needed classrooms, laboratories, and faculty offices for the Department of Computer Science and the Center for Healthcare Innovation, among others, and will position Stevens to make significant progress in many of our strategic goals.

Greg Gianforte has made Stevens a major philanthropic priority; he and his family are deeply committed to Stevens and our mission. His career success, his devotion to his alma mater, and his generosity as a donor are truly exemplary. Many future generations of Stevens students and faculty will benefit as a result of this extraordinary gift.

Per aspera ad astra,



Nariman Farvardin
President