



March 9, 2016

Dear Colleagues,

I want to take this opportunity to highlight several examples of “student-centricity,” one of the five strategic priorities that the Stevens community adopted in its 10-year Strategic Plan, *The Future. Ours to Create*.

Recently, I received an email from the mother of one of our students. Sadly, the student’s father had passed away suddenly, in the midst of the terrible late January blizzard that caused the Governor to declare a State of Emergency and forced road closures throughout New Jersey. In her email, the mother described the amazing response of Campus Police in getting her son home that day:

I called the Stevens Police, spoke with an Officer whose name, I'm pretty sure, was Melissa. She was awesome. Within 10 minutes she called me back and said they would somehow get my son home. Officer Dennis Long drove him in the blizzard all the way from Stevens to North Brunswick in the height of the storm...It is folks like him that make the world a better place and I wanted you to know what an amazing team you have on the Stevens Police Force. As a mother, I could not let this go by without letting you know how much they helped our family and how thankful we are. As a Stevens Parent, more proof of what a fantastic decision we made when choosing Stevens.

I want to offer my most profound gratitude for Officers Melissa Maione and Dennis Long, as well as to Chief Tim Griffin and the entire Campus Police force for the way they represent Stevens each and every day. This email is but one of many, many compliments that I have received about our officers over the last five years from parents and other visitors. Having worked with them myself, I know that they are true professionals who exemplify the words “student centricity.”

In another example, a freshman student came to the Office of the President in the fall term in tears. She was very emotional and frustrated by her difficulty navigating the “college system” and unsure about where to turn for help. She mentioned that she remembered how Stevens portrayed itself as a small institution with a personal touch during the admissions process, and that her decision to come to Stevens was based in part on her expectation that she would be able to receive help and personal attention if needed. We put her in touch with Dr. Costas Chassapis, Associate Provost for Academics. I recently received the following message:

I have met with Dr. Chassapis several times and he has been extremely helpful; in fact I believe nearly all the questions I have had up to this point in time were sufficiently answered by Dr. Chassapis. Importantly, I feel much more confident about my future at Stevens.

Thank you, Dr. Chassapis, for your direct involvement in addressing this student’s challenges, and for the example you are setting that each student’s problems are our problems.

One of the biggest challenges faced by Residence Life may be student housing, where they are tasked with, among many other duties, ensuring a safe and comfortable living condition for each of our students. Dean Trina Ballantyne and her staff take that mandate seriously, and when contacted by a parent about a mold problem, they mobilized the necessary colleagues throughout the University to take quick action and attended to it immediately. An email from the mother stated:

Thank you for the swift attention to the conditions ... I was not able to visit the apartment this past weekend to see the progress for myself; however my son is pleased. The mold condition seems cleared as well as the other issues.

These are just a few examples of the positive impact of your collective efforts. I know that many people are often involved in a single problem solved, and I am aware that there are many more routine and non-routine problems that never come to my attention because of the student-centric attitude with which so many of you are performing your jobs. From groundskeepers and physical plant tradespersons who may have limited student contact to student affairs professionals and faculty who interact with students a great deal, your collective efforts are what contribute to an environment where we put students first.

I want to thank not only those highlighted in this email, but all faculty and staff who work tirelessly to advance Stevens as a premier, student-centric technological research university.

Per aspera ad astra,


Nariman Farvardin
President

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