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To the Stevens Community:

Each fall, I send a message to the campus community highlighting our progress and sharing data on a number of areas that demonstrate that Stevens is a *University on the Rise*. This fall, as in previous years, we have much good news to report. However, I would be painting an incomplete picture if this year's message did not also acknowledge the many challenges and concerns our community has faced over the last six months and those that are still before us.

The global coronavirus pandemic, widespread economic upheaval, nationwide reactions to racial injustice, and loss—of loved ones, of social connectedness, and of traditions and experiences we have cherished—have permeated our lives and created grief, anxiety, and stress for many of us. Throughout these past six months, our entire community has operated with resiliency, with determination, and with the best interests of our students in mind. Throughout the months of intense planning and preparations for Fall 2020 and with a focus on promoting a safe and healthy living and learning environment, the members of our community have worked tirelessly and assiduously on many planned and many unplanned but critically important activities and initiatives.

Despite the challenges that many of us have faced and the new demands thrust upon us by the pandemic, we have recruited stellar cohorts of new undergraduate and graduate students. We have engaged students in innovative virtual classes, advising, experiential learning, and career preparation. We have submitted proposals and won competitive research awards. We have made significant progress on world-class facilities, and so much more. All these efforts have been undertaken while planning for and delivering technology-enabled, hybrid and virtual learning; preparing socially-distanced classrooms, dining facilities, and residence halls; purchasing and distributing personal protective equipment; implementing rigorous on-campus testing and sanitization and disinfection protocols; making plumbing and HVAC improvements; and many other efforts too numerous to mention here.

In recognition of all these efforts, I want to start my Fall 2020 message with a sincere and profound expression of gratitude. For all that you have done to maintain and elevate Stevens and the Stevens community, particularly over the last few months, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to each of you.

The following provides highlights and updates on the current state of our university.

New Undergraduate and Graduate Students

Despite all of the challenges and uncertainties that characterized the past student recruitment season, Stevens welcomed one of the largest cohorts of undergraduate students in our history this semester. Preliminary reports indicate that 989 incoming freshmen, transfer, Link, and non-degree students enrolled at Stevens this fall. For the second year in a row, Stevens received over 10,000 applications—10,347 to be exact. As in recent years, this cohort of students is academically distinguished with a combined average SAT/ACT score of 1407 for the Class of 2024. 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 for Fall 2020 reached 3,793, a new record.

Graduate applications also reached a new record this year: 11,175, a 19% increase over last year. However, due to the impact of the pandemic, our current new graduate student enrollment is 974, down 37% from last year at this time, but with a large number of students interested in deferring their enrollment to the spring or next fall. Despite these challenges, the current number of new and continuing graduate students for Fall 2020 semester is 3,453, less than 5% lower than this time last year. Enrollments in StevensOnline continue to grow significantly. More than 500 students are now enrolled in StevensOnline, a 65% increase above last year's final Fall 2019 count. The Office of Graduate Education and many colleagues throughout the academic enterprise worked tirelessly to achieve these results, and the outcomes are particularly encouraging given the challenges currently experienced by international students. I and our entire university community are extremely grateful for their efforts.

New Faculty

Twenty outstanding new faculty members were recruited from prestigious institutions such as Stanford University and the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory at California Institute of Technology for this academic year, bringing the number of full-time faculty to 311, a new record. Of this new cohort of faculty, nine are women (45%). The expertise of new faculty members spans many areas including mechanical engineering, computer science, electrical and computer engineering, industrial engineering, physics, applied mathematics, hydrology, economics, finance, technology management, and more. We eagerly anticipate the impact that these new researchers, scholars, and teachers will have on our students, our research, and on the academic reputation of Stevens.

Research Awards

Research awards totaled \$46.0 million in FY20, up from \$37.9 million in FY19, and a new record for Stevens. In addition, our researchers garnered \$3 million in research awards for FY21 even before the end of FY20. Noteworthy awards included a \$4.9 million award to Davidson Laboratory by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey for high-resolution storm surge forecasts; two awards totaling \$5.9 million to the Systems Engineering Research Center (SERC) by the U.S. Department of Defense for SERC program and research task management; several awards totaling \$6.0 million from the U.S. Army-Picatiny Arsenal to the Center for Environmental Systems, SERC, and the Department of Physics; and two awards from the U.S.

Department of Energy for a combined \$2.8 million to the Department of Civil, Environmental, and Ocean Engineering and the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering.

Administrative Leadership

We are also pleased to welcome two new vice presidents to Stevens, [Ms. Laura Rose, Vice President for Development and Alumni Engagement](#), and [Mr. Tej Patel, Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer](#).

Also, two members of the President's Cabinet have recently announced that they will step down from their positions in the coming year: [Vice President for Communications and Marketing Ed Stukane will retire in November](#), and [Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Christophe Pierre will step down from this role at the end of his five-year term in August 2021](#).

Campus Diversity Initiatives

I am delighted that the New Jersey Business and Industry Association (NJBIA) has recognized Stevens ACES (Accessing Careers in Engineering and Science) with its 2020 Diversity and Inclusion Award for increasing STEM educational and career opportunities for underrepresented minorities. Stevens ACES will be profiled in the October issue of *New Jersey Business*. Also, with unanimous support of the Board of Trustees, Stevens is planning an expansion of this very successful program.

Also, earlier this summer, the President's Cabinet approved goals and activities in support of a campus initiative known as [Standing Together, Standing Against Racism](#). In the coming weeks, I will announce the formation of the President's Task Force on Equity and Inclusive Excellence to work on racial inequities that may exist at Stevens and to make recommendations based on data and best practices. Progress on this and other diversity and inclusion initiatives will be reported on a new website scheduled to go live in early October.

Student Housing and University Center, Campus Infrastructure, and Sustainability

Perhaps one of the most visible changes on our campus is the tremendous progress of construction on our new Student Housing and University Center (SH/UC) project. Both towers were "topped off," at 21 and 19 stories, and the curtain wall—the "skin" of the buildings—has now been completed up to the 7th floor of the Harries Tower and the 6th floor of the south tower. The project is on budget and on schedule to open for the Fall 2022 semester.

Other recent campus improvements include the installation of a new roof on Davis Hall and a new HVAC unit also for Davis Hall that will be in place by the end of October. Electrical capacity has been added to our campus grid to support the SH/UC and all future projects. Also, both elevators in the Wesley J. Howe Center were replaced with new motors, controls, and cabs.

In September, our newest building, the Gateway Academic Center was awarded LEED Gold Certification by the U.S. Green Building Council. This prestigious honor recognizes sustainability in the design, construction, and materials used for the building and highlights the

university's commitment to creating a healthy and green campus. In May, Stevens received the STARS Gold rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) in recognition of the sustainability achievements the university has made both in the classroom and in our campus operations.

Fundraising, Financial Results and Financial Planning

At the end of FY20, gifts and pledges to Stevens totaled \$13.8 million, down from \$15.4 million in FY19, in part due to impacts of the pandemic on philanthropy overall. Also, to date we have raised \$180 million toward our overall campaign goal of \$200 million. With renewed energy, innovative and relevant programs, and the engagement of our alumni and friends, I am most optimistic about the future. Our students, the ultimate beneficiaries of philanthropic support, are the leaders and problem-solvers who will fuel our innovation economy in the years and decades to come. They are an excellent investment.

With known and predicted budgetary impacts of the coronavirus on revenue and expenses, Stevens closed FY20 with considerable cost-saving measures in place. The FY21 budget will be finalized and approved by the Board of Trustees this fall once enrollment numbers and COVID-19-related expenses have been confirmed. Based on the information presently available, the university's current FY21 financial outlook reflects a shortfall of approximately \$36 million (12.4%) compared to the preliminary budget developed in early 2020. This shortfall is a function of both revenue losses and new expenses incurred as a result of the pandemic. A strategic approach that focuses on Stevens' core education activities will soon be taken to address this budget shortfall to enable us to have a balanced budget in FY21.

COVID-19 Grants and Student Support

Recognizing that many students and their families have faced unexpected financial challenges as a result of the pandemic, Stevens recently announced that the university will allocate \$3.3 million in institutional funds for Stevens COVID-19 Grants of \$500 per student and additional funding to the Office of Financial Aid to help address the greatest needs of students whose financial circumstances have changed drastically due to the pandemic. Stevens will seek additional philanthropic support from alumni, friends, corporations, and foundations to augment the funds allocated to Financial Aid to further assist needy students.

In addition to distributing more than \$930,000 in CARES Act funding to eligible students who experienced unexpected financial challenges due to COVID-19, Stevens also launched the Stevens Rises Relief Fund, which has raised more than \$100,000 to assist students in need. A recent initiative, "Give a Mask, Get a Mask," engaged more than 530 donors in donating a Stevens-branded face mask and hand sanitizer to Hoboken first responders while receiving one in return. Overall, the program will contribute 625 face masks to Hoboken first-responders.

A Community of Scholars and Innovators

Whether we are experiencing the fall semester on campus or online, Stevens remains a vibrant intellectual community. Rich discussions are taking place between students and faculty, among

research teams, and in numerous forums on special topics. I was very impressed both by the presentation and the attendance at the recent lecture by “Hidden Figures” author Margot Lee Shetterly and look forward to upcoming talks by [Dr. Rohit Chitale on September 23rd](#) in the President’s Special Lecture Series on Pandemics and the [President’s Distinguished Lecture on October 7th](#) featuring PSEG Chairman, President, and CEO Ralph Izzo on [global climate change](#).

Stevens’ 150th Anniversary

With the many unforeseen challenges currently facing all in our community, it is easy to lose sight of a major milestone—the 150th anniversary of the founding of Stevens. We kicked off our sesquicentennial on Founder’s Day on February 21, 2020 with in-person balls for undergraduate and graduate students and a soiree for faculty, staff, and alumni and held two virtual events *The History of Stevens’ Traditions* and *The First 100 Years: A Brief History of Steven*. The 150th anniversary committee is working to identify additional commemorative experiences that adhere to current safety guidelines so please stay tuned for more information in coming months.

Final Thoughts

At a recent meeting, a colleague asked, “What keeps you up at night?” My response was that, while there have been many urgent challenges in the last few months that have required my attention, the most important challenge that I think about is this:

How will Stevens position itself to thrive in a post-pandemic era? How can we harness our agility, our resiliency, and our spirit of innovation to differentiate our university and prepare our students better than ever before?

This is the collective work of our university community. As we near the end of our 10-year strategic plan, *The Future. Ours to Create (2012-2022)*, and envision the Stevens of the future, I look forward to our conversations and to working with all of you to meet this challenge.

I wish you a healthy, safe, and productive fall semester.

Per aspera ad astra,



Nariman Farvardin
President