

October 29, 2020

To Faculty, Staff, and Students:

Based on the recommendations from the [Spring 2021 Semester Planning Task Force](#), which was chaired by Provost Pierre and included Faculty Senate representatives, Deans, faculty members, undergraduate and graduate student leaders, and administrators responsible for the implementation of campus health and safety measures, I am pleased to share Stevens' preliminary plans for the Spring 2021 semester. These recommendations were discussed and unanimously endorsed by the Cabinet earlier this week.

In short, the preliminary plans for the Spring 2021 semester call for an increase in the number of students on campus and a concomitant increase in on-campus instruction and other activities compared to the Fall 2020 semester.

While a number of details remain to be finalized, our intent for releasing plans at this point is to enable students, faculty, and staff—and their families—to begin developing their own preliminary academic, professional, and personal plans for the Spring 2021 semester. Additional detailed communications will be sent by the middle of November; therefore, we ask for your patience as we work through myriad and interdependent logistical and operational plans necessary to provide more definitive information for our community.

It is important to underscore that all our plans are subject to change based on health conditions and infection rates at Stevens and within the local community, as well as State and federal government guidance. All plans should be made with this proviso in mind.

### **On-Campus Learning Option for Certain Undergraduate and Graduate Students**

Student populations that will be eligible to take on campus classes, i.e., those classes offered in hybrid modality, in Spring 2021 include the following groups:

- First-year undergraduate students and transfer students who were eligible to be on campus for the Fall 2020 semester
- First-year undergraduate and transfer students starting in the Spring 2021 semester
- Senior undergraduate students who are in their last undergraduate semester in Spring 2021 as per an approved application for candidacy
- Senior undergraduate students who are in their last undergraduate semester in Summer 2021 as per an updated study plan

- New graduate students who matriculated in the Fall 2020 semester
- New graduate students matriculating in the Spring 2021 semester

While we are pleased that our plans include offering an on-campus experience for a greater percentage of students, we must continue to operate our campus on a reduced-density basis in order to abide by required social distancing requirements.

Students who are uncertain of their status should contact the [Office of the Registrar](#).

As was the case in the Fall 2020 semester, all students will continue to have the option for completely online learning.

### **Additional Student Populations Eligible for Limited On-Campus Activities in Spring 2021**

In addition to those listed above, other segments of our student population who may be considered for limited on-campus activities in Spring 2021, but not for classes, include:

- A limited number of student employees as deemed essential by their supervisors; this group may include students who work on campus supporting the residence halls, classroom-based teaching and related activities, and in research labs, including Ph.D. students.
- A limited number of approved additional students and student populations who are in compliance with health and safety practices and the Stevens [Health Honor Code](#), and based on low infection rates for specific populations, among other factors. Populations that may be considered for limited, non-instructional on-campus activities include: varsity athletes in season for the spring (should competitions be allowed by Stevens and the MAC Conference); students working on design or research projects that require an on-campus presence; and graduate peer mentors. Additional details and the approval processes for these groups will be announced by the beginning of December.

### **Change in Spring 2021 Academic Calendar**

The Spring 2021 Academic Calendar will be modified to allow ample time for travel, preparations, and the potential need for quarantining and COVID-19 testing prior to the start of the semester. Major changes include:

- The first day of classes will be February 1, 2021, postponed from the original start date of January 19, 2021.
- Spring break will be eliminated. Three instructional days off will be offered during the semester on Monday, February 15, 2021 (President's Day), Wednesday, March 10, 2021, and Friday, April 2, 2021 (Good Friday).

- The last day of classes will be Friday, May 7, 2021, postponed from the original date of Wednesday, May 5, 2021.
- Undergraduate reading day will be Monday, May 10, 2021, instead of Thursday, May 6, 2021.
- The final exam period will be shortened to Monday, May 10, 2021 to Wednesday, May 19, 2021, instead of Thursday, May 6, 2021 to Wednesday, May 19, 2021.
- In the event of inclement weather, all courses will be held remotely, avoiding the need to cancel and reschedule classes.


The [revised academic calendar](#) is posted online.

Clearly, the Spring 2021 semester will require much coordination, cooperation, and rigorous compliance with our health and safety measures, including the [Health Honor Code](#), planned increases in on-campus testing capacity, and others. With rising rates of infection across the nation, we must do everything within our power to limit the spread of COVID-19 so that Stevens—and more of our students—will be able to benefit from an on-campus experience in Spring 2021, again, subject to health conditions and government guidance.

Please look for additional updates on specific topics and next steps in the coming weeks.

As always, please remain vigilant, and stay safe and healthy.

*Per aspera ad astra,*

  
Nariman Farvardin  
President