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To the Stevens Community,

As part of the university's continuous improvement efforts and consistent with [Goal I3 of the Midpoint Update of the Strategic Plan](#), Stevens has recently completed the first cycle of administrative unit reviews. Goal I3 calls for the development of a review methodology, quantitative metrics, and implementation of a process to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of all key administrative functions over a five-year period. This memorandum summarizes the progress made in fiscal year 2019 and high-level recommendations for the units that were reviewed.

Using the guidelines, process, and materials developed during the prior year and outlined in the [Year 6 Strategic Plan annual report](#), the Administrative Unit Review (AUR) Steering Committee, consisting of Provost Christophe Pierre; Vice President for Finance, Treasurer and CFO Lou Mayer; Vice President for Human Resources Warren Petty; and Vice President for Government and Community Relations/Chief of Staff Beth McGrath, worked with the initial cohort of participating units:

- Department of Physical Education, Athletics, and Recreation
- Center for Faculty Engagement & Advancement
- Division of Information Technology
- Undergraduate Academics
- Undergraduate Admissions

Similar to the process of academic accreditation, the AUR process encompassed five key components: (1) a comprehensive self-study through which each unit prepared a critical self-analysis of its scope of services, processes, functions, staffing, and other factors relating to the efficiency and effectiveness of the unit; (2) extensive external peer review by experienced administrative leaders from respected institutions; (3) broad and diverse stakeholder input; (4) a report and set of recommendations prepared by external peer reviewers; and, (5) a response from the unit, including the development of an action plan to address reviewers' recommendations and opportunities for improvement. During the first cycle, Stevens was fortunate to engage peer reviewers from institutions such as Northeastern, Lehigh, Washington and Lee, Rutgers University, and Fordham University among others.

In total, approximately 300 faculty, staff, and students were involved in the AUR process during fiscal year 2019—including staff from the units themselves, faculty, administration, staff, students, and alumni who provided input to external reviewers, and administration and staff who

provided oversight and administrative support. This was a significant investment of time, and I want to thank all who contributed to this thorough and robust process.

Following is an executive summary of the recommendations for the first cohort of units reviewed. The priority action items to be undertaken, within the parameters of available funding resources, as a result of this process are summarized below:

### **Department of Physical Education, Athletics & Recreation**

- Develop a multi-year plan to address critical facility needs through a purposeful and realistic approach that aligns with the needs identified in the Athletics Facility Master Plan. As part of the plan, prioritize improvements in sports medicine to appropriately support the needs of student athletes through dedicated and expanded space and additional staff. Work with the Division of Development and Alumni Engagement to formulate a fundraising plan.
- Focus on the strategic expansion of staff where there is demonstrated need to provide a first-class experience in athletics and recreation for all students.

### **Center for Faculty Engagement and Advancement (CFEA)**

- Increase center staffing by 0.5 FTE to support current demand for services.
- Develop a close collaboration with instructional technology team within the Division of Information Technology.
- Eliminate the role of the CFEA from the faculty evaluation process.

### **Undergraduate Academics**

- Develop, communicate, and implement an advising model that clearly identifies the role of the Office of Undergraduate Academics vs. the functions of the student success centers in the Schools.
- Restructure the current office and hire a Director to lead the team, after implementation of the new advising model.
- Develop and implement a plan to ensure close collaboration between the Office of the Registrar, Schools' student success centers, and other relevant offices.

### **Division of Information Technology**

- Identify and implement ways to stabilize the staffing of the Division and increase retention of top talent.
- Refresh the IT Strategic Plan that was created in 2013 by building on the achievements to date and on the evolving needs of the institution.
- Establish a governance structure that could provide feedback on future direction, priorities, and resource needs for information technology at Stevens.

## Undergraduate Admissions

- Utilize the full power, including available technological tools and functionality, of the Slate customer relationship management (CRM) product to support enrollment goals, deliver a student-centric experience, and provide data and analysis to key campus constituents.
- Leverage the implementation of the financial aid software PowerFAIDS to implement changes to support the dissemination of financial aid information and offers to admitted candidates.
- Further strengthen staff development opportunities to enhance relationship skills (to engage prospects at a high level) and develop in-house expertise in areas such as event planning, admissions operations, marketing, communications and strategic thinking.
- Monitor primary markets while growing secondary markets, including the international student market, and investigate the use of third-party options to grow the Stevens brand.
- Carefully assess and monitor expenses to focus on redeploying funds to highest priorities. Be strategic in considering incremental requests that keep the overall operation nimble and competitive.

In the coming year, I will be working with the Vice Presidents who oversee each of the units reviewed to ensure that measurable progress is made toward these recommendations.

Lastly, as Stevens pursues its goal to be recognized as a premier, student-centric, technological research university, we must also continue to focus on optimizing the efficiency and effectiveness of administrative and academic units to provide the best educational experience for our students at the lowest possible cost. I am grateful to all who have participated in the AUR during the past year in the spirit of continuous improvement and to serve the best interests of our students.

*Per aspera ad astra,*



Nariman Farvardin  
President