



November 3, 2020

To the Stevens Community:

Earlier this year, I initiated a process to better understand the effectiveness and alignment of the resources Stevens devotes to achieving our communications and marketing goals. These resources include the staff and budgets in the central Division of Communications and Marketing (DCM); staff and budgets for communications and marketing in the Division of Academic Affairs and in other divisions; as well as outsourced marketing and communications activities.

As stewards of our university resources, it is our collective responsibility to pursue opportunities to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of all our operations. Moreover, since the DCM was established in 2013, a number of internal and external changes have occurred. Some of these changes include: improvements in Stevens' branding and reputation-building efforts; establishment of the Division of Government and Community Relations (DGCR), necessitated by increased interactions with the City of Hoboken and State and federal governments; the reorganization of communications and marketing activities within the Division of Academic Affairs, including a number of outsourced marketing activities; significantly increased outsourced marketing and communications in the Division of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs and the Division of Development and Alumni Engagement; and increased need for campus-focused and emergency communications caused by specific events and changes in the external environment and in the higher education sector.

The planned [retirement of Vice President Ed Stukane](#) on November 6<sup>th</sup> presented an opportunity to consider options to further enhance Stevens' marketing and communications efforts and adapt the organizational structure to the various internal and external changes that have occurred. As part of this review process, input was solicited from the Provost and academic leadership; Vice Presidents and other administrators who utilize the services of the DCM; chief communications officers of several high performing universities; external consultants; members of the DCM team, including Vice President Ed Stukane; and several Trustees. The responses have been both extensive and enlightening, and several key themes have emerged:

- Much progress has been made in developing and implementing a unified Stevens brand, including graphical and content updates to both the Stevens website and the alumni publication, *The Indicator*.
- University-level reputation-building efforts have increased, including through digital vehicles such as *NewsPoints* and school-based e-newsletters, collateral materials, videos, and as a result of media and social media efforts.
- Certain marketing efforts, such as those in support of Stevens' Pre-College Program and certain academic reputation-building and graduate recruitment programs, have made

progress toward our institutional objectives. However, coordination of these activities among participating units is uneven.

- Clearer definition of the respective roles and responsibilities of the DCM and communications/marketing staff in other units is needed in order to enhance efficiency and better prioritize the use of university resources to achieve university and unit-level objectives. In parallel, better coordination among all units and individuals engaged in communications and marketing is needed.
- A governance model for the Stevens website should be developed that ensures consistent messaging, best practices, ease and frequency of updates, and clearer accountability for such.
- Communication with the Stevens community should be prioritized and specifically assigned. Faculty, staff, students, and alumni are critically important constituencies that influence reputation and the Stevens brand.

Although there were many additional specific—and some conflicting—recommendations from the dozens of individuals who provided input, these key themes provide a roadmap for our path forward.

After considering all input, including perspectives on the strengths and challenges of Stevens' distributed communications and marketing efforts, and based on the recommendation of key Trustees, I am announcing the formation of the Division of University Relations, effective November 9, 2020. Once mature, this new organizational unit will encompass the following functions: university communications and marketing; campus communications; government relations; community relations; and corporate relations. This division will be headed by Beth McGrath, who currently serves as Vice President for Government and Community Relations/Chief of Staff. Ms. McGrath will retain her role as Chief of Staff as she assumes this new position.


This reorganization provides an opportunity to align campus-focused and external-facing communications and outreach activities with the priorities and knowledge base within the Office of the President. A key objective of this new organizational structure is to facilitate tighter coordination and closer collaboration with the other divisions that engage with external constituencies.

Many of you know that Beth McGrath is an accomplished Stevens veteran, having begun her Stevens career in 1987 in the unit then known as the Office of Marketing and Communications. Beth was promoted to Director of Marketing and Communications and in that role led a team that supported undergraduate student recruitment and development and alumni engagement efforts; created award-winning institutional advertising campaigns; increased media coverage; and conceptualized and managed a number of significant university events. In 1993, Beth joined the Stevens Center for Innovation in Engineering and Science Education (CIESE) as Deputy Director. Rising to the position of Executive Director and over nearly two decades, Beth conceptualized and developed proposals and served as principal investigator (PI) or co-PI on

approximately \$25 million of externally-funded projects including from the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education, and major corporate-funded grants. With significant funding from the Verizon Foundation, Beth and CIESE launched a statewide effort to require engineering as part of the K-12 curriculum in New Jersey, known as *Engineering our Future NJ*. Also, under Beth's leadership, CIESE received the President's Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring, conferred in an Oval Office ceremony by President Obama in January 2011. In 2012, Beth joined the Office of the President as Chief of Staff and in this role manages operations and communications of the Office of the President, monitors implementation of the university's 10-year strategic plan, and directs a number of other strategic initiatives. During the last eight years, Beth's portfolio has grown to include government and community relations, including for local, state, and federal relations, and she played a pivotal role in the approval of several critical university projects, including the Gateway Academic Center, the Babbio Garage expansion, and new zoning which enabled the construction of the University Center/Student Housing project. Beth was appointed as Vice President for Government and Community Relations/Chief of Staff in 2018.

Please join me in supporting the strategic integration of the university's internal- and external-facing communications, marketing, outreach, and engagement efforts under Beth McGrath's leadership in the new Division of University Relations. We look forward to a division that exemplifies our strategic priorities of *Excellence in All We Do*, and *Through Collaboration, Impact*.

*Per aspera ad astra,*

  
Nariman Farvardin  
President