



Update on Stevens' Response to Recent Federal Actions

From: Nariman Farvardin, President

To: Faculty, Staff and Students

Those reading higher education and national news are acutely aware of the dramatic impacts that some universities are experiencing and preparing for as a result of recent Executive Orders and other federal actions. New and anticipated directives from Washington — some of which have been paused for judicial review — span a wide swath of domains, from DEI practices to reductions in research grant overhead rates to taxes on large endowments to possible changes in student grant programs to revocation of hundreds of millions of dollars of federal funding for universities deemed non-compliant. Certainly, this is by far the most tumultuous and uncertain period in higher education in several decades.

I write to share with our university community that these issues are top of mind for our leadership team, and we are working diligently to evaluate and ensure ongoing compliance with new requirements while positioning Stevens for continued success now and in the future. In all cases, we will respond and act thoughtfully and will comply with the law. Our response to these changes will be guided by our steadfast commitment to the core values defined in our [2022-2032 Strategic Plan](#) as: **Excellence, Integrity, Student-Centricity, Collaboration and Innovation, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion** and **Sustainability**.

As an institution that receives significant federal funding — approximately \$50 million per year in various types of student aid and more than \$47 million in federal research grants in FY24 — we recognize the importance of aligning with these new federal directives, and we must prepare ourselves for yet unforeseen impacts.

Actions and conversations currently underway focus on:

Advocacy: We are meeting with our elected officials in Washington to discuss the impacts of new and proposed federal changes on our university community, our research output and on the economic impact we contribute to the State and region.

Information Sharing: We launched and regularly update an intranet site on [Federal Policy Changes and Guidance](#) to keep our faculty, staff and students apprised of changes that have the potential to impact our community.

Review of Programs, Stevens.edu and External-Facing Communications: A working group, led by Vice President and General Counsel Kathy Schulz and Executive Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Susan Metz, has collaborated with campus partners to review and ensure that all programs, activities and events at Stevens are open and welcoming to everyone. This exercise has confirmed that our practices reflect our strong commitment to inclusivity and equal opportunity and that they fully comply with legal requirements and **institutional policies**. We have reminded our campus partners to include a statement (which can be found in the **FAQs** of our Federal Changes intranet site) on all appropriate websites and relevant communications affirming that all programs, activities and events are accessible to all without discrimination.

It is important to note here that the term “DEI” has become a flashpoint in recent months. Stevens remains focused – as it always has been – on upholding our core values which are outlined in **Stevens’ 2022-2032 Strategic Plan**. In this document, we define our core value of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as follows:

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION – We are one Stevens, a global community with diverse experiences and perspectives that make us stronger as an institution. We work individually and collectively to advance our university and members of our community. We act with transparency, empathy and compassion to support each other and to engender pride in our affiliation with Stevens. We strive to ensure that all members of our community feel welcome, are included and have opportunities to succeed.

As we review our strategic plan and other descriptions of our DEI activities, our commitment to this core value remains unchanged.

Lastly, due to the significant uncertainties that lie ahead that could affect research awards, research indirect cost recovery, international enrollments, possible price escalation due to tariffs or an economic downturn, the leadership team is meeting regularly to review institutional and divisional budgets to proactively mitigate the potential for negative impacts from external factors. All Vice Presidents have agreed to carefully review current and planned expenses, including new hiring, before making new financial commitments. Our primary focus remains on preserving the quality of our academic programs and our students’ experience while exercising appropriate fiscal responsibility and trying to avoid more draconian measures that some universities have had to implement. Next week, you will hear more from the Division of Human Resources about the importance of reducing vacation day accruals to reduce the university’s financial obligation for FY25.

As we move forward, I want to repeat what I stated at our recent Employee Recognition event: that the strength of this university is the talent and dedication of our people. With our collective cooperation, our commitment to excellence and student-centricity and with a strategic approach to strengthening our university’s programs and financial profile, we will navigate these challenges together and emerge as a stronger, more resilient institution.

Thank you for your dedication, adaptability and unwavering commitment to our students and our mission. Please stay engaged as we continue to provide updates and visit the **Federal Policy Changes and Guidance** site for additional information.

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