



Office of the President

To: Stevens Faculty and Staff

From: Nariman Farvardin, President

Date: October 3, 2024

Subject: October Update: Transformative Gifts, Global Partnerships and Research Breakthroughs

Greetings, colleagues and friends across the Stevens community.

As the temperature cools and we settle into the fall semester, I'm excited to share several significant developments that highlight Stevens' continued progress and reinforce our position as a leader in technology education, research and innovation.

I'm thrilled to report that we received a **\$10 million gift from Emeritus Trustee Emilio A. Fernandez to dramatically expand our iSTEM program**. This generous contribution will allow us to empower more unconventional geniuses and establishes the iSTEM Endowed Fund, ensuring the program's long-term sustainability. With \$7.5 million in anticipated matching gifts, this transformative gift has the potential to grow to \$17.5 million.

Our global impact has also grown through several recent international events. We partnered with the Nekotech Center of Excellence to host the **Second Annual Africa-US Presidential Forum on STEM, AI and MBA on Sept. 19**, bringing together African royalty, heads of state, U.S. officials and academic leaders to advance the education of high-achieving African graduate students. Additionally, as part of the Governor's and Choose New Jersey's economic mission to Canada in which Provost Jianmin Qu represented Stevens, we **signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Finance Montréal** at the Canada Fintech Forum, further expanding our reach in fintech.

In another significant step for fintech innovation, **the New Jersey Fintech Accelerator at Stevens (NJ FAST)** launched its first cohort of fintech startups. At a Sept. 16 event at Stevens, partners selected 14 startups to begin a three-month curriculum with weekly mentorship sessions, business model refinement and pitch polishing. This partnership with the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, Prudential and Plug and Play positions Stevens at the forefront of fintech entrepreneurship.

In the latest *U.S. News & World Report rankings*, Stevens maintains its strong position at No. 76 among national universities. Our undergraduate engineering program jumped 11 spots to No. 71, and our undergraduate business program moved up eight places. Additionally, we're proud to be newly recognized on the "Best Undergraduate Teaching" list at No. 56. Stevens also retained its place on the "Most Innovative Schools" list, ranking No. 33 nationally.

Our research enterprise continues to thrive. A new AI system developed at Stevens **accurately detects respiratory diseases in X-ray images**, potentially revolutionizing medical diagnostics. Another project, funded by the NIH, aims to **use AI to help doctors detect vision disorders in prematurely born infants**. We've also **joined the NSF-funded GO Blue Center** to advance marine energy technologies and **launched the Center for Innovative Computing and Networked Systems (iCNS)** to drive breakthroughs in computing and electrical engineering. On Sept. 26, our experts in AI – including Brendan Englot, Jennifer Kang-Mieler, Pin-Kuang Lai, Carlo Lipizzi and Sunil Paliwal – shared their cutting-edge research with a packed room of healthcare and pharma executives, exploring AI's impact on healthcare from drug discovery to clinical trial design.

In addition, our faculty continue to attract attention in major media outlets for their expertise and thought leadership. Igor Pikovski's ambitious experiment to "see" gravity was featured in *Popular Mechanics*. Lindsey Cormack discussed her book *How to Raise a Citizen: And Why It's Up to You to Do It* with *Bloomberg*. In *Fortune*, Brian Rothschild emphasized the importance of fully absorbing the lessons learned in a part-time MBA program. Stay up to date on **Stevens in the news**, and **follow Stevens on social media** to learn about other faculty developments and university updates.

I'm looking forward to celebrating with many of you at the **Stevens Awards Gala** on Oct. 5. This spectacular evening will honor the brightest stars in the Stevens galaxy (I invite you to **learn more about them**), capped by a celebration of dining, dancing and conversation. It's a wonderful opportunity to show our Stevens pride!

On Oct. 9, we have the privilege of welcoming Dr. Darío Gil '98, IBM Senior Vice President and Director of Research, for the **President's Distinguished Lecture Series**. Dr. Gil will share his insights on "What's Next in Computing." This lecture promises to be a fascinating look into the future of technology and its implications for science, business and society. I recommend you register now for this not-to-be-missed event.

I hope to see many of you on Oct. 15 at our **Faculty & Staff Tailgate Party**. This event provides a wonderful opportunity to connect with colleagues and cheer on our Women's Volleyball team.

On Oct. 16, we'll celebrate Stevens' designation as a Great Place to Work during "Certification Nation Day." I invite you to join the celebration **on LinkedIn** and share what makes Stevens an exceptional place to work and learn.

I encourage you to stay involved and stay connected with Stevens. Your engagement and support continue to amplify our success and impact.

Per aspera ad astra.