

July 13, 2020

To the Stevens Community:

On July 8 and 9, I and members of our leadership team held a series of webinars to announce our reopening plans for the Fall 2020 semester for members of our campus community. Also last week, we submitted our [reopening plans](#) to the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education of New Jersey (OSHE).

This memorandum summarizes these plans and announces the launch of a new website, [Stronger. Safer. Stevens.](#) containing detailed information about our plans for the fall semester. This website will serve as a repository for updates on campus operations while COVID-19 remains a challenge in our region.

It is with immense gratitude and a sense of great hope and deep responsibility that I share our plans for the Fall 2020 semester. Many colleagues throughout the university have worked tirelessly over more than three months to develop our plans to return to campus in preparation for the fall semester. These plans have been strengthened by input, feedback, and critical review by the Faculty Senate and by many individual and groups of faculty and staff as well as undergraduate and graduate student leaders, alumni, friends and advisors, and by evolving government and health guidance. Our plans have been discussed with the City of Hoboken, and they will also be reviewed and further strengthened as a result of a partnership with a leading New Jersey research hospital, Hackensack Meridian Health, to be finalized in the coming days.

It is important to note that these plans, while comprehensive and based on the latest health and government guidance, are subject to change as warranted by local health conditions and emerging guidance. We will remain vigilant and agile and will adapt as needed, and we will keep the community informed of all updates and changes to the plan through an aggressive, multi-channel communications program, including by posting updates on the [Stronger. Safer. Stevens.](#) website.

Our planning effort has been guided by five key principles:

- Reduce the risk of infection for members of our community while maintaining the core mission of the university
- Follow applicable guidance and implement best practices recommended by government and health authorities and respond with agility to new circumstances
- Encourage and support individual and shared responsibility within our community in minimizing infection and risk
- Return responsibly and in stages, and provide some flexibility for employees and students where possible

- Communicate transparently and frequently with all members of our community

Outlined below are the key elements of our plan:

Phased, Flexible Reopening

The university will reopen in a [phased approach](#) starting with a voluntary return to campus on July 20th for approximately 10% of our employee population. This percentage is expected to increase to approximately 50% at “full strength” by early August and continue through the Fall 2020 semester.

Consistent with our individual and shared responsibility for our university community’s health and safety, all members of the Stevens community—faculty, staff, and students—must adhere to the [Health Honor Code](#). This code requires that faculty, staff, and students:

- get tested for COVID-19 test no more than five days before coming to campus and report the results to Student Health Services or the Division of Human Resources;
- participate in required screening, testing, and contact tracing protocols;
- use face masks consistent with Governor Murphy’s Executive Orders;
- practice social distancing;
- self-monitor temperature and other symptoms daily; and
- [quarantine if from a high-risk state per New Jersey’s travel advisory](#); and
- additional requirements listed in the [Health Honor Code](#).

In addition to requiring adherence to the Health Honor Code, Stevens is implementing a number of measures throughout the campus to promote a safe and healthy campus environment, including provision of a “Welcome Back” bag and personal protective equipment (PPE) to each member of our community; COVID-19 screening, testing, and contact tracing, in consultation with the City of Hoboken; strengthened sanitization, disinfection, physical barriers and other measures to enhance safety and hygiene; and a plethora of signage throughout the campus to reinforce social distancing. Our Division of Facilities and Campus Operations is also reviewing campus buildings to identify locations where system-dependent enhancements may be made to air handling systems. More information is available on the [Stronger. Safer. Stevens.](#) website.

Mandatory Education and Training Before Returning to Campus

Resources will be posted on the Student Health Services website for all members of our campus community to access prior to coming to campus. These resources will be required reading and intended to equip faculty, staff, and students with information to promote health and safety for themselves and the campus community.

Academic Schedule and Hybrid Instruction: StevensFlex

The [academic schedule for the Fall 2020 semester](#) will follow the planned academic calendar, with classes starting on August 31st. In order to provide students with the opportunity to take many of their classes on campus in a socially-distanced classroom environment while

simultaneously enabling students who cannot or do not wish to come to campus to participate in classes online, Stevens will implement a hybrid form of instruction, StevensFlex. StevensFlex classes will meet in a physical location on campus at a scheduled time, with students attending class in-person on an alternating schedule while the other class members join the class online.

Large courses with enrollments greater than 50 students will be taught online only or in a hybrid mode, with the addition of more recitation sessions in smaller groups, either in person with social distancing or online, with modifications made before or during the semester as appropriate.

Classrooms for Fall 2020 courses will be assigned and announced prior to the start of the Fall 2020 semester. For hybrid and in-person courses, students will also be offered the day(s) and/or week(s) that they will attend sessions in person versus remotely and will be notified of the seat that they will have for each course. Seating assignments will be provided to the students prior to the start of the Fall 2020 semester and will be stored in a central database in the Office of the Registrar and can be accessed for contact tracing if necessary. Students wishing to access courses remotely may elect to do so later this month.

Later this month, a revised fall schedule will be published for faculty and students. There will be a two-week window of time in which students will elect whether to take classes in-person or remotely. Should students opt for remote learning, all of their courses for the Fall 2020 semester will be taken remotely. If there is a class that is not offered remotely but is essential for the student's course of study, the academic advisor will work with the student and the instructor to devise an accommodation.

For additional information on academics, course scheduling, research, teaching and research labs, and the S.C. Williams Library, please visit the [Academics and Research section](#) of our return to campus plan.

International Students

In light of the recent ruling from the Department of Homeland Security prohibiting international students from remaining in the U.S. if engaged in only online courses, we urge all international students to carefully review course options to ensure that they are enrolled in courses that have a sufficient classroom component as part of StevensFlex. Stevens is [participating in an amicus brief](#) in support of the lawsuit that Harvard and MIT brought against the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency to challenge this ruling and will pursue all options to aggressively oppose these new and unreasonable regulations. We urge all international students to be in touch with the Office of Graduate Education or the Office of Undergraduate Academics, and the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) for updates and advice.

Residence Halls, Student Life

To support a healthy and safe environment for the Stevens housing community, [additional health and safety measures and procedures](#) have been instituted in all residence halls, in Stevens leased housing facilities, in Greek houses, and for all aspects of student life. These measures include:

enhanced cleaning and sanitization; reducing population density in the residence halls; restricting use of common areas consistent with current guidance from the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education of New Jersey (OSHE); and setting aside rooms with private bathrooms to isolate students who test positive for COVID-19. Stevens may require non-invasive temperature monitoring of residential students for entrance to residence halls if determined necessary or appropriate.

Social distancing and face coverings will be required in all shared common spaces in residence halls, leased housing properties, and Greek houses owned by Stevens, including but not limited to hallways, shared bathrooms (where possible), lounges, laundry rooms, and kitchens.

No visitors will be permitted in Stevens housing this fall, including Stevens students residing in other locations. Students may only access the residence hall or leased housing property to which they are assigned. All students, including students who reside in Stevens' on- and off-campus housing, Stevens leased housing, and all Greek houses regardless of ownership, will be bound by the Stevens [Health Honor Code](#) and all Stevens health-related policies and protocols.

Student clubs and organizations play a vital role in the quality of life at Stevens. The activities of student organizations, especially gathering in meetings, events, and programs, are impacted by COVID-19 social distancing guidelines, and new requirements are in effect. Many student activities will occur in the Fall 2020 semester utilizing social distancing and virtual options. Detailed information on [dining and catering](#), [student clubs and organizations](#), [performing arts](#), and [athletics and recreation and physical education](#) is available on the [Stronger. Safer. Stevens. website](#).

Enhanced Student Health and Mental Health Services

Beginning in August 2020, Stevens will expand clinical hours and telemedicine options to provide increased health care coverage for all Stevens students. [Student Health Services](#) will be staffed until 7 p.m. each weekday, an extension of three hours, and will offer weekend hours and telemedicine services during hours when Student Health Services are closed. For hours and more information, please visit the [Student Health Services website](#).

Stevens will also offer expanded mental health services beginning in August 2020. [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS) will expand psychiatry hours and will extend counseling hours by four hours to 9 p.m. each weekday, with a mix of in-person and virtual counseling options. For hours and more information, please visit the [CAPS website](#).

Safe, Healthy, and Flexible Return for Faculty and Staff

Stevens will implement a coordinated process for return of faculty and staff that is aimed at promoting a safe and healthy environment. Required use of PPE; social distancing; installation of acrylic barriers in certain spaces; directional and social distancing signage; COVID-19 screening and testing; enhanced sanitization; HVAC and plumbing improvements and installation of touchless systems where possible; and other measures to promote personal and community health and hygiene are part of our multi-dimensional and layered efforts to promote a

safe and healthy work environment. More information is available on the [Stronger. Safer. Stevens.](#) website (including sub-pages).

Policies and procedures are highlighted below and delineated on the [Stronger. Safer. Stevens.](#) website. These policies and procedures aim to provide flexibility for faculty and staff who are in high-risk groups while fulfilling our educational mission and our responsibility to our students.

Before returning to campus, Stevens requires that all members of the Stevens community including employees be tested for COVID-19 no more than five days prior to their return. Employees should email their test results to the Division of Human Resources at benefits@stevens.edu. In addition, anyone entering New Jersey from [states with a significant spread of COVID-19](#) should quarantine for 14 days, even if having received a negative COVID-19 test result. The list of states changes regularly.

Employees who are immunocompromised or at high risk for COVID-19 (as defined by CDC and other guidance) and for whom accommodations are not adequate will be permitted to work or teach remotely. Employees should consult their supervisor or the Division of Human Resources for more information. Please note that [Stevens' Policy on Discrimination, Harassment and Bias Incidents](#) prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities, including illnesses such as COVID-19.

[Expanded employee health services](#), including telehealth options, are available to year-round employees currently enrolled in any of the Stevens Horizon Health Plans.

Employees who have particular concerns should speak with their supervisor and/or the Division of Human Resources for more information or to discuss their specific issue.

Meetings, Events, and Programs

Meetings may be held in person for no more than 10 people, as long as participants are at least six feet apart and do not exceed the occupancy limits for the meeting room. This limit may change based on guidelines from the State of New Jersey and Stevens policies. If social distancing is not possible, meetings and events must be conducted remotely and participants may not meet in person. Capacity limits for rooms will be available through the University Events.

Transportation/Parking and Restricted Access to Campus

Recognizing that members of our community may opt to avoid mass transit for a period of time, Stevens will offer greater flexibility, including daily parking passes, during the 2020-2021 academic year. More information on [parking options](#) is available on our website.

In an effort to maintain desired reductions in campus density and enable contact tracing as required, Stevens will continue to restrict access to the campus only to those with a valid Stevens ID. The campus will be closed to the general public until further notice, with access for non-Stevens personnel and students to be limited to pre-approved visitors and vendors, service professionals, and delivery services. Procedures for visitors, contractors, and invited guests are


delineated on our [website](#). Outside facilities rentals and use by external groups or individuals are suspended for the Fall 2020 semester.

In closing, I encourage all members of the Stevens community to carefully review the [Stronger. Safer. Stevens.](#) website and to familiarize themselves with the [Health Honor Code](#). It is our responsibility—individually and collectively—to return to campus in a mode that protects our community to the greatest extent possible and that fulfills our core education and research mission.

Once again, I extend my deepest appreciation to each and every one of you for all you do to make Stevens the special place that it is, and especially to all my colleagues who continue to work intensively over the summer months on the myriad aspects of implementing these plans.

I cannot wait to see you on campus in the coming weeks and months.

Per aspera ad astra,


Nariman Farvardin
President

