Greetings and welcome to the Mustang Family!

Congratulations to you and your student for everything you have achieved to arrive at this point. You are the parents and family members of a new college student.

The past five months have certainly created challenges for you and your student. We have been working hard during that time to prepare to not only reopen our campus with new health and safety measures, but also for all the other elements of your student’s college experience. The Stevenson University commitments to a caring community, exceptional experiences, and connections to career are still in place and continue to be priorities. They will just look a little different this year.

This newsletter is designed to introduce you to many of the services and resources that are offered by our Student Affairs division. These include the Wellness Center, Residence Life and Housing, the Dean of Students, Conduct, Diversity and Inclusion, and Student Activities (which is also responsible for New Student Orientation).

We encourage you to talk with your student about how they will access the services and resources that Student Affairs provides. As a starting point, encourage them to participate fully in the excellent hybrid New Student Orientation program that has been developed by the Student Activities team. Encourage them to learn about how to access Wellness Center services and help them to build connections with the Residence Life team, perhaps most importantly, their RA who will serve as an important guide during the semester.

These are challenging times but my team and I look forward to partnering with you to support your students this year.

Sincerely,
Tiffany Sanchez
Vice President for Student Affairs
Stevenson University
The Stevenson Wellness Center provides limited primary healthcare services and mental health resources to support students in reaching their optimal health so that they can achieve their full academic and personal potential. To best meet the needs of the students, the Wellness Center offers health and counseling services in one convenient location on the Owings Mills Campus, and due to the Covid-19 pandemic tele-health and tele-counseling services will also be available this academic year.

Through health education, the Wellness Center encourages self-care and personal responsibility for the student's own health, with an emphasis on safety. Collaboration with other University services promotes student success and engagement in the Stevenson community.

Treatment is available to eligible students whose concerns fall within this Scope of Services. Those whose needs cannot be met within this model will be referred to community resources for care.

This year also requires a focus on keeping students healthy during the current public health crisis. As such, the health care professionals and therapists endorse the following CDC recommendations for college students to stay healthy.

Please have conversations with your student about these important topics:

- Wearing face coverings, physical distancing, and good hygiene, such as handwashing. Visit our Keep Stevenson Safe page at www.stevenson.edu/safe for videos and helpful information.
- Developing a support network of friends. Campus and extracurricular activities such as athletics and student clubs are great ways to meet new friends. Have fun!
- Staying active. Regular physical activity can help keep your student's thinking, learning, and judgment skills sharp.
- Eating healthy.
- Getting vaccinated against the flu.
- Encouraging them to reach out to the Wellness Center to discuss their concerns with a health professional or therapist (i.e. sexual health, anxiety, depression, etc.). If the health professional/therapist advises treatment, follow instructions. Attend follow-up appointments to track your progress.

Visit the Wellness Center website at www.stevenson.edu/wellness for more information and follow along on Facebook and Instagram via the handle @StevensonWellness.
Talk with your student about their own decisions related to personal health and safety, especially with unique challenges added this year by the COVID-19 pandemic. This could include reviewing your student’s health insurance information and discussing Keep Stevenson Safe guidelines such as physical distancing, face coverings, and the updated Guest Policy available here. It is important to note that we will be starting off the semester prohibiting guests in residence halls and individual units. While we encourage residents to connect in safe ways, this means that if a resident does not live in an individual unit, they are not permitted in the space.

Help your student prepare to talk through expectations with those they live with. Each Resident Assistant will guide residents through the process of creating a roommate/suitemate agreement. This is an excellent opportunity to discuss acceptable and comfortable uses of their living space. We encourage students to keep in mind that this is a shared space and compromise is of the utmost importance when it doesn’t affect safety or health. If your student has never shared a room or space with a non-relative, have a conversation about their fears to help ease their concerns and set reasonable expectations.

Discuss your student’s goals for the upcoming year. It may be helpful to review their course schedule and talk about resources that may be available such as the Student Success Center should they find a specific topic challenging. It is also encouraged to begin thinking of how your student may want to get involved this upcoming year through our student clubs and organization – including the Residence Hall Association!
OFFICE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

DEAN OF STUDENTS
Website: www.stevenson.edu/student-life/meet-dean
E-mail: jkelly@stevenson.edu

The Dean of Students is responsible for enforcing many of the non-academic policies of the University and provides direct assistance to the Leadership Scholars Program. Through regular collaboration with faculty and staff, the Dean strives to help students have an exceptional experience. In addition, he provides assistance to students and families with any questions or challenges that may arise during their time at Stevenson. Please do not hesitate to contact the Dean, Jeff Kelly, if he can be of assistance.

STUDENT CONDUCT
E-mail: jmunson@stevenson.edu

Stevenson University is dedicated to cultivating an environment that supports trust, respect, honesty, and civility toward everyone in our campus community. As a parent or family member, know that your student plays a crucial role in upholding these values and for being a good citizen both on and off our campus. It’s important to remember that students have rights and freedoms that are respected, but equally vital for them to understand that they have responsibilities to the campus community and to meet the university’s expectations for their behavior.

Behavior that violates our expectations is considered misconduct. The Office of Student Conduct investigates allegations that come to its attention and oversees the campus student conduct system. The aim is to help students take responsibility for their actions, learn from their choices, recommit to Stevenson’s values, and move forward with their academic and social pursuits.

The Office of Student Conduct invites you to look over Stevenson’s policies wants you to know that we take our students’ safety and security very seriously. You can see Stevenson University Policies that apply to students here.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to Assistant Vice President, Student Affairs and Conduct Jeremy Munson, and he would be more than happy to try and assist you.
Stevenson University greatly values community and to strengthen our community we place an emphasis on Diversity & Inclusion (D&I). We have a Center for D&I located in the Caves Sports & Wellness Center, complete with a lounge area, Prayer & Meditation Room, kitchenette open for student use, and staff that is excited to engage in conversation and offer programs for your student. Looking ahead to the upcoming academic year, programming will have a focus on civility and racial justice.

We firmly believe that in order to engage in conversation with one another it is important to have a foundation and common starting point. As such, one of the first things your student will notice on campus is a collection of posters titled “Learn the Lingo.” This collection of posters introduces the Stevenson community to common terms being used today when it comes to conversations around social identities and justice. The goal is for all community members to become familiar with these terms and thus engage in conversation using some of the same language.

As you prepare your student to jump into conversation willingly and excitedly, it is important to chat with them about ways to engage in conversation with those who are or believe differently than themselves. Some tips for students to consider when engaging in conversations around difference or difficult conversations are listed below. We hope that you are able to create some time to review these with your student and assist us in shaping strong leaders who are able to engage in civil discourse about some of the most difficult topics in our society (including but not limited to politics, race, religion, and sexual orientation).

- Engage in conversation with an open mind. People may have different beliefs or values than you, but that doesn’t mean you have nothing in common and nothing to learn from one another. Approaching a conversation with the intent to learn elevates the conversation to an entirely new level.
- Be respectful. Especially if/when disagreeing with someone, it is important to remain respectful and aim to understand the other person’s point of view without needing to change your mind or the other person’s.
- Be honest... it’s ok to not know everything about a topic and it’s ok to admit when you don’t know something. It’s also OK to admit that you are quite knowledgeable about a particular subject, whether through reading and research or lived experience.
- Ask questions. It is OK to ask questions. Just be sensitive and ask yourself “How would I feel if someone asked me this” prior to asking someone else.
- Participate! Don’t shy away from a conversation just because it is something that you are unknowledgeable about, don’t know what to say, or have a different belief than what is being presented. It’s OK to just listen sometimes and it’s OK to engage in a discussion to share your point of view/understanding and aim to understand the other person’s point of view or experience. Again, this doesn’t mean either of you have to change your stance.
- Lastly, become comfortable with changing your mind. It is OK to change your mind about something once you learn more about it or see it from a different perspective.

Unfortunately, there are times that these conversation don’t go as planned or as intended. In those instances, one or more parties might be offended or hurt by what is said. For occasions where this goes an extra step and ventures into the realm of bias or discrimination, the University has a reporting system. The Bias Reporting System can be accessed via the D&I page on the Stevenson website (https://www.stevenson.edu/student-life/forms/anonymous-reporting.html). While this form can be completed anonymously, we encourage reporters to self-identify so that our staff may follow up with the individual to offer support, ask questions and hopefully assist in coming to a resolution.
The Office of Student Activities is so excited to welcome your student to our Mustang Family. One of the first opportunities for your student to get connected with their peers and the campus will be New Student Orientation, which will occur Thursday, August 27 – Sunday, August 30. Your student may have already received the schedule along with information about Orientation and their Orientation Leader. If they have not yet received it, it will be e-mailed throughout the four days have been planned to help your student feel connected and confident beginning their journey at Stevenson. They will have the opportunity to become connected with returning students, as well as meet their peers who are also new. We hope you will encourage them to attend as many sessions as possible and emphasize the importance of being engaged in the University community.

While active participation in New Student Orientation is strongly encouraged, please note that students will not be penalized for missing sessions. They will be asked to write a paper for their First Year Experience course reflecting upon the impact of New Student Orientation and what being a Mustang means to them. Regardless of how many sessions they attend, they should have no issues completing that assignment. Again, these Orientation sessions are meant to enhance their experience and not feel like an additional burden. We have planned for most of the Orientation sessions to be virtual. There are a few sessions, meal times, and social gatherings that may have an in-person component. We ask that students participating in those sessions wear their face coverings and maintain physical distance. Please view the schedule here (please note that formatting may vary if you are viewing from a cell phone).

We would like to share some data from last year’s New Student Orientation survey completed by our first year students.

97% of new students reported feeling either very confident or somewhat confident to begin their careers at SU as a result of attending New Student Orientation.

98% of new students reported that their Orientation Leader was a helpful resource throughout New Student Orientation.

97% of new students reported that they felt like a valuable member of the Stevenson community as a result of New Student Orientation.

We hope to receive similar positive feedback this year. However, we do acknowledge that there are new challenges that present themselves due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While we have shifted the format of our Orientation program, the goals of community, connection, learning, and making memories are still at the core of what we are planning. Thank you in advance for your partnership. If you have any questions, please e-mail the Office of Student Activities at activities@stevenson.edu as our staff members are primarily still working remotely.

In addition to New Student Orientation, the Office of Student Activities is here to support your student and help them grow personally, socially, and professionally throughout their entire time at Stevenson. Students can become involved by joining a club or organization, by getting involved with Fraternity and Sorority Life, by applying for a student employee position in the office, by attending events, by volunteering as an Orientation Leader, and more.

The Office of Student Activities at Stevenson University prepares students for lives of integrity and leadership. They promote an overall sense of community by providing students with impactful programs. In fact, Student Activities extends learning outside the classroom by empowering and challenging students in a fun and inclusive environment. Student Activities will develop the whole student by creating exceptional experiences that influence personal growth while connecting students to their careers.

We know that this academic year will present us with challenges, but also with opportunities. We commit to continuing to support our students in whatever ways we can. We hope that your student will join a club and attend events, even if they are held virtually. We hope they will challenge themselves to step outside of their comfort zones, and we hope you will encourage them to take advantage of all that SU has to offer.
Convocation marks the beginning of the academic year for all our new students. On August 27, soon after our Class of 2024 and new transfer students arrive on campus, they will be officially welcomed into the Stevenson community.

Convocation is always a special and uplifting occasion. New students will receive a Stevenson University pin and will have the opportunity to pledge their commitment to upholding our Stevenson values in sessions led by First-Year Seminar faculty.

For safety and physical distancing, we will not be gathering together in the gym as usual. Students will watch a convocation video in small groups, with greetings from University President Elliot Hirshman and Provost Susan Gorman as well as other distinguished speakers and community members. We encourage you to also watch the video on August 27, and join us virtually as we celebrate the kick-off to our 2020-2021 academic year. ([www.stevenson.edu/convocation2020](http://www.stevenson.edu/convocation2020))

**EXPRESS YOURSELF…AND WISH THEM WELL**

As we say “hello” to new students, we know that, for you and other family members at home, this is also a milestone event filled with feelings of joy, excitement, and maybe even a bit of nostalgia. Share your feelings and wishes for your new students by writing them a letter and mailing it to them. There is nothing like receiving a personal handwritten note to bring a smile to a new student’s face. You can download and print our template here or use your own stationery. Whatever you choose, we hope you will take a moment to send a special note to your new student.