Welcome Message from Dean Barua, College of Engineering and Computer Science

January 25, 2021

Dear Titans,

I would like to extend a personal welcome to the Spring 2021 semester.

This semester begins in the midst of an ongoing pandemic and on the heels of both an attempted violent insurrection in the capitol and the ultimate peaceful transfer of power. We have now, not only inaugurated a new President, but also a new Vice President who is the first woman and the first person of Black and South Asian decent to serve in that role. I am hopeful for the progress to come at the national and global level over the coming months.

Your education and academic success are the top priority for me and for our college faculty and staff. This Spring the majority of your classes will continue to be held in a virtual environment in order to keep you and your families safe during this pandemic. Please know that our dedicated faculty are eager to begin the semester with you, and that the College offers a range of services to support you throughout the semester. I am very hopeful that we will, this fall, come together in-person once again.

I want to update you all on the ways that we in ECS have been working, even virtually, to better support our diverse student body. In the Fall semester, we formed the Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee consisting of faculty, students, staff, and administrators in order to create a stronger culture of inclusivity within the College. We have also established new scholarships for 2020-2021 to promote diversity and inclusion in STEM including the Fledhouse Rising Memorial DEI Scholarship, the Rangan #BLM Scholarship, and the ECS Dean’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Scholarship. The African American Alliance Fund has awarded our College a grant to support the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) student organization and we continue to offer a variety of scholarships to transfer students from communities that have been historically underrepresented in Engineering and Computer Science. We have also redoubled our efforts to ensure all students have support for projects, mentorship for research, the ability to participate in student programs, and connections with our alumni.

We in ECS are building our strategy for long-term, sustained change in order to become the fully inclusive community we need to be. This will require a change in our policies, our practices, and our cultures. This will take time and require the collective effort of our faculty, staff and students. I am committed to leading this change.

On Monday, January 18th our nation celebrated the life and achievement of Civil Rights leader Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and I am reminded of the inspiring speech he gave on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial during the March on Washington. His words remind us that we are all tasked with the responsibility of being agents of change and beacons of hope in our communities. I invite you to join us as we walk together as Titans into a better future ahead.

Sincerely,

Susamma (Susan) Barua, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Engineering and Computer Science