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Date: Sat, 01 Dec 2001 12:45:14 -0500

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December 1, 2001

Dear student:

I understand that you have experienced a great deal of frustration with mail service in Lerner Hall this semester. I appreciate the understanding that you have shown regarding the difficulties - from Anthrax scares to interruptions in Postal Service deliveries - with which Mail Services has had to contend this semester. In the end, though, I regret that we have not provided adequate service to students.

I understand the importance of mail to you and apologize for the inconvenience and frustrations brought about by poor service. I am intervening personally in the management of mail services in order to effect management and service delivery improvements both immediately and in the longer term. As of today, I have taken the following actions:

1. On Friday, I appointed Kent Frampton, a senior manager in Support Services with a track record of solving problems and improving management practices, as Interim Director of Student Mail Services. Effective immediately, Kent will oversee the performance of Archer Management Services, which provides mail service in Lerner, and that of the entire student mail operation. I am confident that under Kent's supervision, mail services to students will improve very quickly.
2. I met with senior officials from Archer Management Services on Friday morning. Beginning Monday, Archer will provide 12 additional staff members, above the current level of 9. These additions to staff will allow us fully staff extended hours and will remain in place until processing and delivery problems are resolved. Archer also will provide more senior on-site managers and has committed to meeting the higher service standards students deserve.
3. Beginning Monday, December 3, we will extend weekday package room hours until 10:00 PM through the end of the term, in addition to the recently reinstated Saturday hours. The new, extended hours - Monday through Friday 12:00 PM - 10:00 PM and Saturday 12:00 PM - 4:00 PM - will allow additional time for students to pick up packages that have not been picked up. Every student who arrives by closing hours will be served.

4. We will re-notify students who have packages waiting by e-mail and paper notices, so that everyone who has a package will know to pick it up.
5. I have received assurances that problems in the e-mail notification system have been corrected; we currently are testing the system to be sure that that is the case.
6. Simultaneously, Kent and I are reviewing every aspect of the Lerner Mail Services operation in order to make changes necessary to provide prompt, courteous mail and package service. This includes immediate action to ensure that every piece of mail addressed to a student is delivered in a timely manner.

Specifically, this means we will progress rapidly toward achieving our goal that all pieces of mail received at Lerner by 11:00 AM will be processed and placed in student mailboxes the same day. Mail received after 11:00 AM will be processed and placed in student mailboxes no later than the following morning. Packages will be processed - and electronic and paper notifications delivered - on the same schedule.

7. I have been in communication with the leadership of the Columbia College and Engineering Student Councils, and will, along with other staff members, work closely with them to resolve these problems promptly. I have formed a short-term task force, including representatives from the Councils, to help assess the mail operation and develop strategies to improve it. The group held its first meeting on Friday, November 30 and will meet on at least a weekly basis as we move forward.

I would like to hear from you regarding any problems that you have experienced with mail, packages, or the quality of service provided to you. Please send any comments, questions, and complaints that you have to Task Force members and me at [lernermail@columbia.edu](mailto:lernermail@columbia.edu) . If you experience anything other than courteous service or the processing time described above for mail, please be sure to let us know.

The Task Force, Kent, and I will monitor the effectiveness of our short-term changes carefully and develop a long-term plan to provide quality mail services to you. Many of the problems that have contributed to the current state of affairs are substantial, but the bottom line is that it is our responsibility to resolve them. We are working aggressively to do what is necessary to correct the deficiencies and provide the high quality mail service that you have a right to expect.

I will report back to the student community on our progress in the weeks

ahead. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me with your questions, complaints, or other comments.

Kenneth J. Knuckles Vice President Support Services

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