

Institute Faculty Meeting Wednesday July 29, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 2:31PM

Faculty Senate President Thomas gave her report: The Faculty Senate even after the end of the Spring semester was meeting into June with Joel Bloom, Fadi, Andrew, Ed Bishof, Dale, Atam, and Jerry Trombella to answer any of our questions, and listen to our concerns and suggestions. On March 17, Andrew Christ formed a COVID advisory committee and the Senate leadership has been working with that committee since its inception. That advisory committee tried to manage the pandemic crisis through the shared governance process. Had representatives from the Faculty Senate, University Senate, the Student Senate, LEC, PSA, OPEIU, UCAN, EOP, Staff Council, GSA, and the Alumni Association. In early May, it became clear that we needed to put together a pandemic recovery plan, so the pandemic recovery steering committee and the pandemic recovery sub-committees were all formed. There are ten different sub-committees all focused on a different part of the University. The Senate worked closely with Andrew Christ and LEC to populate those committees with instructional staff. In addition to this summer's faculty work, we know that Joel, Fadi, Ed, HR, and PSA have all hosted open forums to hear and address your stated concerns. With this meeting, we decided we needed to do something a little bit different. The best way for the faculty and administration to communicate was not through another Faculty Senate meeting, and not through another forum. We decided that the best way to communicate would be to host a meeting open to everybody, where everyone can speak freely.

Provost Fadi Deek gave his opening remarks: I am going to talk about the context of the university, the factors that are impacting what we are doing for the fall, exactly what we are doing for the fall, and then talk a little bit more about our roles as instructors. We have a vibrant and diverse community, and we would like to make it even more vibrant and more diverse. We have been on an amazing path: arrived at 100 US News, 97 to be exact, Carnegie R1, and we have joined the America East Conference. More successes will come our way. There is a reopening underway in New Jersey. We are in stage 2, which means that there was no in-person instruction and summer classes were held online. We could have held them on campus with waivers, held labs and other course that require hands on experience on campus, but we opted not to do it. Our residence halls are essentially empty, except for those students that did not have another option, so a limited number of students are in the residence halls. The next stage will be phase 3, which will reduce restrictions on in person instruction and residence halls can expand capacity. We can then restart our university, and we have already started doing this. Many colleagues are already on campus, 25% of staff are here everyday, and those numbers are increasing. In phase 3 even more colleagues can be on campus. Research has restarted, which is about 50%. Many staff have never left: police force, grounds, and custodial. In phase 3, students can come back to campus, and when they are here they can attend classes, work with faculty on research, and take advantage of activities and support systems. How are we doing this? We have a pandemic recovery plan. We were pioneers in starting to talk about a pandemic recovery plan. Preparation for the plan started very quickly, in early April, and the draft of the plan has been downloaded about 15,000 times worldwide. It is a flexible plan that first and foremost takes into consideration the health and well being of everyone in the community. It allows a shift to online if need be. Have

consulted with health care professionals and infectious disease experts. Will abide by and respect government directives, health advisories, and common sense. If necessary, we have self-isolation and quarantine spaces in the dorms. Out of 15 peer universities, 10 are doing something similar to our plan. The heart of the plan is converged learning: it blurs the distinction between physical and virtual spaces, some instruction will take place in person, give us opportunities to strengthen our presence in this space to quickly build NJIT global, and allow flexibility to transition between online and in person as we see fit. Modified instruction for safety: 100/200 level courses are in the converged learning mode, enrollment is limited to enforce social distancing between faculty and students, face coverings are required, and classrooms will be cleaned. The technology is similar to is here, there are 28 hardwired physical locations for converged learning, and 109 mobile carts to make every space like this. Converged classroom usage: students will be assigned a color (blue or red) and use color marked seats when they attend class in person. Unmarked seats left empty to ensure social distancing. Classrooms will be cleaned and disinfected after every second period. How will students know when to come in? We are implementing a Back to School App that will send an invite before class asking if students are interested in coming to class that day and the groups will have alternate attendance. Most 300/400 Graduate level courses will be synchronous online, some will be converged, some will be face to face for international student requirements, and all courses originally scheduled to be asynchronous online will stay that way. Roles of instructors: not just teach, but support outside the classroom, do research, and advise students. Everyone is a role model and integral to the NJIT community. In conclusion: safe teaching and learning environment, converged learning training is being provided, and students want face to face learning experiences.

Andrew Christ gave his opening remarks: Will run through the preparations that we have made on campus for the arrival back, and the safe operations for our students, faculty, and staff through the fall semester. We have provided everyone with two face covers. They are cloth face coverings that CDC recommends nationally. Placed decals all over to remind people to wear face masks, and this is a must, not an option. Face coverings are helping you protect others and catching the virus, they are not PPE. PPE is being provided in circumstances where social distancing is not possible, such as labs and studios. These orders have already been placed and will be here shortly. Restocking orders will happen from within the departments. Will submit COVID-19 claims to FEMA and hope to get 75% back. **E. Thomas:** Somebody asked if the PPE face masks will be provided for lab classes? **A. Christ:** as part of the instructional delivery request, there have been PPE, face shields, and masks. The only masks that can't be provided are N-95 respirators. There are some research facilities that require N-95 respirators, but they are already enrolled in the medical surveillance program. How to care for your face mask: one to use and one to wash, can be used over and over again, no true life expectancy, except if it rips, stretches, or does not fit on the face. Have ordered tens of thousands for replacements. To clean the face mask you put it in the wash and store masks in a clean place when you are not using them. HVAC systems: increasing the amount of maximum outside air that can be injected into the buildings, and provide for more air and less stagnant air. Mode of air will deteriorate the comfort inside the buildings. Upgraded all filters in campus facilities to the highest level the systems can handle. Increased frequency of filter changes. Going to have random indoor quality testing that will be looking for viral load. Indoor quality testing will be posted publicly on the pandemic recovery website. Social Distancing: have spread out and moved furniture, signage posted all over campus, disabled hand dryers and installed paper towel dispensers, shut off drinking fountains, de-

calls on elevators, signs to maintain 6 feet of distance, and signage where to sit in different buildings. Medical Self Monitoring: everyone will monitor for COVID-19 symptoms, temperature kiosks will be around to determine if you have a fever, health pledge at web authentication when using NJIT systems, and personal responsibility to stay home if sick. Cleaning and Disinfection: modified cleaning protocols, special training for custodial staff to deal with high touch surfaces, will have disinfecting supplies in the classrooms and labs, staff and faculty will be responsible for their own work spaces, non-essential tasks may need to take a backseat to mitigate virus, and purchased additional equipment to quickly clean classrooms and spaces. Testing: intent to do baseline testing of all community members before the start of the semester. For students, it means 21 days before return to campus or go to Saint Michael's Medical Center. For employees, 21 days before the start of the semester and University Hospital will administer test. Will do wastewater testing to identify viral load action level. Training and education: HR, Environmental Health and Safety, and Dean of Students Office have developed a training program for the entire community to understand your responsibilities and protocols .

Q&A Followed

E. Thomas: To Fadi, with the a & b groups, a lot of classes in MTSM have 39 students, which might exceed the possible in person group. Who manages these populations? The faculty or the app, and how do we know who is supposed to be in the classroom? **F. Deek:** Go by the number of students and based on that identify a classroom. The number of students registered will dictate the number of students in each group. The app will help the faculty. **Nancy Steffen:** What will the plan for follow up surveillance testing be? How will the data be aggregated so we have a baseline picture of the community? **A. Christ:** Have decided to not do continuous surveillance testing throughout the semester, but going to make testing available for symptomatic individuals as we move forward. Using self monitoring as our methodology. **Dale McLeod:** Using standard PCR test and will send to LabCorp that will then send the results back to us. **A. Christ:** For any students doing testing with St. Michael's Medical Center they will be using the antigen test first and if they are positive then get a PCR test. **Maurie Cohen:** Large numbers of 100 and 200 level courses are taught by part time instructors, many of them have indicated they will not re-sign their contracts. What arrangements are in place to make sure there will be instructors to teach courses? **F. Deek:** Arrangements are at the local level. Had meeting with the Deans and shared some solutions implemented in the colleges and if they can be implemented elsewhere. Put every possible effort and energy into identifying adjuncts or full time colleagues who may be teaching at the upper level and is willing to teach a lower level class. Open to ideas coming from departments. **Miriam Ascarelli:** Letter circulating from Senior faculty that was submitted to the Faculty Senate, requesting that all instructors who are currently teaching in person can be allowed to default to remote teaching instead. Many faculty would like to see NJIT commit to this opting system. Those who have the least amount of job security are being put at risk because they are teaching these 100/200 level courses. Wonder if the Faculty Senate can vote on a resolution and if the administration can allow folks that want to teach remotely opt to teach remotely. **F. Deek:** We have done all we can to put safety first. We need to look at this from all angles. We are allowed in phase 2, 25% of university employees in the office, and we do not yet have that. We understand and respect the concerns, but it is not only us in the classroom. We have to take the students and parents who are paying tuition all into consideration, as to how we are going to offer our courses. NJIT has an obligation to do as much as feasible, and we are doing what we can, while keeping everyone safe. **E. Thomas:** Letter was forwarded to the Faculty Senate Executive

Committee. This was something that has been discussed, but we are ambivalent on the topic because one, we certainly want everyone to feel and be safe, but at the same time it was 5 weeks ago that the students and parents were notified about our instructional teaching plans. We do have a responsibility to them as they have been making decisions based on those plans for the last 5 weeks. If senators want to bring this up, please reach out to Denis and I. **Denis Blackmore:** The idea of having the faculty express themselves in terms of a vote, would be okay with us. As Ellen said we understand everyone's concern, but we have an obligation with our students and their parents. We can have a vote to get a sense of everyone's sentiment. **E. Thomas:** Fadi, what evidence is there that students want this? Are the freshmen and sophomores students worried about coming to campus? **F. Deek:** Received numerous emails of students who will be coming and want to come to campus. **Calista McRae:** A large fraction of attempts to reopen, despite the best precautions and huge number of resources, has led to new localized outbreaks. How do we avoid the same thing happening at NJIT? **A. Christ:** Working with the Dean of Students, trying to educate our students as best we can to understand the ramifications of the decisions they make. If they are on campus, we will likely identify that there is going to be a super spreader in our residence halls through our waste water testing. Depending on the results of that testing, can react in the appropriate way. **Gernot Riether:** Most of our adjuncts are taking public transit to the college, and take multiple modes of transportation. Was this considered in the decision making process? **A. Christ:** Yes, we absolutely considered that, and understood that people will be taking public transportation. **Arthur Hendela:** What will the expectation be for people to come to class if the class time is 7:30AM plus traffic? Are there any other sizes for the masks? **A. Christ:** No, the masks are one size fits all. The population of students on campus will likely be 25%, so the parking situation will not be as usual, and we hope the students are responsible enough to get to class on time. **Amitabha Bose:** If a student in a converged classroom tests positive for COVID, will the class immediately move online for at least two weeks and the students be informed? Does the faculty member/instructor have the ability to move the class online, with the consent of the students and faculty, if the curriculum delivery is better? **F. Deek:** Will use common sense if there is a scenario like that. Decision on how to act is not finalized yet and some more discussions will take place. The curriculum delivery is in the hand of the instructor, and these decisions in the hands of the Deans and Chairs. **A. Christ:** If we do have a positive test result, we will do the appropriate contact tracing, take guidance and advice from the epidemiology department at St. Michaels as to what to do next, and follow that guidance to proceed with next steps. **E. Thomas:** If infected people enter the library will library staff be notified? **A. Christ:** It will depend on how far that contact tracing occurs. That is not in the hands of the University, but with the City/County Health department. Will provide them with the information, but it is their responsibility to do the contract tracing. **Nancy Steffen:** What threshold of NJIT localized infections will cause a transition to fully online classes? **A. Christ:** Will understand the threshold when people get tested and see how many cases are positive. We are the only NJ university that is doing baseline testing, and can react accordingly when we get positive test results. **Jorge Golowasch:** Is there a chance that access doors to rooms, bathrooms in particular, will have sanitization products? **A. Christ:** Issue of supply chains, but will continue to replenish sanitizing products where they are needed. **Kristin Carfora:** Regarding the app, how will professors be notified about students coming to class? If no students sign up does that mean we are not required to come to campus? **F. Deek:** Will be notified via cell phone, and if there are no people coming to class then they can either teach the course from the classroom or remotely online. **Kyle Riismandel:** Who is doing the policing for behavior to follow the rules? In the classroom,

if a student or many students do not have a mask on is the class dissolved and taught online? Why should university lecturers and adjuncts risk the health of their households to teach in person when there is a risk of infection? **A. Christ:** The policing will be a combination of public safety and student ambassadors who will remind people to wear their face coverings, and provide face masks. Professors can ask students to leave if not wearing a face mask. There will also be opportunities for students to purchase masks from the bookstore. If there is a repeated offense, then the student code of conduct will be used along with the cooperation of the faculty member. **D. McLeod:** Protocols have been defined to ensure that instructors and students remain safe on campus. If people follow this protocol, then there should be no risk of the virus when teaching in a classroom. If there are any concerns that an individual employee might have about not coming to campus, then there is medical leave and other things that employees can access. The choices that NJIT have made is changing a number of protocols, operating statuses to ensure that people can come to work and not be affected. **E. Thomas:** For those of us who are teaching 100% online what is your policy about them coming to campus? Do you want them to continue to work from home so that the number of people on campus are minimized, or come to campus to add to faculty morale? **F. Deek:** Faculty, students and staff are welcome to come to campus, but we can not entertain visitors until a later time and date. In phase 3 we will be able to have 50% back on campus and will encourage people to come back. **Cheickna Sylla:** With all of these protocols, how is this being managed? **A. Christ:** Going through the training you will know the basics and if you need more specifics you can read the pandemic recovery plan. **Thomas Ogorzalek:** Can we consider the HEPA filtration systems for our labs and studio spaces? **A. Christ:** Based on the engineering capabilities of our systems, we did all that we could to modify them and incorporated PPE to enhance the protection for students and instructors. **E. Thomas:** Will members of upper administration be expected to be on campus everyday, and are upper administration making themselves available to adjunct the course in the event that departments are unable to staff? **F. Deek:** The upper administration is on campus and is expected to be on campus up to 25%. Regarding adjunct work, will let the chairs and Deans decide what the department's needs are and go from there. **Calista McRae:** What does the current director of risk assessment say about NJIT's current plans, specifically what is our risk for a small number of infections, an outbreak, death of a community member, and being sued? **A. Christ:** Pandemic recovery has a subcommittee related to risk management, and that group has examined all plans to date and understood the implications of our decisions. If someone does get sick on our campus, they are covered by our workers compensation insurance, if it deems to be job related. Liability insurers have also been part of the conversation as it relates to how we are going to open our campus. **Jorge Golowasch:** Is there a way to get an estimate of how long aerosols may stay in the air in a room that is visited by students often? **A. Christ:** Certainly possible to give air change per hour based on a particular system. Can contact my office to get the specific information. **E. Thomas:** Has the university worked to ensure that students are going to have the technology they need? **F. Deek:** Yes. **E. Thomas:** Procedures that we have in place now with 100/200 level courses is that dependent on NJ being in phase 2 and will we open up more when NJ is in phase 3? **F. Deek:** It is related to the phases, but we have our own constraints because of common sense of what we are willing to do. Want to ensure adequate social distancing. **Ashish Borgaonka:** Heard some universities are developing a faculty buddy program: if someone gets sick and can't manage classes remotely, then another faculty member can take over the class. Is NJIT considering something like this? **Fadi Deek:** That is a great idea, but it will have to happen at the local level between the departments and their faculty. **Calista McRae:** What accommodations will be made for lecturers and adjuncts

who are going to be faced with young children at home all day with school closures. **D. McLeod:** We are monitoring the situation very closely. Hoping to get clarification on when municipalities will open schools and childcare centers. **Megan O'Neill:** Are we waiting until NJ is in phase 3 to implement our converged classes? **F. Deek:** Phase 2 does not allow for in person instruction, except when it is a lab or hand on experience, or request waivers. We do not know when we are going into phase 3, but when it does happen, we will be able to implement our plan. **E. Thomas:** How do you envision organizing the decision making if we have to still deal with this in Spring 2021. **F. Deek:** We are prepared for this. The process should be as it has been and use the normal channels for discussion, but will make sure the faculty senate remains at the center. **Maurie Cohen:** How is the pandemic response plan taking into consideration other countries and other states' changing situations? **F. Deek:** aligned with the state's plan, keeping an eye on the federal government, and we will abide by state directives.

The meeting ended at 4:23PM