

Minutes of NJIT Faculty Meeting of December 5, 2018

Presiding: Eliza Michalopoulou, Faculty Senate President

I. Convening of meeting

The meeting was convened at 2:42 pm by the Faculty Senate President, Eliza Michalopoulou and a quorum was confirmed.

II. Approval of minutes

As a quorum was present, the minutes of the October 24, 2018 Faculty Meeting were moved, seconded and unanimously approved.

III. President's Report

NJIT President Joel Bloom reported on the recent successes, opportunities and challenges facing the university.

A. Successes at NJIT identified by President Bloom were as follows:

1. President Bloom said that the \$200 million [Next fundraising campaign](#) was complete, and that it had generated monies for 250 student scholarship. He added that NJIT funds around \$30 million in student scholarships annually, that gifts and pledges have grown NJIT's endowment to \$124 million, and that fundraising remains an ongoing priority given declines in state funding of NJIT and other NJ public universities.
2. President Bloom lauded the university's growing research expenditures, \$162 million, attributing that growth to the 130 faculty hires NJIT has made in recent years.
3. President Bloom noted the extraordinary success of NCE's new [Makerspace](#), saying that it has quickly achieved "standing room only" status.
4. President Bloom highlighted that the MTSOM has successfully partnered with IBM to create the [IBM Skills Academy](#).
5. President Bloom noted that the Provost would detail the 75% achievement rate of our 2020 Vision KPIs, but that he was pleased with the progress given the challenging funding environment. He noted in particular NJIT's improved ranking in [U.S. News and World Report, now 106 in Best Colleges for National Universities](#).
6. President Bloom stated that the Amazon/Alexa Summit that NJIT hosted in July 2018 brought 2,700 people to campus, from at least 11 countries. Additionally, the MetroLab Conference brought another 300 people to campus.

B. New and ongoing opportunities at NJIT identified by President Bloom were detailed as follows:

1. President Bloom stressed the opportunities associated with NJIT's continued commitment to hiring new faculty, and he stated the fact that NJIT now has 303 faculty following continuous faculty hiring during his tenure as President.
2. President Bloom noted that [NCE's new School of Applied Engineering and Technology](#) already counts 1,000 students in its programs, and is expected to grow because he frequently hears from NJIT's industrial partners that they want to employ

- more “technologists” rather than train “humanities and social science” majors to do those skilled technology jobs that they rather not pay certified engineers to do.
3. President Bloom noted that NJIT continues to pursue funding opportunities through the states [Medical Devices Industry Research Cluster](#) for which \$3.7M has already been received.
 4. President Bloom noted that opportunities for research collaboration exist with cell therapy and gene therapy laboratories (including Celgene, Pfizer, and Johnson & Johnson).
 5. President Bloom noted that he had hired Vice President Simon Nines to help oversee NJIT’s reorganization of the [Enterprise Development Center \(EDC\)](#). The goal is “to get [NJIT] out of the EDC business” in its current form.
 6. President Bloom identified continued opportunities for NJIT to contribute to STEM Teacher’s Education throughout the state, through CSLA.
 7. President Bloom announced NJIT’s intent to expand programs via digital platforms (20+ online master’s degrees and growing), throughout the state (e.g., Jersey City programming), and internationally.
 8. President Bloom outlined his plans for Strategic Property Acquisition, including his plans to purchase in 2019 Mueller’s Florist, an antiquated wooden structure on 156 Central Ave, Newark, NJ 07103. He also spoke of plans to purchase or enter into a P3 (public-private-partnership) for the development of the Warren Street School and turning it into a residence hall that would have 300-400 beds to house first-year students.
 9. President Bloom spoke of the development and timeline for NJIT’s 2020+ Strategic Plan. The plan is designed to take NJIT about three years (2019-2022), leading up to the [Middle-States](#) accreditation visit in 2022. NJIT will then take the feedback from Middle States into account in developing its next “8-year” strategic planning for the remainder of the 2020s.
- C. Challenges facing NJIT identified by President Bloom were outlined as follows:
1. President Bloom emphasized that state funding for NJIT has been stuck at \$34 million recently, and it is his goal – despite that trend -- to work with NJ Governor Phil Murphy to increase state funding to NJIT
 2. President Bloom stated that NJIT, like higher education in the northeast, is working against demographic declines in the number of students expected to enroll in college or universities. First, he noted that undergraduate applications are up (8,200 applicants for first year), but that we must continue to grow the undergraduate population. Second, he spoke about the declining graduate enrollments specifically linked to the decline in international students coming to the United States (as well as NJIT). He said that domestic graduate students pay about \$10k per year, while international graduate students pay about \$30k per year, suggesting the difficulty of intensifying domestic graduate enrollment to make up for the losses in international graduate student enrollments. He also stated that the U.S. cannot easily compete in an environment in which Canada offers international graduate students citizenship upon earning their degrees. He stated that domestic undergraduate students pay about \$12K a year.
 3. President Bloom emphasized his commitment toward improving the financial appreciation of NJIT’s assets relative to NJIT’s Moody’s and S&P rankings, and the overall challenges of appreciating the fiscal health of the University.
 4. President Bloom indicated that the challenges of keeping tuition and fees low are considerable.

5. President Bloom stressed that NJIT's ongoing capital (infrastructure) renewal and replacement efforts include \$64 million in recent spending following ten years of neglect by the University in maintaining buildings and other infrastructure.
6. President Bloom noted that NJIT has considerable and growing competition in its efforts to sustain and grow enrollments now that the regional and national trend is one where "Every university is (now) a STEM one".
7. President Bloom emphasized the necessity of renewed branding, marketing and visibility of NJIT, noting his experiences throughout the state with donors and industry partners who still see NJIT in terms of its past rather than its present.
8. In closing, President Bloom stressed accountability across the board: "Student success is dependent on each of us," and thanked the faculty for the opportunity to speak.

D. President Bloom responded to two questions from faculty.

1. Regarding the state funding challenges, President Bloom said that keeping NJ students in state will help, that forming more relationships with business and industry will help, and that he hopes that in doing those things that Governor Murphy will stop flat funding and respond positively to his request to increase funding to NJIT by 2% in the next budget.
2. Regarding President Bloom's plan to add more students to NJIT, he was questioned about admitting students who aren't prepared to succeed. Professor Yehoshua Perl claimed that he had data from the NJIT Registrar indicating that 218 current NJIT students had taken the same courses 3-4 times in attempts to pass those courses. President Bloom said he wasn't familiar with that data, but that the number seemed small to him. He stressed that NJIT admits only qualified students, and admission is based on objective criteria, grade point and test scores, and that all those students deserved the chance to succeed if they met our minimum standards. He also stressed that many of our students work 50+ hours a week off campus. He stressed accountability across the campus, and the importance of advising focused on student success as well.

IV. Provost's Report

NJIT Provost Fadi Deek updated the faculty on the 2020 Vision strategic plan and the development of our 2020+ Vision strategic plan..

- A. Provost Deek reported that the Institute's KPIs are largely the same since the last report; undergraduate enrollment is approximately 9,000 students, SAT scores are up two points in our student profile, retention and graduate rates are stable, and external funding continues to grow
- B. Provost Deek reported that our areas of concern include infrastructure and technology, instruction, and diversity. He stressed that students want NJIT to be better in responding to their concerns in those areas, especially in teaching infrastructure.
- C. Provost Deek showed a slide of the 2020+ Vision planning timeline. The timeline indicated that fall 2018 focused on "needs analysis" – inclusive of peer identification and community input. He noted that the draft 2020+ plan will develop in 2019 toward a 2020+ launch date in the fall 2020 semester. The plan, as President Bloom stated, takes us through to the Middle States visit in 2022, which will then initiate the drafts in 2022-3 of a 2030 Strategic Plan that will be fully informed by the Middle States review. Provost Deek

then the current “needs analysis” is developing, and will be detailed in a future meeting with faculty.

- D. Provost Deek detailed the process for NJIT’s review of peer identification – i.e., the peer institutions by which we will measure our progress. We are targeting peers in four clusters: (a) cluster analysis-research focus (no medical schools), (be) cluster analysis-education focus (no medical schools), (c) cluster analysis-STEM focus (with medical schools), and (d) filtering of NJIT application overlap (with medical schools).
- E. Provost Deek presented slides detailing Fall 2018 total enrollment (n=11,423), the full-time and part-time entering student cohorts, and the overall student profile that includes significant improvements in both SATs and retention over the past seven cohorts (2011-2017).
- F. Provost Deek noted that NJIT is doing better overall in the key markers of successful student outcomes. The student profile of both undergraduate and graduate students is strengthening.
- G. Provost Deek noted that NJIT had grown its research expenditures, reversing a downward trend of only a few years ago.
- H. Provost Deek responded to a series of questions of faculty:
 - 1. Regarding a comment about potentially changing the balance of priorities between new building and focusing on repair and maintenance of existing infrastructure. Faculty requested that there be more transparency about the building-by-building review of facilities. Faculty expressed concern that the \$30 million recently dedicated to infrastructure repair and replacement was not a reasonable benchmark. Provost Deek and President Bloom indicated that a Town Hall meeting would be held in 2019 regarding campus infrastructure, and that the Town Hall meeting would be the best opportunity for input.
 - 2. Regarding a question about the recent increases in the Student Orientation, Advising and Registration (SOAR) Program students, Provost Deek noted that spring transfers are not included in the student data he detailed earlier, that the student profile is based on fall to fall students. It was noted that the transfer students who enter through SOAR have a different profile, and that NJIT has experienced growth in SOAR admissions. From 2016 through 2018, SOAR students went from 50 students admitted to 200. Provost Deek noted that the success of these students hinged on advising efforts, and that the number of advisors in the program remained stable (n=10) while the number of students quadrupled (from 50 to 200).
 - 3. Regarding ongoing faculty concerns about campus-wide problems with information technology services, Provost Deek announced NJIT’s new interim Chief Information Officer, Gregg Chottiner.

V. Faculty Senate report

Faculty Senate President Michalopoulou reported that the faculty senate had only met on three occasions since the last NJIT faculty meeting. She gave a brief description of the topics the senate is working on and postponed a more detailed report in favor of holding an open discussion regarding the evaluation of teaching at NJIT.

V. Open Discussion of Teaching Evaluations

Faculty Senate President Michalopoulou said that teaching evaluations have come under increasing scrutiny nationally, and that it has been some time since the faculty actively discussed how we utilized teaching evaluations at NJIT. She asked, What should we do?

We have to decide. Should we stick with the current evaluations as they are? Should we stick with them but change the questions? Should we supplement teaching evaluations with other forms of evaluations (e.g., peer evaluation)? Or do something different? It has been said that the union (PSA-AAUP) restricts us from doing peer to peer in-class evaluation. Among the faculty comments and responses were these:

- A. Faculty should consider the best practices in business management that entail 360-degree evaluation of students-instructional peers-management when considering how to evaluate teaching across campus.
- B. Several faculty (who are PSA representatives) noted that the faculty union (PSA-AAUP) does not actually restrict in any written form peer to peer in-class evaluation, and that the union could be open to changing its norms – allowing faculty and instructional staff engage in peer-to-peer evaluation. Faculty were generally amenable to the idea of working with the union to make peer-to-peer evaluation more acceptable across the campus.
- C. Tony Schuman, Dean of COAD, encouraged the faculty to look to systems that are focused on Student Outcomes. He pointed out that COAD is successfully utilizing the [internet-based Kepler archiving and retrieval system](#) to maintain and review student work associated with course delivery in COAD. He noted that systems like Kepler can be used in coordination with peer-to-peer evaluation and traditional course evaluations to give a more complete evaluation of instructional quality (“teaching effectiveness”).
- D. Regarding concerns about the use of course evaluations for promotion, tenure, and merit considerations, a former member of the University Promotion and Tenure Committee noted that it is important to separate out peer evaluation and student evaluation. He noted that it is easy to mischaracterize how they relate to P&T considerations at the department and University levels. He said it was his experience that the University P&T Committee looked at course evaluations as only a part of the Committee’s evaluation of teaching, taking in consideration feedback from the faculty member’s department, the teaching philosophy and materials provided by the faculty member under consideration, etc.
- E. One faculty member suggested that an additional goal of instructional evaluation could be to provide feedback to students. The student might want to know, for instance, what the risks of taking professor x versus professor y might be. He also suggested that there be a complaint mechanism for students to voice how the evaluation process relates to them.
- F. Some faculty expressed concerns about bias in the course evaluations, and the need to consider making evaluations mandatory for students, or at least making it mandatory for the higher and lower scores on each question being excluded in order to get a more accurate number.
- G. Faculty Senate President Michalopoulou noted that we already have a system that allows us to address low response rates by giving the evaluations in class (in a controlled environment).
- H. One faculty member asked if we can ask senior students to list instructors who were good or influential in their development, the general idea being that we would get a better assessment of faculty teaching from students at the end of their undergraduate careers.
- I. One faculty member noted the need for NJIT to increase incentives for faculty to participate in the Institute of Teaching.
- J. One faculty member suggested divorcing the teaching professor from the evaluating professor so that student and peer assessment of teaching is completely separated from the grading of the student.

VII. Other business

- A. One faculty member thanked the faculty senate for its work on behalf of the faculty, and then proceeded to ask whether the new policy on the proctoring of online exams was an NJIT or faculty senate policy. Faculty Senate President Michalopoulou responded that the policy was recommended by Faculty Senate and approved by Provost Deek, and was therefore NJIT policy.
- B. As the hour was drawing late and there were no further pressing issues, it was decided that any other business could wait until the next faculty meeting, which is currently scheduled for February 13, 2019.

VIII. Meeting adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:08 pm.