

CREATING NEW CONNECTIONS

In July, NJIT hosted the 2018 VOICE Summit, sponsored by Amazon Alexa. This was the first major tech conference in our new Wellness and Events Center, and it was the largest international voice-technology conference of the year. The event was an outstanding success and drew nearly 3,000 industry leaders and developers at the forefront of both natural language processing and technologies that are revolutionizing user engagement by leveraging voice. The Summit featured approximately 200 speakers, including thought-leaders from eight different countries as well as David Isbitski '98, who is Amazon's chief evangelist for Alexa and Echo.

By hosting this event, we succeeded in shining a spotlight on NJIT's growing prominence in the technology economy, in addition to our capabilities as both a top polytechnic university and a destination for conferences and other professional gatherings. Media coverage of the VOICE Summit and of NJIT's role as the conference host was extensive — nearly 900 instances of media coverage with an estimated advertising value of well over \$1 million. Social media also chronicled, to a global audience, the excitement on campus throughout the three-day event. In addition, we seized upon this opportunity to create new connections between a plethora of well-established and rising tech companies and NJIT, its students, and its faculty.

The cover story of this issue of *NJIT Magazine* also relates to creating connections. "Alumni Mentors Paying It Forward" takes a closer look at another type of connection — mentorship. At NJIT, mentorship is an integral component of the educational experience, and we are particularly grateful to our esteemed alumni who have taken advantage of opportunities to share their knowledge and experiences with our students. Like many of our alumni, a significant number of today's NJIT students are the first in their family to attend college. For them, mentors can provide vital support and help to increase awareness of the academic and professional opportunities of which the students can avail themselves. I hope you enjoy reading about the efforts of our alumni mentors, as well as the other topics covered in this issue, and I welcome your feedback. ■

