NJIT’S COVID CAVALRY
When the Pandemic Dimmed Campus Lights, Highlanders Roared Back with Ingenuity and Grit

FAB FOUR  2019 HONOR ROLL
TOWARD A BRIGHTER FUTURE

It is my privilege to introduce the annual Honor Roll of Donors as part of this special edition of NJIT Magazine, which recognizes our supporters’ continued commitment to shaping the future of NJIT.

As the far-reaching effects of COVID-19 continue to change the world in which we live, this issue’s cover story focuses on the concerted efforts of the NJIT community — alumni, faculty, staff, students and researchers — to mitigate the impact of this unprecedented global crisis. These initiatives range from designing and fabricating thousands of pieces of personal protective equipment to developing a novel test swab that can be 3D-printed using inexpensive, widely available materials and speedily assembled in a range of fabrication settings. During the COVID-19 pandemic, NJIT’s New Jersey Innovation Institute (NJII) has played a key role in ensuring that all 71 hospitals in the state report COVID-related data as completely and accurately as possible to track and validate the spread of the disease and assess its impact on the population. NJII is advising hospitals and practitioners on how to apply for funding in order to keep their facilities open and understand changes in the regulatory environment as well as the shift to telemedicine. Going forward, NJIT researchers are developing new testing approaches as demonstrated by Senior Vice Provost for Research Atam Dhawan’s work on the National Institutes of Health committee that relies on inexpensive, data-linked point-of-care devices for this and future pandemics.

This issue’s second feature spotlights NJIT undergraduates who continue to earn the nation’s top academic honors, the latest being a new university record of four students named Goldwater Scholars this year by the Barry Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Foundation. The scholarship is recognized among the country’s most prestigious for STEM undergraduates pursuing research careers. In “Fab Four,” you will read about this year’s NJIT Goldwater Scholar class, doubling last year’s total, which is the largest from any academic institution in New Jersey and equals second-most across the nation. NJIT exceeded universities such as Columbia University (3), Harvard University (3), Massachusetts Institute of Technology (2) and Princeton University (2).

As you read this issue of NJIT Magazine, we remain in the midst of an uncertain time. NJIT has felt the tragic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Individual members of our university community have contracted the virus and/or seen their relatives and loved ones battle COVID-19. Members of their families have lost employment and are facing financial hardship. Some have lost loved ones to this pandemic. We all have seen our lives profoundly disrupted — emotionally, socially and financially.

Higher education will play an indispensable role in our recovery from this pandemic as well as the prevention of another in the future. So, on behalf of all at NJIT, I thank every Honor Roll donor for your support of our university. Through your generosity, we can continue our mission to prepare the next generation of scientists, technologists, engineers and leaders to make a global impact.

As always, I hope you enjoy this issue of NJIT Magazine, and I welcome your feedback.
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Leading-edge achievements by faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends of NJIT
U.S. News & World Report has released its 2021 rankings for the nation’s top graduate schools, with NJIT ranked among the best for graduate degree programs in engineering. The university moved up two slots this year to No. 87 — up 24 slots in the past five years — and has been included on the distinguished list since 2003.

NJIT’s Newark College of Engineering, which celebrated its centennial in 2019, offers a range of master’s and Ph.D. degree programs. In recent years the college has greatly expanded its laboratory, hands-on and experiential learning components, increased student access to state-of-the-art physical and computing machinery, and geared its curriculum to extensive utilization of this technology — all of which reinforce the university’s reputation as one of the country’s best graduate engineering schools.

“Newark College of Engineering has consistently received many accolades over the years for offering high-caliber graduate programs taught by faculty who excel in teaching and research,” said Sotirios G. Ziavras, vice provost for graduate studies and dean of the graduate faculty at NJIT. “The U.S. News ranking of its graduate programs is once more a testament to its success.”

The rankings are based on peer assessments of academic excellence from deans of engineering schools and graduate studies, and quality assessments from recruiters of engineering school graduates. U.S. News also considered statistical indicators that measure the quality of a school’s faculty, student-faculty ratios and school selectivity in accepting applicants. The collected data came from statistical surveys of more than 2,081 graduate programs, and reputation surveys sent to over 24,603 academics and professionals in the featured disciplines.

NJIT is one of only four universities from New Jersey ranked in the Top 100.

After a table saw severed the top of his right index finger, Adam Zanellato, a 20-year-old cabinet-maker at the time, had to relearn basic hand maneuvers, such as how to write and hold a fork. There were no affordable prosthetics on the market to help him regain dexterity. Several years later, he still found it hard to pick up coins from a table.

A year and a half ago, he decided to restart his search, and began by contacting a friend in medical school for leads. The woman, an NJIT graduate, made this recommendation: present himself as a research project to students in the university’s biomedical engineering department, which has a strong focus on rehabilitation. She contacted Sergei Adamovich, the director of NJIT’s Center for Rehabilitation Robotics, who agreed to supervise a team with the help of Ashley Mont, a third-year Ph.D. student who specializes in robotic exoskeletons.

A team of four — Ricardo Garcia, Ashe Pignataro, Madison Taylor and Giovanna Nolan — quickly agreed to make it their senior capstone project and promised Zanellato that they would build him a prosthetic finger.

“With our specialized technologies and printing capabilities, the possibilities for design and customization are endless,” Mont noted, adding, “I had worked with each of these students and knew that if any team of undergraduates could succeed, they could.”

“This was not a theoretical exercise. We wanted to make sure our prosthesis was functional — that Adam was able to grip with strength and dexterity, hold utensils and even some tools, while also being able to lift small objects,” said Garcia, the project leader, adding that the team submitted their project for review by the university’s Institutional Review Board to develop a legal framework for where and how the device could be used. Four visits to campus and 10 prototypes later, Zanellato now wears it at home for simple tasks.

Their finger, which features an artificial interphalangeal (hinge) joint system, uses the force generated by the remaining part of the finger to power it, thus mimicking normal finger flexion and extension. To make it affordable, they developed a method for manufacturing it with a 3D printer, using strong but inexpensive materials.

“In terms of design, a key challenge was making sure that it could be easily reproduced if damaged by simply...
Daniel Meza, Hillier College’s First Fulbright Scholar, Works in Slime Mold

Students applying for Fulbright scholarships often see their work described as advanced, insightful, sophisticated or any number of similar platitudes — but for senior industrial design major Daniel Meza, the word was also slimy.

Meza, who plans to graduate in December from Hillier College of Architecture and Design and who’s also an Albert Dorman Honors College student, found his medium in mold and slime. He is just the fourth NJIT student to become a Fulbright Scholar and the first from HCAD.

“You’re not missing anything,” the Randolph, N.J., native explains to people who question if they heard that correctly. “Two years ago I had a design studio. It was experimental furniture. One of my best friends mentioned slime mold because I was talking about moss furniture.”

Meza said he found other artists and designers around the world who use mold and slime in photography and prints, but he doesn’t know of anyone using it for furniture. His current work uses the natural materials for decorative purposes, but he really wants to merge the materials with a form of plastic for actual construction elements.

So far he’s worked on a lamp, stool and table. He also wants to work on lights as well as seats.

The scholarship will take him to Macquarie University in Australia in January 2021, where he’ll develop a method for creating furniture out of slime mold. He applied for 10 months of study and was surprised when the scholarship committee awarded him two years.

“I first met Daniel in an advising meeting and he told me about his design work, including the slime mold table. I was intrigued and, to tell the truth, a little grossed out at first,” said Lorna Ronald, associate director in the Honors College, who manages the fellowship program at NJIT. “I asked to see it and, like Daniel, thought the vibrant yellow slime mold was incredibly beautifully incorporated into the design of the table.”

Research at a university like NJIT is typically associated with beakers and coding, not art and design. But it’s open to all students. “I love hearing about unique and unusual interests. Students often feel very bound by the careers that they have planned for themselves — when there are in fact a greater number of options for them. My job in advising for fellowships is to help students come to know themselves very well so that they can see clearly where their real passions lie and imagine ways to pursue them,” Ronald said.

Meza agreed — “As a designer, I didn’t really think there were opportunities for me to do research or get grants,” he said. “I’m so thankful for the faculty and staff who told me about this opportunity.”

reprinting a part,” Taylor noted.

“Our goal was to make it look more and more like a finger without sacrificing the mechanics,” Nolan said. Pignataro added, “Every tweak to the geometry has a story behind it. When it was pinching, we added a curve.”

Their invention won first prize in the university’s undergraduate TechQuest Challenge on Innovation Day last year. It has since acquired a name — The DeXter — and a professional description: “a body-powered finger prosthetic for subjects with amputations distal to the proximal interphalangeal joint.”

The team recently filed a patent on their invention through NJIT and is seeking to commercialize it.

“It’s very unusual that students have the chance to design a prosthetic for a specific person,” Adamovich said, “but that’s what made this project so exciting.”
‘Shark Tank’ Gives Deals to Professor, Alumnus of Industrial Design Program

A n adjunct professor and an alumnus, both affiliated with Hillier College of Architecture and Design, recently earned funding for their startup companies on the television show Shark Tank.

Professional designer and instructor Krystal Persaud took in $150,000 for her solar charging products, while alumnus Ryan Cruz saw his footwear company get $200,000. The show, which airs Friday evenings at 8 p.m. on ABC, features entrepreneurs competing for investments from celebrity judges who themselves are high-profile business executives and entrepreneurs. The show debuted in 2009, and with the publicity and exposure to investors watching the pitches, it has been a wildly popular showcase for entrepreneurs ever since.

Prior to launching her solar company, Persaud worked as a professional designer of educational toys, while also teaching courses in interactive design, product design and sustainable design at NJIT’s Hillier College and other design schools in the New York metro area. Her company is called Grouphug.

“In college, and for the past 15 years, I’ve been really interested in the environment and sustainability. The one area that felt really impossible was solar, because I live in the city and I don’t own my roof,” she explained. Then, “I went down a rabbit hole one day and was researching renewable energy,” Persaud said. “It started with the idea that everyone can make some kind of impact and we’re all in this together,” hence the name, Grouphug.

She learned that solar panels come in different sizes and shapes, not just large rectangles found on roofs, such as the kind being installed on top of NJIT’s Wellness and Events Center.

Working out of her office in Brooklyn, N.Y., Persaud started acquiring and making parts until she had a viable prototype. She raised $70,000 in a crowdfunding campaign and produced a stylish home charger, which is about the size of a laptop and hangs inside a window, and sells for $150. It holds 3.4 amps, which is the size of the battery in a high-end smartphone or pocket-sized backup battery. Grouphug also offers a commercial solar charger, which Persaud said is in the pilot-project stage. That product is a 150-watt charger, compared to 10 watts in the consumer edition.

Shark Tank producers contacted Persaud after seeing her Kickstarter video. The show aired 10 months later. She said there were 200 pages of paperwork, which required even more time and dedication beyond what she gives to her business, without any promise of even getting on the show. After the episode is filmed, it still takes a few months and meetings to get the funds. But she found the process more satisfying than seeking venture capital.

Technology investor and basketball owner Mark Cuban provided her funding through the show. Now she has venture capitalists calling on a regular basis. Persaud is not interested, though — she’d rather grow the company based on feedback from customers.

“Mark has been extremely available and willing to give advice, make connections and hop on the phone,” she said. “At first it was weird. After a while you get kind of used to it. The one thing that surprised me and was really great about Mark is, he was very open to it and actually came to my office in New York and sat down for an hour. He was open to the vision and we talked about it before we actually signed anything. He always tells startups and he told me this, don’t chase shiny objects. Chase customers.”

Cruz and Persaud both have advice for current students. “Knowing it’s all on me made it easier to transition to being an entrepreneur,” Cruz said. “In my program it was very flexible. They let you have the freedom to create whatever you wanted.”

As for Persaud, she looks to teach one class each fall and said she finds it helpful to hear fresh perspectives from students. “Being part of that cycle of educating designers, and seeing and inspiring them about what they could actually make … I think getting more of them to be entrepreneurial would be beneficial,” she said, encouraging students to utilize the tools and opportunities education provides to achieve their startup goals.
Shyquan Gibbs Named to DI-AAA ADA Scholar-Athlete Team

Shyquan Gibbs, a senior on the NJIT men’s basketball team, was named to the DI-AAA Athletic Directors Association Scholar-Athlete Team.

Gibbs was one of 11 men’s basketball players to earn the prestigious honor, which requires student-athletes to maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.20 (4.00 scale) in undergraduate study and to have been a starter or important reserve with legitimate athletics credentials. Nominees must have participated in at least 50% of the team’s games listed on the nomination form.

Gibbs started all 30 games for the Highlanders this season, increasing his games started streak to 108, which was the longest in the ASUN Conference, and giving him the program record for games played in a career (125). The Hillside, N.J., native finished third on the team in scoring (8.2 ppg) and second in assists (2.1 apg), while playing 32.6 minutes per game, the second most on the squad and seventh most in the ASUN.

A two-time team captain and three-time selection to the ASUN All-Academic Team, Gibbs completed his undergraduate degree in December with a 3.77 GPA and is currently working toward his master’s degree.

Six Highlanders were named to the 2020 Eastern Intercollegiate Volleyball Association (EIVA) All-Conference team, headed by Uvaldo Acosta Memorial Co-Player of the Year Alvaro Gimeno and Freshman of the Year Julian Meissner. The postseason EIVA teams are determined by a vote by the eight head coaches.

Gimeno was selected 2020 Uvaldo Acosta Memorial Co-Player of the Year and named to the first team.

Meissner tabbed 2020 Freshman of the Year and was named to the second team.

In addition to Gimeno, senior Luca Berger earned first-team honors while junior Roque Nido joined Meissner on the second team.

Jens Feldthus and Martin de Chavarria earned honorable mentions.
A gift made today will support NJIT’s everyday heroes ... 
THE STUDENTS!

Consider a gift in support of the Highlander Student Emergency Fund, which provides relief to students facing financial adversity as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, or to the general scholarship endowment which will augment our financial aid budget for our students.

To make a secure online donation visit njit.edu/givenow
NJIT’s COVID CAVALRY

When the Pandemic Dimmed

Campus Lights, Highlanders

Roared Back With Ingenuity and Grit
In mid-March, the COVID-19 pandemic abruptly shuttered classrooms, laboratories and workspaces across the campus. But no sooner were the lights extinguished than the global NJIT community — stretching from Newark to China — mobilized to address the unprecedented global crisis.

To aid front-line workers, students and faculty with 3D printers and other fabrication technology designed and produced thousands of pieces of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks and face shields. Graduates working in hospitals and on emergency crews reached out to us for help, while generous alumni thousands of miles away provided equipment and funds to support us. Researchers in remote labs began creating novel methods to track, test and neutralize the virus.

To bolster societal infrastructure, health care experts from NJIT’s New Jersey Innovation Institute are helping hospitals and practitioners navigate this turbulent period, while advising companies looking to make timely use of their technologies and manufacturing capabilities. A tech-savvy alumnus, now a judge, has taught about 2,500 lawyers, judges and law clerks to conduct court cases virtually.

Looking to the future, Atam Dhawan, senior vice provost for research, is helping to organize a large-scale national initiative to fast-track the development of innovative SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic tests to facilitate our safe return to normal life. A humanities professor is joining with scientists, economists, educators and others to prepare for a post-pandemic “sustainability transition.”

Top: Nicholas Warholak ’19 is a designer on a team of NJIT physicists and advanced manufacturing specialists that created a novel test swab that can be 3D-printed using inexpensive, widely available materials and speedily assembled in a range of fabrication settings. They are making the design available, free of charge, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The device grips the swabbing material like forceps and ejects it into a sample vial hands-free.
ON THE FRONT LINES
As emergency response teams in the region scrambled to acquire dwindling medical supplies to combat the surge in COVID-19 infections, diverse members of the NJIT community — from engineers to physicists to advanced manufacturing specialists to students — began designing and fabricating devices to help address the shortfall.

Students, faculty and staff at the Makerspace at NJIT have, as of May 15, produced 3,500 face shields for healthcare workers and emergency responders in Northern New Jersey. “Our goal was to build something as cleanly as possible that is easily sanitized and reusable,” said Daniel Brateris, director of experiential learning at NJIT’s Newark College of Engineering. The shields made in Makerspace are cut from clear polycarbonate plastic and can withstand even industrial-grade cleansers.

Responding to a design challenge issued by Albert Dorman Honors College, Greg Tanis, the engineering student who won the contest’s award, has, with the assistance of friends, produced nearly 1,500 face shields so far. Laura Gould, a Dorman architecture student, has so far made more than 1,200 masks for hospitals, emergency rooms and community organizations in the New York-metro region.

Inspired by these efforts, NJIT students and their collaborators formed The CommonHealth Project, a startup organization with a face-shield design they are producing through a crowdsourced assembly model. A team of teachers in Morris and Essex counties, led by NJIT alumna Jessica Liatys ’10, has produced hundreds of masks, face shields and well over 1,000 ear guards. Concerned alumni, including some from China, have sent the university 13,000 face masks to help with the onslaught.

INVENTION HUBS
A team of NJIT physicists has developed a novel test swab that can be 3D-printed using inexpensive, widely available materials and speedily assembled in a range of fabrication settings. To augment the nation’s testing capabilities, the inventors are making the swab’s design publicly available, free of charge, to large and small manufacturers.

The developers, from NJIT’s Additive Manufacturing Lab (AddLab), posted the design on the National Institutes of Health’s 3D Print Exchange website, which provides technology related to biomedical science that is readily compatible with 3D printers. While they filed a provisional patent on the design in mid-April, they say it’s important to make it available immediately. Basic medical supplies, including swabs, are still in short supply.

“Broad testing is essential to contain the spread of the virus,” said John Federici, director of the AddLab. The design has novel features that simplify fabrication and

Left: Daniel Brateris, director of experiential learning at NJIT’s Newark College of Engineering, tries on a face shield that was designed and fabricated in the Makerspace at NJIT. Created for healthcare workers and emergency responders in Northern New Jersey, the shield is cut from clear polycarbonate plastic and can be sanitized and reused.

Bottom: Justin Suriano (left), manager of the Makerspace, also dons the shield prototype.
WE NEED TO QUICKLY IMPROVE THE ACCURACY OF TESTS — THEIR SENSITIVITY AND SELECTIVITY — AND THEIR SPEED IN DELIVERING RESULTS. WE MUST ALSO MAKE THEM INEXPENSIVE AND USER-FRIENDLY SO THAT PEOPLE CAN, IN SOME CASES, USE THEM AT HOME AND SEND THE RESULTS THROUGH MOBILE DEVICES TO DATA NETWORKS. THIS WILL ALLOW US TO HELP INDIVIDUALS AND TRACK THE DISEASE THROUGHOUT THE POPULATION.”

- Atam Dhawan, Senior Vice Provost for Research and one of the organizers of a national initiative to fast-track the development of innovative SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic tests

storage, minimize material waste and reduce contamination risk. The device consists of two interlocking arms that work together, like forceps, to grip the swabbing material. By sliding the two arms against each other, the device can eject the sample, depositing it into a vial with no need to handle it.

A team of environmental engineers at NJIT is developing a new way to track the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the novel coronavirus, by combining advanced statistical methods with models that incorporate environmental conditions, such as wind speed, temperature and social distancing.

To date, modelers are largely tracking the growth in the number of cases and adjusting their projections as the numbers change, attributing flattening curves, for example, to social measures. With funding from a National Science Foundation RAPID (Rapid Response Research) grant, the NJIT team is creating a model that will include these and other parameters to make their predictions.

“We want to add the physical dimension to models, taking into account the mechanisms by which the disease spreads, to explain a large jump in cases in a location, for example, or the differences in rates of increase in different cities in the same region, as well as the connections among them,” said Michel Boufadel, director of NJIT’s Center for Natural Resources and a co-principal investigator of the grant.

The team aims to pin down critical points where infections accelerate, as in subways and grocery stores, and suggest ways to modulate the spread. In an indoor area, for example, these actions could hypothetically include finding means to diffuse the viral load, which may influence the severity of the disease, by introducing fresh, uncontaminated air.

AT THE OPERATIONAL CENTER OF HOSPITALS AND THE COURT SYSTEM

NJIT’s New Jersey Innovation Institute (NJII) works with hospitals and health care practitioners in the state to modernize and improve their systems for delivering evidence-based care, safely sharing patient information and providing critical data on diagnoses, admissions and discharges to the New Jersey Department of Health.

During the pandemic, the institute is working with hospitals and health care practitioners to ensure that all 71 hospitals in the state report COVID-19 related data as completely and accurately as possible to track and validate the spread of the disease and assess its impact on the population. NJII experts are also advising hospitals and practitioners on everything from how to apply for funding in order to keep their facilities open, to understand changes in the regulatory environment and to shift to telemedicine.

The institute is connecting hospitals in need of supplies, from masks and shields, to mobile devices, to clinical equipment, with manufacturers and distributors. NJII has, for example, identified providers of N95 masks and face shields and portable, trailer-based negative pressure isolation wards for the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, University Hospital and Hackensack Meridian Health.

On March 15, Stuart Rabner, chief justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court, suspended in-person proceedings in Superior Court, giving the judiciary two days to prepare for cases in virtual courtrooms. The next day, Passaic County Superior Court Judge Sohail Mohammed ’88, a former electrical engineer and technology enthusiast, got to work.

In a series of Zoom conferences, Mohammed has taught about 2,500 attorneys, judges and law clerks the mechanics of conducting a case by phone, tablet and videoconference: how to virtually interview witnesses, take pleas from imprisoned defendants, send encrypted documents and create breakout rooms on Zoom so attorneys and their clients can confer privately during a trial.

In late April, he began preparing municipal court attorneys, judges and
staff to take their cases virtual at the end of the month.

“Virtual courtrooms are not physical, but they’re real,” Mohammed told New Jersey Bar Association members honing their skills in one of his April Zoom workshops. So far, the courts have conducted more than 1,200 remote proceedings with 80,000 participants. From his own basement, Mohammed, a Family Court judge, has presided over arraignments, pleas, sentences and emergent motions.

“It has been critical to keep the doors of justice open and provide access to the courts in a situation such as this,” Mohammed said. “We’ll see more virtual courtrooms five years down the line. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were able to use technology to provide greater access to justice.”

**SHAPING THE POST-PANDEMIC WORLD**

Atam Dhawan, senior vice provost for research, is helping to organize a large-scale national initiative to fast-track the development of innovative SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic tests to assist the public’s safe return to normal life. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) program, Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics, will spend up to $500 million over the next several months on promising technologies aimed at increasing the nation’s testing capacity by up to 100-fold.

The goal is to deliver new testing procedures to the public as soon as late summer and to make SARS-CoV-2 testing readily available to every American. Dhawan chairs the national advisory board of NIH’s Point of Care Technology Research Network, which will coordinate the program’s review of the anticipated thousands of proposals.

The National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering is currently soliciting ideas for both innovative point-of-care and home-based tests and improvements to clinical laboratory tests. The agency will support not just research on new methods, but their
“IT HAS BEEN CRITICAL TO KEEP THE DOORS OF JUSTICE OPEN AND PROVIDE ACCESS TO THE COURTS IN A SITUATION SUCH AS THIS.”
- Passaic County Superior Court Judge Sohail Mohammed ‘88

Front-line heroes on the Lyndhurst Police Emergency Squad: (from left) Captain Tarcisio Nunes ’08, Constantine Baltzis ’20, Elizabeth DeCarlo ’14 and John Fontanetta, M.D., the squad’s medical director, who approved NJIT’s face-shield design.

development, validation, commercialization and distribution.

“We need to quickly improve the accuracy of tests — their sensitivity and selectivity — and their speed in delivering results. We must also make them inexpensive and user-friendly so that people can, in some cases, use them at home and send the results through mobile devices to data networks. This will allow us to help individuals and track the disease throughout the population,” Dhawan said. “We are learning important lessons that will enhance our preparation for future disease outbreaks and other disasters.”

What does the global slowdown mean for the environment and sustainable living, and especially if some of the radical changes in everyday lifestyles and consumption habits persist long term? Earlier this spring, the topic brought together a diverse group of scientists, economists, educators and hundreds more around the world virtually during a live webinar titled, “COVID-19 Can Help Wealthier Nations Prepare for a Sustainability Transition.”

“Few of us imagined that we would be looking into the eye of a cold stop shutdown of significant parts of the global economy,” said Maurie Cohen, professor at NJIT’s Department of Humanities and a host at the event. “We designed this session as a platform to consider how the fundamental cultural and political narrative of our times is inevitably going to change, and in perhaps radical ways.”

The online event — inspired by Cohen and colleagues on behalf of the Future Earth Knowledge-Action Network on Systems of Sustainable Consumption and Production — highlighted the need for sustainability issues and initiatives to take a prominent place in coming post-COVID-19 economic recovery plans. Participants weighed in from their living spaces and varied time zones, stretching from Japan and Australia to the West Coast of North America.

“The NJIT community is nimble, strategic and united in the face of a challenge. Together, we are harnessing our technical acumen, organizational skills, entrepreneurial drive and generosity to help the nation navigate this public health crisis,” remarked NJIT President Joel Bloom. “Our students, faculty, staff, trustees and alumni are problem-solvers who possess great talent and fierce determination. They give me reason for optimism and hope.”

Author: Tracey L. Regan is an NJIT Magazine contributing writer.
NJIT undergrads continue to earn the nation’s top academic honors, the latest being a new university record of four students named Goldwater Scholars this year by the Barry Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Foundation. The scholarship is recognized among the country’s most prestigious for STEM undergraduates pursuing research careers.

This year’s NJIT Goldwater Scholar class, doubling last year’s total, is the largest from any academic institution in New Jersey and equals second-most across the nation, beating out universities such as Columbia University (3), Harvard University (3), Massachusetts Institute of Technology (2) and Princeton University (2).

Of the more than 5,000 applicants this year, only 396 students from 461 colleges and universities nationwide have been named Goldwater Scholars.

“This was the best NJIT has ever done with this program. ... The reason so many of our students received this prestigious scholarship this year, first and foremost, is due to the strong qualifications of our nominees,” said John Carpinelli, NJIT’s campus representative for the Goldwater program who has overseen the scholar nominee selections since 2010. “Undergraduate research has become a part of NJIT’s culture, and the wealth of opportunities for interested students to obtain meaningful research experiences has created a much larger pool of strongly qualified candidates to nominate for the Goldwater program.”

NJIT’s 2020 Goldwater Scholars will now each earn a prize of up to $7,500 per year for up to two years to support their education and research. Here they are:

**SYDNEY SWEET** is a junior majoring in chemical engineering, whose nanoparticle research is aiming to improve health care for Type 2 diabetes patients. During a first-year NJIT Provost Summer Research Fellowship with her professor Xiaoyang Xu, she began a study of hydrogels for the delivery of heart regenerative therapeutics, and contributed on a review paper on nanotechnology-mediated devices to treat obesity published in the journal *Advanced Healthcare Biomaterials*. Since then, she’s earned a $3,000 seed grant for research to improve diabetes drug delivery — work she’s presented at the 2019 American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE) national conference in Orlando, Fla. “I am developing a novel oral delivery system using nanoparticles that can offer a safer way to deliver drugs than how they are typically administered now via subcutaneous injections,” said Sweet.

Through NJIT programs, she also landed her current co-op at Infineum, and a study-abroad opportunity in Melbourne, Australia, last year, which she says has shaped her future career plans.

**On Her Scholarship and Future:** “Living in Melbourne for six months greatly expanded my worldview. ... The city’s sustainability efforts and wildlife conservation inspired me to pursue...”
nanomaterials research in the future that could improve alternative energy sources to combat climate change. I am grateful for the opportunities that may arise from being a Goldwater Scholar, but my greatest takeaway is the empowerment that it’s already sparked in me to pursue my own research path.”

SARA ABDELHAMID is a sophomore chemical engineering major researching the impact that different bottom shapes of industrial stirring vessels have on the production quality of everything from the taste of our food to the effectiveness of our drugs. She started her work as a second-year student in the mixing lab of NJIT Distinguished Professor Piero Armenante, and has since been constructing her own customized mixing systems for her research at NJIT’s Makerspace. Her work has been recognized nationally, receiving first prize in the 2019 AIChE Conference’s Undergraduate Poster Competition. “The findings I soon hope to publish have the potential to make industrial mixing processes much more efficient and cost-effective,” said Abdelhamid, who is currently taking part in a co-op in Johnson & Johnson’s consumer R&D department.

JOSEPH TORSIELLO is a sophomore dual majoring in applied physics and mathematical sciences and involved in research spanning everything from nanotechnology to mosquitoes. As part of his 2019 NJIT Provost Summer Research Fellowship alongside professor Dibakar Datta, he’s applied molecular dynamics simulations to study friction properties of 2D materials, which could enhance the engineering of nanotechnologies.

Torsiello sees himself pursuing a Ph.D. in physics. That aspiration has been spurred on by his research using a laser-based technology called lidar (light detection and ranging) to measure backscattered light from spinning blades of nanodrones, as well as the wings of flying mosquitoes. Working with lidars in the lab of physics professor Benjamin Thomas, Torsiello generates numerical simulations that can help monitor mosquito populations more precisely. “This is extremely important for areas where mosquito diseases are prevalent,” said Torsiello.

On His Scholarship and Future: “It’s an honor to perform research at NJIT and to be a Goldwater Scholar, as both will have allowed me to figure out more about my future career interests and myself overall.”

PHILIP ZALESKI is an 18-year-old junior majoring in applied mathematics who began showing his talents with numbers at an incredibly early age. He started taking AP calculus exams when he was 10, counting toward his college calculus course credits. “My father is a mathematics lecturer at NJIT and my two older brothers were both applied math majors who were all extremely willing to talk to me about their work,” recalled Zaleski.

Arriving at NJIT at age 14, Zaleski has since earned numerous distinctions including being inducted into NJIT’s chapter of Pi Mu Epsilon National Mathematics Honorary Society and receiving multiple Daljit Singh and Devinder Kaur Ahluwalia Scholarships. Through his recent NJIT research fellowship with mathematics professor Shariar Afkahmi, he’s published work in the MDPI journal Fluids to better model the behavior of electrified droplets, such as those used in inkjet printing or electrospray ionization mass spectrometry.

On His Scholarship and Future: “I was incredibly happy to receive the scholarship, as all the hard work that the people at NJIT and I had put into my application had finally paid off! I plan on applying to graduate schools for applied math and hopefully following in the footsteps of my father by teaching at the university level and furthering others in the knowledge of mathematics.”

Author: Jesse Jenkins is an NJIT Magazine contributing writer.
The entire NJIT community extends special thanks to the members of the 1881 Society for their very generous investments in the university.

In the past year alone, 1881 Society members have given nearly $8 million to NJIT, adding over $3 million to the endowment.

The 1881 Society is NJIT’s premier recognition group for alumni and friends who have included the university in their estate plans, have established life income-generating gifts, or have made other planned gift arrangements.

More than 300 individuals belong to this exclusive group of benefactors, whose generosity provides funding for student scholarships, faculty research, campus enhancements and other initiatives.

On behalf of the students and faculty at NJIT, thank you!

For information on becoming a member of the 1881 Society, please contact us today.

BETH S. KORNSTEIN
Associate Vice President of Planned Giving
973.596.8548
bkornste@njit.edu
Dear NJIT Alumni and Benefactors:

On behalf of the NJIT community, I am pleased to share with you the 2019 Honor Roll of Donors. I hope that its arrival at your homes finds you and your loved ones staying healthy and safe during these difficult times.

The coronavirus pandemic has brought about unprecedented disruptions and challenges for all of us. Its impact has been widespread and far-reaching, touching every aspect of our individual and collective lives. It has also changed — at least temporarily, but possibly for much longer — many businesses and industries. Higher education is no exception. One recent study estimates that COVID-19 could lead to the closure of as many as 1,000 colleges and universities across the nation.

NJIT will not be one of them. In fact, our university will not just survive but continue to flourish — and it will flourish in large part because of the long list of benefactors highlighted in this special issue of NJIT Magazine.

In 2019, 5,976 alumni and friends contributed nearly $17 million to the university, establishing 46 scholarships and adding $6.5 million in gifts to the endowment. Among last year’s gifts was the single largest in NJIT history, which resulted in the naming of the J. Robert and Barbara A. Hillier College of Architecture and Design. Just as important, a record number of alumni made a gift to their alma mater in 2019. These donations pushed the university’s alumni giving rate to 10.3% — more than double the national median for public universities.

These generous philanthropic investments have strengthened the university in a host of critically important ways. They have helped to ensure that an NJIT education remains financially affordable for all deserving students and their families. They have contributed to the development of STEM-focused, career-relevant curricula. They have underwritten the renewal of the spaces in which our students learn, study, conduct research and prepare themselves to become tomorrow’s innovators, problem-solvers and leaders. They have funded research that has pushed the frontiers of knowledge and improved human lives.

To all of you who have invested in our hardworking students, world-class faculty, cutting-edge programs and state-of-the-art facilities during the past year, thank you for your continued generosity. Because of you, NJIT’s future remains exceedingly bright.

With gratitude and appreciation,

Kenneth Alexo, Jr., Ph.D.
Vice President for Development & Alumni Relations
President, Foundation at NJIT

The Leadership Circle includes the Eberhardt Society – $25,000 or more, Weston Society – $10,000 to $24,999, Founders’ Club – $5,000 to $9,999, President’s Circle – $1,000 to $4,999. In addition to the Leadership Circle, gifts are recognized at the Dean’s Club – $500 to $999, Annual Fellow – $100 to $499 and Donors – up to $99.

*deceased
The Golden Highlanders — those who received their NCE degrees 50 or more years ago — represented the university’s most senior and distinguished alumni at the 2019 Commencement ceremony.

1951

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Annual Fellow
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1952

Eberhardt Society
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Weston Society
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President’s Circle
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1953

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Henry R. Krauss, ’54
Fred O. Stickel, ’54

Dean’s Club
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Piave Corradi, ’56
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18 NJIT FOUNDATION DONORS 2019

The contributions in this report were received by the university between January 1, 2019 and December 31, 2019.
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Sheldon Krueger, '60
James V. Klimchock, '60
Paul J. Koebel, '60

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Norbert G. Hornstein, '60
Robert G. Schmidt, '60
Roy G. Schmidt, '60
Borah S. Simon, '60
Edward A. Szott, '60

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A. Michael Noll, '61
John H. Olson, '61

**President's Circle**
Richard D. Disman, '61
Richard J. Otero, '61
George Post, '61

**Eberhardt Society**
Martin Tuchman, '62

**Weston Society**
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**Founders' Club**
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Fred W. Ehrman, '61
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Michael S. Taddeo, '61
Joseph F. Tartaglia, '61
Joseph Unterkoller, Jr., '61

**1962**

**Eberhardt Society**
Martin Tuchman, '62

**Weston Society**
Leona M. Seazholtz, '62

**Founders' Club**
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**Annual Fellow**
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**Dean's Club**
Donor: $500,000. Named in honor of the founding director of Newark Technical School, Dr. Charles A. Colton, the Colton Society celebrates the spirit of innovation and achievement that has distinguished NJIT since 1881.

**COLTON SOCIETY**

Established in 2020, the Colton Society is New Jersey Institute of Technology’s premier giving society, recognizing alumni and friends whose lifetime contributions to the university exceed $500,000. Named in honor of the founding director of Newark Technical School, Dr. Charles A. Colton, the Colton Society celebrates the spirit of innovation and achievement that has distinguished NJIT since 1881.

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Martin Tuchman, ‘62
Ying Wu, ‘88, ‘16 HON

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David M. Moskowitz, ‘63

**Dean's Club**
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Phillip L. Gural, ‘63

*deceased

The Leadership Circle includes the Eberhardt Society – $25,000 or more, Weston Society – $10,000 to $24,999, Founders’ Club – $5,000 to $9,999, President’s Circle – $1,000 to $4,999. In addition to the Leadership Circle, gifts are recognized at the Dean’s Club – $500 to $999, Annual Fellow – $100 to $499 and Donors – up to $99.

NJIT FOUNDATION DONORS 2019 19
1963  continued
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Michael A. Basileo, ’64
Frank P. Carbin, ’64
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Raymond T. Hsu, ’64
Anthony J. Ippolito, ’64
Robert M. Haiken, ’65
Ralph J. Ferraro, ’65
Conrad J. Boisvert, ’65

President’s Circle
James F. Flynn, Jr., ’65
Daniel J. Carroll, Jr., ’65, ’70

Weston Society
Lawrence A. Raia, ’65

Eberhardt Society
Lawrence A. Raia, ’65

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Ralph J. Ferraro, ’65
Robert F. Finnerty, ’65
Robert M. Haiken, ’65

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Gary R. LeMann, ’65

1965
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Weston Society
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James F. Flynn, Jr., ’65

Annual Fellow
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Michael A. Basileo, ’64
Frank P. Carbin, ’64
Lester T. Cox, Jr., ’64
Lawrence Decke, ’64
John P. Forde, Sr., ’64
Raymond T. Hsu, ’64
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Robert M. Haiken, ’65
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President’s Circle
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Daniel J. Carroll, Jr., ’65, ’70

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Gowton T. Achaibar, ‘86
Manisha D. Achaibar, ‘86
Maurice A. Deek, ‘86

President’s Circle
Anibal Alcantara, Jr., ‘86
Richard M. Brunner, ‘86
Antonio C. Crincoli, PE, ‘86
Robert M. Longo, ‘86
Arun Sitaraman, ‘86,’89

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Nancy C. Crincoli, ‘86
David C. D’Andrea, ‘86,’93
Steven L. Leone, ‘86
Gino F. Morello, ‘86

Annual Fellow
Derek M. Aziz, ‘86
Patricia M. Bataille, ‘86
David R. Bizuga, ‘86
Robert D. Bluze, ‘86
Mark S. Cardone, ‘86
Daniel D. Chukuvor, ‘86
Arthur H. Crawford, ‘86
Kenneth A. Faenza, ‘86
Glen A. Gaffney, ‘86
Eduardo E. Galvan, ‘86
Glennesa R. Gordon, ‘86,’93
Vincent C. Guthrie, ‘86
Kevin E. Haszko, ‘86
Orest W. Hrycak, ‘86
Lance F. Larsen, ‘86
Angel E. Martinez, ‘86
James C. Menke, ‘86
Ronald L. Michels, ‘86
Kathy M. Monteiro, ‘86,’89
Dennis R. Morrison, ‘86
Rajamani Muralidharan, ‘86,’87
Thomas J. Negrán, ‘86
Andrea Piazza, ‘86,’87
Massimo A. Piazzo, ‘86,’89,’91
Vincent J. Pietrucha, ‘86
Joshua F. Rosenberg, ‘86
Kevin A. Sachs, ‘86
Nicholas J. Sciarrotta, ‘86
James M. Sidebottom, ‘86,’90
Richard W. Stowe, ‘86
Walter Syrek, ‘86
Walter Szynonosz, ‘86

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Bruce G. Hudzik, ‘86
David J. Laube, ‘86
Mark L. Lavach, ‘86
Dennis Meehan, ‘86
Manuel S. Nolau Jr., ‘86,’89
Gary G. Orban, ‘86
Robert W. Sarnowski, ‘86
Richard F. Seamon, ‘86
Robert N. Tully, ‘86

1987

Founders’ Club
Batabanu E. Adewumi, Sr., ‘87,’88,’97
Domingo J. Diaz, ‘87

President’s Circle
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Kalyan R. Raman, ‘87
Edward P. Stevenson, ‘87

Dean’s Club
Benedict J. Cabrera, ‘87
John S. Aletta, ‘87
Carlos Armesto, ‘87
Andrew T. Balto, ‘87
John A. Bonnet, ‘87
Subrata Chatterjee, ‘87,’92
Yung-Ming Chen, ‘87
Jayan U. Dhru, ‘87
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Thomas F. Graham, ‘87
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Nicholas A. Koncz, ‘87,’94
Duc-Huy Ngo, ‘87
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Douglas P. Lischick, ‘87,’89
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Wayne A. Patterson, ‘87
Andrew W. Schuler, ‘87,’91
Rudolph R. Schwarz, ‘87
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The Leadership Circle includes the Eberhardt Society – $25,000 or more, Weston Society – $10,000 to $24,999, Founders’ Club – $5,000 to $9,999, President’s Circle – $1,000 to $4,999. In addition to the Leadership Circle, gifts are recognized at the Dean’s Club – $500 to $999, Annual Fellow – $100 to $499 and Donors – up to $99.

*deceased

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1988

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Robert K. Fritz, ’88
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Paul W. Laman, ’88
Yalan Wang Wu, ’88
Ying Wu, ’88, ’16 HON

Annual Fellow
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Aarón Beaufort, ’88
John A. Gunnung, Jr., ’88
Keith Kollar, ’88
Anthony Pedro, ’88
Erion J. Peter, ’88
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Chi Tang, ’88
William D. Wilson, ’88
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Lankeswara H. Wijayarathne, ’88
Gabriele E. Windgasse-von Wendorff, ’88

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Balasubramanian, ’89
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Devent O. Carter, ’89
Venkatraman
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Min-Jie Sun, ’93
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Zenon Tofil, '95
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Wen Zhang, '95
Yahong Zhang, '95

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Samir Saini, '97
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Consuelo Ruiz, '97
Jose R. Santinio, '97
Umang A. Soni, '97, '00
Ella D. Thompson, '97

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Gaurav Kapoor, '98, '01
Shifang Zhou, '98

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Ming Cheng, '98
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Christopher Greco, '98
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James R. Laws, '98
Mark C. Litwin, '98, '98
Gerry K. Loeb, '98
Dilip K. Mandal, '98
Giovanni P. Miasano, '98
Tao Qu, '98
William F. Schneider, '98

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Bruce M. Fleisher, '99
Wendorff, '99

Weston Society
Jie Zhang, '99

Founders' Club
Matthew J. Hill, '99
Robin S. Tanenbaum, '99

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Marcelle M. Jackson, '99
Roy V. Oommen, '99
Joseph T. Roman, '99

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Jiangang Luo, '99
Sung M. Maeng, '99, '05
Erick Mathurin, '99

TOTAL COMMITMENTS
FY 2015-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>$16.8M</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
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<td>$14.9M</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>$16.9M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Michael Busch, Jr., ’00, ’10
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Michael Busch, Jr., ’00, ’10
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NJIT has renamed its College of Architecture and Design for J. Robert and Barbara A. Hillier to reflect the globally renowned architects’ historic donation to the university. Their gift, the university’s largest ever, will enrich the architecture and design program in many ways: with scholarships that diversify the pool of talented architects entering the profession and funds for the technology that will advance it, to name just two.

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University leaders, trustees, faculty and student-researchers opened NJIT’s Microfabrication Innovation Center in December 2019. (From left) Edward J. Bishof, Sr., senior vice president for finance and chief financial officer; Fadi P. Deek ’85, ’86, ’97, provost and senior executive vice president, NJIT; Atam P. Dhawan, senior vice provost for research, NJIT; Pedro Moura ’20; and Peter A. Cistaro ’68, NJIT Board of Trustees.

NJIT welcomed 35 data science students to its newly opened NJIT@JerseyCity location in the fall semester, with a goal of doubling that number in the spring and reaching 500 students in three years. (From left) Edward J. Bishof, Sr., senior vice president for finance and chief financial officer; Fadi P. Deek ’85, ’86, ’97, provost and senior executive vice president, NJIT; Craig Gotsman, dean of Ying Wu College of Computing, NJIT; Joel S. Bloom, president, NJIT; Jordan Hu ’89, founder/chief executive officer, RiskVal Financial Solutions, LLC and member of the NJIT Board of Trustees; and Andrew P. Christ P.E. ’94, ’01, senior vice president for real estate development and capital operations, NJIT.

MengChu Zhou, a pioneer in automation science and engineering who optimizes systems, from manufacturing and data centers to transportation, in order to glean efficiencies and improve outcomes, received NJIT’s 2019 Excellence in Research Award. (From left) Marjorie A. Perry ’05, president and chief executive officer of MZM Construction & Management and chair, NJIT Board of Overseers; MengChu Zhou, distinguished professor of electrical and computer engineering; and Joel S. Bloom, president of NJIT.
How can different-sized people perform identical fine-motor tasks equally well, such as hitting a baseball or sending a text? In a study of the connection between brain, body and locomotor movement, researchers simulate “brain swaps” in fish to find out.

SIMULATED ‘FRANKENFISH BRAIN-SWAPS’ REVEAL SENSES CONTROL BODY MOVEMENT

Plenty of fictional works like Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein have explored the idea of swapping out a brain from one individual and transferring it into a completely different body. However, a team of biologists and engineers has now used a variation of the sci-fi concept, via computer simulation, to explore a core brain-body question.

How can two people with vastly different-sized limbs and muscles perform identical fine-motor tasks equally well, such as hitting a baseball or sending a text? Is it a unique tuning between our brain and nervous system with the rest of our body that controls these complex motions, or is feedback from our senses taking charge?

In a new study featured in the journal eLife, researchers have computationally modeled the various brains and bodies of a species of weakly electric fish, the glass knifefish (Eigenmannia virescens), to successfully simulate “fish brain transplants” and investigate.

The team’s simulations, which involved swapping models of the fishes’ information processing and motor systems, revealed that after undergoing a sudden jump into the different body of their tank-mate, the “Frankenfish” quickly compensated for the brain-body mismatch by heavily relying on sensory feedback to resume control of fine-motor movements required for swimming performance.

Researchers say the findings provide new evidence that animals can lean on feedback from the senses to aid the interplay of the brain, body and stimulus from their external environment in guiding locomotor movement, rather than depending on precise tuning of brain circuits to the mechanics of the body’s muscles and skeleton.

“What this study shows is the deep role of sensory feedback in everything we do,” said Eric Fortune, professor at NJIT’s Department of Biological Sciences and author of the study, funded by the National Science Foundation. “People have been trying to figure out how the animal movement works forever. It turns out that swapping brains of these fishes is a great way to address this fundamental question and gain a better understanding for how we might control our bodies.”

Using experimental tanks outfitted with high-res cameras in the lab, the researchers tracked the subtle movements of three glass knifefish of different shapes and sizes as they shuttled back and forth within their tunnel-like refuges — a common behavior among electric fish that includes rapid and nuanced adjustments to produce sensory information that the fish need for keeping a fixed position within the safety of their hidden habitats, also known as station-keeping.

The team collected various sensory and kinematic measurements linked to the exercise — most notably, the micromovements of the fishes’ ribbon-like fins that are critical to locomotor function during shuttling activity — and applied the data to create computer models of the brain and body of each fish.

“We showed that movements of the ribbon fin could be used as a proxy of the neural controller applied by the central nervous system,” explained Ismail Uyanik, assistant professor of engineering at Hacettepe University, Turkey, and former postdoctoral researcher involved in the study at NJIT. “The data allowed us to estimate the locomotor dynamics and to calculate the controllers that the central nervous system applies during the control of this behavior.”

“We logged nearly 40,000 ribbon-fin movements per fish during their shuttling to get the data we ended up using to help build models of each fish’s locomotor plant and controller,” added Fortune.

With their models, the team began computationally swapping controllers and plants between the fish, observing that the brain swaps had virtually no effect on the models’ simulated swimming behaviors when they included sensory feedback data. However, without the sensory feedback data included in the models, the fishes’ swimming performance dropped off completely. “Essentially, sensory feedback rescues them,” said Fortune.

The team says the findings could also help inform engineers in the design of future robotics and sensor technology. “We want to be able to make robots that perform as well as humans in controlling body movement, but we need better control algorithms, and that’s what we are getting at in these studies,” said Fortune.

Author: Jesse Jenkins is an NJIT Magazine contributing writer.
NJIT’s Response to COVID-19

The NJIT community is nimble, strategic and united in the face of a challenge. From the moment our campus turned virtual in mid-March, Highlanders got to work. Here’s how:

• Students and faculty with 3D printers and other fabrication technology designed and produced thousands of pieces of personal protective equipment such as masks and face shields.

• Researchers in remote labs began creating innovative methods and devices to track, test and neutralize the virus.

• Health care experts from NJIT’s New Jersey Innovation Institute are key advisers to hospitals and practitioners in this turbulent environment and to companies looking to make timely use of their technologies and manufacturing capabilities.

• Graduates working in hospitals and on emergency crews reached out to us for help, while generous alumni thousands of miles away provided equipment and funds to support us, including thousands of masks.