UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP
NJIT Celebrates Joel S. Bloom's Impactful Presidency

PRESIDENTIAL PONDERINGS
THANKS FOR THE NJIT MEMORIES
A MESSAGE FROM DR. ALBERT A. DORMAN ’45, ’99 HON

This June, NJIT will undertake a major change in leadership when Dr. Joel S. Bloom retires after 11 years as president of the university. Under his direction during the past decade, NJIT has made significant capital improvements, increased its enrollment by 50%, earned top rankings from respected organizations and expanded its worldwide reach, all while continually enhancing the rigorous, career-relevant STEM education provided to its now nearly 12,000 students.

Although much at the university has changed during President Bloom’s presidency, one critically important aspect has not: NJIT continues to be an institution of higher education where hardworking and high-achieving students, regardless of their financial circumstances, earn an education that prepares them for success and leadership in the real world.

As data from Forbes, The New York Times, PayScale.com and many other esteemed organizations confirm, NJIT is an engine of opportunity for talented young men and women, who arrive at the university with exceptional potential and then graduate prepared to excel, to contribute and to lead. President Bloom has indeed played an integral role in elevating the university and upholding its stellar reputation. I hope you enjoy reading this issue of NJIT Magazine, and trust that you will join me in wishing President Bloom all the best!

Albert A. Dorman ’45, ’99 HON

In a Q&A, President Bloom shares his perspective on what it has been like to lead NJIT for more than a decade. We take a photographic look-back at President Bloom through the years.

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FEATURES
NJIT dedicates tutoring center, lecture hall

The space inside Central King Building where NJIT students receive tutoring has been christened the Norma J. Clayton ’81 Learning Center in honor of Clayton, a retired business leader who is now co-vice chair of NJIT’s Board of Trustees. At the same time, a renovated space at Hillier College of Architecture and Design (HCAD) has been named the Weston Alumni Lecture Hall to fete all alumni donors. Outside the hall is a plaque naming donors. “Clayton, also a trustee at Tuskegee University, earned a bachelor’s in industrial engineering at HCAD’s lecture hall will be used for large classes, guest speakers and other events. At the hall’s dedication, HCAD Dean Branko Kolarevic thanked alumni donors for their “exemplary support,” adding, “All of them made the renovation of the lecture hall possible.”

New CFO brings experience in public finance and budgeting

NJIT found its new senior vice president and chief financial officer in state government. Catherine Z. Brennan previously was deputy treasurer for the State of New Jersey. At NJIT, Brennan assumes responsibility for financial management and accountability and the offices of General Accounting, University Budgeting, Payroll, Procurement Services, Accounts Payable, Financial Systems and Innovations, Risk Management, Treasury and the Bursar. As New Jersey’s deputy treasurer, she led a team that developed the state’s annual budget and oversaw Treasury’s responsibilities related to management of federal COVID-19 funding. Earlier in her career, Brennan held roles of increasing responsibility within the state’s Office of Legislative Services. “I understand the high value return a polytechnic research education offers and I know that education is pivotal — even indispensable — to our economy,” Brennan said. “I am extremely enthusiastic to join NJIT’s leadership team and play an important role on behalf of one of the nation’s premier public polytechnic universities.”

NJIT launches chapter of the national academy of inventors

NJIT has launched a campus chapter of the National Academy of Inventors (NAI), which promotes academic technology and innovation, and encourages their translation into devices and services that benefit society. At a ceremony, NJIT inducted 32 faculty members and nine honorary members, including President Joel S. Bloom and Provost and Senior Executive Vice President Fadi P. Deek ’85, ’86, ’97. Chapter members must hold patents issued from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). NJIT’s chapter will promote translational research and its commercialization through $17 million in Federal Grants Fund Business Innovation, STEM Outreach and Female Entrepreneurship

About $17 million in federal funding — from the National Science Foundation (NSF) and U.S. Department of Education (DOE) — will enable NJIT to partner in a regional hub for business innovation, introduce STEM to Newark high school students and foster entrepreneurship among women on campus. The Innovation Corps Northeast Hub, backed by a $15 million NSF grant, will provide entrepreneurial training, mentoring and resources for researchers to start companies that rapidly translate laboratory discoveries into breakthrough products. The group is led by Princeton University and also includes Rutgers University, the University of Delaware, Rowan University, Delaware State University, Lehigh University and Temple University. The regional approach builds on NJIT’s years of experience as a standalone NSF I-Corps site. The STEM introduction, backed by a $1.4 million DOE grant, will come via a Forensic Science Initiative led by NJIT’s Center for Pre-College Programs. Its first students will arrive in the summer of 2022 with a five-week intensive campus experience that features class and lab work, field research, tutoring and college preparation counseling. That fall, the students will work with a professional on a capstone research project and receive tutoring and counseling through NJIT’s TRIO programs. Also, NJIT will help high school teachers become certified to teach forensic science in their own schools. The entrepreneurship effort, backed by a $665,000 NSF grant, aims to increase the representation of women and minorities in the commercialization of technology developed in academia, be it through patenting, licensing or starting companies. Researchers will train gatekeepers in tech transfer, venture development and entrepreneurship, and create a statewide network of development programs. Partners in the initiative include the New Jersey Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology, nonprofit tech services provider Edge and seven universities: New Jersey City, Princeton, Rowan, Rutgers, Saint Peter’s, Seton Hall and Stevens.

NJIT’s National Academy of Inventors chapter welcomed its inaugural members. Inventions that have made a tangible impact on quality of life, economic development and the welfare of society.” New fellows are inducted annually at a ceremony at USPTO headquarters in Alexandria, Va., where they share experiences and make new connections. Since 2014, nine NJIT inventors have become fellows: Niswar Antar’i B2, Rajesh Dave, Atam Dhawan, Craig Gotten, Somanath Mitra, Yun-Ging Shi, Kamalish Sirkar, Gordon Thomas and MengChu Zhou.
CONVOCATION WELCOMES NJIT CLASS OF 2025

NJIT returned to in-person Convocation festivities Sept. 22, welcoming more than 1,400 first-year students — the largest and most diverse incoming class in NJIT’s history — and acknowledging excellence among alumni, faculty and staff.

Gabrielle Grompone ’17, ’20, a construction project engineer with F. Fletcher Creamer & Son, Inc., provided the keynote address, sharing how she overcame her own early struggles at NJIT with the support of the university community and advising the newest Highlanders to “stay resilient.” NJIT Board of Trustees Chair Robert C. Cohen ’83, ’84, ’87 then presided over the presentation of awards and recognition of newly promoted/tenured faculty. The event, held in the Wellness and Events Center, was also livestreamed to the university community. Here, we feature some Convocation highlights.

1. President Joel S. Bloom thanks the students for joining the NJIT community.
2. Gabrielle Grompone and faculty lead the processional.
3. The Presidential Leadership Award (Graduate).
4. Twinkle Chaurasia ‘21, flanked by NCE Dean Nynens and President Joel S. Bloom, welcomes the first-year students.
5. Synoptic Optical Long-term Investigations of the Sun (SOLIS) facility, which is moving from Arizona. SOLIS is the most advanced solar telescope capable of long-term and close monitoring of the Sun as a whole globe.

NEW COACHES FOR MEN’S TENNIS AND CROSS COUNTRY, TRACK AND FIELD

The Men’s Tennis, and Cross Country and Track and Field programs at NJIT have new head coaches. Leading Men’s Tennis is Marco Mattuccio, who most recently was head coach of the men’s and women’s programs at La Salle University. He also has been an assistant coach at top tennis programs in the country — including at Baylor and Columbia universities — and helped lead the University of West Florida to a pair of Division II national championships in the 2000s.

At NJIT, Mattuccio succeeds Ira Miller, the head coach for seven seasons. "I want to thank Coach Miller for having created such a solid team over the years and leaving me with a great group of young men," Mattuccio said. "I look forward to developing our student-athletes and providing them the best experience possible entering the Southland Conference." Leading Cross Country and Track and Field is Jason Munsch, who brings extensive experience at the college and high school levels. His last collegiate role was as head men’s and women’s coach at Division II Florida Institute of Technology, from 2015 to 2017. He also was an assistant coach at the College of Charleston, University of Central Missouri and Bowling Green University, and most recently served as an assistant coach at Gull St. Bernard’s in Gladstone, N.J. At NJIT, Munsch succeeds Al Alosno, who led the men’s and women’s programs for 18 years. "I believe the academic prominence of NJIT, the vision and leadership of our administrative team and the location of our university within this amazing state and metropolitan area is the perfect recipe to build something truly special," Munsch said. "I am excited about the journey that lies ahead.”
LENDA NAIMOLI AND VINCENT NAIMOLI ’62, ’09 HON
NAIMOLI LEGACY LIVES ON AT NJIT

“HE WAS SO BRILLIANT.” And he loved to work,” Lenda says of her late husband, Vincent “Vince” Naimoli ’62, ’09 HON. “Building a Major League Baseball team from the ground up is not easy!”

While Vince may be most widely remembered for his success as the original owner of the Tampa Bay Rays, a move that brought Major League Baseball to the Tampa area, at NJIT he will always be associated with his dedication to his alma mater. Generous support from Lenda and Vince resulted in the naming of the Naimoli Family Athletic and Recreational Facility, home of NJIT’s men’s and women’s varsity tennis programs, in 2011.

Vince’s passing in 2019 was felt throughout the campus. However, the Naimoli legacy at NJIT continues through a charitable remainder trust created by Lenda and Vince that will ultimately support the Dr. Joel Bloom Presidential Scholars Program, the Margaret and Ralph Naimoli Endowed Athletic Scholarship and the Naimoli Family Endowed Scholarship. To commemorate their exemplary generosity, the university will name the Lenda and Vince Naimoli ’62, ’09 HON Turf Room in the Wellness and Events Center as a celebration of Vince’s life and work, and of the couple’s devotion to NJIT.

“Vince loved sports and he loved his work, but he also loved family and never forgot where he came from,” Lenda says. “He felt that it was important to give back.” Lenda shares her late husband’s love of philanthropy and NJIT. “I enjoy keeping up with Vince’s charities,” she says, noting that she is finding solace in carrying on his tradition of generosity. “It is a good feeling,” she explains, “to help the students, and to show young people that you care about them.”

To learn more about Lenda and Vincent Naimoli ’62, ’09 HON and the legacy they have created at NJIT, please visit “Donor Stories” at njit.giftplans.org.

For further information on the 1881 Society or about how to include NJIT in your estate plans, please contact:
Beth S. Kornstein
Associate Vice President, Planned Giving
973-596-8548
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Your legacy begins today.
When President Joel S. Bloom joined NJIT in 1990 as associate vice president for academic affairs and student services, he already had a wealth of expertise and experience in education: as an administrator for the New York City public school system, a research director focused on urban education at Teachers College, Columbia University and an assistant commissioner in the New Jersey Department of Education's Division of General Academic Education, where he initiated curriculum content standards, preschool programs, model urban effective schools, high school academies for science and technology and much more.

This June, after more than three decades at the university — the last 11 as president following several other administrative roles — he will retire. His impact on NJIT, particularly at the helm, has been noteworthy on a number of fronts. Not only has he broadened the university’s reach both nationally and internationally, he also has shaped an institution that excels in research, opens doors to STEM education for underserved and minority students, and upholds strong and supportive ties with its hometown of Newark. Here, we take a closer look at the Bloom era, during which NJIT reached new and greater heights.
Dr. Bloom has been a steadfast and dedicated partner in supporting our city’s economic growth, educational goals and the social well-being of our residents. His efforts to empower Newark’s youth have provided them with the tools and wisdom of advanced education, enabling them to reach their full potential, take charge of their lives and achieve personal excellence. Under his leadership, NJIT has made an incredibly positive impact on Newark and its people, and I will always be grateful to him for doing so. His work stands as his legacy." — Newark Mayor Ras J. Baraka

**Campus Transformation and Capital Improvements**

NJIT has seen its campus transformed by capital investments of several hundred million dollars since Bloom became university president in 2011.

Current students, faculty and staff are witnessing two major capital projects — construction of a new residence hall at Warren and Wickliffe Streets, and development of a park at the former Mueller’s Flower Shop at Central Avenue and Summit Street — while utilizing several past projects that were made possible by funding under Bloom’s tenure.

“As NJIT president, Dr. Bloom has been an advocate for the physical improvements to our campus,” said Andrew Christ ’94, ‘01, senior vice president for real estate development and capital operations.

Christ cited Bloom’s leadership in obtaining nearly $100 million in state funding for Central King Building renovations and construction of the Life Sciences and Engineering Center, $20 million to renovate Faculty Memorial Hall and nearly $20 million for the Makerspace and Microfabrication Innovation Center. Bloom and the NJIT Board of Trustees authorized $214 million for construction of the Albert Dorman Honors College Residence Hall, Greek Village, Wellness and Events Center (WEC) and Science & Technology Parking Garage.

Christ also observed that, under Bloom, NJIT invested over $110 million in capital renewal and replacement in stewardship of its existing academic, research and student support spaces. “The annual investment in this program has risen from $3.3 million in fiscal year 2011 to a peak of $27 million in 2019, resulting in significantly improved facilities and a reduction in the deferred maintenance and renewal backlog on the NJIT campus,” he said.

Christ added on a personal note that since Bloom established the position of vice president of real estate development and capital operations in 2014, “I could not be more grateful to him, as it brought me back to my alma mater to help remove our facilities and plan for a sustainable future.” Christ said.

Anthony Samaha ‘16 was a Student Senate member representing architecture and design students when planning began for the WEC in 2012. Samaha praised the NJIT administration, then newly under Bloom’s tenure, for listening to his concerns about walking time between the new facility and Weston Hall.

“My biggest concern at the time was to make sure that a connection between the entire campus was maintained and spaces for architecture students still had avenues directly to Weston for ease of access,” he explained. That way, he said, “A student would not have to sprint across campus to get to class and carry their models to Weston through a labyrinthine series of curbs and sidewalks.” The current walk from the main WEC doors to the Weston ramp only takes a few minutes.

**The Bloom Years**

1990 Joel S. Bloom joined NJIT as associate vice president for academic affairs and student services.

1994 Promoted to vice president for academic affairs and student services.

1995 Appointed founding dean of Albert Dorman Honors College.

2011 Became the eighth president of NJIT, installed in 2012.

2012 Designated a Champion of the Year by the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers.

2013 Named to NJBIZ’s Power 100 List.
GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

Exponential growth has not been limited to just the physical campus under Bloom's presidency. One of the biggest areas of transformation has been at the international partnership level. While the buzzwords descriptive of such endeavors ring familiar—high-profile, strategic, promising, dynamic—NJIT's foray onto the global stage has helped lift the university to become a leader in research, education and business development around the world. And around the world NJIT has gone—to Israel, Egypt, China, Denmark, Zambia and more.

In 2021, for example, NJIT unveiled a partnership with Israel's Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU). This partnership launched a world-class Institute for Future Technologies in New Jersey. Two powerhouse universities in the fields of cyber technologies and environmental engineering have come together to offer dual degrees, exciting new research projects and innovation and entrepreneurship opportunities.

To further broaden its worldwide presence, NJIT was the first partner of an Egyptian firm Tatweer Misr to launch an international campus in Egypt as part of a $200 million educational expansion project. This expansion is integral to a 415-acre, $2.3 billion development plan in Mostakbal City named Bloomfields that will attract an estimated 3,000 students annually and prepare them for burgeoning opportunities in the region and abroad—in areas that include medical informatics, information technology, civil engineering, architecture, construction management technology and manufacturing engineering technology.

In 2015, NJIT received $200 million educational expansion project at NJIT, as well as support for New Jersey's transition to offshore wind and other green energy solutions.

"President Bloom’s vision and steadfast support have been invaluable in helping Choose New Jersey advocate for New Jersey around the world as the best place to do business in the U.S. Under his leadership, NJIT has taken on partnerships, like establishing the Institute for Future Technologies, that have raised the profile of the university on the global stage," said Jose Lozanos, president and CEO, Choose New Jersey. "I am grateful for President Bloom’s contributions to our business attraction efforts and his dedication to our great state."

Dr. Bloom’s announcement serves up mixed emotions, as we are so proud of his accomplishments during his tenure at NJIT. He has been instrumental in NJIT’s transformation and rise in national rankings, instilling pride in our alma mater. His personable approach and leadership will be greatly missed.”

- Ralph Jimenez ’02, President, NJIT Alumni Association
ALBERT DORMAN HONORS COLLEGE

Like NJIT, Albert Dorman Honors College (ADHC) started small. Its precursor was the NJIT Honors Program, created in 1985 with an inaugural class of 28 students that grew to 160 by 1990. In 1995, the university made history by establishing ADHC, the first honors college in a public polytechnic university. Named for Albert A. Dorman ’45, ’99 HONF, founding chairman and first CEO of the multinational firm AECOM, the college was headed by founding dean Joel S. Bloom, then vice president of academic affairs and student services.

During his tenure as ADHC dean, Bloom raised $23 million for scholarships and led an initiative to develop a residential honors program. New and accelerated programs soon followed—in dentistry, medicine, optometry, physical therapy and law. Under Bloom, the college has gone on to work in major companies and start their own businesses, as is the case with the college’s namesake. Many other Dorman Scholars have received prestigious national awards, including National Science Foundation grants and Fulbright and Goldwater scholarships.

Some honors students have been Mayor’s Honors Scholars, through a program introduced by Bloom and Newark Mayor Ras J. Baraka in 2019 to recruit STEM students from Newark Public Schools into the Honors College with full scholarships and paid summer internships with the City of Newark.

“The Albert Dorman Honors College was formed under the leadership of Dr. Bloom, Dr. Dorman and Dr. [Sam] Fenster, and was truly visionary. Dr. Bloom has been unfailing in his support of the Dorman College, our scholars and our alumni ever since,” said ADHC Dean Louis Hamilton. “Our alumni remember his tenure as dean so fondly, because he worked closely to create opportunities for them. He has been tireless in his effort to bring in donations and resources that fund the programs and scholarships that have had such a profound effect, not only on the Dorman College, but on NJIT as a whole. We all owe a great debt of gratitude to him for his leadership.”

LOCAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE PARTNERSHIPS

Even before he became president in 2011, Bloom championed the recruitment of community college students.

In his previous role as vice president for academic affairs and student services, Bloom became an ally in the halls of two-year colleges, working with administrators to help their students find a second home at NJIT, according to Anthony Jackson, the university’s associate director of undergraduate admissions. That reputation only grew when he was president.

“People at the community colleges speak about Joel with reverence,” said Jackson, who focuses on transfer recruitment. In particular, they note “how he has made them feel welcome and how he has been willing to go above and beyond to make things work out. "It has made my job easier, because they know that at our highest level, they have someone they have access to who can help their students get through the door,” Jackson added.

During Bloom’s presidency, NJIT has signed new agreements with local community colleges and expanded others to incorporate new majors at four of NJIT’s six academic schools.

“Today, the university has partnerships with 14 local community colleges, with those closest to campus transferring the most students. This past fall, for example, when NJIT welcomed nearly 700 transfer students, the top three in terms of numbers were Bergen Community College, Middlesex College and Essex County College, according to Jackson. NJIT’s transfer agreements stretch north, south and west, including Sussex County Community College, Ocean County College, Warren County Community College, Hudson County Community College and others. After all, you never know where the next budding engineer, programmer or architect will come from. The president “has always encouraged us to have more and more relationships with community colleges to attract more students, because the transfer students play a big role in what goes on here,” explained Jackson. “And they do well for themselves once they transfer in.”

Jackson further noted that Bloom has been “very hands-on in terms of talking to the community colleges and telling them just how important their students are to NJIT,” concluding. “He has been a strong advocate of the community colleges and the relationships that we formed with them.”

2017 Honored with the Educator of the Year Award by the American Council of Engineering Companies of New Jersey, the leading advocate for New Jersey’s consulting engineering profession.

2018 Celebrated NJIT’s No. 1 national ranking by Forbes for student upward economic mobility.

2019 Appointed by Gov. Phil Murphy to the recently established Commission on Sciences, Technology and Innovation, to strengthen the state’s innovation economy.

2019 Received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, given annually to U.S. citizens who “embolden the spirit of America in their work toward equality, tolerance, brotherhood, diversity and patriotism.”

2019 Led NJIT’s investment in capital renewal and replacement in stewardship of existing academic, research and student support services to a peak of $27 million.

2019 Introduced, with Newark Mayor Ras J. Baraka, the Mayor’s Honors Scholars Program, to recruit STEM students from the Newark Public Schools into NJIT’s Albert Dorman Honors College.

As president of NJIT, Dr. Bloom has implemented transformative changes that have enhanced the quality of education for our state’s students. His legacy of serving young people will continue to inspire our own work in the years ahead. — U.S. Senator Cory Booker

At the news conference in 2019 announcing the Mayor’s Honors Scholars Program (from left) Newark Public Schools Superintendent Roger Leon, Newark Mayor Ras J. Baraka, President Bloom

Working side-by-side with President Bloom for nearly a decade gave me a front-row seat to observe him sharing NJIT’s unique role in Newark, N.J., and the world. NJIT prospered because Joel communicated our distinct identity — a public polytechnic university engaged in professional education and applied research — while expanding our additional mission elements of economic development and engagement.” — Fadi P. Deek ’85, ’86, ’97, NJIT Provost and Senior Executive Vice President

“These transfer students from Middlesex College, Passaic County Community College and Delaware State University were celebrated by NAT at National Transfer Student Week 2021.”
2019 marked NJIT’s ascent to both a U.S. News & World Report Top 100 National University and an R1 Carnegie Classification for “Very High Research Activity.”

2020 Presenting the highest-level award granted by the Secretary of the U.S. Air Force to a nonemployee civilian, the Distinguished Public Service Award.

2020 Served as a member of New Jersey’s Higher Education Restart Advisory Group during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2021 Cited among the Top 10 in the first-ever ROI-NJ Influencers Technology list.

2021 Facilitated NJIT’s 14th community college partnership.

2022 President Bloom retires from NJIT.

Dr. Joel Bloom has been an incredible educator! He has taken an already well-respected learning institution and made it elite! His vast knowledge and his compassion around social status and economic challenges for certain populations have created a learning environment where students can thrive. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the educational opportunities he has afforded the local population in and around NJIT that normally might not have had a quality education. Dr. Joel Bloom has been that leader who has created a climate of success. So upon his retirement, I commend a great leader, superior educator, a wonderful collaborator and true friend!” — Congressman Donald M. Payne Jr.

President Bloom addresses the crowd at the 2017 Newark Girl Power Career Summit, a CPCP TRIO program event that welcomed to campus more than 300 female students from 14 Newark high schools.

“...and Liberal Arts. The MST, working with five Newark high schools, helps strengthen students’ math skills and college readiness, and assists teachers in building learning communities in math instruction. A good percentage of students are subsequently invited to complete college-level math courses on campus and many become full-time Highlanders. The FSI, backed by $1.4 million in federal seed money, distributed by the N.J. Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, introduces Newark high schoolers to forensic science as a pathway to college and STEM education, and helps qualify educators to teach the discipline at their own schools. The program will welcome its first students this summer...”

“...President Bloom understands the nexus between the school-age and higher education student populations, as well as the implications for their future as citizens and contributors to the world — and its economy — through STEM careers,” said Jacqueline Cusack, CPCP’s executive director. “Our targeted outreach to underrepresented and underserved school-age youth is not only driven by an interest in exposing students to the superior quality of STEM education offered at NJIT, but also by a moral imperative that speaks to equity and doing the right thing. Both of these tenants ‘stem’ from President Bloom’s leadership...”

Dr. Joel Bloom has been an incredible educator! He has taken an already well-respected learning institution and made it elite! His vast knowledge and his compassion around social status and economic challenges for certain populations have created a learning environment where students can thrive. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the educational opportunities he has afforded the local population in and around NJIT that normally might not have had a quality education. Dr. Joel Bloom has been that leader who has created a climate of success. So upon his retirement, I commend a great leader, superior educator, a wonderful collaborator and true friend!” — Congressman Donald M. Payne Jr.
“Great memories, wonderful colleagues and students, and significant achievements as a foundation to build the future of our university,” remarked Joel S. Bloom about his 11-year tenure as NJIT president.

With his final months at NJIT underway, we sat down with President Bloom to glean a special perspective of what it has been like to lead the university for more than a decade, hear about special moments and learn about his post-NJIT presidency plans.
WHAT HAS SURPRISED YOU ABOUT HIGHER EDUCATION AND NJIT? ‘We’re in an urban setting, not roots, which brings both complexity and energy to the position of the president. We are obligated to serve as an anchor institution with the expectation of partnering with the City of Newark to assist in improving the quality of life within our urban community. In addition, NJIT is New Jersey’s public polytechnic university. It is a STEM university, which from all sources is recognized as being among the most expensive to operate. The body of knowledge in STEM is in constant flux. The knowledge and skills that people need to succeed are changing rapidly. Instructional processes, materials, labs and equipment are evolving at an incredible pace. The rapidity with which we need to adapt and the necessary resources to change is something I hadn’t thought about, given my prior assignment as a vice president and dean of the Albert Dorman Honors College. Sitting in the president’s office of our public polytechnic university, I very quickly realized we are in a footrace for change, growth and resources. STEM education, architecture, computing and engineering are among the most costly disciplines. In addition, the competition in higher education has become intense, whether it’s hiring faculty, recruiting students, competing for research grants, fundraising or growing the university reputation, while creating an environment in which people can become increasingly productive. Therefore, the sine qua non of NJIT became “growth and change for continuous improvement.”

HOW HAS NJIT EVOLVED MOST OVER THE COURSE OF YOUR PRESIDENCY? ‘I realize that, in some ways, we’ve created a seismic shift here at NJIT for our students. This year’s incoming class is 29% women. Wow! That’s great improvement from where we traditionally have been. While we always have been an institution serving many first-generation and low-income students, today we’re increasingly diverse: 25% Hispanic, and this fall 2021 was our largest incoming class of African Americans. NJIT looks like the future of higher education, as we continue to recruit diverse students. As I meet with business and industry partners, particularly alumni, the demand for our students continues to appreciate, for their diversity, the quality of their education and the hunger of our students to succeed. I ask for our business and industry partners, and alumni, to give back to our university, to give their “time, treasure and talent.” After all, we contribute significantly to their talented workforce.

WHAT DO YOU FEEL ARE YOUR PROUDEST ACCOMPLISHMENTS? ‘What kept me here after my first three-year contract working for Saul Fenster, who was an outstanding president, was the opportunity to establish the Albert Dorman Honors College. In 1993, as I was thinking about what was I going to do next and weighing my options, I was invited to travel to Santa Monica to meet Al Dorman. Al was and is an absolute giant, having founded a renowned, worldwide engineering design firm. We talked about my having helped to establish high-tech high schools when I was an assistant commissioner of education for New Jersey, and he said, “That’s what we need at NJIT; to create a place for hardworking and high-achieving students to excel.” Serving as the founding dean of the Albert Dorman Honors College is still one of my proudest accomplishments. I think it has led to one of the most transformative periods of this university and something we must continue to build on. Al continues to serve as a mentor and friend.

As president, my proudest accomplishment has been our growth trajectory! We have grown our faculty, students and facilities. Our enrollment has increased by 90%, graduation rate has increased by over 20%, research expenditures by nearly 100% and our campus facilities by 1 million square feet. We continue to monetize the assets of NJIT that have enabled its growth. We are now a nationally and internationally ranked university. I’ve observed and learned that higher education has changed from an ivy covered institution to a commodity. The only way commodities do well is with a growth scenario with all of the KPIs (key performance indicators) continuing to go up.

WHAT IS THE MOST VALUABLE LESSON YOU’VE LEARNED AS PRESIDENT? ‘A colleague said to me just the other day, “You can’t make decisions by committee.” While shared governance is a tradition of NJIT, which I often follow, at times you must say this is how we now need to proceed. We’ve had the deliberative process, we have all reviewed all the data in the room that is available to us at this time. Situational leadership requires us to reach consensus, execute and move together in the same direction. The key is building the leadership team characterized by trust, ongoing communication and accountability. KPIs and ROIs have become part of the lexicon of the NJIT leadership. I would tell you today the team of people, vice presidents and senior staff, leading NJIT along with the trustees, is as good as you’re going to get managing any type of high-performance organization.

LET’S TALK ABOUT SOME OF THE STANDOUT MOMENTS DURING YOUR TENURE AS PRESIDENT. WAS THERE ONE THAT BROUGHT TEARS TO YOUR EYES? ‘A very virulent collection is from my inauguration — when I stood at the podium and realized who’s in the audience and who’s not in the audience, and the who’s not in the audience in this case were my parents. Speaking about it today is still Saddening. This was somewhat ameliorated by seeing my wife Diane and son Ean, as well as lifelong friends, some from kindergarten, in the audience.

SWITCHING GEARS, WHAT WAS THE FUNNIEST MOMENT? ‘Also at my inauguration [laughs]. As we queued up, there was a big bass drummer who I was marching behind. This guy was about 8’5” and the drum was about 5 feet wide. As we marched, I’m thinking, gee, no one knows I’m here. It was a sunny day and he cast a big shadow. So as we marched, I felt farther and farther behind, so people could see there was someone actually behind the man with the big drum. Also, during the inauguration, John Schuring, who’s a friend and a faculty member of the Department of Civil Engineering, was asked to speak. He did an imitation of me greeting people, stepping forward with a smile on my face and putting my hand out to shake. As he was doing this caricature, several times as he spoke, I found myself laughing at myself and how well he captured me and my joy in meeting people.

AND THE MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT? ‘I think the most memorable moment was coming into the office of the president of NJIT and sitting down at the desk. At that moment, the celebration of the appointment came to an abrupt end and I realized the weight of the responsibility for this great university and its community. And so began the life of too many three 3:00 or 4:30 a.m. wakeups, going to my laptop or picking up my cellphone to read, write, email or text.

DO YOU HAVE A MOST TREASURED MEMORNO FROM NJIT? ‘There are two. One is on the wall in my office. It’s a picture of graduation 2012, my first as president. When you stand at that podium and you look around and see the rows filled with a very diverse group of students, along with their parents, siblings and earlier generations of family, or just prior to the opening of the ceremony, there’s not a better moment than going out to talk to these families when they are seated and you get a sense of how important Commencement is to them. I will never forget when I asked a student a quesuing up for graduation what he was going to do with his soon to be earned salary, and he replied buy his mother a house. How special and appreciative are our NJIT students!

My second treasured memento is the prestigious Ellis Island Medal I received. I was in the Great Hall of Ellis Island where my dad had entered the United States when he was 10 years old. The night I received the award, I carried a picture of him with his mother and three sisters sitting on a steamer trunk in the Great Hall. After all, this is a nation of great immigrants, of which I am a descendant.

WHERE HAS THERE BEEN A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF CAMPUS TRANSFORMATION? WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE SPOT ON CAMPUS? ‘During my transition from vice president and dean to president, I was a strong advocate for making sure we bought Central High School from the Newark Board of Education. Because of my prior position, I knew many of the politics in the state and in the city and used some of those acquaintances to ensure that the building would be offered to NJIT if it was to be sold. There are three ground floors in that building due to its grade, so when you go into the building, regardless of which ground floor you enter, there’s an abundance of students. We created student workspaces and workrooms, and these attractive areas where students can hang out and relax. We also created, and here is my favorite spot, an area where students can work together in teams, receive tutoring and/or meet with advisors. You can easily observe the diligence and intelligence of our students from these spaces. Today, students still tell me CKR is one of their favorite buildings on campus. It’s my first stop when I host visitors to campus, because I think it’s emblematic of this institution, a composition of the past, future and our students.

HOW WILL YOU BE SPENDING YOUR RETIREMENT? ‘I will be president emeritus for two years, finishing June 30, 2024, and will offer my assistance, when appropriate, to my successor. There are some projects I look forward to seeing to completion, and I also look forward to continuing to serve on some boards. However, I’m very clear and know only so well that there is only one president at a time. I look forward to spending more time with my dear wife Diane and son Ean as well. And, for two weeks every year, my wife and I go sailing with some friends, mostly in the San Juan Islands off of the coast of California and Washington, and north into the Canadian waters where the scenery is both stunning and calming. While the
To honor his final year as NJIT’s president, make a gift in support of the Dr. Joel Bloom Presidential Scholars Program.

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE YOU RECEIVED UPON BECOMING PRESIDENT, AND WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR YOUR SUCCESSOR?

When I came here in 1990, Saul Fenster told me I didn’t know anything about being a higher education administrator, and of course he was right. He said why don’t you do some externships, bring back knowledge about leading student affairs — NJIT previously had no such VP — and take a year to learn about NJIT. NJIT was a different university in 1990, and the “commoditization” of higher education was at its threshold. The ranking of higher education by Money Magazine was just beginning. NJIT’s marketing was about nil.

When I became president, I took the lessons I had learned at NJIT during my prior 19 years. There was an immediate context of an existential threat to NJIT due to the proposed reorganization of New Jersey higher education. Tactically, we needed to position NJIT, uniquely, as the state’s public polytechnic university producing the highly needed STEM workforce, conducting STEM research and serving as a partner to the science and technology industries of New Jersey. It became a 50-yard dash to preserve the NJIT brand. We did persevere.

Soon, a new president will join the footrace, immediately as state funding for higher education is being debated. In addition, there are very time-critical decisions about both state funding for facilities and federal funding becoming available directly and indirectly through the state as a result of “Critical Infrastructure” and anticipated “Build Back Better” legislation. The next president must have great observational and listening skills. The NJIT community is a highly intelligent, shared-governance community of trustees, administration, faculty, students, staff and alumni. A president, particularly a new one, cannot succeed without listening and understanding the NJIT community and the context in which the university exists. However, I also learned quite a while ago about the 80% solution: Do your homework, gather and synthesize the needed information, consult with colleagues and the community, then proffer a strategy or solution, even if it’s a partial one which others — vice presidents and senior staff — must help you to communicate, implement, monitor, assess and report the outcomes, and adjust if necessary. The NJIT community is an amazingly talented and hardworking community that will support open, highly communicative and participatory processes.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR NJIT’S FUTURE?

The future has to be about growth and continuing to improve the reputation of this university. Our students, faculty and staff are excellent, and this must continue to be communicated. The accumulation by faculty and students of highly competitive national prizes over the recent years has been stunning. We must also continue to celebrate the diversity of our university, and the contributions it has made over the decades to improving the quality of life for our communities through STEM.

Established to provide talented, hardworking students from low-income families and underserved communities with a world-class, STEM+ education.

First Lady Diane Bloom and President Joel S. Bloom

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thanks for the memories
Impact on Protected Environments. "

JOHN RIBARDO ’80, M.S. ’83

supporter of NJIT Athletics.

visionary and a major benefactor and

Iris Award, which honors exemplary

the second recipient of the Herb M.

Hall of Fame, was

Runner-Up status in 1961.

and guided the team to an NAIA

winning streak during his senior campaign, Webb set the school

record for points in a game with 29 against

Brooklyn Poly en route to finishing the

season with better than 200 ppg.

Brooklyn Poly and guided the team to an NAIA

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Webb helped NCE to a 9-6 record. During

the 1960s

WYCLIFFE GORDON ’00

in his junior year,

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NKUAH ASARE ’18

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BROOKE M. ODLE M.S. ’09,

14 PhD. received an “Up and Comer”

Award from the American Society of

Brooke M. Odle is a Quants

presented

"Stitching the U.S. Army's ‘Data Fabric’"

KELLY (CROWE) ASCOLESE ’07

as NJIT's second all-time leading scorer (1,497) and ranks

second on the all-time list. She averaged 15.2 points per game and racks fourth on the

school's all-time assist list with 307.

She serves as an associate editor of the

Journal on Multidimensional Systems and Signal Processing and editor of the Journal of

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2020 class of the NJIT Athletics Hall of Fame for women's basketball. Ascolese graduated as the school's

all-time assist leader with 307.

Ascolese also graduated as the school's

conference, journal magazines and book

sessions, and served as a board chair of the

Wireless and Optical Communication

Conference (WOCC) (2017-2018). Zhao received the AFRL-VFRP award in 2014-2016, AFOSR SFFP award in 2017-

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Test your knowledge about President Bloom and his tenure at NJIT! Answers can be found by reading through the pages of this issue of NJIT Magazine or, if you’re stumped, at the bottom of this page.

Across
2. NJIT partner Ørsted a leader in this technology
3. New NJIT chapter, National Academy of _____
6. President was founding dean
7. Key ability according to president
9. Phrase for what’s needed from alumni
12. Former flower shop, site of new park
14. Where funniest moments of presidency occurred
15. NJ’s largest startup incubator
17. Funding type
18. President’s favorite campus spot, abbrev.
22. Data science satellite location
24. Designates R1 research rating
25. Fabrication facility
26. Nonprofit economic development agency
29. NJIT’s newest community college partner
30. A first area of responsibility of the president
33. Pipeline-to-college program, abbrev.
35. NJIT corp. bringing ideas in academia to the marketplace, abbrev.
36. $2.8 billion on NJ
38. Presidential tenure length, spelled out
39. One of the president’s most treasured mementos
40. Increased significantly this year, esp. in Class of 2025

Down
1. Dr. Joel Bloom ________ Scholars Program
4. “Jewel” of the NJIT campus, abbrev.
5. Honors College students, by another name
8. The Blooms’ favorite pastime
10. Forbes cited NJIT No. 1 for this
11. NJIT country partner
13. Future Technologies in New Jersey partner
16. President’s second title at NJIT
19. The city NJIT calls home
20. No. of community college agreements, spelled out
21. Describes NJIT
23. Where president was research director
27. What NJIT teaches
28. President named ________ of the Year
31. Former purpose of CKB
32. What the future of NJIT needs to be about
34. Month/day president stepping down, roman numerals
37. NJIT First Lady’s first name
38. Presidential tenure length, spelled out
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Celebrating Dr. Joel Bloom’s 30 Years of Making Change Through Leadership at NJIT.

NJIT has planned numerous local and national events throughout the 2021-2022 academic year to provide Highlander Nation the chance to bid him farewell before he retires this June. The series of events, activities and meetings also affords the president and First Lady Diane Bloom the opportunity to extend their heartfelt gratitude to the countless members of the NJIT community who have been valued partners, mentors and friends over the years.

To find a city near you, go to njit.edu/thank-you-tour.