ANEW VISION FOR YING WU COLLEGE OF COMPUTING Q&A WITH Dean Craig Gotsman

n January 2017, Dr. Craig Gotsman was named Dean of the Ying Wu College of Computing. Prior to NJIT, Gotsman was the founding director of the Jacobs Technion-Cornell Innovation Institute at Cornell Tech, a New York Citybased graduate campus dedicated to fostering innovation and producing entrepreneurial engineers, with the purpose of growing the tech sector of that city. He had also co-founded several technology startup companies and consulted to many large technology corporations. Before helping found Cornell Tech in 2012, Gotsman held the Hewlett-Packard Chair in Computer Engineering at Technion– Israel Institute of Technology, where he co-founded the Technion Center for Graphics and Geometric Computing in 2001. While at Technion, he also served in a number of associate dean roles and as deputy senior vice president. Gotsman has been a visiting professor at Harvard University, INRIA Sophia Antipolis (France), ETH Zurich (Switzerland) and a research scientist at MIT.

Some of Gotsman's key accomplishments at Cornell Tech included developing, marketing and managing novel academic programs; forging industry connections and fundraising; promoting new approaches to innovation; and commercializing intellectual property in an academic environment.

As an educator, Gotsman has spearheaded efforts to provide students with opportunities for building practical knowledge

Q. In your new role as YWCC dean, what are your immediate priorities?

A. My top priority is to increase the visibility of the college and open it up to the outside world. Forever gone are the days of the ivory tower academic model, the days when the campus was mostly isolated from the rest of the world: conducting research, publishing papers, living quietly within a small, closed academic community. Now things are changing so quickly that we have to interact much more with the outside world just to keep up, especially in the tech sector. I would like to see the college faculty and students interacting on a daily basis with the local tech industry and the growing tech ecosystem emerging in nearby New York City.

Q. What are some examples of how YWCC provides unique real-world opportunities for students?

A. The tech world of the 21st century is quite different from what it was in the 20th century. There is much more activity in the entrepreneurial space; many more startups and small ventures compared to large behemoths such as IBM, Microsoft and Google. This allows us to create multiple opportunities for daily interaction between students and the different components of the tech sector; for example, hands-on projects with small and large companies, and opportunities to promote their own ideas and ventures. There are also many advantages to young students interacting with active tech entrepreneurs. Beyond the exposure to cutting-edge technologies and real-world problems, immersing the students in the entrepreneurial culture and the level of energy that comes with it is extremely valuable. It adds important new dimensions to the students' educational experience and makes for a more rounded engineer.

Q. What are your thoughts about strengthening relationships with alumni?

A. Alumni relations at NJIT should be strengthened significantly. Alumni are a tremendous source of inspiration, support and feedback. And I don't just mean financial support although there's a lot of that potential as well. At Cornell Tech, even as newcomers to New York City, we were able to easily plug through hands-on, cooperative and experiential education. It is a practice he aims to strengthen in NJIT's computing curriculum, capitalizing on the emerging tech scene in New Jersey, and especially on the university's proximity to New York City, which is home to a rich startup ecosystem expected to eclipse Silicon Valley as the next high-

Gotsman's research interests include 3D computer graphics, geometric modeling, animation and computational geometry. He has published over 180 research papers, won eight best paper awards at leading conferences and mentored more than 50 postgraduate students at all levels. He holds 10 U.S. patents and has commercialized some of his academic research to co-found three startup companies. He is a member of Academia Europaea, Europe's leading Academy of Science and Arts. Gotsman received all his degrees from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.



into that environment because Cornell has an enormous alumni base there. These alums helped us get established in the city and provide mentorship and other opportunities for our students. NJIT has a large number of alums working in the tech industry in New Jersey and New York and I don't think we've taken advantage of them as much as we could. We should bring them back to campus to see where we are and what we are doing today, connect them to our current students, and use them to build a broad, strong and robust network.

Q. What do you hope to achieve in the next five years?

A. We first need to forge the college's identity with its department of computer science and newly formed department of informatics. Then we need to slowly, Dean Gotsman explains an algorithm to a group of YWCC students.

but surely, put the college on the map. Rankings are not everything, but they are something we need to be conscious of. Right now, the college has a decent ranking but it must be improved. At the undergraduate level, I want to connect the college better to the outside world in terms of student engagement. At the graduate level, while we have a fair amount of research coming out of the college, we need to multiply it by a factor of two or three. That will require enlarging and enhancing our faculty and doing the same for our Ph.D. program. I want to turn YWCC into the to-go place for information technology in the region, both in the academic community and in the industrial community.