

Freshman Convocation 2009
Robert A. Altenkirch
President

Welcome to NJIT and the start of a new academic year, your first. You made history this fall by being NJIT's largest freshman class ever and part of NJIT's largest enrollment ever¹.

You may know that NJIT is ranked in the top tier of national research universities by US News and World Report. We are home to the World's largest telescope, brought on line this year, for studying the sun in the visible region of the electromagnetic spectrum, its workings and its effect on the Earth. The telescope is housed at Big Bear Solar Observatory, which we operate for the California Institute of Technology in southern California. We have expanded our educational offerings over the past few years, putting in place new academic programs this fall to complement fourteen put in place last fall and we are working on four additional programs to be developed over the course of this year. We recently formed the School of Art and Design which, along with the New Jersey School of Architecture now comprises the College of Architecture and Design.

You may hear from time to time, "there is nothing to do at NJIT." Not true, although it has become a myth. To the contrary, there is a lot to do on campus. Later you will hear from the Student Senate President, and I assume he will outline for you some of the activities planned for this year. Additionally, there are performances at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, NHL hockey and NJIT basketball games at the Prudential Center, and minor league and NJIT baseball games at Riverfront Stadium in downtown Newark.

We are also working closely with the City of Newark on neighborhood enhancements close to campus to provide entertainment, shopping, dining, and living opportunities. This effort will take some time, and it may not directly impact you while you are a student here. But, enhancements to the city, and to the campus, improve the value and marketability of your degree in the future. So be involved in city activities as well as campus activities, from tutoring in city schools, to volunteering in support of non-profit organizations, to involvement in the university's projects in the city such as the neighborhood redevelopment and development of a Greek Village, a cluster of new town homes, to expand and enhance Greek life at NJIT. The more vibrant the neighborhood, the more students and faculty will want to locate around the campus and, as a result, the more vibrant the university.

Part of the team that assists you as first year students in adjusting to college life are the Freshman Seminar instructors. These instructors volunteer to teach a Freshman Seminar course, and I want to thank them for their efforts. Would the Freshman Seminar instructors please stand so that we can recognize them with a round of applause?

I'll look forward to seeing you on campus and at the various events throughout the year. There are a lot of opportunities for you to be involved in a variety of activities. Take a look at the NJIT web site often and read the e-mail messages that come out periodically so you can keep current on campus news.

Have a good year.

¹ At the time of writing, fall 09 enrollment was projected to exceed the previous high of 8,854.. After finalizing enrollment after the 10th day of class, fall 09 enrollment is 8,840, making the fall 09 enrollment the second largest in history.