

**2010 CONVOCATION ADDRESS**  
**Robert A. Altenkirch**  
**President**  
**September 15, 2010**

Good afternoon and welcome to NJIT's University Convocation marking the beginning of the 2010 – 2011 Academic Year.

As many of you know, University Convocation is a unique occasion for bringing our NJIT community together: to celebrate the new academic year; to reflect on our achievements; and to assess our goals and aspirations.

As we consider what we have accomplished and what we plan to do, it is also an opportunity to rededicate ourselves with renewed commitment to our core values, including: serving the communities in which we live; being satisfied with nothing less than excellence; acting with integrity; caring for students as individuals; treating each other with respect and dignity; and being sensitive to the cultural and personal differences among members of our university community.

We have many achievements of which we can be justifiably proud:

For the fifth year in a row, NJIT was named by *U.S. News & World Report* to the top tier of national research universities.

*U.S. News* also listed NJIT as the 4th most racially and ethnically diverse campus in the U.S.

*The Princeton Review* named NJIT one of the nation's best institutions for undergraduate education, and

*Bloomberg Businessweek* ranked NJIT in the top 10% of 852 colleges and universities in the U.S. for best return on investment.

The physical facilities of the campus continue to improve and expand. We completed purchase of the historic Central High School building, which will be known as the Central King Building, or CKB. We are readying classrooms in the facility for use late in the fall and for spring classes, and we envision the building being a showcase for NJIT and a point of engagement for the Newark community and all who visit the NJIT campus informing everyone who enters of the extraordinary array of activities and initiatives that take place at NJIT and a place of pride for the NJIT community, the citizens of Newark, and the State.

Implementation of the NJIT Campus Gateway Plan, a mixed use redevelopment of properties north of and on the south edge of campus, took some major steps forward recently. A developer will be selected shortly to create a Fraternity and Sorority Village on the NJIT parking lot across Warren St. and, potentially, a

residential and retail complex along Warren St. Other elements of the Gateway Plan are progressing as well, about which you will hear over the course of the year.

Construction on the Naimoli Family Athletic and Recreational Facility, an enclosure of the tennis courts to the north of the Fleisher Athletic Center, is moving forward according to plan. The more than 25,000 square foot facility will house year-round tennis as well as other athletic and recreational activities. The facility, made possible in part by a generous gift from Vincent Naimoli, a '62 NJIT graduate, Founder and Chairman Emeritus of the Tampa Bay Rays of Major League Baseball, is scheduled to open during this academic year.

We also take great pride in our academic achievements.

NJIT has a distinguished record for attracting high achieving students and faculty from diverse populations, and our students, faculty, and alumni, including Vince Naimoli, whom I just mentioned, and Steve Cordes, our keynote speaker from whom you will hear later, continue to excel. Let me mention just a few more examples:

NJIT students from the College of Architecture and Design were awarded the grand prize for 2010 from the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards for a modern townhouse design, "The Box and Beyond." The design was developed for the Newark Chapter of the Habitat for Humanity.

Two NJIT faculty members, Kam Sirkar, Otto H. York Department of Chemical, Biological, and Pharmaceutical Engineering, and Ali Abdi, Electrical and Computer Engineering, received Innovators' Awards from the New Jersey Inventors Hall of Fame.

The New Solar Telescope at Big Bear, under the direction of Phil Goode, Distinguished Professor of Physics, is the World's largest ground based solar instrument. Following its dedication last fall, it has produced images referred to by an international astronomy magazine, as "the most detailed image of a sunspot ever obtained in visible light."

But what of the future, what does it hold for NJIT?

As I'm sure everybody here is well aware, for the foreseeable period ahead we will face the reality of uncertain economic times, as we have for a number of years along with other sectors of the economy in New Jersey, the U.S., and the World for that matter.

While confronting these economic challenges has not been, and will not be easy, please keep in mind that NJIT is held in high regard throughout higher education. The fact that the university has been ranked very highly as an excellent return on

investment in education is due, we believe, in large part because of prudent and conservative fiscal management and strong academic and research programs.

In addition, over the coming year we should see tangible physical evidence of emergence of the Gateway Plan and the impact of ownership of the Central King Building.

To those of you newly joining the NJIT community, I encourage you to become involved. Join in activities of all kinds as your interests lead you. The most successful alumni graduate from college with a network of friends, professional colleagues, and relationships that continue to bring them rewarding opportunities all throughout their lives.

This ceremony will introduce you to many successful members of the NJIT community. Reach out to get to know them, enjoy and celebrate their successes with them, and strive to be like them yourselves, as others have done before you. I know that you can accomplish this, and I look forward to sharing many more successes with you as we go forward together.

It is now my distinct pleasure to introduce our Keynote speaker.