

THE FORUM

Dear Colleagues,

Throughout the summer, our team has been focused on understanding how shifts in the federal landscape are affecting our faculty.

On July 17th, I addressed the Board of Trustees' Public Session, detailing the evolving federal landscape and our efforts to support faculty. We acknowledge the wide-ranging direct and indirect impacts. My presentation summarized the **Provost's Task Force's key initiatives**, which include:

- Establishing stop-gap funding for faculty.
- Recommending a faculty impact statement for Promotion & Tenure (P&T considerations).
- Issuing P&T guidance for research startups and extensions.
- Publishing an academic policy to assist students with visa-related challenges.
- Implementing "Faculty Fridays" and "The Forum" as platforms to discuss potential federal funding reductions and strategies for meeting NSF Broader Impact guidelines.

During my presentation to the Board, I highlighted faculty concerns. To gather further input, I've invited representatives from key faculty stakeholder groups—including deans, chairs, and early and late-career faculty, as well as lecturers—to share their perspectives on the current climate.

We are pleased to share the unedited letter from the PSA to the VPFA, authored by Professors Amit Bose and Burt Kimmelman, below. In our commitment to fostering open communication with the VPFA, we are also including an unedited letter from an early-career faculty member who requested anonymity.

We encourage you to share your responses, opinions, or questions via this [anonymous form](#) by August 15th. Submissions will be published in upcoming communications.

Best summer,
Omowunmi "Wunmi" Sadik, Ph.D. Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs,
Distinguished Professor of Chemistry and Environmental Science

Letters to the VPFA*

The Role of Collective Bargaining at NJIT by Amitabha Bose and Burt Kimmelman

The PSA represents all full-time instructors, researchers and most professional staff at NJIT. Our core responsibilities include negotiating and enforcing your terms and conditions of employment, and assisting members should they be subjected to an investigation or charge. Legally binding, the PSA contract secures salary increases, healthcare benefits, sick leave provisions—and much more. For example, the contract provides ways to address process failures associated with Faculty Handbook or LEC policies.

Collective bargaining agreements, such as ours, are a bulwark against unfair practices employers or governments may try to impose. Fortunately, using a mutual gains approach, such as what we have adopted over many years, the PSA and NJIT administration have jointly worked towards addressing our shared interests, making them a reality.

We will continue to collectively address the challenges imposed by the current federal administration that's proven itself to be anti-science, anti-education, and anti-student (look no further than the present defunding of the NIH, NSF, and Department of Education, and punitive changes to loan repayments). We will work with NJIT's Administration to forge agreements to protect our employees from misguided, often illegal, directives.

We must be realistic, however, about the extent of our Administration's cooperation; there are areas where we likely disagree. The PSA will oppose any possible institutional directives that impinge upon our academic

freedoms, abandon our institution's core values, and/or threaten our jobs, all of which are essential for our University's proper functioning.

Our union is strong for several reasons; one is that our peer-elected Governing Board translates your ideas and concerns into actions. The various roles we play, in concert, nurture our all-encompassing approach. We value most highly the integral relationships the PSA has established with our members. Of course, we urge non-dues-paying faculty and lecturers to join the PSA. When everyone contributes a fair share, everyone benefits.

Early Career Tenure Track Faculty Member - Anonymous

Dear Dr. Sadik,

Academia has been profoundly impacted by recent federal developments. Although, some changes were always expected, the speed and the number of changes took everyone by surprise and left them with little to no time to react or respond. The most significant impact will be on early career faculty and faculty focusing on DEI and Climate Change Research.

Those who embrace tenure-track positions have already signed up for a formidable challenge to meet high expectations. To us, three things are very important for success, 1) establishing a research program and building strong reputation, 2) creating a long-term sustainable strategy for sponsored research, publications, teaching excellence, and service, 3) securing independent grants to fund doctoral students and cover summer salary. I felt like recent developments have changed the criteria for 1, and 2, making 3 very difficult to achieve. Stop-gap funding programs have tried to help and support but the focus is mostly on temporary solutions and continued support for doctoral students and not much for summer salary, which is a really important factor for junior faculty, who are often starting families with growing list expenses.

The uncertainty of the funding scenario, increased competition for grants, changes in the personnel at funding institutions and other factors have created an environment of stress and anxiety to the point that any email from the funding agency is causing a nervous reaction. Early career faculty want to focus and work hard to establish themselves so that they will be recognized, acknowledged, and appreciated in the near future – I do not think this is a lot to ask for.

I appreciate you and your team for all your initiatives to create a culture of peer encouragement and support among NJIT faculty, especially early career faculty. I keep hoping though that a lot more can and should be done given the challenging times we are going through.

Regards,

A representative not-yet-tenured faculty member

Faculty Awards & Recognitions



President Teik C. Lim
NJ Biz Power 100



Arjun K. Venkatesan
AAEES 40 Under 40

If you are planning to apply for a prestigious award, please contact [Dr. Shivon Boodhoo](#) for assistance and advice. [Faculty Awards website.](#)

Events and Upcoming Deadlines

- **Department chairs workshop** - Tuesday, August 26, 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
- **CEIE Teaching Launchpad for new faculty** - Tuesday, August 26, noon - 4 p.m.
- **CEIE Summer Teaching Conference** - Wednesday, August 27, 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- **New faculty and lecturers orientation** - Thursday August 28, 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- **Convocation** - Friday August 29, 8:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.
- **Welcome Brunch for new faculty and lecturers** - Friday August 29, 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
- **Office of Faculty Affairs Events** - Faculty Fridays, Faculty Huddle - [see more](#)
- **2025/2026 Promotion and Tenure Promotion dates:**
<https://www.njit.edu/provost/promotion-and-tenure>

We Want to Hear from You!

Your contributions are valued! We invite you to share your suggestions, news materials, opinions, student success stories, and classroom engagement examples for inclusion in *The Forum*. Please email them to vpfa@njit.edu or use this [anonymous form](#) by the 15th of each month.

*A note on "Letters to the VPFA": The Forum operates in strict adherence to all ethical standards. No content will be redacted or removed from letters received and all letters must be under 300 words for publication. Please note that all opinions expressed herein are those of the individual authors and do not represent the official views or endorsement of the institution.

The Forum is dedicated to supporting the professional development and community of NJIT faculty.

New Jersey Institute of Technology

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