

THE FORUM

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the latest edition of ***The Forum***, which begins with an overview of the Fall 2025 Faculty Huddle held on September 10th at the Highlander Club. One of the most powerful ways we can support our faculty is through the sharing of skills and expertise. The Office of Faculty Affairs is here to facilitate that: we offer professional support to those who need it, and we welcome anyone who would like to volunteer their time and expertise to help their peers.

To that end, our October *Faculty Fridays* will focus entirely on peer support, exploring ways faculty can actively offer and ask for help through mentoring and coaching. Remember, a simple conversation with a colleague or mentor can often be the best form of support, reminding us that we're not alone in facing daily challenges. In closing, this edition includes our September letter to the VPFA*, provided this month by a department chair. We strongly encourage you to share your own thoughts, opinions, or questions anonymously [via this form](#). We look forward to publishing your submissions in upcoming editions.



Provost Pelesko at the Faculty Huddle on
September 10, 2025.

Faculty Huddle

The Faculty Huddle, held on September 10 at the Highlander Club, served to welcome back faculty and university lecturers and to engage campus leaders on the impact of the changing federal landscape on research and academics. Provost Pelesko acknowledged the current stressful time due to federal changes, thanking faculty for their resilience.

He remarked that the administration created the Ad-Hoc task force on Federal Developments to address the issues and highlighted actions by the Administration through the Task Force including:

- **Stop-Gap Funding:** In place since the spring to assist faculty with terminated grants, it's being used judiciously for critical needs like continuing animal subjects research and paying continuing students.
- **Faculty Impact Statements:** Similar to COVID-era measures, faculty can include impact statements with their promotion and tenure (P&T) packages.
- **P&T Guidance Document:** This document summarizes the Task Force recommendations for how P&T committees at NJIT should consider the impact of recent changes in US federal policy on faculty productivity, with a primary focus on research funding. The recommendations do not change the fundamental requirements for tenure and promotion as detailed in the NJIT Faculty Handbook. The P&T guidance is being circulated for approval.
- **Core Values & Agency Contact:** Faculty are warned **NOT TO SIGN any documents** sent directly by a funding agency (e.g., agreeing to a 15% overhead cap). They must contact the Research Office or Provost's Office for guidance.

The provost updates the Faculty Senate bi-weekly. Everyone should check the research office website for updates: <https://research.njit.edu/updates-federally-funded-research-grants-and-contracts>

Other Campus leaders were in attendance to provide updates and address questions from the faculty. Dr. Atam Dhawan, Senior Vice Provost for Research, categorized the federal government actions impacting sponsored research into three main areas: (i) DEI and Environmental studies. (ii) Indirect cost cap of 15% and (iii) Inclusion of a political agent/liaison to oversee the award process. Mariette Chemishanova, Director, Office of Global Initiatives (OGI) addressed issues concerning visa appointments, restrictions on third-country visa applications, and a potential four-year limit for student visas. Faculty with questions are encouraged to contact OGI, although they cannot provide legal advice. Dr. Sotirios Ziavras, Vice Provost for Graduate Studies, highlighted that NJIT has a strong enrollment of 552 PhD students. He responded to questions about how these students are being impacted by the federal changes. Professor Amit Bose, PSA President responded to the question of free speech. He referenced a Texas law requiring the vetting of all curriculum materials and a recent faculty firing related to gender expression/identity.

The event also featured a roundtable discussion & next step. VPFA Sadik led a roundtable asking, "What is the most significant challenge facing you based on recent federal actions?" Participants' responses included visa issues, concerns about grant/funding uncertainty, and the impact on enrollment and department funding. Perry Deess noted that a student survey showed that even domestic students are worried about their international peers. VPFA Sadik encouraged faculty to continue the conversation, attend Faculty Fridays events, and direct any questions to vpfa@njit.edu.

We encourage you to share your responses, opinions, or questions via this anonymous form. Submissions will be published in upcoming communications.

Thank you for being part of our community,
Omowunmi "Wunmi" Sadik, Ph.D. Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs,
Distinguished Professor of Chemistry and Environmental Science

Letters to the VPFA*

A Chair's View by Dr. Farzan Nadim

We are living through unprecedented changes for academia, our country, and the world. Many of these changes are brought about by a series of US Presidential executive orders that defy historical conservatism. For academia and federal agency employees both, this has resulted in confusion, anxiety, and disruption. How should we, as the administrative units of an academic institution, respond? My first thought is that we should prioritize our response according to our conscience and common sense. The federal government is a behemoth compared to any academic institution, or even all of them put together. We are in no position to fight the chaos of the federal system, but we can do two things: protect ourselves, especially those of us who are most vulnerable, and educate.

The most vulnerable of us are: international students, doctoral students and post-doctoral trainees, those protected by anti-discrimination laws including women and under-represented minorities, campus activists, and junior faculty. Our highest priority, therefore, is to identify how we can make our institution less vulnerable by protecting these groups. As a department chair, I will emphasize some practical steps related to my administrative domain. These are not my ideas, but those of my department faculty; nor is this an exhaustive list but, hopefully, a starting point for a conversation.

Undoubtedly, the most imminent issue in the life of our department faculty and research staff is the change in the funding landscape. The recent bridge fund established by the Provost has been a crucial step. Yet, as a recent example in our department showed, the lack of clarity in eligibility and the process can turn potential applicants into a ping-pong ball passed among multiple university offices, ultimately ending in no useful outcome. Similarly, limiting seed grant funding for basic research is short sighted. It is imperative, more than ever, to help our faculty to be more competitive to obtain grants to ensure their success. Another small but extremely fruitful investment is travel funding for researchers who do not have funding to attend meetings and seminars, to present their research, network, and establish collaborations. Similarly, publication costs are often a daunting barrier to disseminating

research findings. More Read and Publish agreements (<https://researchguides.njit.edu/readandpublish>) spearheaded by the University Library would help. Another important step could be for the university or colleges to establish a competitive funding or awards system specifically for doctoral candidates and postdocs. Such awards do not need a high dollar amount, but rather serve as an indicator of individual success and boost the candidate's career. Other useful endeavors include initiatives to train faculty, especially junior faculty, in how to tap into new funding sources, such as how to make one's research translational or relevant to industry, institutional subscription to funding opportunity sites such as GrantForward.com, and providing access to workbooks from GWSW, (<https://www.grantcentral.com/workbooks/>) etc.

In the current headline-driven discourse, I often wonder if we lose sight of our primary role: to educate. An educated society is engaged in civic duties to protect its health, economic prosperity, and freedom. As faculty, we teach. It is our duty to go beyond the basic steps and teach students how to think critically and independently. It is our responsibility to protect the hard-won academic freedom granted to our students and us; to stop self-censorship and draw the line at attacks on academic integrity.

Faculty Awards & Recognitions

**Raj Dave' has been awarded the
Lifetime Achievement Award from
American Institute of Chemical Engineers, AIChE**

Davé, is a fellow of AIChE and the National Academy of Inventors and a former chair of the Particle Technology Forum. He is a problem-focused inventor whose groundbreaking methods for re-engineering tiny particles have applications in such diverse areas as rocket fuels and explosives, high-value-added chemicals and pharmaceuticals.



"Being selected for this award means a lot to me since I have been part of this community in various capacities for almost 25 years and have closely known and admired many giants in the field who have previously received this award," he said. "It is a strong endorsement of the hard work of many students and postdocs who I am fortunate to have worked with."

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Office of Faculty Affairs is currently working on the following awards and seeks nominees.

The Carnegie Foundation Fellows: In spring 2026, Carnegie Corporation of New York plans to award 30 fellowships of up to \$200,000 each to extraordinary scholars, authors, journalists, and public intellectuals. Nominations are made by the university president. This year's topic: *the many ways political polarization in the United States manifests itself in society and suggest ways that it may be mitigated*. Studies of polarization in other countries are welcome, provided they offer lessons that can be applied to the United States. Projects based in disciplines across the humanities and social sciences are welcome.

Blavatnik US National Awards: The Blavatnik National Awards honor America's most innovative young faculty-rank scientists and engineers. These awards celebrate the past accomplishments and future potential of young faculty members working in the three disciplinary categories of Life Sciences, Physical Sciences & Engineering, and Chemical Sciences. Every year, one Blavatnik National Awards Laureate in each disciplinary category will receive \$250,000 in unrestricted funds, and five nominees in each disciplinary category will be recognized as Finalists and will receive \$15,000 in unrestricted funds. Nomination is made by the university.

American Chemical Society National Awards: Multiple awards available.

National Academy of Inventors Senior Member: At a minimum, candidates must demonstrate a high degree of innovation by holding 1 issued U.S. patent. Candidates must be in professional practice or research in his/her current field for at least 5 years.

Blavatnik Regional Awards: The Blavatnik Regional Awards acknowledge and celebrate the excellence of outstanding **postdoctoral scientists** from institutions in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut working in the three disciplinary categories of Life Sciences, Physical Sciences & Engineering, and Chemical Sciences. Laureates are awarded \$30,000 each and two Finalists in each disciplinary category are awarded \$10,000 each in unrestricted funds.

If you are planning to apply for a prestigious award, please contact [Dr. Shivon Boodhoo](#) for assistance and advice 8 weeks to two years ahead of the deadline. See the [faculty awards website](#) for information.

Events and Upcoming Deadlines

- **Office of Faculty Affairs events** - [see more](#)
- **Faculty Fridays** - Save the dates: Oct 3, Nov 7, Dec 5, Feb 6, Mar 6, Apr 3, May 1 in CKB 116 11:30 A.M. - 1 P.M.
 - Faculty Fridays Oct 3 will center on Mentorship
 - Faculty Fridays Nov 7's theme will be Engaging with AI
- **New Faculty Research Showcase** - Nov 12 in Campus Center Ballroom A at 11:00 A.M. – 1 P.M.
- **Faculty Development Workshop Part 2** - Dec 12 in CKB 116 at 8:30 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.
- **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 are requested to 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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